

THE ROTAKIDS GLOBAL HANDBOOK

1. Introduction: The Power of the Young Leader

RotaKids is not merely a volunteering club; it is a character incubator. Between the ages of 6 and 13 (with the standard range being 7 to 12, and a one-year extension in either direction permitted upon approval of the sponsoring Rotary Club and in accordance with applicable local law) children absorb values that will define their entire adult lives. This handbook provides the structure needed to transform children's natural enthusiasm into projects with real impact.

2. The Adult Support Team

- A. The Rotarian Advisor: A member of the sponsoring Rotary Club. In a Community-Based club, the Rotarian Advisor is required to attend all meetings. In a School-Based club, the Rotarian Advisor is required to attend at minimum the monthly board meetings. Their role is to bring the "world of Rotary" into the school or community and to facilitate access to resources.
- B. The Faculty Advisor: The key person in the School-Based Model. They manage day-to-day logistics, track attendance, and ensure that all activities are age-appropriate. The Faculty Advisor is required to attend all regular membership meetings of a school-based club.

3. RotaKids Meeting Structure (45-Minute Model)

Meetings must be fast, energetic, and structured:

1. Opening (2 min): Official greeting and recitation of the RotaKids Pledge in unison.
2. Minutes (5 min): The RotaKids Secretary reads the notes from the previous meeting.
3. Vision (15 min): Discussion of current projects. *"What have we done? What comes next?"* The Brainstorming method is used.
4. Leadership Activity (15 min): A team game or a short lesson on Rotary values.
5. Closing (3 min): Announcement of the next meeting date and agenda items.

No meeting shall be deemed official unless the Rotarian Advisor is present (Community-Based Model) or the Faculty Advisor is present (School-Based Model).

4. The Service-Learning Methodology

We teach children to plan their projects using 4 simple steps:

- INVESTIGATION: What problem do we see in our school or neighborhood?
- PREPARATION: What do we need? Who can help us?
- ACTION: Carrying out the project itself.
- REFLECTION: What did we learn? How did those we helped feel?

5. Implementing the Merit System (The Gear of Service)

The Gear of Service badge system is the programme's core pedagogical retention tool, providing children with a visible, tangible record of their growth through service:

- **Monitoring:** The Secretary maintains a "Three Wheels Register" - a record of the volunteer hours and service activities completed by each member, verified and signed by the Rotarian Advisor or Faculty Advisor at each meeting.
- **Validation:** At the end of each semester, or upon the completion of a major project, the Rotarian Advisor reviews the Three Wheels Register and approves the filling of the next circle marker on the member's badge.
- **Solemnity:** The Wheel Loading Ceremony - the formal filling of a circle marker on the badge - is strongly recommended to take place before the entire school community or in the presence of parents and invited guests, to reinforce the sense of achievement and shared pride in service.

6. Completing a Minimum of 3 Projects per Year

A RotaKids club must cover all 3 directions. A comprehensive catalogue of 70 project examples across 7 categories is available in Annex B of the RotaKids Resolution Package.

1. **School/Local:** e.g., creative recycling, a "Friendship Bench" in the school yard, homework help for younger classmates.
2. **Regional/National:** e.g., the "Purple 4 Polio" campaign (planting crocuses or fundraising), clothing collections for disadvantaged areas.
3. **International:** e.g., correspondence with another RotaKids club via rotakids.net, the "Shoebox" project for children in other countries, fundraising for animal shelters.

7. Safety and Ethics (Safeguarding Essentials)

- **The Golden Rule:** Never one adult alone with a child.
- **Identity:** Children wear the RotaKids uniform or badges during external activities to be easily identifiable.
- **Digital:** Access to the club website (on the .club domain) is monitored by the Rotarian Advisor and/or Faculty Advisor.

8. The Graduation Ceremony (The Bridge to Interact)

Members who have completed at least one full Gear of Service level - evidenced by the completion of the three Progress Markers of a level and the corresponding formal advancement record - receive direct eligibility for Interact membership upon departure from the RotaKids programme, consistent with Article 13.080 of the RotaKids Statement of Policy. Members who have completed Level III in full also receive the Master of the Gear certificate. All departing members receive the RotaKids Programme Graduation Certificate, regardless of the level reached at the time of departure.

9. The RotaKids Citation (Annual Recognition Mechanism)

Mirroring Rotary International's standards of excellence, the RotaKids Citation is the annual distinction awarded to clubs that meet their strategic objectives. It is not merely an award - it is a club health monitoring tool.

Performance Criteria (Annual Objectives)

To receive the Citation, a RotaKids club must achieve at least 5 of the following 7 objectives during a Rotary year:

1. Values Framework: The RotaKids Pledge is recited at a minimum of 90% of meetings held.
2. Service Impact: Completion of 3 projects (School/Local, Regional/National, and International).
3. The Gear of Service: At least 50% of active members advance by at least one circle marker in the merit system during the Rotary year.
4. Digital Presence: Club data updated on RotaKids.net and at least two success stories published on the club's RotaKids.club page.
5. Membership & Retention: Maintaining a minimum of 15 active members, or a net growth of 10% compared to the previous year.
6. Strategic Pipeline (Transition): At least one member who has reached the upper age limit is formally transferred to a local Interact club through the Graduation Ceremony.
7. Fundraising Impact: Completion of at least one visible Service-Learning fundraising project, reported on RotaKids.com.

Districts may adapt these criteria by adding additional objectives or adjusting the minimum number of objectives required, provided that the core principles of service, membership development, and Rotary values are maintained. Any such adaptation must be approved by the District Governor or the District RotaKids Committee Chair.

10. The Transition Protocol: The Bridge to Interact

RotaKids is the foundation, and its success is also measured by the number of young people who continue within the Rotary family.

1. Identification: At the beginning of each Rotary year, the Secretary identifies members who will reach the upper age limit during that mandate, as well as members who have completed at least one full Gear of Service level and may therefore be eligible for direct Interact membership.
2. Interact Mentorship: The local Interact club (or the nearest available) shall designate an "Interact Ambassador" to visit the RotaKids club and share their experience of Interact projects with the younger members.
3. Graduation Ceremony: At the last meeting of June, all departing members receive the RotaKids Programme Graduation Certificate, documenting their years of service, the levels reached, and the circle markers earned.

Members who have completed at least one full Gear of Service level - evidenced by completion of the three Progress Markers of a level and the corresponding formal

advancement record - are eligible for direct Interact membership, without a mandatory probationary or aspirant period, consistent with Article 13.080 of the RotaKids Statement of Policy.

Members who have completed Level III in full also receive the Master of the Gear certificate, which serves as the highest letter of recommendation for Interact membership.

Members who have not completed any full level are encouraged to transition into Interact through the standard membership process of the receiving club.

11. Using the RotaKids Digital Ecosystem

Unlike other programs, RotaKids benefits from a donated digital infrastructure provided by the pioneers of District 2241.

- RotaKids.net (The Registry): The Rotarian Advisor is responsible for keeping the club's map pin "green" (active). Clubs that report no activity for 24 consecutive months will be marked as "Legacy Clubs" (grey pin).
- RotaKids.org (The Library): The single source for downloading official emblems, charter diploma templates, and parental consent forms.
- RotaKids.club (The Community): Each club claims its own subdomain (e.g., pitesti.rotakids.club). Publishing the full names or contact details of minors is strictly prohibited. The site is administered by the Rotarian Advisor or Faculty Advisor under Safeguarding rules.
- RotaKids.com (The Impact): A PHP/HTML prototype reserved for future project, fundraising, or impact-related tools. It is not an operational MVP and not an official fundraising platform unless and until approved through RI-compatible technical, privacy, safeguarding, and governance review. Clubs use this platform to access support for their Service-Learning activities and to demonstrate the program's collective impact at the global level.

12. Ceremony Guide: "The Wheel Loading Ceremony"

The filling of a Progress Marker on the badge is the supreme moment of pride for a RotaKid.

1. Context: The ceremony takes place at the end of a major project or at the end of a semester.
2. Attendance: The presence of the President of the sponsoring Rotary Club, or the highest-ranking available officer per the order of precedence established in the club's governing documents, is required.
3. The Act: The child is called forward. Their achievement is read aloud - for example: "For 50 hours of volunteer service and coordinating the recycling team."
4. The Symbol: The Advisor fills the corresponding Progress Marker on the badge worn by the child.

For each Progress Marker filled - at any level - the achievement is acknowledged with the reading of the hours accumulated and a personal word of encouragement from the presiding officer.

At the transition between levels - when the member advances to the next Gear of Service level - the ceremony carries full solemnity. The new badge corresponding to the new level is presented, showing the previously completed level in the Level Markers area and the first Progress Marker of the new level already filled. At the same ceremony, the Level Completion Certificate for the level just completed is presented, and the following message is delivered:

- Transition to Level I (upon joining the club) "You are in the circle - thank you for belonging!"
- Transition to Level II (upon completion of Level I) "You are a spoke of the wheel - thank you for taking action!"
- Transition to Level III (upon completion of Level II) "You are in the gear - thank you for moving others!"

Upon departure from the programme, regardless of the level reached, the member receives the RotaKids Programme Graduation Certificate, documenting their years of service, the levels reached, and the circle markers earned. If the member has completed Level III in full, they also receive the Level III Completion Certificate at the same ceremony. The Graduation Certificate serves as the member's passport into their next chapter - whether Interact, school leadership, or community life.

12.1. The President's Ceremonial Collar

The RotaKids Club President may wear a lightweight ceremonial collar during official club meetings, charter ceremonies, induction ceremonies, Wheel Loading Ceremonies, citation ceremonies, handover ceremonies, and formal public events.

The President's Collar represents temporary service responsibility and club representation during the elected term. It does not represent personal rank or superiority over other members.

The collar shall be simple, child-safe, lightweight, and appropriate for children aged 7 to 12. It may consist of a turquoise or club-color ribbon, a child-safe breakaway clasp, and a central RotaKids or Rotary-family emblem approved by the sponsoring Rotary Club and District.

At the annual handover ceremony, the President's Collar may be transferred from the outgoing RotaKids President to the incoming President, symbolizing continuity of service, responsibility, and leadership within the RotaKids Club.

The President's Collar is optional but recommended for clubs that wish to maintain ceremonial continuity with Interact, Rotaract, and Rotary practice.

Together with the President's Ceremonial Collar, the Club Pennant strengthens ceremonial continuity between RotaKids and the wider Rotary family.

12.2 The Club Pennant

A RotaKids club may use a Club Pennant as an optional ceremonial and friendship item, in continuity with Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact practice.

The Club Pennant may be displayed during official club meetings, charter ceremonies, induction ceremonies, Wheel Loading Ceremonies, handover ceremonies, district events, school partnership events, and formal public presentations.

The pennant may also be exchanged with visiting clubs or partner clubs as a symbol of friendship and shared belonging within the Rotary family.

A standard Club Pennant should normally include the RotaKids logo, the name of the club, the city or locality, and the District number. The name of the sponsoring Rotary Club and the year of chartering may also be included.

The pennant does not indicate rank. Its purpose is ceremonial, representative, and relational. It helps children experience Rotary-family continuity and club identity in a concrete and memorable way.

Where a club receives pennants from other RotaKids clubs, Interact clubs, Rotaract clubs, or Rotary clubs, these may be displayed during meetings or kept as part of the club's historical archive.

The Club Pennant is optional but recommended, especially for clubs that participate in district events, friendship exchanges, or inter-club visits.

12.3 The Club Bell

A RotaKids club may use a Club Bell as an optional ceremonial meeting item, in continuity with Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact practice.

The Club Bell may be used by the RotaKids Club President or presiding child officer to open and close official club meetings, charter ceremonies, induction ceremonies, Wheel Loading Ceremonies, handover ceremonies, district events, and formal public presentations.

The sound of the bell marks attention, order, and respect for the meeting. In RotaKids, the bell should always be explained as a symbol of service responsibility, not authority or superiority.

The bell should be small, safe, lightweight, and appropriate for children aged 7 to 12. It may be placed on the President's table together with the Club Pennant, President's Ceremonial Collar, attendance register, and other ceremonial items.

The Club Bell is optional but recommended, especially for clubs that wish to preserve Rotary-family ceremonial continuity in a child-appropriate form.