

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

DISTRICT 6630

And

THE OHIO-ERIE YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

For:

INBOUND STUDENTS



# Ohio-Erie Youth Exchange Program, Inc.



## GUIDELINES FOR INBOUND STUDENTS

### INTRODUCTION

Ohio-Erie is an international multidistrict that extends from Ontario, Canada to North Carolina, USA. We hope that your year here as part of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program will be one of the greatest experiences of your entire life. To help you gain the maximum benefits and enjoyment from this program, the following guidelines are provided.

Although you may find many similarities with our way of life in the United States and Canada, there are also many differences. It is these differences that offer a stimulating challenge as you explore new ideas and new concepts of life in a foreign country and how to adapt. As a general rule, the pace of life here is somewhat faster than in many other countries. We are generally recognized as friendly, relaxed and very hospitable people and we will do all we can to help you settle down in your new environment. You may feel nervous at the outset and your host parents and their family may feel the same. Be natural, act as you would in your own home and you will soon develop a happy relationship with them.

The principal objective of our Youth Exchange Program is to promote better understanding and goodwill. Unless you attempt to understand our way of life, to study and discuss our problems, the full value of the program will not be realized. Do not hesitate to discuss our social customs with your host family or friends at school. This will help you to understand our way of life.

### OBLIGATIONS OF THE STUDENT

Inbound students who are accepted into the Ohio-Erie Rotary Youth Exchange Program are required to accept the following obligations:

1. Students and parents have read and signed the “Guarantee Form and Visa Application” and the “Rules and Conditions of Exchange”, both of which are part of the Long Term Program Application. By signing these, and any other Ohio-Erie (e.g Independent Travel) or District specific documents, all parties have agreed to follow all of the rules of the Rotary Exchange Program.
2. Students are expected to obey the laws of the host country at all times and accept the supervision and discipline of the host club, host parents and school.
3. Students SHALL NOT, under any circumstances, operate a motorized vehicle of any description during the period of the exchange nor may they own a motorized vehicle in the host country. This includes cars, motorcycles, tractors, motorboats, ATV’s, snowmobiles, jet skis and any similar vehicle or any vehicle that requires a governmental license of any kind. This does not include riding lawnmowers. Violation of this rule can and will result in an immediate termination of the Exchange and a return home.



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4. Students will not be permitted to “go steady” with a boy or girl friend. Dating, preferably in the company of other couples is encouraged. For obvious reasons, serious romantic involvements are strongly discouraged. Sexual activity is prohibited. Students can and will be sent home if found to be engaging in sexual activity of any kind.
5. The use of illicit drugs including prescription drugs not prescribed to you is prohibited. **Any violation of this rule will result in IMMEDIATE TERMINATION of your Exchange.** Both the United States and Canada have serious legal consequences for drug offenders.
6. Even though you may be of legal drinking age in your home country, the legal age is 21 in the United States and 19 in Ontario, Canada. It is expected that you will refrain from drinking at parties and in public places during your exchange. Peer drinking is prohibited. Should your host family offer you an alcoholic beverage in their home and IF you wish to accept it and IF you and your natural parents have agreed that this is acceptable, then it is permissible. If your hosts do not use liquor in their home, you will not either.
7. Smoking is also regulated in both the United States and Canada and the purchase of tobacco products by underage persons can result in criminal penalties. If your application indicates that you are a non-smoker, you will maintain that status during your exchange.
8. The Youth Exchange Program is a high school program. Students are required to be enrolled in a high school selected by the host club and will attend classes regularly, attempt to obtain satisfactory grades, and participate fully in all school activities. The host club is under no obligation to enroll the student in a college or university, even if the student’s family offers to pay all fees and expenses. Students, who do not regularly attend school or make a reasonable effort in their classes, risk being sent home.
9. Students will be required to address Rotary clubs, other service organizations, youth, and community groups during their exchange.
10. During their stay, students will have certain obligations to their host District, club and District Youth Exchange Program. These will probably include attending the District Conference, periodic attendance at the host club meetings as well as participation in host Club activities. Many districts have regular programming for Exchange Students and students are encouraged to participate fully in these events. Personal plans should not be allowed to interfere with these obligations.
11. Students are ambassadors for their country and must, at all times, behave in a manner which will reflect positively on their families, communities, country, and Rotary.
12. Students must return home by a direct route on completion of their exchange period. They will not be allowed to stay in the host country after the termination of the exchange.



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13. District Committees frequently utilize Inbound students at its interview and orientation sessions for succeeding groups of Outbound students. Students are encouraged to accept these requests.
14. Students should remember that Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) is a cultural program. Students should be prepared to participate in family and cultural activities during their exchange as well as learning English.

### **PASSPORT AND OTHER TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

When you reach your final destination, it is advisable to give your passport, airline ticket and other important travel documents to either your Rotary counselor or host family for safe keeping.

Students arriving at a U.S. airport will need to go through U.S. Immigration and Customs and have a visa for the United States, even if their final destination is in Canada. At U.S. Immigration you will complete an I-94 form (usually this is done on the plane), which is to be stapled into your passport. This form must be surrendered when you depart the United States at the end of your exchange. If you are hosted in Canada, this form must be surrendered prior to its expiration date, which is typically six months. It can be handed in at either the U.S. border before leaving the U.S. or to Canadian Immigration officials.

Students hosted in Canada must go to Canadian Immigration when they first enter Canada. Students arriving at the Detroit airport **MUST** stop at the Canadian immigration office at the Detroit-Windsor border (this means you go inside the office). You will be issued a Student Authorization Visa which should be stapled into your passport.

Students hosted in the United States also receive a form DS-2019 (Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor (J-1) Status), which must be retained during your entire exchange. Should you leave the United States during your exchange, you will need this form to re-enter the United States.

Both the United States and Canada will inspect (Customs) your personal belongings when you arrive. It is important that any prescription medications are in their original containers. You should check the U.S. and Canadian web sites for the legality of prescription medications. Non-prescription medications such as cold remedies should be purchased after arrival as they may not be legal or confiscated at Customs. It is suggested that you make a list of gifts that you are bringing along with their value to make it easier to complete the customs forms.

### **STUDENT INSURANCE**

It is mandatory that all students purchase the Ohio-Erie health, property and liability insurance. The Ohio-Erie policy meets all of the requirements established by Rotary International. This policy must be must be purchased online from the designated Ohio-Erie insurance carrier.



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## COUNSELOR

Your host Rotary Club must appoint a Counselor whom you should regard as your confidant during your stay here. If you have any problems with school, host family, finances or problems of a personal nature, consult your Counselor. Ideally the counselor should be of the same gender as the student. Keeping the counselor informed of any concerns is crucial to the success of your exchange. He or she is there to help you and will welcome the opportunity to act as a mediator if things go wrong. If you are not assigned a Counselor, you should tactfully ask that one be appointed for you as soon after your arrival as possible. You may ask for a counselor of the same gender. When your counselor is unable to assist you or does not respond to your concerns, you should contact your host district Inbound Chair (or General Chair) for help in solving or remedying the situation. The Ohio-Erie Country Contact and your sponsor district Outbound Chair are available and should be contacted if this approach does not work. In all cases, do not wait until a problem has gotten so big that returning home early is the only solution.

## HOST FAMILIES

Hosting arrangements are the responsibility of the hosting Rotary Club. Rotary International requires that you be hosted by two or more families during your exchange. It is not the student's responsibility to find host families. If problems occur with the host family, first attempt to solve the problem directly with your host family. Your Counselor may be able to assist you with cultural or language issues. Remember, though, the responsibility is on you to adjust to the host family's environment. The host family is under no obligation to adjust to you, nor to treat you as a "special guest." You are expected to accept the normal discipline and supervision of the family and settle into their routine which will not necessarily be the routine you may have been used to at home.

Because you are assimilating yourself into the family environment, you should not address your host parents as "Mr." or "Mrs." rather, call them "Mom" or "Dad" or by some other term that will be agreeable to all concerned. You should visit the YEO Resources web site (<http://yeoresources.org>) and print the "First Night Questions" in your native language and English. Review these questions with your host parents during the first few days that you are in their home.

You may have a room of your own. You should be prepared to share a room with a host sibling of the same gender. A host brother or sister may have sacrificed his/her own room or the privacy of his/her own room in order to host you. Be aware of this fact and show the proper appreciation to whoever is affected.

Some students have complained that their host families have involved them too much with family activities and that they had wanted some "peace and quiet" on their own. Discuss this tactfully with your host parents if it occurs.



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One final point - it is inevitable that you will fit in more readily with some host families than with others. This makes it even harder to leave those whom you have grown to love. However, do not embarrass anyone by speaking poorly in public or posting negative comments on the web (e.g. Facebook, blogs, etc.) about your various families.

## **HOMESICKNESS**

You are bound to experience homesickness, particularly after the excitement and experience of settling in and meeting new people has passed. Each student will have to find his/her own method of coping. When homesickness occurs, it is recommended that you keep yourself occupied as much as possible with studies, sports, and other activities. Students who join activities early in their exchange increase their opportunities to make new friends and decrease the effects of homesickness. Instant messaging and excessive contact with friends back home will add to the feeling of homesickness.

## **FINANCES**

Your host Club will provide you with a monthly stipend of at least US \$50 or the Canadian equivalent. Ask your counselor or host parents for assistance in opening a personal bank account and obtaining an ATM card. This should be done at the same time you establish your Emergency Fund (see below).

ATM access is widely available in the United States and Canada but most banks have a nominal (\$1-\$3) transaction fee for withdrawals from ATM's not owned by your bank. ATM's are also a good way for parents to provide additional funds for their children and give the best exchange rates available. Western Union and travelers checks can also be used but are more expensive. Credit and debit cards are widely accepted, even at such places as McDonald's.

## **EMERGENCY FUND**

You are required to establish an emergency fund of at least US \$350 or the Canadian equivalent. Your Counselor will assist you in opening a joint bank account where both your signature and your Counselor's signature are required to withdraw funds. This money is to be spent only with the authority of your Counselor or host parents. This fund is designed for use in emergencies or to cover major items like clothing, approved travel and other similar needs. It is not meant for the day-to-day expenditures which should be covered by your monthly stipend from the club. This emergency fund must be replenished by your parents as it is depleted. The funds will be released to you at the end of your exchange

## **SCHOOLING**

All students are required to attend school at the high school level and perform all of the assigned work, including exams. While we understand that language barriers may make this difficult at times, we always expect you to give your best effort. If you wish to obtain credit for your school studies while on your exchange, you will need to discuss this matter both with your school at



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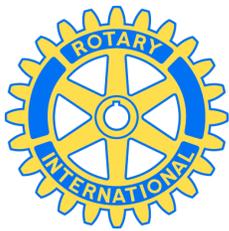
home, prior to coming here, and with your host school. Due to varying state and provincial regulations, graduating from a U.S. or Canadian high school may not be possible.

You should particularly note the following points regarding schooling:

1. School discipline here differs from school to school and visiting students are expected to conform to local custom. Read the school rules provided to you by the school, typically found in your student planner or agenda.
2. Regular attendance at school is expected. Students must also be sure to arrive at school and classes on time, as tardiness is not acceptable to the schools. Written parental (host parent) permission is required if you need to miss school, arrive late or leave early for Rotary functions. Missing a class each week for a Rotary meeting is acceptable but work must be made up. This should be discussed with the school during your enrollment.
3. Students are expected to complete homework assignments just like their fellow classmates. Failure to work at homework and other school projects and assignments creates ill will with schools and will not be tolerated. Assignments that are missed due to Rotary sponsored trips must also be made up and completed per the school's policy.
4. Students should carefully choose the subjects they take during their Exchange. English must be taken by all students. Some schools also offer English as a Second Language (ESL) which may be helpful if your English skills are poor. Students are encouraged to take U.S. or Canadian government and history classes to gain a better understanding of the culture. We also recommend taking one or two 'fun' classes or courses that are not offered in your home country.
5. Most high schools offer extensive extracurricular activities, including athletics. Students are encouraged to participate in these activities as it is an excellent way to meet new friends. Eligibility to participate is dependent on local school and/or state authority and is not guaranteed.

## CLIMATE

The Ohio-Erie area enjoys four distinct seasons of the year. During the winter months of November through March, temperatures can drop to well below freezing, and some areas get lots of snow during the winter. If you are in Canada, Michigan or Ohio expect temperatures to be as cold as  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-4^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). Tennessee and North Carolina are much milder in winter, although the mountain areas of North Carolina will see quite a bit of snow. In summer months of June, July, and August, it can get very warm with temperatures in the  $25^{\circ}\text{-}35^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $77^{\circ}\text{-}95^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) range in the north and  $30^{\circ}\text{-}35^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $86^{\circ}\text{-}95^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) in the south.



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## **CLOTHING**

In view of the climate you will require warm clothing for the winter months. Often the host family has the ability to help the student find inexpensive or loaner jackets for the winter months. Jeans are common for both boys and girls. Students should bring at least one set of clothes for more formal occasions (e.g. dresses for girls and jacket and tie for boys). Your Rotary blazer is an excellent addition for these occasions. Please be aware that all clothing is entirely the responsibility of your natural parents.

## **RELIGION**

In many cases, you will be expected to attend religious services with your host family. You are encouraged to go with your family, even if it isn't your religion. It is permissible to also ask your host family to attend a service for your own religion as this helps to build the bonds of understanding.

## **TRAVEL**

It is very important for you to understand that this is a cultural Exchange and not a travel Exchange. Travel will be limited to the following:

1. Travel with your host family is always acceptable. You must notify your Counselor if you are traveling for more than a weekend or leaving the district for an extended period of time.
2. You may accompany Rotarian families on overnight, weekend or holiday trips provided you are invited to do so. You must secure permission from your Counselor. Your Counselor may require permission from your natural parents.
3. The District Committee will arrange several functions during the year (e.g. orientation meetings, District Conferences, Exchange Student weekends) where you can travel and meet the other exchange students. Attendance at these functions is strongly encouraged. Orientation and District Conference are mandatory.
4. You may, with the approval of your host club and your natural parents, enroll in the Rotary approved tour which is available for students. Details are available at <http://OhioErie.org>.
5. Independent travel is never permitted. This includes visits to relatives or other family friends.
6. Travel with school or church groups will be allowed, but must be approved by your Counselor. Requests for such travel will be treated on an individual basis and will only be considered when all of the following requirements are met:
  - (a) Written parental authority from home is received for this particular trip, to the satisfaction of your District Youth Exchange Chair.



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- (b) Your host parents and host Rotary club approves the trip and the proposed travel itinerary.
  - (c) The prior permission of the school principal is obtained if the trip takes place during the school term.
7. Students are only permitted to fly by registered commercial airline. Flights in private aircraft are not allowed.

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

During your stay you will be expected to speak on a number of occasions to Rotarians, school groups, and other service clubs or community organizations. Be prepared with a formal presentation. PowerPoint, posters, flags and other visual or audio material will enhance your program. Have a good selection of photographs (either printed or digital) of your family, your home, your town, and your country.

From time to time you may receive requests to be interviewed by the media (radio, newspaper or TV). Your remarks should always be positive when speaking about your exchange. It is suggested that you consult your Counselor to assist you in preparing for these interviews.

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND COMPUTER USAGE**

During your year you will be required to send regular reports to your sponsoring club and District and to the host District Committee as well as the Ohio-Erie Country Contact. Please be sure that you know when, and to whom, each of these reports is to be sent and do not forget them. Please be sure to respond in a timely manner, as many of these reports are required by either government or Rotary regulations.

Write or email regularly to your parents and friends back home. They do not have to be long letters, but they should be regular. You should be careful to make sure that your communications to your parents is positive. If you use the phone to talk to your parents, use a calling card. Never charge calls to your host family's phone without their permission.

Instant messaging (IM, texting) and social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, Hi 5) are common forms of communication. While these are good ways to talk to your friends, spending a great deal of time on the Internet will isolate you from your host family and friends at school. Excessive communication to friends back home in your native language will delay the development of your English language skills and may contribute to homesickness. Talk to your host family as to their Internet rules and limit your time on the Internet to no more than 30 minutes a day per the Ohio-Erie guideline.

When you are using your host family's computer, do not download material from the Internet without specific permission from your host parents.



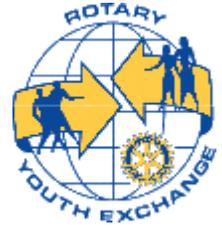
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Visiting sexually oriented or other pornographic web sites or the downloading of material from them is prohibited and will result in the termination of your exchange.



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## SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

The most powerful force in the promotion of international understanding and peace is exposure to different cultures. Youth Exchange provides thousands of young people with the opportunity to meet people from other lands and to experience their cultures.

A Youth Exchange student will spend an extended period of time, up to a year, living with a Host family in a country other than their own. Rotarians, their families, and non-Rotarian volunteers are expected to use their best efforts to safeguard the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment of every student with whom they come in contact.

Rotary International is committed to protecting the safety and well being of Youth Exchange students and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. **The safety and well-being of students should always be the first priority.**

### DEFINITIONS

**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:

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



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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.

## **IS IT ABUSE OR IS IT HARASSMENT?**

Whether the alleged conduct amounts to sexual abuse or sexual harassment is not to be determined by the adult to whom allegations are made.

After ensuring the safety of the student, all allegations should be immediately reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities. In the United States and Canada, reporting of sexual abuse is required by law.

## **ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES**

### **1. Report from Student**

If you are sexually or physically assaulted, abused, or are accused of sexually or physically assaulting or abusing another person, you should follow this procedure immediately:

Report the situation to your local Rotary Host Club Youth Exchange contact. This will generally be your Counselor.

If you feel that you cannot tell your local Youth Exchange contact, then report the situation to the District Youth Exchange Chairperson. If you cannot report the situation to either of these people, report the situation to another member of the Youth Exchange Committee whom you are comfortable making a report to.

If there is not an immediate response when you make your report, report it again, and continue to do so until someone responds in an affirmative manner to take care of the situation. Make sure that we understand that your situation is serious.

### **2. Report from Parents (Host or Natural)**

If your son/daughter notifies you that s/he has been sexually or physically assaulted, abused, or are accused of sexually or physically assaulting or abusing another person, or, if after talking with your son/daughter you feel that either of these situations has occurred, you should follow this procedure immediately:

As soon as possible, report the situation to your local Rotary Host Club Youth Exchange contact. This will generally be the Counselor to the student.

If you are unable to make this contact, or feel uncomfortable doing so, contact the District Youth Exchange Chairperson.



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If there is not an immediate response when you make your report, report it again, and continue to do so until someone responds in an affirmative manner to take care of the situation. Make sure that we understand that the situation is serious.

### 3. Reporting Guidelines for Adults

For use by all adults to whom a student reports an incident of abuse or harassment.

Any adult to whom a student reports an incident of sexual abuse or harassment is responsible for following these *Allegation Reporting Guidelines*

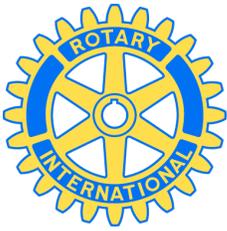
- (a) **Listen attentively and stay calm.** Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse. It is appropriate to listen and be encouraging. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.
- (b) **Assure privacy but not confidentiality.** Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment to make it stop and to ensure that it doesn't happen to other students.
- (c) **Get the facts, but don't interrogate.** Ask the student questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the student that s/he did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking 'why' questions. Remember your responsibility is to present the student's story to the proper authorities.
- (d) **Be non-judgmental and reassure the student.** Do not be critical of anything that has happened or of anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the student. Assure the student that the situation was not their fault and that they were brave and mature to come to you.
- (e) **Record.** Keep a written record of the conversation with the student as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the student's words, and record only what has been told to you.

### 4. Protect the Student

**Ensure the safety and well-being of the student.** Remove the student from the situation immediately and from all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Give reassurance that this is for the student's own safety and is not a punishment.

### 5. Report to Appropriate Authorities

**Immediately** report all cases of alleged sexual abuse to the appropriate law enforcement authorities first and then to the club and district leadership for investigation. The local police department should be the first contact.



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In most situations, the first Rotary contact is the Rotarian counselor who has responsibility for seeking the advice of and interacting with appropriate agencies. If the allegation involves the conduct of the Rotarian counselor, the District Youth Exchange chair should be contacted.

All allegations must be reported to the Ohio-Erie General Chair, RI and the Department of State (DOS reporting applies to US Rotary Clubs only), within 72 hours of the initial report. The person responsible for doing so is the District Youth Exchange Chair. Districts will cooperate with all police or legal investigations.

In cases of harassment, a report must be made to the Rotary Club district youth exchange leadership, within 72 hours. The District Youth Exchange Chair and District Governor are responsible for having an investigation conducted.

You will likely be requested to provide the following information:

- (a) The student's name and location
- (b) The suspected perpetrator's name and relationship to the child (if known)
- (c) A description of what you have seen or heard regarding the abuse or neglect
- (d) The names of other people having knowledge of the abuse
- (e) Your name and phone number

Should the district investigation of harassment indicate the incident is sexual abuse or criminal in nature, it will be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and Rotary International.

### 6. Avoid Gossip and Blame

Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

Districts are to maintain the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person by refusing to share any details of the alleged offense with any persons outside law enforcement or state agencies, except the following Rotary Youth Exchange personnel: Club Counselor, District Youth Exchange Chairman, Ohio-Erie Chairman and RI.

### 7. Do Not Challenge the Alleged Offender

The adult to whom the student reports the allegation **must not contact** the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. *In cases of non-criminal harassment, the District Youth Exchange Chair and District Governor are*



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*responsible for having an investigation conducted, and they will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.*

### 8. Follow-Up

After reporting allegations to the Rotarian counselor or District Youth Exchange Chair, follow up to ensure steps are being taken to address the situation. Specifically, Districts will conduct an independent and thorough investigation into any claims of sexual abuse or harassment. Any adult against whom an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment is made will be removed from all contact with youth until the matter is resolved. Privacy of both the Exchange student and the alleged adult abuser will be respected during the investigation.

## POST REPORT PROCEDURES

For Use by Rotarian Counselors and District Youth Exchange Chairs

The student's Rotarian counselor and the district Youth Exchange chair are responsible for ensuring that the following steps are taken immediately following an abuse allegation is reported.

1. The adult to whom the student reports the abuse should follow the *Allegation Reporting Guidelines*.
2. Confirm that the student has been removed from the situation immediately and all contact with alleged abuser or harasser.
3. Contact appropriate law enforcement agency immediately (if not already done). If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the club or district Youth Exchange chair should coordinate an independent investigation into the allegations.
4. Ensure the student receives immediate support services.
5. Offer the student an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent the interests of the student. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with the Youth Exchange program.
6. Contact the student's parents or legal guardian. If away from home, provide the student with the option of either staying in country or returning home.
7. While investigations are being conducted, remove the specific student and any other youth from all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
8. Cooperate with the police or legal investigation.

The Rotary Youth Exchange Experience:

## Culture Shock

By Dennis White, Ph.D.

Most of us are familiar with the term "culture shock". We may think of it as the temporary disorientation that comes from being exposed to a different language, different customs, food, etc. What we don't often realize is that it is usually a rather profound reaction to fairly significant other differences; in the way people view the world, in the way they think and what they value. Tourists often experience culture shock at a superficial level. People who actually live in another culture can experience culture shock as an on-going reaction and adaptation to basic differences. Rotary Youth Exchange Students, living and studying in a different culture, living in the homes of host families, often experience significant culture shock, sometimes on a continuous basis, throughout their stay abroad.

Most exchange students in year-long programs go through a fairly identifiable progression of adjustment to culture shock, although each student's experience is unique. It must be emphasized that while culture shock can be very uncomfortable, there is nothing wrong with it, or with the person experiencing it. It is also quite common for students to have a very positive and rewarding experience, despite having on-going adjustment problems with culture shock. Many would argue that the most rewarding exchanges come only when there is a pronounced experience of culture shock.

Culture shock usually involves at least four stages. It is quite common for these stages to repeat themselves as students become more and more successfully immersed in the host culture. These stages are:

1. Excitement and Enthusiasm. This is the feeling of excitement and enthusiasm that accompanies travel to a new place, seeing and doing so many new and different things, and meeting new people. It is most prominent at the beginning of the exchange year, but can repeat itself as students continue to have new experiences, like changing host families, meeting new students, or continued travel. Sometimes it can be the excitement that comes from developing a new skill or increased understanding of the host culture.
2. Irritability. This is the stage most readily associated with culture shock and occurs when the initial excitement wears off and real differences become evident. These are differences that go beyond food and language, and they are often indescribable to the person experiencing them. No matter how understanding and accepting the student may try to be, there will be many times when they just don't like or understand why their host culture is the way it is, and they can't seem to make the feeling go away. Irritability can come at any time that a student is confronted with differences they may not have experienced or perceived previously.
3. Adaptation. This is the longest, most difficult and most rewarding stage. This is when students learn to accept that they will have to adapt if they are going to be successful in their host culture. They work at adapting to customs and habits that they may not understand, and may not like. Sometimes even when they try very hard, they have difficulty, because so much of this adaptation depends on learning the native language. They know they are adjusting when they begin to think and speak using idiomatic expressions (expressions that have meaning beyond a literal translation). They know they are adjusting when they notice

that they are doing things without thinking, and these are the very things they never thought they could become comfortable with. An example would be when someone from a very formal culture becomes comfortable standing very close to other people, frequently touching them and being touched, during a conversation. Adaptation is a continuous process, and it requires added attention as some of these newly discovered differences become apparent to the student.

4. Biculturalism. This stage comes very near the end of the stay, or sometimes doesn't really emerge until the students returns to their native countries. This is when they realize that they have become competent in another culture, and can see the world and function from another, very different point of view. When this stage emerges toward the end of the exchange year, it all seems very unfair to the student. Just as they are getting to experience the benefits of really knowing how to function well in-their host culture, they have to go back home.

In Table 1 below, a model of a typical year of adaptation and adjustment to culture shock is pictured. The bold line that waves up and down represents the high and low feelings that students experience as they go through the various stages of adjustment to culture shock.

Rotary Youth EXchange													
Culture Shock Cycle													
Pre-Departure	Months												Return ...
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Normal													
Feelings													

Adapted from a model by Robert Icohfs .

Table 1.

The first few months, including the period just before departure, coincide with the initial excitement stage. This peaks when the excitement wears off, or what is sometimes referred to as the time when the "honeymoon" is over. This is when reality sets in. This is when differences beyond superficial ones emerge, and irritability sets in, often verily quickly. At times, however, this irritability can come fairly slowly, but it is almost inevitable as the confrontation of one's own ethnocentrism occurs.

The lowest point typically comes at about four months, or near the middle of December, for students who start their exchange in August. For Christian students, this also coincides with what is probably the first Christmas they have spent away from their families. As a result, there is a sort of double negative of culture shock and homesickness.

Following the irritability stage is the much longer stage of gradual adjustment and adaptation where the student really learns the cultural tools necessary to function competently in the host country. This stage can actually involve the recycling of prior stages, with deeper and deeper understanding following periods of confusion, frustration and irritation.

The final stage, shown as coming around the time of returning home, can involve another plunge into a period of feeling low. If the student is not already sad at the prospect of returning home; "just when it's getting good", they will almost inevitably feel sad shortly after they return, when they go through a "reverse culture shock". This phenomenon is less well understood, and less often anticipated, but just as common as initial culture shock. The degree to which students go through reverse culture shock is a rough measure of the success of their immersion in the host culture, and not a sign that something is wrong. Only after experiencing reverse culture shock can students really appreciate the extent to which they have changed, and, as a result, the extent to which they have become truly bicultural.

The journey through culture shock has also been described as moving from **Ethnocentrism** to **Ethnorelativism**. All cultures are ethnocentric. They teach their members that their way is the right, natural and preferred way of doing things. When someone is exposed to another culture, with different values, behaviors and beliefs, there is a tendency to respond with defensiveness, labeling one's own practices as right and the other culture as wrong, silly or even stupid. Ethnorelativism is the awareness that develops as one realizes there are other valid ways of dealing with the world — whether we agree with them or not. When the exchange student gets through the initial denial (which is what happens in the irritability stage) they can begin to develop the skills necessary to adapt and be competent in the new culture. They then develop an ethnorelative world view. Their thinking may follow this progression:

1. I don't like the way they do this — it's stupid.
2. But they seem to be doing o.k. doing it this way.
3. If I want to survive here, I'd better learn to do it this way.
4. Now that I can do it this way, it doesn't seem so bad, even though I may still prefer to do it my way.

Developing the competence to succeed in another culture — that is — going through the process of culture shock, may be better understood by analyzing the process of developing competence at anything. Essentially, we go through four stages:

1. **Unconscious Incompetence.** This is a stage when we not only don't know how to do something, we don't even know that we don't know how to do it. We are ignorant. Most of us think we know the proper way to greet someone. For example, when we go to another culture where greetings are done quite differently, we may just breeze along doing it our way, not even knowing that what we are doing may be perceived as rude or insulting.
2. **Conscious Incompetence.** In this stage we may be aware that we are doing something wrong, but we just may not have the skills yet to do it properly. We may know that

- another culture spends more time in greetings inquiring about one's relatives, but if we are not skilled at the language, we may have trouble doing it, even if we want to.
3. Conscious Competence. In this stage we have developed the necessary skills to do what is necessary, but we still have to consciously remind ourselves to do it. We may think it is a waste of time to stop and discuss the well-being of all of our family members when we greet a friend, but we know how to; and more importantly, we know it is important to do so in this culture in order to appear "civilized" and polite.
  4. Unconscious Competence. In this stage we have become so skilled at the new cultural behavior that we do it without thinking. We may find that it becomes very natural to stop and chat with friends as we greet them, inquiring about the mutual health of both families, as if [it is](#) the most natural thing in the world to do.

When exchange students get to this point — unconscious competence, they have gotten to the bicultural stage of adjustment to culture shock. They have developed an effective ethnorelative world view. So one can see that culture shock is not a problem to avoid. Instead, it is a necessary discomfort that one must go through to really experience the rich and varied joys of intercultural living.

*(note: Additional articles by Dr. White on related topics include "The Middle Stage of Culture Shock" and "So You Think You're Home Now". Both may be obtained by contacting Dr. White.)*

*About the author:*

*Dr. Dennis White is a Psychologist, a former U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer and a member of the Rotary Club of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, USA. He makes training presentations for Rotary Youth Exchange Programs and other intercultural training programs in many locations.*

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## PROGRAM GUIDELINES INBOUND STUDENTS

**\*\* AIRLINE TICKETS:** Make certain that you purchase a **FULL ROUND TRIP RETURN TICKET**. Full means that all airport connections must be showing on the ticket, not just the port of entry into the USA. Your return ticket must be complete all the way through from your starting point to your final destination. Do not plan to buy your return ticket in North America or your connecting flights here in North America. This is the only kind of ticket approved by Rotary Youth Exchange. It may be an **“open”** or **“fixed date”** ticket and must be able to be changed with a minimal fee (US \$200 or less). This ticket enables you to return home without difficulty if that need should arise.

You must send a copy of your travel itinerary to your Ohio-Erie District Chairman, Club Counselor and Host Family as soon as it becomes available.

**\*\* INSURANCE:** Basic health and liability insurance coverage for your stay in North America is purchased online at:

<https://secure.visit-aci.com/insurance/oerye/>

This policy complies completely with Rotary International requirements.

**\*\* VISA: BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN YOU HAVE THE CORRECT VISA**

You are going to be an **Exchange Student in the United States**, and will need a **“Multiple Entry” J-1 Visa**, from the *US Embassy*. A **DS-2019** form is included with this letter, along with the Rotary Guarantee form. You may will to make an appointment for a personal visit to the nearest U.S. Consulate to obtain your visa. Prior to this interview, you will need to pay the SEVIS I-901 fee of US \$220. This may be done on-line at:

<http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/index.htm>.

The J-1 visa will allow you to live and attend school in the United States. Travel into the US requires that you have the DS-2019 form in your possession at time of entry. *Staple the DS-2019 into your passport.*

**\*\* EMERGENCY MONEY:** You will be required to set up a **joint “Emergency” bank account** with your Rotary Counselor OR your Host District may hold the money for you in their District account. **This account must have a balance of at least US \$500**. If money is withdrawn for emergencies, it must be replaced immediately. The remaining balance will be returned to you when you leave for home at the end of your exchange.

**DO NOT LEAVE HOME  
UNLESS YOU HAVE THE ABOVE ITEMS!**

**\*\* PERSONAL EXPENSES:** You will find that Rotary Clubs and Host Families are very generous, friendly, loving, and caring, however, **DO NOT** expect them to pay for things that are your responsibility. During the year, you may be invited to participate in many events, which are educational, interesting and fun. Souvenirs, joining clubs and activities, or purchasing clothes should be considered in determining how much money to bring with you.

**\*\* IMMUNIZATION:** Be sure to bring copies of all immunizations with you, **with complete dates and dosages**. This information is required by all schools, in order to attend. Failure to have this documentation may result in your not being able to attend school, which could lead to a loss of your student visa status. You will need to make sure that you have a **TB Test done within three months of your school start date**.

**\*\* MEDICAL:** If any medical issues occur, that would change any answer on the medical or dental form of the Long-Term Application, this change **MUST** be reported to your Hosting District Chair within 10 days of the occurrence.

**\*\* HOST FAMILY:** During your stay you will be living with at least two families located in your assigned community. Students may not reside with any relative during the exchange.

**\*\* SCHOOL:** Students must certify that they have not previously been an academic year or semester exchange student in the host country.

Students **MUST** provide a translated “written English language summary” of the exchange student’s complete academic course work.

Some US schools are conducting entrance tests for English fluency and may require the student to undertake a test prior to acceptance in the school. It is important that students have some preliminary English when they arrive.

Students are expected to have regular attendance at school and are encouraged to take a regular course load, which will expose them to the language and culture. Although they may be eligible to get credits or even a diploma, the Rotary Youth Exchange Program does not in any way guarantee this.

Students are strongly encouraged to join school teams or get involved in extra curricular activities (e.g., music, drama, clubs, etc.). This will help them to make friends and to facilitate their integration into the new culture.

**\*\* ATHLETICS & EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** Eligibility to participate in extra-curricular activities, including athletics, is not guaranteed. Eligibility is dependent on local school and or state authority.

**\*\* EMPLOYMENT:** Exchange students may not be employed on either a full- or part-time basis during their stay in the United States, but they may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work.

**\*\* COMMUNICATION:** Exchange students are encouraged to communicate with both their host club counselor and host family prior to leaving home. Keep this communication informal – telling them about your family, your interests and your departure itinerary.

**\*\* TRAVEL:** Travel is permitted with host parents or for Rotary club or district functions authorized by the hosting Rotary club or district, with proper adult chaperones. Independent travel is prohibited. Further explanation of travel rules is found in the *Independent Travel Rules* document.

**\*\* APPROVED TOURS:** Several trips are available throughout the year to broaden your exposure to the various parts of the country. Below is a list of some of the trips offered in the multidistrict area:

**Eastern Adventure:** A 10 day US trip (mid March), which covers parts of eastern United States, including Washington, D.C., New York City, Boston and Gettysburg. Bus trip starts and ends in Columbus, Ohio. The approximate cost is US \$1,400. Additional funds for food and miscellaneous expenses are recommended. Details are found at McMurray Travel website: <http://mcmurraytravel.com>.

**Western Adventure:** A two week US trip (last 2 weeks of June) is a combination flight and bus. You fly out to Phoenix, Arizona and then take a bus out to the west coast. Points of visit include Los Angeles, San Francisco, Reno, Yellowstone National Park and Grand Canyon. The approximate cost is US \$2,750. Additional funds for food and miscellaneous expenses (approximately another US \$400 - \$500) are recommended. Details are found at McMurray Travel website: <http://mcmurraytravel.com>.

**\*\* RETURN HOME:** Unless you are involved in a Rotary-related trip or travel in the host country with your family (with permission of your host District Rotary Youth Exchange Chair) after school ends for the year, you will be expected to return home within fifteen days of the last day of school. Otherwise you are expected to return home within 3 days of the approved trip end. These are the latest return dates. You may be required to return earlier to accommodate your host District Rotary Youth Exchange District, your host Rotary Club, or your host family. All travel arrangements must be approved before being booked.

**Please photocopy these Program Guidelines and leave it with your family.**

## RULES & CONDITIONS OF EXCHANGE INBOUND STUDENTS

(This form satisfies the requirements of Rotary International Youth Exchange certification and the US Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Regulations)

Exchange Year	Student	Host Rotary Club	Host District
2022-2023			

### Addendum to Long Term Application: Rules and Conditions of Exchange

*As a Youth Exchange student sponsored by a Rotary club and/or district, you must agree to the following rules and conditions of exchange which are in addition to the general rules in the base application.. **Violation of any of these rules may result in dismissal from the program and immediate return home, at student's expense.** Please note districts may attach additional rules if needed to account for local conditions.*

#### **Behavior:**

You are expected to do your best to maintain a positive attitude throughout the exchange year, and act appropriately as an ambassador for Rotary and your country. Students may not adopt new eating habits or diets during exchange not identified on the student's application.

#### **School:**

Regular school attendance is mandatory and students are expected to arrive to school and class on time. Students are expected to complete homework assignments and make an effort to achieve good grades. Students missing class for approved travel are expected to make up the missed work. Students are expected to learn English to the best of their ability.

#### **Rotary 4 D's:**

These should be covered at your Outbound Orientation in your sponsor country and will be covered again at your Inbound Orientation in your host country, For clarification they are:

- (a) Dating - no serious one-to-one relationships, sexual relations, pregnancy, etc.
- (b) Drinking - no solo or peer alcoholic drinking; it is acceptable, however, for a student to have a drink with Host Parents during a family meal (e.g., Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.)
- (c) Driving - includes any motorized vehicle - cars, motorcycles, tractors, motorboats, ATV's, snowmobiles, jet skis and any similar vehicle or any vehicle that requires a governmental license of any kind. This does not include riding lawnmowers. Students are prohibited from enrolling in any driver's education program.
- (d) Drugs - no involvement with any non-prescription drugs (e.g., marijuana) - usage or peddling; no involvement with prescription drugs not prescribed to the student; no possession of drug paraphernalia (e.g., pipes, bong, clips, papers, etc.)

#### **Smoking:**

Smoking and the use of any tobacco products (including chewing tobacco and snuff) are strictly prohibited, regardless of age.

Exchange Year	Student	Host Rotary Club	Host District
2022-2023			

**Social Media:**

During your exchange, telephone, email, SKYPE, social networking communication should not become excessive, or interfere in any way with developing friends in your host country. The student is responsible for all charges incurred. Students should limit their time on the computer to 30 minutes per day for social networking (e.g., for non-school work activities). Inappropriate pictures or comments posted on “Facebook” (or similar social networking sites) **WILL NOT** be tolerated.

**Travel:**

Travel is permitted with host parents or for Rotary club or district functions authorized by the hosting Rotary club or district, with proper adult chaperones. Independent travel is prohibited. Further explanation of travel rules is found in the *Independent Travel Rules* document. For extended trips or travel outside the USA written permission of natural parents may be required in addition. Students may not return home during the exchange year except in an emergency approved by the District Chair.

**NATURAL PARENT VISITS:**

Visits from natural parents are permitted only with the advance approval of the Host Family, Host Club YEO, and the RYE District Chair, and then only after March 1 of the exchange year. Visits will not normally be approved during the last two weeks of the exchange. Other natural family members may only visit accompanied by the Natural Parents. No home country friends may visit during the exchange.

**Body Modification:**

Body piercing or obtaining a tattoo without the express written permission of the Natural Parents, host parents, YEO and RYE District Chair is prohibited.

*We have read and understand the above Ohio-Erie Rotary Youth Exchange “Rules and Conditions of Exchange – IB Students” and will abide by these Rules & Conditions.*

**Student:**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print first and last names legibly)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Natural Parents:**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print first and last names legibly)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print first and last names legibly)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions: Signed forms are to be scanned and emailed to the Ohio-Erie Country Contact immediately, so that we are aware that you have received all essential documents**

## INDEPENDENT TRAVEL RULES INBOUND & OUTBOUND STUDENTS

(This form satisfies the requirements of Rotary International Youth Exchange certification and the US Department of State 22 CFR Part 62 Regulations)

Exchange Year	Student	Host Rotary Club	Host District
2022-2023			

The exchange program typically offers students various opportunities to travel while on exchange. To ensure there is no misunderstanding, students and parents are asked to review the below information and agree to abide by these rules.

1. The RI Certification document stipulates: *Students should not undertake travel outside the immediate area of the community in which the host club is located without the consent of the students' parents or legal guardians and of the participating clubs or districts.*
2. The **District** must approve travel for arrival at the start of the Program year and again at the end of the Program year before any tickets are booked.
3. The Rotary Youth Exchange Program is **NOT** a travel program. Any opportunity to travel is at the discretion of the Rotary **DISTRICT** and must be under the direct supervision of the host family, school or hosting Rotary club/district. A student **MUST NOT** travel alone or be accompanied solely by other students. The **DISTRICT MUST** approve all travel outside the boundaries of the district.
4. By signing the form on Page 3 below natural parents are giving the written permission required for the District to approve travel.
5. The students and parents have signed agreements to come to their host family/district directly and return by a direct route at the end of their experience.
6. The Insurance coverage obtained for the exchange students is rated with the expectation that students are under the protective umbrella of Rotary. Continued eligibility for the coverage requires that they be Rotary Exchange Students and under the guidance and supervision of Rotary.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Therefore, all travel that does not follow these guidelines is not approved for O-E students. Should a student elect to leave the host district without the approval of Rotary, the following steps shall be taken:**

1. The district chair is to advise the O-E Country Contact who will then communicate the violation to the sponsoring district chair.
2. Notification will be given to the student and parents that the student has undertaken travel or left the district without the approval of Rotary. Due to this, **the student has elected to end his/her relationship and terminate Rotary's responsibility for the individual.** As a result

Exchange Year	Student	Host Rotary Club	Host District
2022-2023			

of this decision and action of the student (and parents, where applicable), the following steps are taken:

- a. The appropriate branch of the host country **government is notified** that the student's visa is no longer sponsored by Rotary and the individual is no longer a student in the school system
- b. The Insurance carrier is notified that the student is no longer with the Rotary Youth Exchange program and **coverage** should be **cancelled** immediately.
- c. The student should **receive no assistance** from the host or sponsoring Rotary clubs or districts since this may imply a continuing relationship that the student has terminated.
- d. The student should **not be permitted** to leave items **with host families** nor be permitted to return there.
- e. The student's **return travel** to the home country is **the sole responsibility of the student** and his/her family.

These procedures have been developed to protect the students and to protect Rotary and the host families from liability and potential litigation. In the event that this situation should arise, please refer to this document. Your cooperation in this matter will be greatly appreciated and is necessary for continued successful exchanges of our young people.

**Student:**

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Natural Parents:**

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions: Signed form is to be scanned and emailed to the O-E Country Contact, prior to departure.**

Exchange Year	Student	Host Rotary Club	Host District
2022-2023			

## Permission for Approved Travel

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, (name of parents/guardians),  
the parents/guardians of the said student, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of student), hereby  
grant permission for our son/daughter to travel outside of his/her host Rotary district, with the  
approval of the host Rotary District Chair, during the exchange year.

### Natural Parents:

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print first and last names legibly)

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print first and last names legibly)

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions: Signed form is to be scanned and emailed to the O-E Country Contact, prior to departure.**



## Ohio-Erie Youth Exchange Program, Inc.



9. The student's Rotarian Counselor should inform the district Youth Exchange chair and district governor of the allegation. Either the district governor or the district Youth Exchange chair must inform Ohio-Erie District Chairman and Rotary International of the allegation as soon as reasonably possible, and provide follow-up reports of steps taken, the outcome of all investigations, and resulting actions.

### POST ALLEGATION REPORT GUIDELINES

#### Responding to the Needs of the Student

There will need to be a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting the student after an allegation report. The student is likely to feel embarrassed, confused, and may become withdrawn and appear to be avoiding members of the host family or club.

After a report of harassment or abuse, students may or may not want to remain on their exchange. If they do, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary club depending on the circumstances. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country, but change to a different host club.

It may be difficult for club members and host families to understand how the student is feeling, but it would be helpful for the student to know that the club remains a support for them. Club members and host families may experience ambiguity toward their roles and may feel unclear regarding their boundaries. However they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

#### Appropriate Response for Addressing Issues Within the Rotary Club for Allegations Made Against Rotarians or Non-Rotarians

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of the students. Club members should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations.

Club members should be cautioned about speculating or commenting on the matter during the investigations. Comments made about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers do not support our statement of conduct or Rotary ideals. Comments made against an alleged abuser could lead to a slander or libel claim filed against Rotarians or clubs by the alleged abuser.

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

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

Adopted by the Rotary International Board of Governors, November 2006