**EXHIBIT A**

**ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES**

**DISTRICT 5970 ABUSE AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES**

District 5970 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth program participants and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines, **The safety and well-being of program participants must always be top priority.**

**DEFINITIONS**

See District 5970 Youth Protection Policy, Definitions.

**RECEIVING AN ALLEGATION REPORT**

Any adult to whom a program participant reports abuse or harassment must: *Listen attentively and stay calm.* Acknowledge that it takes courage to report abuse or harassment. Be encouraging, but remain neutral; do not express shock, horror, or disbelief. *Assure privacy but not confidentiality.* Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse or harassment to make it stop and ensure that it doesn't happen to others. *Get the facts, but don't interrogate*. Ask questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Reassure the young person that he or she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the young person's motives. Remember that your responsibility is to report this information to the proper authorities. *Be nonjudgmental and reassure.* Avoid criticizing anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It's especially important not to blame or criticize the young person. Emphasize that it was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature to come to you. *Document the allegation*. Record the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Try to record the young person's exact words.

**ALLEGATION RESPONSE**

The following steps must be taken immediately after alleged abuse or harassment is reported. Some of them may be performed by any program volunteer, while others should be performed by a district officer, as specified.

**1. Protect the young person.** Ensure the safety and well-being of the young person by removing him or her from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the young person that this is for his or her safety and is not a punishment. Take immediate action to ensure the young person's health and well-being, and get him or her medical or psychological care, if necessary.

**2. Report the allegations to appropriate authorities.** Immediately report all cases of abuse or harassment -- first to local law enforcement authority for investigation and then to club and district leaders for follow-through. Interrogations related to allegations of abuse or harassment must be left entirely to law enforcement agencies. In most situations, the first Rotary contact is the Club President, the Club Youth Protection Officer, or Youth Counselor assigned to exchange student, who is responsible for seeking advice from and interacting with appropriate agencies. If the allegation involves the conduct of this Rotarian, the district governor or District Youth Protection Officer should be the first Rotary contact. District 5970 Youth Protection Officer will cooperate with police or legal investigations. District 5970 has researched local, state, and national laws related to youth protection, including reporting allegations, and notes the following legal requirements of which all volunteers must be aware: 

All reports or allegations of assault or sexual harassment or physical abuse must be reported to local law enforcement authorities. Any other activities or action involving a Youth Participant that may constitute an assault, sexual harassment, or physical abuse, or violation of a restraining order must also be reported to a local law enforcement authority. If the recipient of a report is uncertain whether the reported conduct is of a nature that requires reporting to law enforcement authority, he or she should immediately consult with the District Governor, the District Youth Protection Officer, or local legal counsel to resolve this question, and pending resolution, protect the Youth Participant from further exposure to the alleged perpetrator. Doubt should be resolved in favor of reporting the matter to local law enforcement authority.

**3. Remove the accused person from contact with youth.** District 5970 will remove the alleged offender from all contact with Rotary youth program participants until the matter is resolved. Follow established criteria and procedures for removing a Rotary Youth Exchange student from a host family if they report a problem with, or make an allegation against, a host family member. If appropriate, move the student to the temporary housing that was screened in advance.

**4. Avoid gossip and blame.** Don't tell anyone about the allegation other than those who need to know. Be careful to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation. District 5970 maintains the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person by enforcing the following procedures:

Rotary Officers who obtain information of a complaint or allegation associated with their responsibilities in protecting a youth participant shall not share this information except with appropriate law enforcement authorities or other Rotarians involved in the investigation. 

**5. Follow through.** A district officer must inform RI of the allegation within 72 hours and provide ongoing status reports. District 5970 will ensure that the program participant's parents or legal guardians have been notified and offer the young person an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent his or her interests. If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, or if the investigation is inconclusive, the district governor will appoint a district review committee to coordinate an independent review to ensure that district youth protection policies were followed, confirm that youth safety was the highest priority, and determine any necessary modifications to district procedures. This review is not responsible for determining the validity of any allegations; that can only be done by youth protection agency personnel or trained law enforcement professionals. If law enforcement has found the allegations to be noncriminal, the district governor is responsible for contacting the alleged offender. The district governor may delegate this task to a district youth protection officer or district review committee. District 5970 will document all accusations of inappropriate behavior and the actions taken to resolve the situation, so that patterns of inappropriate behavior are identified and addressed.