

# **CENTRAL STATES ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE**

**[www.csrye.org](http://www.csrye.org)**



## **STUDENT PROTECTION REPORTING GUIDELINES**

**This manual is intended to serve as a guide for all districts within the CSRYE organization. Districts are responsible for distribution and training of Club Leaders. Club leaders are responsible for appropriate training of host families and distribution of this information to appropriate student authority figures at local level.**

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## **STATEMENT OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH**

CSRYE 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

### **OUR MISSION**

**Central States Rotary Youth Exchange Program** is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all our Youth Exchange Students, both inbound and outbound.

We do this by:

- Recognizing that all young people have the right to freedom from harassment and abuse.
- Ensuring that all our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and accept the responsibility for helping to prevent the abuse of children in their care.
- Each District is Committed to Responding swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of harassment and/or abuse, and by providing adults and young people with the opportunity to voice any concerns that they may have
- Each District is Committed to Appoint a Child Protection Officer who will act as the main point of contact for parents, children, host families and outside agencies.
- Each District is Committed to ensure that access to confidential information is restricted.

Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of our Student Protection Policy and activities.

# ABUSE AND HARASSMENT ALLEGATION - REPORTING GUIDELINES

## ***INTRODUCTION***

The most powerful force in the promotion of international understanding and peace is exposure to difference 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 rushing 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 the allegations are made. After ensuring the safety of the student, all allegations should be immediately reported.

## ***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.
- e. **Record.** Keep 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. 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 most situations, the first Rotary contact is the Rotarian counselor who has responsibility for seeking the advice of and interacting with appropriate agencies. However, if the allegation involves the conduct of the Rotarian counselor, the District Student Protection Officer or District Youth Exchange chair should be contacted. All allegations will be reported to Rotary International as soon as reasonably possible. The person responsible for doing so is the **District Student Protection Officer or District Youth Exchange Chair.**

Allegation Reporting Guidelines  
Continued

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.

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 Student Protection Officer, follow up to make sure steps are being taken to address the situation.

***POST REPORT PROCEDURES***

***For use by Rotarian Counselors and District Student Protection Officers***

The student's Rotarian Counselor and the District Student Protection Officer are responsible for ensuring that the following steps are taken immediately following an abuse allegation report.

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 abuse or harasser.
3. Contact appropriate law enforcement agency immediately (if not already done). If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the Club and District Student Protection Officer and/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 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 District Student Protection Officer and the District Youth Exchange chair must coordinate and inform the District Governor and Rotary International of the allegation as soon as reasonably possible 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.

## District Youth Exchange Team - Leadership Chart

