



## **District Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy for Multidistrict Finland (districts 1380-1430) adopted for Rotary year 2015 - 2016 and onwards.**

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

#### **1. Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth**

District 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 children and young people with whom they come into contact.

#### **2. Incorporation of District Youth Exchange Program and Liability Insurance**

Rotary Districts 1380-1430 within Multidistrict Finland Youth Exchange program are registered organizations under the laws of Finland and Estonia, and carry a general liability insurance covering the multidistrict officials, district youth exchange officials as well as club youth exchange teams and all volunteers.

#### **3. Volunteer Selection and Screening**

Rotary Finland will maintain their own records related to volunteer and host family criminal background checks. Volunteer and host family application and agreements will be maintained in the district level by district chairs.

*All volunteers* interested in participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange program must meet the following requirements:

- Volunteers must complete a written application.

- Background checks (as the law in Finland permits).
- Undergo personal interviews.
- Provide a list of references for the district to check.
- Meet RI and district eligibility requirements for working with students. RI policy prohibits any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment 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, additional safeguards must be put in place to ensure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact as well as for the protection of the accused. 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 complete a written application.
- Host families must undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability for hosting exchange students. Host families must demonstrate:
  - Commitment to the safety and security of students
  - Motivation for hosting a student consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange
  - Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student
  - Ability to provide appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well-being
- Home visits must be conducted for each family and should include announced and unannounced visits, both before 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 who are permanent or part-time residents in the home.

**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 that may arise during the exchange, including instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.

#### **4. Student Selection and Screening**

*All students* interested in participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange program must meet these requirements

- Complete a written application and be interviewed to determine suitability for participation in the program.
- Attend and participate in all multidistrict (national) orientation and training sessions.

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

## 5. Training

Each district will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Exchange program participants. Each district protection officer will conduct training sessions. Training sessions will be arranged on multidistrict, district and club level.

Specifically, each district will

- Adapt the *Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual and Leader's Guide* to incorporate specific district guidelines, information on local customs and cultural issues, and legal requirements
- Develop a training calendar that defines the participants, frequency of training required for each volunteer position, and training methods to be used
- 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 Rotarians 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 participants have received the requisite training
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance

## 6. Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Each district is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Youth Exchange students and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled in accordance with the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines.

## 7. Follow-through and Review Guidelines

Each district takes all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will ensure that each allegation is investigated thoroughly. The district will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations and will not interfere with other investigations when conducting its own independent reviews.

## 8. Other Responsibilities

- Establish procedures for reporting, investigating, and handling noncriminal offenses or historical cases that law enforcement chooses not to investigate.
- Control that all inbound Youth Exchange students maintain insurance at recommended levels.
- Provide each student with a list of Rotary district and club contacts including: student's Rotarian counselor, host club president, host district chair, host governor, sending district

chair, sending governor, sending club president and two non-Rotarian resource persons (one male and one female).

- Provide each student with a list of local services in the district (rape and suicide crisis hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.).
- Complete a student data request form for all participating Youth Exchange students and return it to RI one month before the exchange begins.
- Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to Youth Exchange students.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Appoint an independent lawyer, therapist, or counselor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.
- Report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours.
- 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 regularly.
- Appoint a district youth protection officer.
- Require a quarterly report from each inbound and outbound student in the district that includes information on current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas, and suggestions. The district Youth Exchange chair and correspondent for the inbound students can then review the reports and assist students as needed.

## 9. Club Compliance

Each district will monitor all participating clubs within the district and ensure that they 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:

- All materials produced in the club to promote and support the Youth Exchange program, including promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, Web site links, etc.
- List of services in the area (rape and suicide crisis hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Club abuse and harassment prevention training program materials

Participating clubs must agree to carry out the following:

- Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating its program in accordance with Multidistrict and RI policies.
- If not coordinated by the district, conduct background checks and reference checks for all volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to, adult residents of host home, counselor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact with youth. All volunteers must complete and sign a Youth Volunteer Affidavit.
- Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both before and during the placement.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
- Follow the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines.
- Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the district's Youth Exchange program structure (so-called backdoor exchanges).

- Set procedures for removal of a student from the host family, including establishing criteria for moving a student and locating available back-up temporary housing in advance.
- Develop contingency hosting plans that include prescreened, 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, including information for dentists, doctors, places of worship, counselors, suicide and rape crisis hotlines, etc.
- 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 — both males and females who are not related to each other and do not have close ties to the host families or club counselor — who can help the students with any issues or problems.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, deaths) involving Youth Exchange students to the district immediately.
- Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians.
- Appoint a club youth protection officer.

## **10. Youth Exchange Document Retention**

All documents consisting student or student family (home/host) information need to be handled, stored and archived with extra care. Basic principle being that information should be distributed only to those instances and individuals to the extent which is required for them to perform their assigned role in the Rotary youth exchange program. All copies of these documents and records of students and student families (home/host) in printed paper or digital format should not be stored longer than necessary.

Student applications (OB/IB), Host family application, Volunteer application, Student Quarterly reports and Host family visits records are stored in the district level for minimum of one (1) year and maximum of five (5) years after person in question has participated in to the youth exchange program.

Student Incident reports including all documents related to student in question and the incident reported, are stored for maximum of ten (10) years.

Records of Criminal background checks are stored no longer than six (6) months.

## **Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth**

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, Rotarians' spouse, 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.  
(November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 72)