

# District 5030 Youth Exchange Youth Protection Policy

## **1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth**

District 5030 is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of anyone with whom they come in contact.

## **2. Definitions**

Volunteer: Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), or other Rotary activities having sustained direct interactions with students, either supervised or unsupervised. This includes, but is not limited to, club and District Youth Exchange officers and committee members, Rotarian counselors, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses and partners that host students for extended activities or outings, host parents, and other adult residents of the host home (including siblings and other family members).

Student: Youth involved with Rotary Youth Exchange or Rotary Youth Leadership Awards regardless of whether they are of the age of majority.

Sexual abuse: Sexual abuse refers to engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student, or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts, alone or with another person of any age of the same sex or the opposite sex.

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or "groom" their victims.

## **3. Incorporation of District Youth Programs and Liability Insurance**

The Rotary District 5030 Youth Exchange program and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards are separately incorporated as Rotary District 5030 Youth Programs, Incorporated and Rotary District 5030 RYLA, Incorporated, respectively, under the laws of the state of Washington, USA. Each corporation shall carry general liability insurance with coverage and limits of not less than \$1,000,000 US for each incident.

## **4. Volunteer Selection and Screening**

The following screening steps must be completed prior to participation in Youth Exchange activities or other Rotary youth programs:

1. The Rotary Club and the Office of the District Governor will maintain for at least ten years, all records of Youth Volunteer Affidavits, criminal background checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with minors.

2. Each volunteer interested in participating in any Rotary youth program, to include Rotary Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact, and the like, must:
  - ◆ Complete a Youth Volunteer Affidavit form and authorize the Rotary Club and/ or District 5030 to conduct a criminal background check.
  - ◆ Undergo personal interviews.
  - ◆ Provide a list of references for the Club to check.
  - ◆ Meet RI and District eligibility requirements for working with students.
  - ◆ Understand and comply with RI and District guidelines for the Youth Exchange and other Rotary youth programs.

RI requires that any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. If an individual is accused of sexual abuse or harassment, and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, then, for the safety of youth participants and the protection of the accused, additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact. A person later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated to participate in youth programs. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former position.

3. Host families must meet the following selection and screening requirements, in addition to those listed above.
  - ◆ Complete a written application.
  - ◆ Host families must undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability for hosting exchange students. The interview, to be conducted by the Rotary club Youth Exchange Committee, must assess the potential Host Family's:
    - Demonstrated commitment to the safety and security of students;
    - Motivation for hosting a student is consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange;
    - Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student;
    - Aptitude for providing appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well being.
4. The responsible Rotary club shall conduct home visits. Home visits must be conducted for each family and may include both announced and un-announced visits, both prior to and during the placement. A Home Visit shall be conducted prior to placement, and again during placement, even for repeat host families.
5. All adult residents of the host home must meet the selection and screening guidelines. This includes adult children of the host family and other members of the extended family that reside in the home either on a full- or part-time basis.
6. Rotarian counselors must meet the criteria for all Volunteers, as well as the following:
  - ◆ Counselors shall not be a member of the student's host family.
  - ◆ Counselors must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, which may include instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.

- ◆ Counselors should not be close friends or relatives of other volunteers involved with a particular student (i.e. school principal, host family, etc.).

## **5. Student Selection and Screening for Youth Exchange**

All students interested in participating in the District 5030 Youth Exchange program must:

- ◆ Complete a written application and be interviewed for their suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program. The interview(s) is mandatory.
- ◆ Attend and participate in all District orientation and training sessions.

All parents or legal guardians of students interested in participating in the District 5030 Youth Exchange program must:

- ◆ Be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program. The interview is mandatory, even for repeat families.

## **6. Training**

District 5030 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Exchange program participants. The Youth Exchange Committee will conduct and document the training sessions.

District 5030 will:

- ◆ Adapt the Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual to include relevant information on specific District guidelines, local customs, cultural issues, and legal requirements.
- ◆ Develop a calendar for training and define the frequency of training required for each volunteer position, including descriptions of who is to participate, when training should occur, and how training will be conducted.
- ◆ Conduct specialized training sessions for the following Youth Exchange program participants:
  - District Governor
  - District Youth Exchange committee members
  - Club Youth Exchange committee members
  - Rotarian counselors
  - Other Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Youth Exchange activities, such as local tours or District events
  - Host families
  - Students (outbound and inbound)
  - Parents and legal guardians of students
- ◆ Establish guidelines to ensure that all those required to be trained have participated.
- ◆ Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance.

## **7. Allegation Reporting Guidelines**

District 5030 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being young people participating in any Rotary club or District program and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled in accordance with the Youth Exchange Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines, found in Appendix B.

## **8. Investigation Guidelines**

District 5030 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will investigate each allegation thoroughly. Rotary clubs within District 5030 and the District will cooperate with all law enforcement, child protective services, and legal investigations, and will conduct independent investigations as appropriate.

The District Governor may establish an ad hoc committee to carry out internal investigations.

## **9. Other District 5030 Responsibilities**

District 5030:

- ◆ Has procedures for reporting, investigating, and proper handling of non-criminal offenses or historic cases that law enforcement will not investigate.
- ◆ Requires that all inbound Youth Exchange students maintain a policy of insurance consistent with Youth Exchange guidelines
- ◆ Provides each student with a list of local services in the District (rape and suicide crisis hotline, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, proper law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- ◆ Will follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites and usage of the Rotary Marks.
- ◆ Will appoint an independent lawyer, therapist or counselor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment, when appropriate to the situation.
- ◆ Will report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours.
- ◆ Will report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to RI within 72 hours.
- ◆ Evaluate and review this policy and accompanying procedures on a regular basis.

## **10. Club Compliance**

District 5030 will monitor and ensure that all participating Rotary clubs within the District comply with RI guidelines for abuse and harassment prevention. All clubs that wish to apply to the District for certification must provide the District with a copy of the following for review and approval:

- ◆ Copies of all materials produced in the club to promote and support the Youth Exchange, RYLA and other Rotary youth programs including, but not limited to, policies, applications, promotional materials and brochures, Web site links, etc.
- ◆ List of services in area (rape and suicide crisis hotline, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, proper law enforcement agencies, community services, private services)
- ◆ Club abuse and harassment prevention training program

Participating clubs must agree to:

- ◆ Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating their program in accordance with District 5030 and RI policy.
- ◆ Conduct criminal background checks and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to adult full-time residents of host home, counselor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with sustained direct unsupervised contact. All volunteers must complete and sign the Youth Volunteer Affidavit found in Appendix A.
- ◆ Provide legible copies of all background checks, reference checks, interview assessments, and Home Visit documentation to the Office of the District Governor within 7 days of receipt by the Club.
- ◆ Develop and implement a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes home visits and interviews both prior to and during the placement.
  - Provide documentation to the Office of the District Governor within 7 days of selection / non-selection decision and/ or home visit(s).
- ◆ Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
  - Provide documentation to the Office of the District Governor within 7 days of departure.
- ◆ Follow the Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines found in Appendix B. Report all allegations of sexual abuse or harassment to the appropriate authorities immediately (including police or state agencies as appropriate) and then to the club and District leadership for investigation.
- ◆ Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the District 5030 Youth Exchange program structure (e.g. “backdoor exchanges”).
- ◆ Set procedures for removal of a student from the host family (criteria for moving a student and back-up temporary housing available in advance).
- ◆ Develop contingency plans for hosting that include pre-screened and available back-up families.
- ◆ Provide each student with a comprehensive local services list.
- ◆ Ensure that the host counselor for each student is not a member of the student’s host family.
- ◆ Ensure that the host counselor is trained in responding to any problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse or harassment.
- ◆ Support attendance at District training on sexual abuse and harassment prevention for host families, outbound students, inbound students, and their parents or legal guardians.
- ◆ Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites and usage of the Rotary Marks (available in late 2005).
- ◆ Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to the Program Chair or District Governor immediately.
- ◆ Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants’ parents or legal guardians.
  - Provide documentation to District Governor within 7 days of interview.

Appendix A: Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines