

**District 5650 Youth Exchange
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 a year, or perhaps just an extended period of time, 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 into 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:

- Non-touching offenses
- Indecent exposure
- Exposing a child 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

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 some countries, this reporting is required by law.

Allegation Reporting Guidelines

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**.

1. Report from Student

- 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 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.

2. ***Protect the Student***

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

3. ***Report to Appropriate Law Enforcement Authorities***

Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment to the appropriate law enforcement authorities first and then to the club and district leadership for investigation. In District 5650 cases occurring in **Nebraska** should be reported to the **Nebraska Child Abuse Reporting Hotline. (1-800-652-1999.)** In District 5650 cases occurring in **Iowa** should be reported to the **Iowa Child Abuse Reporting Hotline. (1-800-362-2178.)**The appropriate law enforcement office to whom reports should be made is the local police department or the county sheriff. 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 RI within 72 hours; the person responsible for doing so is the Youth Exchange Officer (Chairperson of the District Youth Exchange Committee.

District 5650 will cooperate with police or legal investigations.

District 5650 has researched local, state, and national laws related to sexual abuse and harassment prevention and notes the following legal requirements of which all adult volunteers participating in the program must be aware:

Nebr. Rev. Stat. § 28-711. Child subjected to abuse or neglect; report; contents; toll-free number.

(1) When any physician, medical institution, nurse, school employee, social worker, or other person has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect or observes such child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in child abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident or cause a report of child abuse or neglect to be made to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department on the toll-free number established by subsection (2) of this section. Such report may be made orally by telephone with the caller giving his or her name and address, shall be followed by a written report, and to the extent available shall contain the address and age of the abused or neglected child, the address of the person or persons having custody of the abused or neglected child, the nature and extent of the child abuse or neglect or the conditions and circumstances which would reasonably result in such child abuse or neglect, any evidence of previous child abuse or neglect including the nature and extent, and any other information which in the opinion of the person may be helpful in establishing the cause of such child abuse or neglect and the identity of the perpetrator or perpetrators. Law enforcement agencies receiving any reports of child abuse or neglect under this subsection shall notify the department pursuant to section 28-718 on the next working day by telephone or mail.

(2) The department shall establish a statewide toll-free number to be used by any person any hour of the day or night, any day of the week, to make reports of child abuse or neglect. Reports of child abuse or neglect not previously made to or by a law enforcement agency shall be made immediately to such agency by the department.

Nebr. Rev. Stat. § 28-713. Reports of child abuse or neglect; law enforcement agency; department; duties.

Upon the receipt of a call reporting child abuse and neglect as required by section 28-711:

(1) It is the duty of the law enforcement agency to investigate the report, to take immediate steps to protect the child, and to institute legal proceedings if appropriate. In situations of alleged out-of-home child abuse or neglect if the person or persons to be notified have not already been notified and the person to be notified is not the subject of the report of child abuse or neglect, the law enforcement agency shall immediately notify the person or persons having custody of each child who has allegedly been abused or neglected that such report of alleged child abuse or neglect has been made and shall provide such person or persons with information of the nature of the alleged child abuse or neglect. The law enforcement agency may request assistance from the Department of Health and Human Services during the investigation and shall, by the next working day, notify either the hotline or the department of receipt of the report, including whether or not an investigation is being undertaken by the law enforcement agency. A copy of all reports, whether or not an investigation is being undertaken, shall be provided to the department;

(2) In situations of alleged out-of-home child abuse or neglect if the person or persons to be notified have not already been notified and the person to be notified is not the subject of the report of child abuse or neglect, the department shall immediately notify the person or persons having custody of each child who has allegedly been abused or neglected that such report of alleged child abuse or neglect has been made and shall provide such person or persons with information of the nature of the alleged child abuse or neglect and any other information that the department deems necessary. The department shall investigate for the purpose of assessing each report of child abuse or neglect to determine the risk of harm to the child involved. The department shall also provide such social services as are necessary and appropriate under the circumstances to protect and assist the child and to preserve the family;

(3) The department may make a request for further assistance from the appropriate law enforcement agency or take such legal action as may be appropriate under the circumstances;

(4) The department shall, by the next working day after receiving a report of child abuse or neglect under subdivision (1) of this section, make a written report or a summary on forms provided by the department to the proper law enforcement agency in the county and enter in the tracking system of child protection cases maintained pursuant to section 28-715 all reports of child abuse or neglect opened for investigation and any action taken; and

(5) The department shall, upon request, make available to the appropriate investigating law enforcement agency and the county attorney a copy of all reports relative to a case of suspected child abuse or neglect..

Iowa Code:

232.68 Definitions.

The definitions in section 235A.13 are applicable to this part 2 of division III. As used in sections 232.67 through 232.77 and 235A.12 through 235A.24 , unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "*Child*" means any person under the age of eighteen years.
2. "*Child abuse*" or "*abuse*" means:
 - a. Any nonaccidental physical injury, or injury which is at variance with the history given of it, suffered by a child as the result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child.
 - b. Any mental injury to a child's intellectual or psychological capacity as evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment in the child's ability to function within the child's normal range of performance and behavior as the result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child, if the impairment is diagnosed and confirmed by a licensed physician or qualified mental health professional as defined in section 622.10 .
 - c. The commission of a sexual offense with or to a child pursuant to chapter 709 , section 726.2 , or section 728.12 , subsection 1, as a result of the acts or omissions of the person responsible for the care of the child. Notwithstanding section 702.5 , the commission of a sexual offense under this paragraph includes any sexual offense referred to in this paragraph with or to a person under the age of eighteen years.
 - d. The failure on the part of a person responsible for the care of a child to provide for the adequate food, shelter, clothing or other care necessary for the child's health and welfare when financially able to do so or when offered financial or other reasonable means to do so. A parent or guardian legitimately practicing religious beliefs who does not provide specified medical treatment for a child for that reason alone shall not be considered abusing the child, however this provision shall not preclude a court from ordering that medical service be provided to the child where the child's health requires it.
 - e. The acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of a child which allow, permit, or encourage the child to engage in acts prohibited pursuant to section 725.1 . Notwithstanding section 702.5 , acts or omissions under this paragraph include an act or omission referred to in this paragraph with or to a person under the age of eighteen years.
 - f. An illegal drug is present in a child's body as a direct and foreseeable consequence of the acts or omissions of the person responsible for the care of the child.
 - g. The person responsible for the care of a child has, in the presence of the child, as defined in section 232.2 , subsection 6, paragraph "*p*" , manufactured a dangerous substance, as defined in section 232.2 , subsection 6, paragraph "*p*" , or in the presence of the child possesses a product containing ephedrine, its salts, optical isomers, salts of optical isomers, or pseudoephedrine, its salts, optical isomers, salts of optical isomers, with the intent to use the product as a precursor or an intermediary to a dangerous substance.
 - h. The commission of bestiality in the presence of a minor under section 717C.1 by a person who resides in a home with a child, as a result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of the child.
 - i. Cohabitation with a person on the sex offender registry under chapter 692A in violation of section 726.6 .
- 2A. "*Child protection worker*" means an individual designated by the department to perform an assessment in response to a report of child abuse.
3. "*Confidential access to a child*" means access to a child, during an assessment of an alleged act of child abuse, who is alleged to be the victim of the child abuse. The access may be accomplished by interview, observation, or examination of the child. As used in this subsection and this part:
 - a. "*Interview*" means the verbal exchange between the child protection worker and the child for the purpose of developing information necessary to protect the child. A child protection worker is not precluded from recording visible evidence of abuse.

b. *"Observation"* means direct physical viewing of a child under the age of four by the child protection worker where the viewing is limited to the child's body other than the genitalia and pubes. *"Observation"* also means direct physical viewing of a child aged four or older by the child protection worker without touching the child or removing an article of the child's clothing, and doing so without the consent of the child's parent, custodian, or guardian. A child protection worker is not precluded from recording evidence of abuse obtained as a result of a child's voluntary removal of an article of clothing without inducement by the child protection worker. However, if prior consent of the child's parent or guardian, or an ex parte court order, is obtained, *"observation"* may include viewing the child's unclothed body other than the genitalia and pubes.

c. *"Physical examination"* means direct physical viewing, touching, and medically necessary manipulation of any area of the child's body by a physician licensed under chapter 148 or 150A .

4. *"Department"* means the state department of human services and includes the local, county, and service area offices of the department.

5. *"Health practitioner"* includes a licensed physician and surgeon, osteopath, osteopathic physician and surgeon, dentist, optometrist, podiatric physician, or chiropractor; a resident or intern in any of such professions; a licensed dental hygienist, a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse; a physician assistant; and an emergency medical care provider certified under section 147A.6 .

6. *"Mental health professional"* means a person who meets the following requirements:

a. Holds at least a master's degree in a mental health field, including, but not limited to, psychology, counseling, nursing, or social work; or is licensed to practice medicine pursuant to chapter 148 , 150 , or 150A .

b. Holds a license to practice in the appropriate profession.

c. Has at least two years of postdegree experience, supervised by a mental health professional, in assessing mental health problems and needs of individuals used in providing appropriate mental health services for those individuals.

7. *"Person responsible for the care of a child"* means:

a. A parent, guardian, or foster parent.

b. A relative or any other person with whom the child resides and who assumes care or supervision of the child, without reference to the length of time or continuity of such residence.

c. An employee or agent of any public or private facility providing care for a child, including an institution, hospital, health care facility, group home, mental health center, residential treatment center, shelter care facility, detention center, or child care facility.

d. Any person providing care for a child, but with whom the child does not reside, without reference to the duration of the care.

8. *"Registry"* means the central registry for child abuse information established in section 235A.14 .

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §235A.2; C79, 81, §232.68]

83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159; 84 Acts, ch 1207, §1, 2; 85 Acts, ch 173, §2; 86 Acts, ch 1177, §1; 87 Acts, ch 153, §1, 2; 89 Acts, ch 24, §1; 89 Acts, ch 89, §16; 89 Acts, ch 230, §3, 4; 93 Acts, ch 76, §1; 93 Acts, ch 93, §2; 94 Acts, ch 1130, §1, 2; 95 Acts, ch 41, §24; 95 Acts, ch 108, §17; 95 Acts, ch 182, §7; 96 Acts, ch 1092, §2; 97 Acts, ch 35, §4, 5, 25; 97 h, ch 176, §1; 2001 Acts, ch 46, §2; 2001 Acts, ch 131, §1; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §49; 2004 Acts, ch 1116, §6 ; 2005 Acts, ch 158, §20

Subsection 2, NEW paragraph i

232.69 Mandatory and permissive reporters - training required.

1. The classes of persons enumerated in this subsection shall make a report within twenty-four hours and as provided in section 232.70 , of cases of child abuse. In addition, the classes of persons enumerated in this subsection shall make a report of abuse of a child who is under twelve years of age and may make a report of abuse of a child who is twelve years of age or older, which would be defined as child abuse under section 232.68 , subsection 2, paragraph "c" or "e" , except that the abuse resulted from the acts or

omissions of a person other than a person responsible for the care of the child.

a. Every health practitioner who in the scope of professional practice, examines, attends, or treats a child and who reasonably believes the child has been abused. Notwithstanding section 139A.30 , this provision applies to a health practitioner who receives information confirming that a child is infected with a sexually transmitted disease.

b. Any of the following persons who, in the scope of professional practice or in their employment responsibilities, examines, attends, counsels, or treats a child and reasonably believes a child has suffered abuse:

(1) A social worker.

(2) An employee or operator of a public or private health care facility as defined in section 135C.1 .

(3) A certified psychologist.

(4) A licensed school employee, certified para-educator, holder of a coaching authorization issued under section 272.31 , or an instructor employed by a community college.

(5) An employee or operator of a licensed child care center, registered child development home, head start program, family development and self-sufficiency grant program under section 217.12 , or healthy opportunities for parents to experience success - healthy families Iowa program under section 135.106 .

(6) An employee or operator of a substance abuse program or facility licensed under chapter 125 .

(7) An employee of a department of human services institution listed in section 218.1 .

(8) An employee or operator of a juvenile detention or juvenile shelter care facility approved under section 232.142 .

(9) An employee or operator of a foster care facility licensed or approved under chapter 237 .

(10) An employee or operator of a mental health center.

(11) A peace officer.

(12) A counselor or mental health professional.

(13) An employee or operator of a provider of services to children funded under a federally approved medical assistance home and community-based services waiver.

2. Any other person who believes that a child has been abused may make a report as provided in section 232.70 .

3. a. For the purposes of this subsection, "*licensing board*" means an examining board designated in section 147.13 , the board of educational examiners created in section 272.2 , or a licensing board as defined in section 272C.1 .

b. A person required to make a report under subsection 1, other than a physician whose professional practice does not regularly involve providing primary health care to children, shall complete two hours of training relating to the identification and reporting of child abuse within six months of initial employment or self-employment involving the examination, attending, counseling, or treatment of children on a regular basis. Within one month of initial employment or self-employment, the person shall obtain a statement of the abuse reporting requirements from the person's employer or, if self-employed, from the department. The person shall complete at least two hours of additional child abuse identification and reporting training every five years.

c. If the person is an employee of a hospital or similar institution, or of a public or private institution, agency, or facility, the employer shall be responsible for providing the child abuse identification and reporting training. If the person is self-employed, employed in a licensed or certified profession, or employed by a facility or program that is subject to licensure, regulation, or approval by a state agency, the person shall obtain the child abuse identification and reporting training as provided in paragraph "*d*".

d. The person may complete the initial or additional training requirements as part of any of the following that are applicable to the person:

(1) A continuing education program required under chapter 272C and approved by the appropriate licensing or examining board.

(2) A training program using a curriculum approved by the abuse education review panel

established by the director of public health pursuant to section 135.11 .

(3) A training program using such an approved curriculum offered by the department of human services, the department of education, an area education agency, a school district, the Iowa law enforcement academy, or a similar public agency.

e. A licensing board with authority over the license of a person required to make a report under subsection 1 shall require as a condition of licensure that the person is in compliance with the requirements for abuse training under this subsection. The licensing board shall require the person upon licensure renewal to accurately document for the licensing board the person's completion of the training requirements. However, the licensing board may adopt rules providing for waiver or suspension of the compliance requirements, if the waiver or suspension is in the public interest, applicable to a person who is engaged in active duty in the military service of this state or of the United States, to a person for whom compliance with the training requirements would impose a significant hardship, or to a person who is practicing a licensed profession outside this state or is otherwise subject to circumstances that would preclude the person from encountering child abuse in this state.

f. For persons required to make a report under subsection 1 who are not engaged in a licensed profession that is subject to the authority of a licensing board but are employed by a facility or program subject to licensure, registration, or approval by a state agency, the agency shall require as a condition of renewal of the facility's or program's licensure, registration, or approval, that such persons employed by the facility or program are in compliance with the training requirements of this subsection.

g. For peace officers, the elected or appointed official designated as the head of the agency employing the peace officer shall ensure compliance with the training requirements of this subsection.

h. For persons required to make a report under subsection 1 who are employees of state departments and political subdivisions of the state, the department director or the chief administrator of the political subdivision shall ensure the persons' compliance with the training requirements of this subsection.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §235A.3; C79, 81, §232.69]

83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159; 84 Acts, ch 1279, §4, 6; 85 Acts, ch 173, §3 - 5; 87 Acts, ch 153, §3; 88 Acts, ch 1238, §1; 89 Acts, ch 89, §17; 89 Acts, ch 230, §5; 89 Acts, ch 265, §40; 94 Acts, ch 1130, §3; 97 Acts, ch 85, §1; 99 Acts, ch 192, §27, 33; 2000 Acts, ch 1066, §42; 2001 Acts, ch 122, §2, 3; 2002 Acts, ch 1047, §2, 20; 2002 Acts, ch 1142, §1, 31; 2005 Acts, ch 121, §2

Subsection 1, paragraph b, NEW subparagraph (13)

232.70 Reporting procedure.

1. Each report made by a mandatory reporter, as defined in section 232.69 , subsection 1, shall be made both orally and in writing. Each report made by a permissive reporter, as defined in section 232.69 , subsection 2, may be oral, written, or both.

2. The employer or supervisor of a person who is a mandatory or permissive reporter shall not apply a policy, work rule, or other requirement that interferes with the person making a report of child abuse.

3. The oral report shall be made by telephone or otherwise to the department of human services. If the person making the report has reason to believe that immediate protection for the child is advisable, that person shall also make an oral report to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

4. The written report shall be made to the department of human services within forty-eight hours after such oral report.

5. Upon receipt of a report the department shall do all of the following:

a. Immediately, upon receipt of an oral report, make a determination as to whether the report constitutes an allegation of child abuse as defined in section 232.68 .

b. Notify the appropriate county attorney of the receipt of the report.

6. The oral and written reports shall contain the following information, or as much thereof as the person making the report is able to furnish:

- a. The names and home address of the child and the child's parents or other persons believed to be responsible for the child's care;
- b. The child's present whereabouts if not the same as the parent's or other person's home address;
- c. The child's age;
- d. The nature and extent of the child's injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries;
- e. The name, age and condition of other children in the same home;
- f. Any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injury to the child, the identity of the person or persons responsible for the injury, or in providing assistance to the child; and
- g. The name and address of the person making the report.

7. A report made by a permissive reporter, as defined in section 232.69 , subsection 2, shall be regarded as a report pursuant to this chapter whether or not the report contains all of the information required by this section and may be made to the department of human services, county attorney, or law enforcement agency. If the report is made to any agency other than the department of human services, such agency shall promptly refer the report to the department of human services.

8. If a report would be determined to constitute an allegation of child abuse as defined under section 232.68 , subsection 2, paragraph "c" or "e" , except that the suspected abuse resulted from the acts or omissions of a person other than a person responsible for the care of the child, the department shall refer the report to the appropriate law enforcement agency having jurisdiction to investigate the allegation. The department shall refer the report orally as soon as practicable and in writing within seventy-two hours of receiving the report.

9. Within twenty-four hours of receiving a report from a mandatory or permissive reporter, the department shall inform the reporter, orally or by other appropriate means, whether or not the department has commenced an assessment of the allegation in the report.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §235A.4; C79, 81, §232.70]

83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159; 87 Acts, ch 153, §4; 97 Acts, ch 176, §2, 17; 2000 Acts, ch 1137, §4, 14; 2001 Acts, ch 122, §4

4. *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.

District 5650 maintains the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person by enforcing the following procedures:

- a. District 5650 will cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies and will supply these agencies with information about factual allegations made against an accused person.
- b. District 5650 will share information about factual allegations only with those persons:
 - To whom reports are required to be made under these guidelines;
 - To whom reports are required to be made under state or federal law; or
 - Who need this information to help protect students from abuse or harassment.

5. *Do Not Challenge the Alleged Offender*

The adult to whom the student reports 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 responsible for investigating, and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.

6. *Follow-Up*

After reporting allegations to the Rotarian counselor or district Youth Exchange chair, follow up to make sure steps are being taken to address the situation. Specifically, District 5650 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.

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 the country or returning home.
7. Remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with the specific student and other youth while investigations are conducted.
8. Cooperate with the police or legal investigation.
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 Rotary International of the allegation within 72 hours, and provide follow-up reports of steps taken, the outcome of all investigations, and resulting actions.

Post Allegation Report Guidelines

Responding to the Need 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 the 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 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.