

Youth protection guidelines policies and procedures updated May 2020

These policies can be found in Kiwanis International Policies and Procedures as Procedure 432.

All adults working with youth under the age of 18 at any Kiwanis event are required to read/understand, agree to and abide by these policies.

Education: Every Kiwanis club is expected to inform and educate its members on these guidelines, best practices and required actions for individuals who become aware of youth in potentially harmful situations. This education must occur annually, including providing a copy of these guidelines to each club member. Every Kiwanis district is expected to provide an educational forum or workshop at every district-produced convention and conference regarding guidelines and best practices for adults working with youth, using materials provided by Kiwanis International.

Chaperone: A chaperone is defined as a Kiwanis member, faculty member, parent, legal guardian or person who is in loco parentis, twenty-one (21) years of age or older, who has been approved by the school or agency and registered with the school or agency to accompany the youth members at the specific event.

Chaperone addition: 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.)

Criminal history background checks: 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. The check must be conducted and verified by Kiwanis International. Persons without a clear criminal history background check may not serve as the advisor. Approved background checks shall be valid for no more than two years. Kiwanis advisors shall acquire a new criminal history background check upon their initial appointment to the position.

District administrators for Service Leadership Programs: Kiwanis International requires all SLP district administrators to complete an application process, which includes submission of 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.

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 criminal history background check.

Overnight stays: While attending a Kiwanis event that requires overnight stay in a hotel or camp/conference setting, adequate adult chaperoning is expected and must include no fewer than one adult male for each ten or part of ten youth males, and one adult female for each ten or part of ten youth females. Except for a parent sharing a sleeping room or other sleeping quarters (e.g., a tent) with his/her own child, no adult should share a hotel or dormitory sleeping room or other sleeping quarters with a youth. In the event that sleeping quarters consist of multiple beds (such as in a bunkhouse or camp cabin), adults may share the sleeping quarters with youth members of the same gender, provided that two or more adults are present.

Transportation: When transporting youth, the best practice is the “rule of threes,” with at least three people in the vehicle at all times, along with documented approval from a parent or guardian for the transportation arrangements. When both of these conditions cannot be met, one of them should be. All transportation decisions should be made in accordance with local laws and school policies.

Use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, marijuana, and other substances

While attending any Kiwanis event that is produced primarily by or for the benefit of youth, adults are expected to refrain from using or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, tobacco and/or marijuana products, even if prescribed for medicinal use. In addition, the use and/or possession of illegal drugs or the improper/illegal use of legal drugs is prohibited.

Medications: The possession of prescription and non-prescription medications by youth at a Kiwanis event should be permitted only by the written permission of the parent/guardian.

Reporting: If a Kiwanian observes troubling behavior involving a youth at a Kiwanis event or becomes aware of a situation that is illegal or potentially unsafe for a young person at a Kiwanis event, he/she must immediately contact the appropriate personnel at the event, as well as provide notification to law enforcement personnel as appropriate. All local, state, provisional and federal laws regarding reporting must be followed. If the Kiwanian becomes aware of the troubling behavior after the event, he/she must contact leaders of the event and provide notification to law enforcement personnel as appropriate. Kiwanis International now offers a 24-hour, confidential helpline at 1-866-607-SAFE. The helpline can be used if you think a youth has been harmed or their safety and well-being are at risk.

Personal information: All documents bearing personal information of any youth attending a Kiwanis event, including registration forms, medical information forms, permission to treat forms, etc., should be treated as confidential. Processes that protect this information must be created, including minimizing the number of people who have access to any such documents. The documents shall be maintained a minimum of three years or longer, as may be required by applicable state/provincial laws and regulations. After the maintenance period has expired, the documents shall be destroyed in a way that maintains confidentiality, such as shredding. The disposal and destruction of all confidential information shall conform to applicable state/provincial laws and regulations.

Youth and social media: For any social networking site that involves requesting a connection (such as inviting someone to be a friend on Facebook), adults should never initiate such connections with youth. If a youth requests such a connection from a Kiwanian, the Kiwanian should use his/her best judgment in responding. Adults should treat their interaction with youth on social networking sites as though the interaction were occurring in public, in front of other adults and young people. In other words, if it would not be appropriate to say something to a young person in public, it should not be said as a comment on a social networking site either. Kiwanians should refrain from interactions that can be seen as excessive (such as constantly “liking” or commenting on a person’s posts on Facebook). Prior to posting any media online, such as photographs, obtain permission from any and all individuals (or parents, for minors) who appear in that media; it could be illegal to do otherwise. See Kiwanis International Policy B for complete social media guidelines.

Behavioral or health issues: Kiwanians are often seen by a young person as adults to trust with personal and/or sensitive information. Kiwanians should refrain from counseling youth and should instead find, or assist the young person in finding, appropriate expert assistance.

Conflicts with other rules: Whenever these guidelines conflict with local school policies or rules, or local state/provincial, or national laws or regulations, the highest applicable standards for conduct shall prevail.