



Kiwanis®

Updated requirement for criminal history background check

For more than 100 years, our organization has steadfastly served the children of the world. In fact, today we have nearly 300,000 student members in our Service Leadership Programs.

To demonstrate our commitment to the youth we serve, Kiwanis International has decided to strengthen our youth protection policies and procedures throughout our programs, including the following:

The Kiwanis International Board of Trustees adopted this statement effective February 19, 2020:

No Kiwanis club or district is permitted to deviate from Policy 16(d)(1), which states:

“Kiwanis International requires clubs to have a clear criminal history background check for any club member serving as an advisor to any Service Leadership Program club.”

Background checks are available online at Kiwanis Connect and can be accessed [here](#).

Therefore, any Kiwanis advisor to any Service Leadership Program who does not have a clear criminal history background check on file with Kiwanis International is not permitted to have any contact with youth at a Service Leadership Program meeting or event.

This policy has been in effect for several years and is not a change. As leaders in the organization, you understand that in order to serve the children of the world, we must keep them safe and continually demonstrate the importance of following all youth protection policies.

As of April 1, 2020, any Kiwanis International SLP advisor who does not have an approved criminal history background check on file will be ineligible to serve in the advisor role, and notice will be sent to the club secretary and district leadership. The Kiwanis International and Service Leadership Programs staff will make every effort to work with SLP advisors in completing this critical requirement.

Additionally, on February 19, 2020, the Kiwanis International Board of Trustees approved the following policy regarding Service Leadership Program events and adults working with youth.

That the Kiwanis International Board approves the amendments to Kiwanis International’s policies and procedures, as shown below, effective May 1, 2020.

b. All Levels of Kiwanis

Kiwanis International and any subsidiary, affiliate, district, division, zone, region, or club therein organizing a Service Leadership Program event where adults will have direct interaction with youth under age 18 must follow these guidelines. Criminal history background checks for persons listed below, when required, must be conducted and verified by Kiwanis International in accordance with Kiwanis International procedures. A clear check must be verified prior to arrival at the event. Persons who do not meet this criterion may not attend the event.

5. Single-Day Events Without an Overnight Stay: All Kiwanis advisors (club members and non-members) registered for or participating in any Service Leadership Program event must have a clear criminal history background check and must have completed Kiwanis International annual youth protection training. All other adults participating in single-day events must follow all Kiwanis International youth protection policies and procedures, a copy of which will be provided before the start of the event.

6. **Overnight Events:** All adults (club members and non-members) registered for or staying overnight at any Service Leadership Program event must have a clear criminal history background check and must have completed Kiwanis International annual youth protection training. However, parents/guardians of participating students who are not chaperones may attend the event for a maximum of one overnight stay without a ~~eriminal history~~ background check.

7. **Chaperones:** A minimum of one adult per 10 students must be serving as chaperones during the entirety of the event. All chaperones (club members and non-members) participating in any single-day or overnight Service Leadership Program event must have a clear criminal history background check and must have completed Kiwanis International annual youth protection training. Additionally, chaperones must follow all applicable policies and procedures. (See also Procedure 432.)

8. **Aktion club members:** Aktion Club members are exempt from criminal history background checks. However, their chaperones/caregivers are not exempt.

The last policy change is as follows:

(2) District Administrators for Service Leadership Programs: Kiwanis International requires all SLP District Administrators to complete an application process, which includes submitting a completed application, having a clear background check conducted and verified by Kiwanis International, and completion of Kiwanis International youth protection training and any other elements that may be required by Kiwanis International. After receipt of an individual's application and verification of all required elements, Kiwanis International will review the information and decide, in its sole and absolute discretion, whether the individual is accepted to become an SLP District Administrator. Kiwanis has no obligation to allow an individual to become an SLP District Administrator based solely on a "clear" background check. Denial may be appealed via the process outlined in Procedure 197.

This change is effective May 1, 2020. We will have applications available before the deadline.

In addition to these new policies, we are introducing new resources for our SLP advisors. We have new training from Praesidium, Inc., via their Armatus training database. We have new materials and training for chaperones, and we'll have new in-person training at our Kiwanis Family conventions in June and July. And finally, we have introduced a 24-hour, confidential helpline at 1-888-607-SAFE. The helpline can be used if you think a youth has been harmed or their safety and well-being are at risk.

We realize these are significant changes, and we thank you for your attention to these critical matters. To be sure we are informing leaders in a timely manner, you will receive this letter via email and through the postal service.

Please do not hesitate to reach out for additional information and clarification. We are available at youthprotection@kiwanis.org.

Updated February 28, 2020