

NEW JERSEY DISTRICT · EST. 1947

ADVISOR GUIDE

2026–2027 Service Year

Mentor. Coach. Lead.

10,000+

Student Leaders

130+

Active Clubs

21

Divisions

\$23K+

Scholarships

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- The Kiwanis Family & K-Family pipeline
- Your role: Mentor · Coach · Compliance
- Club operations & officer responsibilities
- Election process & timeline
- Dues, finances & youth protection
- District events, DECON & conferences
- Year at a Glance — full service year



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SECTION 1

Welcome to NJ Key Club

Thank you for stepping up as a Key Club advisor. Your commitment makes a real difference — not just for the students in your club, but for the communities they serve.

A Note from the District Administrator

- Key Club is student-led by design — your role is to guide, not govern.
- This guide gives you everything you need to support a thriving club.
- Your LTG is your first call for questions. The DA is always available for bigger issues.
- Thank you for investing in the next generation of servant leaders.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is an NJ-specific companion to KCI's official advisor resources. It covers district structure, local processes, NJ-specific contacts, and practical day-to-day guidance. Reference it alongside the KCI Advisor Guide at keyclub.org/advisoreducation.

10,000+

Student Leaders

130+

Active Clubs

21

Divisions

\$23K+

Scholarships/Year

#8 of 33

KCI District Size

Quick-Reference Contacts

Role	Name	Contact
District Administrator	Cristina Trecate	ctrecate@njkeyclub.org
Assistant District Administrator	Bonnie Sturm	bsturm@njkeyclub.org
Your Division LTG	njkeyclub.org/district-board-members	njkeyclub.org
Your Division Zone Administrator	njkeyclub.org/district-board-members	njkeyclub.org
KCI Support	Key Club International	keyclub.org

Your First 30 Days — Checklist

Connect with your LTG	Introduce yourself and ask about division events.
Confirm school approval	Make sure Key Club is registered with your administration.
Meet your officer board	Schedule individual 1:1s with each officer.
Attend first meeting	Observe, take notes, coach the President afterward.
Review officer guides	Download at keyclub.org/resources/officer-guides-club-officers-lieutenant-governors/
Verify dues status	Confirm dues are paid; plan this year's collection.

Complete youth protection

Bkgd check + training: kiwanis.org/youthprotection.

Bookmark njkeyclub.org

Go-to for announcements, LTG contacts, and events.

SECTION 2

The Kiwanis Family

Key Club is the high school branch of Kiwanis International — a family of service organizations that spans every stage of life. The student in your meeting today is entering a service community designed to carry them for life.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

K-Kids

Introduction to community service and civic responsibility. Kiwanis-sponsored.



MIDDLE SCHOOL

Builders Club

Building the leadership foundation. Kiwanis-sponsored.



HIGH SCHOOL

Key Club

Student-led service and leadership development. The world's largest high school service organization.

YOU ARE HERE



COLLEGE

Circle K International

World's largest collegiate service organization. Natural next step after Key Club.



AGES 18–26

Kiwaniis Voices

Pilot program for young adults who want to serve with peers at their own stage of life.



ADULT

Kiwaniis International

The parent organization. Sponsors Key Club and funds the entire K-Family worldwide.



ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Aktion Club

Kiwanis-sponsored service and leadership for an often-overlooked community.

Why This Matters for Advisors

- Every member in your club is already part of something larger than one school year.
- Connect members to Circle K chapters at nearby colleges to ease the transition.
- Your sponsoring Kiwanis club is a direct link to adult mentorship and resources.
- The K-Family pipeline creates lifetime service leaders — your club is step three.

SECTION 3

How Key Club Works

Key Club is student-led by design. The structure is an inverted pyramid: KCI exists to serve districts, districts serve divisions, divisions serve clubs, and clubs exist to serve their members. Leadership flows upward as support, not downward as control.



What "Student-Led" Means in Practice

Students Do	Advisors Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and run all meetings • Select and organize service projects • Make all club-level decisions • Manage the club budget • Elect officers and set goals • Represent the club at district events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure youth protection compliance • Serve as school liaison • Provide guidance when asked • Attend events per school policy • Sign off on forms and paperwork • Connect students to resources

SECTION 4

NJ District at a Glance

The NJ District is organized across three tiers: the statewide district, 21 geographic divisions, and 130+ individual clubs. Understanding this structure helps you navigate support resources quickly.

THE DISTRICT	21 DIVISIONS	130+ CLUBS
<p>Statewide</p> <p>Governed by elected Executive Officers (Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, Webmaster) and the District Administrator. Sets the annual project, manages scholarships, runs DECON and district events.</p>	<p>Geographic Groupings</p> <p>Each division covers a geographic area, from Cape May (Div. 1) to Sussex County (Div. 21). Each is led by an elected Lieutenant Governor (LTG). The Zone Administrator supports the LTG and is the primary adult contact in that area.</p>	<p>Individual Schools</p> <p>Each club is the base unit. Clubs run their own meetings, plan service events, collect dues, and report monthly to the district through the Club Monthly Report Form (CMRF).</p>

Key District Facts

Service Year	April 1 – March 31
Annual Dues	\$17/member (\$10 KCI + \$7 NJ District)
District Project	Environmentalism in NJ (2026–2027)
District Mascot	Gnomeo the Garden Gnome
District Newsletter	The Jersey Key (3× per year)
Scholarships	\$23,000+ awarded annually at district level
Charter Year	1947 — one of the oldest KCI districts
KCI Rank	8th largest of 33 KCI districts

Your LTG — Your First Resource

Your division's Lieutenant Governor is your primary district contact. LTGs are elected high school students who serve as the bridge between clubs and the district. They can help with:

- Introductions to your division's other clubs and advisors
- Chartering ceremonies and new member drives
- Questions about district requirements and deadlines
- Connecting your club to service project partners
- Navigating KCI resources and reporting systems

Find your LTG: njkeyclub.org/district-board-members

Zone Administrators

NJ Key Club is divided into geographic zones, each overseen by a Zone Administrator (ZA). ZAs are adult Kiwanis Committee members who support their zone's LTGs and clubs, and serve as an additional adult resource between the division level and the District Administrator.

- Zone Administrators can help with club concerns that need adult follow-up
- They work alongside LTGs and serve as mentors to division leadership
- ZAs are a direct resource when you need adult support beyond your LTG
- The Zone Administrator is the primary adult contact for your geographic area

Find your Zone Administrator: njkeyclub.org/district-board-members

The Kiwanis Committee

The Kiwanis Committee is a group of Kiwanis members who work to mentor the members of the district board. Each role has a specific focus:

- Zone Administrators — work directly with LTGs to support division-level leadership.
- Financial Counselor — works with the executive committee, primarily the Treasurer, on financial guidance and oversight.
- DA and ADA — work with the entire board to provide guidance, mentorship, and continuity.

Reach the Kiwanis Committee at: kiwaniscommittee@njkeyclub.org

SECTION 5

Your Role as Advisor

As an advisor, you wear three hats: mentor, coach, and compliance anchor. None of those hats involve running the club — that's the students' job.

MENTOR	Guide Without Driving	Listen first, advise second. Help students find their own answers rather than solving problems for them. Let them lead — even when they might fail.
COACH	Build Capability	Build self-esteem. Push members toward bigger goals. Every student is motivated differently — get to know them.
COMPLIANCE	Keep the Club Safe	Ensure youth protection requirements are met. Maintain the rule of three. Be the liaison to school administration.

Core Advisor Responsibilities

Attend meetings	Required. Your presence signals investment and provides compliance coverage.
Review meeting agendas	In advance when possible. Support officers in thinking through logistics.
Support the election process	Facilitate — don't choose. Start in January for May installations.
Work with the Secretary	The secretary submits the Club Monthly Report Form (CMRF) each month. Review it with them and ensure it's submitted on time.
Monitor dues collection	Work with the Treasurer to ensure dues are collected and submitted by the annual deadline.
Oversee YOF grant projects	Youth Opportunities Fund projects require advisor sign-off.
Relay district info as needed	If officers don't mention district announcements in a meeting, make sure you do. Time-sensitive details can be found in the bi-weekly advisor emails from the DA. If you don't receive these, email administrator@njkeyclub.org to be added to the listserv.
Ensure DCM attendance	Make sure officers are attending DCMs (Divisional Council Meetings) hosted by the LTG to stay updated on district news and requirements.
Maintain communication	Stay in regular contact with your LTG, Zone Administrator, and school administration.
Youth protection compliance	Background check, annual training, rule of three — non-negotiable.

SECTION 6

Club Operations

Officer Roles & Responsibilities

Each club is led by a student board. Officers are elected by club members. Meet with each officer at the start of the year to review their officer guide and set goals.

keyclub.org/resources/officer-guides-club-officers-lieutenant-governors/

<p>PRESIDENT</p> <p>Runs meetings, coordinates all club activities, sets the vision. Your primary student contact.</p>	<p>EDITOR</p> <p>Manages internal and external club communications and the club newsletter.</p>
<p>VICE PRESIDENT</p> <p>Supports the president, oversees committees, steps in when the president is unavailable.</p>	<p>WEBMASTER</p> <p>Maintains the club's online presence and social media. Reviews content for youth protection compliance.</p>
<p>SECRETARY</p> <p>Takes minutes, maintains records, and submits the Club Monthly Report Form (CMRF) each month — a required recurring responsibility.</p>	<p>CLASS DIRECTORS</p> <p>Represent each grade level, help recruit new members, ensure underclassmen feel included.</p>
<p>TREASURER</p> <p>Manages the budget, tracks dues, handles reimbursements, and presents a report at every meeting.</p>	

Club Committees

Spreading work across committees keeps all members engaged. Suggested committees:

Service	Plans and executes service events throughout the year.
Membership	Recruits new members and coordinates onboarding.
Fundraising	Manages club fundraisers to support event and project budgets.
PR & Communications	Social media, school announcements, club visibility.
Events	Logistics for DECON, regional events, and club socials.

SECTION 7

Running Effective Meetings

Great meetings are student-run, structured, and short. Your role is to be present — not to lead. If the president is struggling, coach them after the meeting, not during it.

Suggested Meeting Structure

Time	Item	Who/What
5 min	Call to Order & Pledge	President opens; Pledge of Allegiance and Key Club pledge.
5 min	Roll Call & Minutes	Secretary takes attendance and reads previous minutes.
5 min	Treasurer's Report	Brief financial update.
10 min	Officer Reports	Updates from VP, Editor, Webmaster, Class Directors.
15 min	Service Project Discussion	Review upcoming events, assign roles, confirm logistics.
5 min	Old Business	Follow-up on items from previous meetings.
5 min	New Business	New agenda items, announcements.
5 min	Open Floor & Adjourn	Member comments, LTG updates, president closes.

Advisor Tips: During Meetings

- Sit at the back or side — not at the front table.
- Take notes on what's working and what isn't for post-meeting coaching.
- Speak only when a compliance or safety issue requires it.
- Let awkward silences happen — students will fill them.
- Encourage the president to prepare an agenda 24 hours in advance.

SECTION 8

The Election Process

Officer elections are the most important governance event of the year. Start in January so new officers are trained and ready before May installation.

January

- Announce upcoming elections to all members
- Encourage members to consider running for office
- Share officer guide links at keyclub.org/resources/officer-guides-club-officers-lieutenant-governors/
- Form an Elections Committee from non-candidates

February–March

- Hold elections overseen by the Elections Committee
- Update officer info in Kiwanis Engage (engage.kiwanis.org)
- Meet individually with each newly elected officer — review their guide and set goals
- Pair new officers with outgoing officers for shadowing

April–May

- Install new officers — thank retiring officers publicly
- Establish club committees for the coming year
- Suggested installation outline at keyclub.org/resources/officer-guides-club-officers-lieutenant-governors/

August–September

- Elect class representative at first meeting of new school year
- Update officer info in Kiwanis Engage
- Kick off recruitment for new members

SECTION 9

Dues & Kiwanis Engage

Annual dues are \$17/member (\$10 KCI + \$7 NJ District), submitted together through KCI, which then separates the district portion automatically.

Kiwanis Engage — engage.kiwanis.org

- Kiwanis Engage is the platform for all roster management and dues payment — it replaced the old Membership Update Center (MUC).
- Access: Faculty Advisor, President, Secretary, and Treasurer all have login access.
- If the Faculty Advisor changes mid-year, contact the District Administrator at administrator@njkeyclub.org to update the email on file before attempting to log in.

Roster & Officer Management

- Update officers first — new officers must be added in Engage before they can log in.
- Add all new members — do not delete returning members; only remove members who are not returning or remain unpaid.
- Use personal emails — collect each member's personal email (not school email — school filters frequently block KCI communications) plus first name, last name, and expected graduation year.
- Mid-year changes — if officer contact information changes, update it promptly in Engage.

Paying Dues

Navigate to the Finance tab in Engage, generate an invoice, and pay by credit card online or mail a check payable to Key Club International. Multiple invoices can be submitted throughout the year as new members join — you do not need to wait until the full roster is finalized.

We recommend paying by credit card whenever possible. Checks take significantly longer to process — both at the school level and at KCI. If a check is mailed late, the club could be at risk of suspension even if the check was written before the deadline. Credit card payments are processed immediately.

Tips for Dues Collection

Plan two collection windows each year:

- Beginning of the school year (September–October): Collect from returning members and new recruits early to hit the Early Bird deadline.
- After the winter holidays (January): A second window catches members who joined mid-year or whose initial payment was delayed.

Why dues matter:

Non-dues-paid members cannot attend district events, are ineligible for scholarships, cannot apply for YOF grants, and cannot vote in district elections. Staying current on dues keeps your members fully connected to everything Key Club offers.

Key Dues Deadlines

Engage Opens	April	Platform opens for new service year roster and dues.
Early Bird Deadline	November 1	Clubs that pay early receive a banner patch at DECON. Strongly encouraged.
Regular Deadline	December 1	All dues must be submitted by December 1 to remain in good standing.
First Late Notice	January 15	Late notice sent to President and Faculty Advisor.
Kiwanis Club Notified	January 31	Sponsoring Kiwanis club is notified of non-payment.
Suspension if Unpaid	February 1	Club suspended — loss of good standing, ineligibility for awards and DECON contests, and inability to vote in district elections.
Principal Notified	February 15	Notice sent to school principal if still unpaid.

DUES LINKS

How to pay: njkeyclub.org/how-to-pay-dues · KCI dues portal: keyclub.org/dues-reporting · Video tutorial: keyclub.org/dues-reporting

Club Standing Statuses

KCI recognizes three non-active club statuses. Understanding what each means helps you act quickly if your club is at risk.

SUSPENDED

Triggered when dues are not paid by February 1.

- Club immediately loses good standing
- Ineligible for all awards and DECON contests
- Cannot vote in district elections
- Members cannot run for district or international office
- Reversible upon payment — contact the DA immediately if you are at risk

INACTIVE

A club that has not met KCI activity requirements for the service year.

- Club is no longer considered active in KCI records
- May still be able to reactivate by meeting requirements and paying dues
- Ineligible for awards, contests, and district participation while inactive
- Contact your LTG or the DA to understand the reactivation path

CHARTER REVOKED

The most serious status — the club's official charter with KCI has been formally revoked.

- Club no longer legally operates as a Key Club chapter
- All KCI affiliation, branding, and benefits are lost
- Members cannot represent the club at any KCI-affiliated event
- Rechartering requires a full new application process through KCI and the DA
- See keyclub.org/news/club-status-explained for full details

SECTION 10

Service & District Initiatives

Service is the core of Key Club. Members lead projects — advisors support logistics and compliance. Below is what is happening district-wide this year.

District Project — Environmentalism in NJ

ENVIRONMENTALISM IN NJ — 2026–2027 DISTRICT PROJECT (THE NATURE CONSERVANCY)

Clubs are encouraged to incorporate environmental service into their programming. The district recognizes clubs through the District Project Service Hours Award at DECON. Track environmental service hours separately. Key Club partners with The Nature Conservancy on environmental initiatives.



NJ District Service Positions

Two appointed district-level positions give individual members a chance to lead NJ-wide initiatives. Worth mentioning to motivated members:

UNICEF CHAMPION

Appointed by the district board to lead NJ Key Club's UNICEF campaign, including the annual Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF initiative. Coordinates club participation statewide and represents NJ at the KCI level. Announced each service year — encourage interested members to apply.



THIRST WATER WARRIOR

Leads NJ Key Club's Thirst Project partnership, organizing club fundraising and awareness efforts around the global water crisis. Announced each service year — encourage interested members to watch for the application window.



Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) Grants

YOF grants allow clubs to fund community service projects through KCI. Any club in good standing can apply. Advisor sign-off is required on all applications.

- Apply at keyclub.org/youth-opportunities-fund/
- Grants fund local service projects: food drives, clean-ups, community builds
- Applications reviewed at the KCI level on a rolling basis
- YOF has two cut-off dates each service year: October 15 and March 1. Make sure applications are submitted before the applicable deadline.

Reporting Service Hours

Tracking and reporting service hours is essential for award eligibility and club accountability.

What to Track	How to Report	Why It Matters
Service hours per member per event	Secretary logs in CMRF and Kiwanis Engage	Required for AARF and award eligibility

Project names, dates, partner orgs	Detailed logs by Secretary; summarized in AARF	Documents community impact for scholarships
District project participation	Note Environmentalism in NJ activities separately	Required for District Project Award consideration

SECTION 11

District Leadership Opportunities

One of the most powerful things an advisor can do is tell a capable student that they are ready to lead beyond your school. Many never apply simply because no one said they should.

Elected District Positions

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (LTG)

Each division elects an LTG at DECON. The LTG is the primary liaison between clubs and the district board, visits clubs in their division, and represents their division's members at the district level. Requirements: dues paid, club in good standing, advisor endorsement recommended.

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, and Webmaster are elected annually at DECON by delegate vote. These are full-year leadership roles requiring significant commitment and travel. Requirements: dues paid, club in good standing, advisor endorsement recommended.

Appointed & Committee Roles

DECON CHAIR

A student position responsible for planning and executing NJ Key Club's annual DECON. Significant real-world event planning and leadership. Applications typically open in the fall.

DISTRICT COMMITTEES

The district board operates through standing committees (service, membership, communications, etc.). Students can get involved at committee level without running for a board position.

UNICEF CHAMPION & THIRST WATER WARRIOR

District-appointed service leadership roles (see Section 10). Both involve leading NJ-wide initiatives and representing the district at the KCI level.

KCI International Opportunities

Paid-dues members in good standing can pursue:

- Run for KCI international office (President, Vice President, or Trustee)
- Apply for the Global Leadership Certificate Program
- Attend ICON as an NJ district delegate
- Compete in international contests through ICON

Advisor Role in District Leadership

- Confirm dues are paid and the club is in good standing before a student files for any district or international position.
- Connect candidates with the LTG for candidacy requirements and with the DA for district office specifics.
- Your role is to encourage and facilitate — not to manage their campaign.

SECTION 12

District & International Events

Key Club's event calendar is one of its strongest retention and recruitment tools. Members who attend district events consistently re-engage and pursue leadership roles.

NJ District Events

Season	Event	Details
SPRING	District Education Conference (DECON)	The flagship NJ event. Held annually at The Berkeley Hotel, Asbury Park, NJ. Includes workshops, district officer elections, 20+ contests and awards, service, and fellowship. Every club should send a delegation.
FALL	Fall Rally	Annual district kick-off event — training, bonding, and energy for new and returning members. Held at Six Flags Great Adventure.
SPRING & FALL	Regional Training Conferences (RTCs)	Smaller regional gatherings focused on officer and club training. Held in both the spring and fall. Highly recommended for newly elected officers.
YEAR-ROUND	Officer Training Conference (OTC)	Leadership training for club officers, facilitated by LTGs. Ideally done as soon as officers are elected in the spring. If your club holds elections in the fall, the OTC happens then as well. Contact your LTG to schedule.

International Events

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT RALLY

Virtual · November Free annual virtual event open to all members. Breakout workshops on leadership, service, and club management. KCI board updates. Attendance earns NJ recognition. Highly encouraged for all members.

ICON

International Convention · Summer 2026 · Dallas, TX The largest Key Club event of the year. Leadership workshops, international elections, global fellowship, and KCI business. NJ typically organizes a district delegation — connect interested members with the DA.

Advisor Responsibilities at Events

- You are required to chaperone any event your club attends.
- Confirm school field trip or activity approval well in advance.
- All chaperoning adults must have a cleared Kiwanis background check.
- Collect photo release and medical authorization forms before any travel.
- Apply the rule of three — no adult alone with a student at any time.
- Transportation: minimum three people in any vehicle, document parental approval.
- Ratios: 1 advisor per 50 students for day trips; 1 per 10 for overnight. Follow your school policy if stricter.

SECTION 13

Recognition, Contests & Scholarships

Recognition is one of the strongest retention tools a club has. Students who feel seen stay engaged. The Annual Achievement Report Form (AARF) is the foundation — clubs must complete it to be eligible for any contest or award at DECON. Start collecting documentation early, not in February.

DECON Contests (20+ total)

All contests require club dues to be paid and the AARF to be submitted. Review all criteria at the start of the year at keyclub.org/resources/distinguished-officer-club.

Club Awards

- Distinguished & Diamond Distinguished Awards — based on the Club Annual Achievement Report Form (AARF)
- Single Service Award — best one-time project (tiered by club size)
- Major Emphasis Program Award — best large-scale or sustained project
- Signature Project Award — annual projects a club is known for
- District Project Service Hours Award
- Kiwanis Family Relations Award
- Club Website Award
- Club Social Media Award
- Club Video Award
- Club T-Shirt Award
- Year-in-Review Scrapbook

Individual Contests

- Oratory Contest
- Essay Contest
- Talent Contest

Individual Recognition

- Distinguished Club Officers (NJ District program) — recognized for service hours, attendance, reporting, and leadership throughout the year
- Student Spotlight — NJ District recognition for notable service or leadership
- DECON Grants — awarded on an application basis to help fund student attendance at DECON. Must be a member in good standing to apply.

Advisor & Adult Recognition

DOMINICO GATTI OUTSTANDING FACULTY ADVISOR AWARD

One Faculty Advisor recognized annually at DECON.

ROBERT J. MASCENIK OUTSTANDING KIWANIS ADVISOR AWARD

One Kiwanis Advisor recognized annually at DECON.

DR. ANDREW BATSIS KEY OF HONOR AWARD

The highest recognition any adult can receive in NJ Key Club. Awarded for exceptional lifetime contributions to Key Club and youth service in New Jersey.

Scholarships

NJ Key Club awards \$23,000+ in state-level scholarships annually at DECON. Additional scholarships are available through KCI. Eligibility generally requires paid dues, club in good standing, and completion of the AARF.

Advisor Tip: Make Recognition a Habit

- Share DECON contest criteria with officers in October — preparation starts early, not in February.
- Nominate deserving members for Distinguished Officer and Student Spotlight — they will not nominate themselves.
- Acknowledge service hours and milestones at every meeting. A shout-out in school announcements goes a long way.
- Check advisor award eligibility annually — you deserve recognition too.

SECTION 14

Youth Protection, Safety & Event Compliance

Non-Negotiable Requirements

- All advisors must complete a Kiwanis-conducted background check before any direct interaction with students.
- Annual Youth Protection training required at kiwanis.org/youthprotection. Youth Protection Helpline: 866-607-SAFE (7233).
- The rule of three: never be alone with a student — maintain in all in-person AND written communications.
- Key Club Code of Conduct must be upheld at all meetings, events, and district functions.

Praesidium Academy — Chaperone Course Requirements

Chaperones for Key Club events are required to complete a Kiwanis background check and three Praesidium Academy courses, in addition to being familiar with Kiwanis International Youth Protection Policies & Procedures.

Required Praesidium Academy Courses for Chaperones:

1. Abuse Risk Management for Volunteers
2. Social Media Safety
3. Preventing Sexual Activity Between Adolescents

Note: Faculty advisors only need to complete the background check and these courses if they will be chaperoning a Key Club-sponsored event off school premises.

Access all training at: keyclub.org/advisoreducation/#chaperones

Key Club Code of Conduct

All club activities must align with Key Club's Code of Conduct. As advisor, you are responsible for ensuring members understand and uphold these standards at all times — at meetings, at events, and at district functions. Violations should be reported through your school's standard process.

Event Forms — What You Need Before You Go

Before any club travel or off-campus event, advisors must have on file for each attending student:

PHOTO RELEASE FORM

Required before any photos taken at Key Club events may be shared or published. Keep signed forms on file for the full service year.

MEDICAL RELEASE / AUTHORIZATION FORM

Required for all travel. Documents emergency contacts, medical conditions, and authorizes emergency treatment. This is in addition to any forms your school requires.

TRANSPORTATION FORM

Documents how students are traveling and with whom. All transportation must follow the Rule of Three — minimum three people per vehicle for any Key Club activity.

Always check whether your school requires additional forms beyond these. School requirements layer on top of Kiwanis requirements — you must satisfy both.

Youth Protection Guidelines at a Glance

<p>BACKGROUND CHECKS</p> <p>Required for every adult working with youth under 18. Must be completed before any interaction with students.</p>	<p>SOCIAL MEDIA</p> <p>Never initiate a digital connection with a student. Treat all interactions as public. Obtain written permission before posting photos of minors.</p>
<p>ANNUAL TRAINING</p> <p>Completed every year at kiwanis.org/youthprotection. Helpline: 866-607-SAFE (7233).</p>	<p>MEDICATIONS</p> <p>Prescription and non-prescription medications require written parent/guardian permission at any Kiwanis event.</p>
<p>RULE OF THREE</p> <p>Never be alone with a student. Applies to all in-person meetings and all digital communications — always CC a third person on emails and texts.</p>	<p>ALCOHOL & SUBSTANCES</p> <p>Zero tolerance. Advisors must refrain at all events. Prohibited for all students.</p>
<p>OVERNIGHT EVENTS</p> <p>No adult shares sleeping quarters with youth (except parent with their own child). Two or more adults required in bunkhouse/cabin situations — same gender only. Chaperones must be 21+ with a valid background check.</p>	<p>PERSONAL INFORMATION</p> <p>All documents bearing student personal information are confidential.</p>

NJ-Specific Reporting Protocol

If you observe or suspect abuse, neglect, or a safety concern involving a student, follow this sequence:

1	If no immediate danger	Contact your school counselor or designated school official first. Follow your school's mandatory reporting process — you are likely a mandated reporter as a school employee.
2	If there is immediate danger	Call 911 immediately. Do not wait for school administration approval.
3	After any report	Notify the DA (Cristina Trecate · ctrecate@njkeyclub.org) so the district is aware. Document the date, time, and nature of the concern in writing.
4	Do not counsel	Do not attempt to counsel the student. Your role is to connect them to appropriate professional resources, not to manage the situation yourself.

SECTION 15

Communication & Social Media

Clear communication between advisor, officers, and the district is one of the biggest factors in whether a club thrives. Set expectations early.

Communication Best Practices

- Use official email — keep all Key Club communications on your school or Kiwanis-related email. Avoid personal accounts.
- Apply rule of three — CC a third person on all emails and texts with individual students.
- Stay on the same page as the President — a quick weekly check-in (5 minutes) prevents most issues.
- Forward relevant district communications to your President immediately. Don't be a bottleneck.
- Keep the school in the loop — administrators appreciate regular updates, especially before events.

Social Media Guidelines

The Webmaster manages the club's social presence. Your role is oversight — not management.

- Never initiate a social media connection with individual students
- Review all posts mentioning students before they go live
- Obtain written parent/guardian permission before posting photos of minors
- Club accounts should never be managed from a personal advisor account
- Direct messages to students require rule of three compliance

Staying Connected to the District

NJKEYCLUB.ORG

Primary district website. Announcements, resources, LTG contacts, club list.

THE JERSEY KEY

District newsletter published 3× per year. Share with your officers.

LTG VISITS

Your LTG will visit your club and hold division-wide meetings. Attend when possible. LTGs also send monthly newsletters and interim emails with important district updates — share these in full with ALL club members. Do not edit or excerpt them.

DISTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow NJ Key Club on social platforms for real-time updates.

BI-WEEKLY ADVISOR EMAILS

The DA sends bi-weekly emails with time-sensitive district updates. If you are not receiving these, email administrator@njkeyclub.org to be added to the listserv.

SECTION 16

The Kiwanis Sponsor Relationship

Every Key Club must have a sponsoring Kiwanis club. This relationship is a formal requirement — and when it is working well, it is one of the most valuable assets your club has.

What the Sponsoring Kiwanis Club Does

- Provides formal sponsorship required by KCI for chartering and annual standing
- Offers mentorship from experienced adult community volunteers
- May provide financial support for club events, service projects, or DECON costs
- Collaborates on joint service projects — a great way to expand your club's community reach
- Designates a Kiwanis Advisor to serve alongside you as an additional adult resource

Building a Strong Relationship

The advisor is the primary point of contact with the sponsoring Kiwanis club. A strong relationship makes everything easier.

- Introduce yourself to the Kiwanis Advisor and club President at the start of each service year
- Invite Kiwanis members to Key Club events and service projects — they want to be involved
- Give the Kiwanis club a brief update on your club's activities at least once a semester
- Connect deserving senior members to Kiwanis for recognition or scholarship opportunities
- Don't assume they know what you need — communicate early and specifically

If the Relationship Has Gone Cold

- Contact your LTG first — they have Kiwanis club contacts for the division and can help facilitate reconnection.
- If that does not resolve it, reach out to the DA directly.
- Re-engaging a lapsed sponsor relationship is normal and solvable — support is available.

SECTION 17

Frequently Asked Questions

Real questions from advisors — answered directly.

Q: What do I do if a student is struggling emotionally?	Do not attempt to counsel the student. As a school employee, you are likely a mandated reporter. Connect the student with your school counselor or appropriate mental health professional and follow your school's referral process. Document the interaction. Notify the DA if the concern also involves a Key Club activity.
Q: What if my Kiwanis sponsor relationship has gone cold?	Contact your LTG first — they have Kiwanis club contacts for the division and can help facilitate reconnection. If that does not resolve it, reach out to the DA directly. This is common and solvable.
Q: What if a student wants to run for district office?	Confirm their dues are paid and their club is in good standing — both are required to run for any district or international position. Connect them with the LTG for candidacy requirements and notify the DA. Your role is to encourage and facilitate, not to manage their campaign.
Q: What if dues are not paid by the deadline?	The club is suspended on February 1 — loss of good standing, ineligibility for awards and DECON contests, and inability to vote in district elections. Contact the DA immediately if you are at risk of missing the deadline. Suspension can be reversed upon payment, but it creates real complications.
Q: How do I handle an officer who is not doing their job?	Do not step in and do it for them. Have a private conversation with the officer first. If it continues, involve the club President. Your role is to coach — help them understand the impact and develop a plan. As a last resort, the club's bylaws govern officer removal.
Q: My club is brand new (or recently reactivated). What do I focus on first?	Get dues paid, get your roster into Kiwanis Engage, establish your Kiwanis Advisor relationship, and hold your first service event. Everything else follows. Your LTG and the DA are your best resources in the first year.
Q: Do I need to attend every event?	You are required to chaperone any event your club attends off school grounds. For on-campus meetings the expectation varies by school — check your school's policy. At minimum, you should attend all officer meetings to stay informed.
Q: What if I need to be replaced as advisor mid-year?	Update the Faculty Advisor email in Kiwanis Engage immediately by contacting memberservices@kiwanis.org . Notify your LTG and the DA. Ensure the incoming advisor completes a background check and Youth Protection training before taking on any duties.

SECTION 18

Awards & Recognition

NJ Key Club awards over \$23,000 in scholarships annually and recognizes clubs and members at district and KCI levels. Recognition is one of your strongest retention and recruitment tools.

District Scholarships	\$23,000+/year	NJ Key Club awards multiple scholarships annually at DECON. Applications open in spring — ensure senior members apply. Details at njkeyclub.org .
KCI Scholarships	Additional Awards	Key Club International offers additional scholarships and recognition at the international level. See keyclub.org for current offerings.
Club Awards	DECON Recognition	Clubs can earn awards for membership growth, service hours, newsletter quality, and more. Review criteria at the start of the year.
Individual Awards	Member Recognition	Members recognized for service hours, leadership, and community impact. Your LTG advises on current district award programs.
DECON Grants	Attendance Funding	Application-based grants to help fund student attendance at DECON. Must be a member in good standing.
Annual Achievement Report Form (AARF)	Year-End Summary	The AARF documents your club's year — service hours, membership, events, accomplishments. Secretary and officers compile it.

Advisor Tip: Make Recognition a Habit

- Acknowledge service hours and milestones at every meeting.
- Nominate deserving members for district awards — they won't nominate themselves.
- Share DECON award criteria with your President in October so preparation starts early.
- A shout-out in the school announcements goes a long way.

SECTION 19

Key Resources & Contacts

Essential Links

NJ Key Club Website	njkeyclub.org	Primary district resource — club list, LTG contacts, announcements, event calendar.
How to Pay Dues	njkeyclub.org/how-to-pay-dues	Step-by-step dues submission instructions.
KCI Officer Guides	keyclub.org/resources/officer-guides-club-officers-lieutenant-governors/	Official officer resource library and training materials.
KCI Advisor Education	keyclub.org/advisoreducation	Online training + Praesidium chaperone course requirements.
Kiwanis Engage	engage.kiwanis.org	Update officer information after elections and manage dues.
Kiwanis Member Services	memberservices@kiwanis.org	Kiwanis Engage technical support — login issues, roster problems.
YOF Grants	keyclub.org/youth-opportunities-fund/	Apply for Youth Opportunities Fund grants. Deadlines: Oct 15 and Mar 1.
Club Status Explained	keyclub.org/news/club-status-explained	Understand Active, Inactive, Suspended, and Charter Revoked status.
Youth Protection	kiwanis.org/youthprotection	Annual training and full guidelines — required for all advisors.
Find Your LTG & ZA	njkeyclub.org/district-board-members	Current district board — LTGs and Zone Administrators.
NJ Building Guide	njkeyclub.org/building-guide	For recharter or new club questions.

Key Contacts

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Cristina Trecate · ctrecate@njkeyclub.org Grant applications, CR recharter status, chartering support, Kiwanis sponsor connections, listserv additions.

ASSISTANT DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

Bonnie Sturm · bsturm@njkeyclub.org District support, advisor questions, general club guidance.

YOUR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Find at njkeyclub.org/district-board-members First resource for questions, DCMs, sponsor introductions, chartering ceremony support.

YOUR ZONE ADMINISTRATOR

Find at njkeyclub.org/district-board-members Adult support resource for your geographic area; mentors division leadership alongside the LTG.

KIWANIS COMMITTEE

kiwaniscommittee@njkeyclub.org Reach Zone Admins, Financial Counselor, DA, and ADA for mentorship and support.

KEY CLUB INTERNATIONAL

keyclub.org Kiwanis Engage, officer guides, YOF grants, official chartering.

KIWANIS MEMBER SERVICES

memberservices@kiwanis.org Technical support for Kiwanis Engage — login issues, roster problems, platform questions.

Key Club Acronym Reference

AARF — Annual Achievement Report Form	KCI — Key Club International
CKI — Circle K International	LTG — Lieutenant Governor
CMRF — Club Monthly Report Form	NJDB — New Jersey District Board
DCM — Divisional Council Meeting	NJKF — New Jersey Kiwanis Foundation
DECON — District Education Conference	OTC — Officer Training Conference
GATC — Governors and Administrators Training Conference	RTC — Regional Training Conference
ICON — International Convention	UNICEF — United Nations Children's Fund
IP — Immediate Past	YOF — Youth Opportunities Fund
KCF — Kiwanis Children's Fund	ZA — Zone Administrator

SECTION 20

Year at a Glance

Key dates across the 2026–2027 service year (Apr–Mar). Confirm specific dates with your LTG and watch njkeyclub.org for official announcements.

October <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service year begins • New member recruitment • Early Bird dues Nov 1 • Fall Rally season 	November <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Training Conf. (RTC) • Officer Training (OTC) • Service project planning • Regular dues deadline Dec 1 	December <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday service events • Mid-year club review • LTG Division meeting (DCM)
January <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announce elections • Encourage candidates • DECON registration opens • Service hours tracking 	February <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections Committee forms • Officer elections • Update Kiwanis Engage • DECON preparation 	March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer shadowing begins • Scholarship apps open • DECON final prep • YOF deadline Mar 1
April <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DECON • Submit AARF before DECON • Award nominations • Officer installation prep 	May <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install new officers • Establish committees • End-of-year celebration 	June <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior recognition • Summer project planning • ICON (if attending)
July <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICON International Conv. • Summer service events • Incoming officer prep 	August <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back-to-school planning • New member outreach • Kick off new year planning 	September <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First meeting of year • Update Kiwanis Engage • Service year ends Mar 31

Critical Annual Deadlines

Annual Dues	Oct–Nov	Submit \$17/member to KCI. Early Bird: November 1. Regular deadline: December 1.
Officer Elections	Feb–Mar	Hold elections, update officer info in Kiwanis Engage.
Officer Installation	Apr–May	Install new officers before end of school year.
AARF Submission	Before DECON	Annual Achievement Report Form — compiled by Secretary and officers. Must be submitted before DECON in April.
DECON Registration	Jan–Feb	Registration typically opens in January. Don't miss the deadline.
Club Monthly Report (CMRF)	Monthly	Secretary submits the Club Monthly Report Form each month — all year long.
YOF Grant Deadlines	Oct 15 / Mar 1	Two cut-off dates per service year. Apply at keyclub.org/youth-opportunities-fund/

NJ KEY CLUB
New Jersey District

NJ Key Club

Advisor Guide · 2026–2027

Mentor. Coach. Lead.

District Administrator: Cristina Trecate
ctrecate@njkeyclub.org
njkeyclub.org



K-Kids



Builders Club



Key Club



Circle K



Voices



Kiwanis



Aktion Club