

**District 5650 Youth Exchange
Abuse and Harassment
Prevention Policy**

1. Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth

District 5650 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.

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. Volunteer Selection and Screening

The following screening shall be completed before participation in Youth Exchange activities.

District 5650 will maintain all records of criminal background checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with minors in perpetuity.

All volunteers interested in participating in the District 5650 Youth Exchange program must:

- Complete a 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 requires that any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. If an individual is accused of sexual abuse or harassment, and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, then, for the safety of youth participants and the protection of the accused, additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact. A person later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated to participate in youth programs. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former position.
- 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. This should include:
 - Demonstrated commitment to the safety and security of students
 - Motivation for hosting a student is consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange
 - Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student
 - Aptitude for providing appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well-being
- Host families must complete a written application
- Home visits must be conducted for each family and should include both announced and unannounced visits, both prior to 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 that reside in the home either on a full- or part-time basis.

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 which may arise during the exchange, which may include instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.
- Counselors should not be close friends or relatives to other volunteers involved with a particular student (i.e. school principal, host family, etc.)

4. Student Selection and Screening

All students interested in participating in the District 5650 Youth Exchange program must:

- Complete a written application and be interviewed for their suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program.
- Attend and participate in all district orientation and training sessions.

All parents or legal guardians of students interested in participating in the District 5650 Youth Exchange program must be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program.

5. Training

District 5650 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Exchange program participants. The District Youth Exchange Compliance Officer shall be responsible for conducting the training sessions. District 5650 will:

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

Additional recommendations: While not required, districts may wish to consider the following.

- If appointed, a district child protection officer can assume training responsibilities.
- Partner districts should share with one another the specific training content each undertakes.

6. Allegation Reporting Guidelines

District 5650 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 in accord with the *District 5650 Youth Exchange Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines*,

7. Investigation Guidelines

District 5650 takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will investigate each allegation thoroughly. The district will cooperate with all law enforcement, child protective services, and legal investigations, and will only conduct its own independent investigations such that it does not interfere with other investigations. When appropriate the District will form a district committee to carry out internal investigations.

8. Other District 5650 Responsibilities

District 5650:

- Has procedures for reporting, investigating, and proper handling of non-criminal offenses or historic cases that law enforcement will not investigate.
- Requires that all inbound Youth Exchange students maintain insurance at a level that is set and reviewed annually.
- Provides each student with a list of local services in the district (rape and suicide crisis hotline, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, proper law enforcement agencies, community services, etc.)
- Will complete a student data request form for all participating Youth Exchange students and return it to RI one month before the beginning of the exchange.
- Will maintain and provide to Youth Exchange students a “district hotline.”
- Will follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites and usage of the Rotary Marks.
- Will appoint an independent lawyer, therapist or counselor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.
- Will report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours.

- Will report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to RI within 72 hours.
- Evaluate and review this policy and accompanying procedures on a regular basis.
- As appropriate District 5650 will appoint a misconduct committee to evaluate and review files, policies, and allegations.
- Request a monthly report from each inbound and outbound student in the district that includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas and suggestions so that the district Youth Exchange chairperson or his or her designee can review the reports and assist students as needed.

10. Club Compliance

District 5650 will monitor and ensure that all participating clubs within the district comply with RI guidelines for abuse and harassment prevention. All clubs that wish to apply to the district for certification must provide the district with a copy of the following for review and approval:

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

Participating clubs must agree to:

- Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating their program in accordance with District 5650 and RI policy.
- Conduct criminal background checks and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to, adult full-time residents of host home, counselor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact. All volunteers must complete and sign the *Youth Volunteer Affidavit* found in *Appendix A*.
- Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both prior to and during the placement.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
- Follow the Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines found in *Appendix B*. Report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment to the appropriate law enforcement authorities immediately and then to the club and district leadership for investigation.
- Prohibit direct placement of students outside District 5650 Youth Exchange program structure (e.g., “backdoor exchanges”).
- Set procedures for removal of a student from the host family (criteria for moving a student and back-up temporary housing available in advance).
- Develop contingency plans for hosting that include pre-screened and available back-up families.
- 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.
- 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 to contact for assistance with any issues or problems to all Youth Exchange students. These people must include both males and females, not related to each other, and individuals independent of the host family and club counselor.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites and usage of the Rotary Marks.

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- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to the district immediately.
- Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians.