

# District 6290 Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy

---

## 1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 6290 strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

## 2. Definitions

**Volunteer.** Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Exchange activities who has direct interactions, whether supervised or unsupervised, with students. Volunteers include, among others: club and District Youth Exchange Officers and committee members; Rotarian counselors; Rotarians and non-Rotarians and their spouses and partners who host students for activities or outings or who might drive students to events or functions; and host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including siblings and other family members.

**Student.** Any individual who is participating in a Rotary Youth Exchange, regardless of whether he or she is of legal age of majority.

**Sexual abuse.** Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite sex. This includes non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

**Sexual harassment.** 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 used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims.

Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments

**Physical Abuse.** Physical abuse is defined as the use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment. Physical abuse may include but is not limited to such acts of violence as striking (with or without an object), hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, and burning.

**Emotional Abuse.** Emotional abuse refers to any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.

## 3. Incorporation of District Youth Exchange Program and Liability Insurance

Rotary District 6290 Youth Exchange program is incorporated through the Central States Youth Exchange Program, Inc., which is incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana.

District 6290 has adequate general liability insurance with coverage and limits appropriate for its geographic location. The participating Rotary Clubs within the United States are covered at minimum by the

general liability provisions of the Rotary International policies. Additional liability insurance may be purchased by individual Rotary clubs. Rotary Clubs in Canada are covered by a liability policy specific to the Canadian needs.

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

District 6290 will maintain in perpetuity all records of criminal background checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with minors.

**All volunteers** interested in participating in the District 6290 Youth Exchange program must meet the following requirements:

- Complete the Youth Volunteer Affidavit form and authorize the District to conduct a criminal background check (subject to local laws and practices).
- Undergo personal interviews.
- Provide a list of references for the District to check.
- Meet RI and District eligibility requirements for working with students. RI policy prohibits any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment 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, additional safeguards must be put in place to ensure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact as well as for the protection of the accused. 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.
- Understand and comply with RI and District guidelines for the Youth Exchange program.

**Host families** must meet the following selection and screening requirements, in addition to those listed above:

- Host families must undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability for hosting exchange students. Host families must demonstrate:
  - Commitment to the safety and security of students
  - Motivation for hosting a student consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange
  - Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student
  - Ability to provide appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well-being
- Host families must complete a written application.
- Home visits must be conducted for each family and should include announced and unannounced visits, both before and during the placement. Home visits must be conducted annually, even for repeat host families.
- Host families will have both announced and unannounced (or short notice) visits during the exchange year.
- 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 who are permanent or part-time residents in the home. They must be interviewed, have references checked, and undergo a criminal background check.

**Rotarian counselors** must meet the criteria for all volunteers, as well as the following:

- Counselors must not be a member of the student's host family.
- Counselors must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.

#### **5. Student Selection and Screening**

**All students** interested in participating in the District 6290 Youth Exchange program must meet these requirements

- Complete a written application and be interviewed to determine suitability for participation in the program.
- Attend and participate in all District orientation and training sessions.

**All parents or legal guardians of students** interested in participating in the District 6290 Youth Exchange program must be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the program.

## **6. Training**

District 6290 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Exchange program participants. District 6290 will conduct the training sessions.

Specifically, District 6290 will

- Adapt the *Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual and Leader's Guide* to incorporate specific District guidelines, information on local customs and cultural issues, and legal requirements
- Develop a training calendar that defines the participants, frequency of training required for each volunteer position, and training methods to be used
- 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

## **7. Allegation Reporting Guidelines**

District 6290 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Youth Exchange students and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled in accordance with the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines.

## **8. Follow-through and Review Guidelines**

District 6290 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will ensure that each allegation is investigated thoroughly. The District will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations and will not interfere with other investigations when conducting its own independent reviews.

## **9. Other District 6290 Responsibilities**

- Establish procedures for reporting, investigating, and handling noncriminal offenses or historical cases that law enforcement chooses not to investigate.
- Recommend that all inbound Youth Exchange students maintain insurance at the levels required by Central States Rotary Youth Exchange.
- Provide each student with a list of local services in the District (rape and suicide crisis hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Confirm that Inbound students have been given a list of local services in the District (rape and suicide crisis hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Provide each student with a list of Rotary emergency contacts, including: host club counselor, host and sending club presidents, host and sending District Governors, host and sending District Chairs, and two non-Rotarian resource people (both male and female).
- Assure that each student is provided with a means to contact the District 6290 Youth Exchange Chair and/or other District Committee members at all times. Also, assure that each student is provided with a means of contacting the host club Youth Exchange Officers and/or Youth Exchange Counselors at all times.
- Complete a student data request form for all participating Youth Exchange students and return it to RI one month before the exchange begins.
- Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to Youth Exchange students.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Appoint an independent lawyer, therapist, or counselor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.

- Report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours.
- 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 regularly.

## **10. Club Compliance**

District 6290 will monitor all participating clubs within the District and ensure that they 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:

- All materials produced in the club to promote and support the Youth Exchange program, including promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, Web site links, etc.
- List of services in the area (rape and suicide crisis hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Club abuse and harassment prevention training program materials

Participating clubs must agree to carry out the following:

- Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating its program in accordance with District 6290 and RI policies.
- In accordance with District 6290 policies, conduct criminal background checks and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to, adult residents of host home, counselor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact with youth. All volunteers must complete and sign the Youth Volunteer Affidavit.
- Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both before and during the placement.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
- Follow the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines.
- Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the District 6290 Youth Exchange program structure (so-called backdoor exchanges). Exchanges outside the District structure are strictly prohibited.
- Set procedures for removal of a student from the host family, including establishing criteria for moving a student and locating available back-up temporary housing in advance.
- Develop contingency hosting plans that include prescreened, available back-up families.
- Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and club members must not be required to host students.
- Ensure that long-term exchange students have multiple host families; students must have more than one host family.
- Provide each student with a comprehensive local services list, including information for dentists, doctors, places of worship, counselors, suicide and rape crisis hotlines, etc.
- 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.
- Provide mandatory training on sexual abuse and harassment prevention for host families, outbound students, inbound students, and their parents or legal guardians.
- Provide the names and contact information of at least three people — both males and females who are not related to each other and do not have close ties to the host families or club counselor — who can help the students with any issues or problems.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, deaths) involving Youth Exchange students to the District immediately.
- Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians.

In the case of an allegation against a host family member, the District shall assure the existence of a procedure for moving the student into a temporary, already-approved host family.

The District shall appoint a Compliance Officer to assure the Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy is carried out by all participating Rotary clubs and the District itself.

**Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth**

Rotary International 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 other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact.

*Adopted by the RI Board of Directors, November 2002*

February, 2017