



Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy

Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

Rotary Youth Exchange Florida and Rotary International are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of each exchange student participant and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact. Rotary Youth Exchange Florida maintains a zero tolerance position regarding incidents of abuse and/or harassment.

Definitions

Volunteer: Any adult (Rotarian and non-Rotarians) involved with Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) activities who has direct interactions with students, either supervised or unsupervised. This includes, but is not limited to, club and district Youth Exchange offices and committee members, Rotarian counselors, that host students for RYE activities or outings or who might drive students to RYE events or functions, host parents, and other adult residents of the host home (including siblings and other family members).

Student: Youth involved with RYE, regardless of whether they are of the age of majority.

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. Such activity includes both active and passive exposure. Additional examples of sexual abuse include, but are not limited to; non-touching offenses (e.g., language), indecent exposure, and exposing a student to sexual or pornographic material.

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 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 other inappropriate physical contact (such as brushing or touching), obscene language or gestures and suggestive or insulting comments

Incorporation of Youth Exchange Program and Liability Insurance

Rotary Youth Exchange Florida, Inc., is incorporated as a not-for profit corporation under the laws of the state of Florida, USA, and is recognized as a designated charitable organization by the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501(c)3 of the IRS code.

The Rotary Youth Exchange Florida program is covered for general liability under the U.S. Rotary Club and District General Liability Policy.

Volunteer Selection and Screening

All Volunteers

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

- a) Complete a Youth Volunteer Affidavit form and authorize Rotary Youth Exchange Florida to conduct a criminal background check
- b) Undergo personal interviews by the host club Youth Exchange Officer and/or assistant(s)
- c) Provide a list of references for the local district to verify, verification to be conducted by the host club Youth Exchange Officer and/or assistant(s)
- d) Meet Rotary International and Rotary Youth Exchange Florida eligibility requirements for working with students. (Rotary International 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 [i.e., any Rotary sponsored or affiliated program or activity]. 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 Rotary youth programs. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that the individual will be reinstated to their former position.)
- e) Understand and comply with Rotary International and Rotary Youth Exchange Florida guidelines for the Youth Exchange program.

Host Families

Host families must meet the following selection and screening requirements, in addition to those listed above:

- a) Host families must undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability for hosting exchange students. This should include:
 - i. Demonstrated commitment to the safety and security of students
 - ii. Motivation for hosting a student consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange
 - iii. Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student
 - iv. Aptitude for providing appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well being
- b) Host families must complete a written application (to be reviewed by both the host club and the District Youth Exchange leadership)
- c) 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. (Home visits will be conducted by the host club Youth Exchange Officer. District Youth Exchange Committee members may be available to assist as necessary. Written reports of home visit results will be sent to the District Youth Exchange leadership.)
- d) All adult residents of the host home must meet the selection and screening guidelines as outlined in the Volunteer section above, including criminal background and reference checks. 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.
- e) Host families shall not host more than one student at a time.

Rotarian Counselors

Rotarian counselors must meet the criteria for All Volunteers, as well as the following:

- a) Counselors must not be a member of the student's host family
- b) 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.

Student Selection and Screening

All students interested in participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange Florida program must:

- a) Complete a written application and be interviewed for their suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange Program
- b) Attend and successfully complete all scheduled orientation and training sessions
- c) Comply with all other conditions and application, screening and selection policies and procedures as determined by the Rotary Youth Exchange Florida, including adherence to the application and selection timeline as published annually by Rotary Youth Exchange Florida.

All parents or legal guardians of students interested in participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange Florida program must be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program. Outbound candidate interviews will be conducted by the sponsoring club Youth Exchange Officer and members of the local District Youth Exchange Committee. Written reports of the interview results (and home visit) will be submitted to the local District Youth Exchange leadership.

Training

Each local District is responsible to provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Exchange participants. Training sessions will be conducted periodically by either the District Protection Officer, or a member of the District Youth Exchange leadership. Uniform training materials will be utilized for consistency.

Each member District Youth Exchange Committee will:

- a) Adapt the *Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual* as developed and revised by Rotary International to include relevant information on specific district guidelines, local customs, cultural issues and legal requirements.
- b) Develop an annual calendar of training sessions and required attendance for different volunteer groups (e.g., Youth Exchange Officers, Host Families, Rotary Counselors). The calendar will include locations of training.
- c) Conduct specialized training sessions for the following Youth Exchange program participants:
 - i. District governor
 - ii. District Youth Exchange committee members
 - iii. Club Youth Exchange Officer(s) and committee members
 - iv. Rotarian counselors
 - v. Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Youth Exchange activities such as local tours or district events
 - vi. Host families
 - vii. Students (inbound and outbound)
 - viii. Parents and legal guardians of students
- d) No one may participate in Rotary Youth Exchange Florida activities without completing the appropriate training session
- e) Records of participation in training sessions will be maintained by the local District Youth Exchange leadership.

Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Rotary Youth Exchange Florida and its member districts are 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 *Youth Exchange Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines*. (Please see the Abuse Reporting Procedure in the Appendices.)

Investigation Guidelines

Rotary Youth Exchange Florida and its member districts take all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will investigate each allegation thoroughly. The organizations will cooperate with all law enforcement, child protective services, and legal investigations, and will only conduct its own independent investigations in a manner that does not interfere with other investigations. District investigations will be led by and coordinated by the District Youth Exchange Protection Officer.

Other Rotary Youth Exchange Florida Responsibilities

Rotary Youth Exchange Florida and its member districts:

- a) Have a procedure for reporting, investigating, and proper handling of non-criminal offenses or historic cases that law enforcement will not investigate. These procedures are part of the training sessions for District Youth Exchange committee members, club Youth Exchange Officers, Rotarian Counselors and student participants.
- b) Require that all inbound Youth Exchange students maintain insurance at or above the level required by Rotary International and the US Government.
- c) Provide each student with a list of local services in the area including rape and suicide crisis hotlines, child protection agencies, law enforcement and hospitals
- d) Complete a student data form for all participating Youth Exchange students and submit a copy to Rotary International one month before the beginning of the exchange
- e) Maintain and provide to Youth Exchange students an "emergency hotline". This number is available 24 hours a day. This information is provided to both inbound and outbound students as part of their orientation and training.
- f) Follow Rotary International guidelines for Youth Exchange websites and usage of Rotary Marks.
- g) Will appoint a local, independent attorney, therapist or counselor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse or harassment.
- h) Will report all criminal allegations to Rotary International within 72 hours of notification. Such reporting shall be conducted by either the District Youth Exchange Chairman or Protection Officer, or an officer of Rotary Youth Exchange Florida.
- i) Will report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to Rotary International within 72 hours of notification.
- j) Require a quarterly report from students that includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas and/or suggestions.
- k) Review and modify as necessary this policy and accompanying procedures on at least an annual basis.

Club Compliance

Each member district will monitor and ensure that all participating clubs within the district comply with Rotary International guidelines for abuse and harassment prevention. All clubs that wish to participate must provide the district with a copy of the following for review and approval prior to participation in Youth Exchange activities (updated annually):

- a) List of services in area including rape and suicide crisis hotlines, child protection agencies, law enforcement and hospitals.
- b) Statement that the club will only use materials developed by or approved by RYE-Florida or the local district related to the promotion and support of Youth Exchange, including, but not limited to, promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, web site links
- c) Names of all club members who will be involved as volunteers in the Youth Exchange program for verification by the local district that Youth Volunteer Applications have been submitted and criminal background checks conducted on each named individual.
- d) Record that the club requires any volunteer to attend District abuse and harassment prevention training program(s)

Participating clubs must agree to:

- a) Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating their youth exchange activities in accordance with Rotary Youth Exchange Florida, District, and RI policy
- b) Comply with Rotary Youth Exchange Florida policy and procedure for conducting criminal background and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the Youth Exchange Program, including but not limited to adult full- or part-time residents of host home, Rotary counselor, club Youth Exchange Officer and all Rotarians and their spouse/partner with direct unsupervised contact. All volunteers must complete and sign the Youth Volunteer Application (found in Appendices).
- c) Adhere to the comprehensive system for host family selection and screening as outlined in the Host Family section of this policy
- d) Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families (with copies of evaluations submitted to the District Youth Exchange Chair.
- e) Follow the Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines as outlined previously in this policy. 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.
- f) Prohibit direct placement of students other than through the defined structure and procedure as established by Rotary Youth Exchange Florida (e.g., no "backdoor exchanges")
- g) Establish procedures for removal of a student from the host family (conditions that would dictate immediate relocation of a student for their safety and well-being), with back-up temporary housing available in advance.
- h) Develop contingency plans for hosting that include pre-screened and available back-up host families
- i) Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and club members must not be required to host students.
- j) Ensure that long-term exchange students have multiple host families.
- k) Provide each student with a comprehensive local services list (or contact if there is a service clearing house through agencies like United Way)
- l) Ensure that the host counselor and Youth Exchange Officer 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.
- m) Ensure that the mandatory training on sexual abuse and harassment prevention for host families, outbound students, inbound students, and their parents or legal guardians is completed.
- n) 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.
- o) Follow Rotary International guidelines for Youth Exchange websites and usage of Rotary Marks.
- p) Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to the District Protection Officer or Chairman immediately.
- q) Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians. The interview will take place in the applicant's home.