

District 5060 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 and Rotary International District 5060 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 as per the below guidelines. *The safety and well being of students must always be the first priority.*

Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 5060 is 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 and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of anyone with whom they come in contact.

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.

Examples of sexual abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Any deliberate touching of sexual areas (breasts, genital area, buttocks) including oral sex.
- Non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure, or exposing a minor or 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 may 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 a critical distinction to be made by any adult to whom allegations are made. After ensuring the safety of the student, all allegations should be immediately reported to the Rotary District 5060 Youth Exchange Chair, with notification to the District Governor. Law enforcement officials may be contacted at any time by any adult involved in receiving reports of sexual harassment or abuse, and no member of the Rotary Club or the District 5060 program should discourage reporting cases of abuse to law enforcement officials.

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 shall follow 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 she/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.

- e) **Record.** Produce 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.

2. Protect the Student

Ensure the safety and well-being of the student. Immediately remove the student from the situation 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.

3. Report The incident

Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment to the club YEO, district YE Chair and District Governor for action. If, in the opinion of any of the adults involved in receiving the report of harassment or abuse, the incident should be reported to law enforcement, it is appropriate to make such a report to the local police where the reported incident occurred. The local club and District 5060 will cooperate with police or legal investigations.

The appropriate contacts for reporting incidents include the Student Counselor for the exchange student, the Club YEO, the Club President, the Inbound Chairperson for the District committee, and the Chair of the District Youth Exchange Committee and the District Governor.

The District Governor shall report all allegations to Rotary International within 72 hours.

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 student and the accused during the investigation.

District 5060 maintains the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person by enforcing the following procedures:

- Youth Exchange Counselors, YEO's, Club Presidents, and members of the Youth Exchange Committee shall be trained to discuss these incidents only with appropriate adults under conditions which promote privacy (avoid discussions in public places).
- Written notes or reports or other documentation about abuse or harassment incidents shall be maintained in closed files in private areas only, and only by those directly involved.
- Club YEOs shall forward all incident documentation to the District Governor for filing in long-term storage.
- Rotary Clubs may maintain a duplicate file (under control of the YEO or Club President).

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 may be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.

6. Follow-Up

Upon receiving a report or allegation of sexual abuse or harassment, the District Youth Exchange Chair will ensure that steps are taken to address the situation. Specifically, the District 5630 Compliance Chair will conduct an independent and thorough investigation into any claims of sexual abuse or harassment. (District 5060 may defer investigation to local law enforcement when they are involved and are conducting their own investigation. It is important not to interfere in investigations that are taken by police or other authorized outside investigators.) 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. Contact between the abuser or harasser and the student should be avoided during any investigative period.
3. Determine whether to contact appropriate law enforcement agency immediately (if not already done). If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, document the decision. The club and district Youth Exchange chair should coordinate an independent investigation into the allegations.
4. Ensure the student receives immediate support.
5. Determine when (and how) to 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.

Additional Steps Which May be Taken as Appropriate:

6. Offer the student an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent the interests of the student.
7. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with the Youth Exchange program, to assist in an investigation.
8. Determine whether to remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with the specific student and other youth in the future.
9. Cooperate with any police or legal investigation.
10. The student's Rotarian Counselor must inform the district Youth Exchange chair and district governor of the allegation. The district governor 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 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.