



## **ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE - DISTRICT 6290 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

We expect that your exchange year will be one of the best experiences of your life. However, there is the possibility that you could be the victim of assault or abuse. Your safety is very important to us, and we can only help you if we know that you have a problem.

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

**District 6290** 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 children and young people with whom they come into contact.

### **2. Definitions**

***Volunteer:*** Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Exchange activities who has 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 activities or outings or who might drive students to events or functions, host parents, and other adult residents of the host home (including siblings and other family members).

***Student:*** Youth involved with Rotary Youth Exchange, 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.

Additional examples of sexual abuse could include, but are not limited to:

- Non-touching offenses
- Indecent exposure
- Exposing a student to sexual or pornographic material

***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.

Examples of sexual harassment could include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual advances
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sex life, and comments about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Displaying 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

**3. If you are emotionally, physically or sexually assaulted or abused you should follow this procedure:**

1. Report the situation and circumstances to your YEO immediately.
2. If you cannot contact your YEO or prefer that the YEO not be informed, report the situation to District Chair, Lody Zwarensteyn. If you can not reach the District Chair, contact the Youth Protection Officer, John Salan. You may call collect from anywhere if you are involved in this type of situation.

**Lody Zwarensteyn, 616-455-6123 (H); 616-581-2261 (C)**  
**John Salan, 616-285-3263 (H); 616-260-6666 (C)**

3. If you cannot report your situation to your YEO, the District Chair, or the Youth Protection Officer, report the situation to any member of the District's Youth Exchange Committee. It is important that you not delay in reporting any incident of assault or abuse. Be sure that someone in the District Exchange Program understands the seriousness of your situation.

**The procedure that shall be followed by a Rotarian receiving information about an assault, abuse, or harassment case is:**

1. Inform the District's Youth Exchange Committee Chair, Lody Zwarensteyn, IMMEDIATELY.
2. The District Chair will take charge of overseeing the student's safety and an investigation into the facts of the situation.
3. No inbound student will be sent home nor any outbound student brought home for reporting such a situation unless the student's personal safety requires it and the District Chair has approved the return.

**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:

## District 6290 Youth Protection Policy, P. 3

- Complete the 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.
- 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.

***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.

***Additional recommendations:*** Although not required, districts may wish to avoid selecting counselors who are close friends or relatives of other volunteers involved with a particular student (e.g., school principal who is also a club member, host family).

## **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 or Individual clubs 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
  - Host families
  - Students (outbound and inbound)
  - Parents and legal guardians of students
- Establish guidelines to ensure that all participants have received the requisite training
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance
- the district Youth Protection Officer will assist with training of students and adult volunteers in the youth exchange program.

## **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.
- Assure that the Central States Rotary Youth Exchange insurance policies meet Rotary International recommended insurance levels:.
- Provide each student with a list of local services in the host community (rape and suicide crisis hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.).
- 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.
- Require a monthly report from each inbound and outbound student in the district that includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Inbound and Outbound Coordinators can then review the reports and assist students as needed.

## **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.

- 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 CSRYE 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).
- 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.
- 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 Governor immediately.
- Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians.

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v. 2.1 (8/1/2010)

v. 2.2 (12/3/2010)