

## District 5300 Youth Protection Policy Implementation and Training

### Policy

District 5300 is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarian 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 youth with whom they come into contact.

The policy and training procedures have been developed to safeguard and protect both our youth and adult members. Rotarian participation in training and certification not only reflects their concern about children's safety in this society, but also their willingness to take steps towards preventing child abuse.

The Youth Protection Policy is designed with the International Youth Exchange program in mind, but in the implementation phase 2006-07 will include training for all District Rotarians involved not only in Youth Exchange, but in the following programs:

Teen Leadership Camp (TLC)  
Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA)  
Multi-District Interact Symposium

It is the intent of District leadership over time to expand the program to all Rotarians working with children and youth in District-sponsored or club-sponsored programs and activities, with the goal of educating them to the problem and the process, in the hopes of prevention.

At the present time, those ongoing District programs include, but are not limited to:

*Kideract (Interact-like club at the elementary school level)*  
*Mideract and Junior Interact (Interact-like clubs at the middle school level)*  
*Interact Clubs*  
*Four-Way Speech Contest (high school)*  
*Dan Stover Memorial Music Scholarship Competition (high school)*  
*Hensel Ethic Essay Contest (high school)*  
*Youth Entrepreneurship activities*

District programs and activities with youth and children may change year-to-year. Every attempt will be made to include any new program or project participants where there is likely personal contact between adult Rotarian volunteers and youth.

# Implementation

1. The District has developed a permanent District Committee entitled Youth Protection. Members are appointed each year by the incoming District Governor and at a minimum, the following should serve:

- District Governor
- District Governor Elect
- Youth Exchange Officer
- District Training Officer
- Resource Rotarian - Law Enforcement
- Resource Rotarian – Legal
- Resource Rotarian - Youth Protection Training
- Youth Protection Advocate

Others may be added as deemed appropriate.

2. The District will develop appropriate curriculum for education and training.
3. The District will identify which Rotarians, Rotary partners and other volunteers that maybe involved with youth in any District-sponsored program;
4. The District will identify which Rotarians are appropriate candidates to serve on the Youth Protection Committee training staff or on the District Training Committee to become certified as instructors;
5. The District will require completion of, and review of, the Youth Volunteer Affidavit and Application (Appendix A herein) for all host and host family members involved in Youth Exchange. An application may be requested from any adult involved in other District youth programs;
6. The District will conduct appropriate training for all Rotarians, Rotarian partners, and any other volunteers that have contact with youth in any District ongoing activities, beginning with Youth Exchange and camp programs, and expanding to other District youth programs;
7. The District will create and keep appropriate records of which Rotarians have received training;
8. The District will develop policy and procedures that ensures privacy of both the Rotarians and the youth participants in regards to youth protection compliance matters, and conduct appropriate record-keeping;

9. The District will review the policy and procedures annually for any necessary changes and updating;
10. The District 5300 budget will include an annual allocation of funds to support the Youth Protection program.

### **Implementing Program for Youth Exchange Participants – Host families**

- a. The District will develop and execute an agreement with a company to conduct background checks for all Rotarians, Rotarian partners, and any other adult volunteers (over the age of 18) that have regular and ongoing contact with Youth Exchange students.
- b. The agreement would be subject to annual review and could be extended upon satisfactory performance by the company.
- c. To protect the privacy of volunteers, results will only be reported to the District 5300 Youth Protection Advocate. Upon receipt of the results, they will be reviewed by the Rotarian serving in this position in consultation with the Youth Exchange Officer. Any applicant having been found to have a criminal record of violence, substance abuse, child abuse, workplace harassment or any similar circumstance will not be allowed to participate in the program. This decision will be made on a case by case basis, with the first and overriding factor being the potential for any harm to the youth.
- d. Rotarian host applicants who have undergone a background check, and are found ineligible to participate in Youth Exchange, will be contacted confidentially by the Youth Exchange Officer, as to the reason.

If after the results of a background check, a host or host family is decided to be inappropriate and denied the ability to participate in the Youth Exchange program, there may be an appeal.

*An appeals process has been outlined in this policy under Appendix B – page 15.*

- e. Youth Exchange students will be oriented by the Youth Exchange Officer in regards to the District 5300 Youth Protection Policy upon arrival. In addition to a review of the policy, the students will receive a pocket card they can carry with them at all times, listing the names, titles and phone numbers of the following:

Youth Protection Advocate  
Youth Exchange Officer  
Rotarian Counselor

District Governor

This may be used by the student for any purpose...if they are in trouble, lost, having difficulties or challenges, or to report an uncomfortable situation, harassment or abuse to someone other than their host family. It should provide a sense of security that there is a network of several Rotarians that can be trusted and to whom they can turn.

In the case that all these four Rotarians are of the same sex, a Rotarian shall be listed of the opposite sex for the comfort of the student. In the event that all four of these Rotarians are from California, a local Nevada Rotarian will be listed – and visa versa.

## **Training**

### **Certifying Instructors**

1. District 5300 will certify adults that have completed all training, successfully passed an oral interview and mock-training, and have indicated they are interested in remaining in the position of instructor for a period of not less than two Rotary years.
2. The Resource Rotarian in the position of Youth Protection – Training shall have had professional training in such matters and have input into the creation and update of all training materials. A credentialed educator or school principal could fill this position.
3. Coursework shall be taught by qualified District-certified instructors, or someone under the direct supervision of a certified instructor.
4. Rotary District 5300 curriculum materials and other Rotary International materials may be used to train and certify volunteers intending to work with youth. It is important to conduct the coursework using standardized materials no matter the location of the training in either state.
5. A listing of which Rotarians in the District have been certified as trainers, and the coursework they have taught at which dates, times and locations shall be kept on file and regularly updated by the Youth Protection Training Resource Rotarian.
6. Instructors shall be subject to an annual review for satisfactory performance.
7. The Youth Exchange Officer and Youth Protection-Training Resource Rotarian shall make every attempt to keep abreast of current standards, State regulations, and/or Rotary International changes and updates to training, so that District 5300 training may be accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date.

## **Conducting training**

1. Training to be conducted by a certified trainer prior to any Rotarian or adult having (extended) contact with minor children or youth.
2. Until such time as the program is expanded, only those Rotarian partners and volunteers involved with Youth Exchange, RYLA, TLC or Interact Symposium will go through training. Only those adults involved in Youth Exchange shall be required to be registered (Appendix A) as volunteers. The adults involved in RYLA, TLC, and Interact Symposium may be required to registered, but will be required to undergo training.
3. Training on youth protection may be integrated into and be conducted as a part of an overall training/orientation program, as long as the curriculum developed is included in its entirety.
4. The Youth Exchange Officer shall keep copies of all materials related to the host families and other adult volunteers engaging in Youth Exchange activities, and ensure their training has been completed.
5. Properly-signed rosters of attendees shall be sent to the District 5300 Youth Protection -Training Resource Rotarian to validate each attendees training.
6. Volunteers shall be subject to ongoing evaluation, and additional training may be required to maintain good standing within the District and the organization.

## **Supervision**

1. In program planning, each District Committee Chair shall have the responsibility to ensure all youth are appropriately supervised and that enough Rotarian adults are present to ensure a safe environment.
2. Two deep leadership (two adult leaders), one of whom should be of the same gender as the child or group, should present for all District activities such as Interact Symposium, RYLA or TLC camps, where practicable. As many times the activities are one adult to a group of young persons, this shall suffice for small group activities. Where this occurs, "roving" adult supervisors are encouraged to keep a watchful eye on the group activities.
3. Two-deep leadership should be used in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program when practical to do so. However, as in the United States and District 5300, it is most

usual for both parents to be working adults, and special attention must be paid and arrangements made when there are anticipated extended periods of time when the youth of one sex is alone with the adult of the other. Supervised after-school activities and options where the youth is not left alone should be explored in each family as appropriate and discussed with the Youth Exchange Officer.

4. In accordance with Rotary International Code of Policies, District 5300 will abide by the rule to have more than one host family for a long-term Youth Exchange participant. Therefore multiple host families will complete the application, go through the background check and review process, and be trained. Only in extraordinary circumstances would a Youth Exchange participant be hosted by one family for the entire course of the program (a school year). Such a situation would be approved by the District Governor, in advance, for special cause, and be reported to Rotary International.

5. For the protection of both the children and the Rotarian, Rotarian partner or any other volunteer, no volunteer should permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during District-sponsored events.

### **Definitions of Abuse**

Psychologists, legislators and educators around the country now recognize five types of abuse:

*Emotional abuse:* attacking the emotional well-being and stability of an individual.

*Physical abuse:* harming the physical well-being of an individual

*Sexual abuse:* harming an individual through inappropriate sexual contact, lewd behavior, etc.

*Neglect abuse:* harming an individual by abandoning, ignoring, or rejecting basic needs

*Ethical abuse:* harming an individual by convincing him or her to do an act that is against his or her physical, moral, religious or ethical interests.

Each will be included in the training materials and curriculum/coursework.

### **Preventing False Accusations of Child Abuse**

Rotarians and other Youth Exchange volunteers should avoid situations in which they are alone with a child. This might include transporting children or young adults alone in a car. This may not always be practical in the Youth Exchange Program, but having another adult or youth in the car may be advised.

When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, adults should find a place out of earshot but within sight of others for the private conference.

Privacy of children or youth in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes must be respected. When it is necessary to supervise children in these situations, at least two adults should be present and intrude only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require. Adult volunteers should preserve their own privacy in these situations also.

When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front, and never for an extended period of time. Rotarians should gauge the student's comfort level with being touched in any way prior to conducting that type of behavior.

Sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature, kissing, sensual massage or sexual gestures are not appropriate behaviors.

Rotarians may not use corporal punishment in any form - spanking, slapping or hitting, etc.

It is the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a young person attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behavior, the adult must reject the overture, and discuss the boundaries so as they are clear, and not subject to interpretation.

Adults who work with children should take precautions to protect children from abuse and also protect themselves from misunderstandings or accusations.

## **Proper Conduct**

The District advocates and expects exemplary behavior by all its adult participants, and it will hold strict line on conduct as laid out in these policies:

1. Abusive statements such as those that deal with race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, age, sex or sexual orientation are not appropriate and will not be tolerated.
2. Any physical, emotional, sexual and ethical abuses are not permitted, as is any neglect or endangerment of a child.
3. Some forms of personal contact are acceptable as long as they are respectful and appropriate:

Touching should be in response to the need of the child, not the need of the adult.

Touching should only be with the child's permission.

Resistance to touching must be respected.

Touching must never include the breast, buttocks or groin.

Touching should be done in the open, not in private.

Touching should have a brief, limited duration.

A child's comfort level with touching is influenced by factors such as age, culture, developmental stages, social and emotional well-being, life experiences, gender, etc., many of which change over time.

Careful attention will be made to the selection of Rotarians and other volunteers for the

youth programs of District 5300, with an eye to good character, proper conduct and demonstrated appropriate behaviors.

This policy will be updated and changed as necessary.  
Appendix A is the District 5300 Youth Volunteer Affidavit and Application;  
Appendix B is the District 5300 Allegation Reporting Guidelines.  
Other Appendixes shall be added as appropriate as the program develops.

Copies will be made available online at [www.district5300.org](http://www.district5300.org) for any Rotarian, and will be distributed in hard copy as a part of all training exercises, and to each incoming President as a part of their training on the responsibilities in this regard.

*Submitted for consideration by Rotary International  
this date of January 12, 2007*

*by: Youth Exchange Officer Linda Logan  
District Governor Christine Montan*

*having been reviewed and accepted by the District 5300 Youth Protection Committee*

## Appendix B

### **Allegation Reporting Guidelines**

For use in training sessions, so that all adult Rotarians will understand their responsibilities in this regard: additionally, 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. Taking a Report from a 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 may be 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. **Protecting 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. Reporting to Appropriate Law Enforcement Authorities**

**Reporting to Law Enforcement.** Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or

physical abuse to the appropriate law enforcement authorities first and District leadership. The District will be concerned about the immediate safety of the child, and is not involved in investigation. Once reported, this becomes a police matter for investigation and possible prosecution. In District 5300, the appropriate law enforcement agency will depend upon the location in California or Nevada. It may be the local City Police Department or County Sheriff's Department. It should be reported in the jurisdiction where the alleged abuse took place, NOT the location where the student maybe at the time of reporting to an adult.

#### **4. Reporting to Others**

a. In most situations, the first Rotary contact will be the Youth Protection Advocate. In the case of a Youth Exchange student, the Rotarian Counselor assigned that student has responsibility for seeking the advice of and interacting with appropriate agencies. If the allegation involves the conduct of the Rotarian Counselor, the District Youth Exchange Officer should be contacted.

b **Reporting to RI.** All allegations must be reported to Rotary International within 72 hours; the person responsible for doing so is the District Governor. The appropriate leaders within District 5300 will cooperate with all police or legal investigations.

d. **Meeting Local Law Requirements.** District 5300 has researched local, state(s), and national laws related to sexual abuse and harassment prevention and believe the training and implementation phase of our program follows all legal and law enforcement requirements. It meets all law enforcement reporting requirements.

e. **Avoid Gossip and Blame.** Rotarians must 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. District 5300 maintains the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person by enforcing the following procedures:

- limiting the number of Rotarians involved to those listed in the policy;
- emphasizing in training the conditions of "innocent until proven guilty" and the importance of maintaining the privacy of both the alleged victim and accused;
- limiting to two the Rotarians reviewing the background check information (secured by an outside source):
- confirming the reliability of the contract services used for background checks to ensure they have privacy policies and procedures in place;
- keeping records in a secure and locked file cabinet, with limited access

f. **Do Not Challenge the Alleged Offender.** The adult to whom the student reports must not contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation and investigation activities must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment, the District Youth Exchange Officer and District Governor

(who may assign the Youth Protection Advocate as his/her designee) are responsible for investigating, and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.

g. ***Follow-Up Activities.*** After a student has reported allegations to the Rotarian counselor or District Youth Exchange Officer, and a law enforcement investigation is begun, it is important that specific actions are taken during this time. 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. The student will remain in a safe alternative environment until the matter is resolved. For this reason a “back-up” family in each region of the District is advised –a safe house where the student can stay until such time as an alternate host family has been secured, gone through the back-ground check and training certifying them.

### **Post Report Procedures**

For Use by Rotarian Counselors and District Youth Exchange Committee Chairs

The student’s Rotarian counselor and the District Youth Exchange Officer 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.
3. Contact appropriate law enforcement agency immediately (if not already done). In the case where the alleged behavior does not fall into the category of a crime (certain harassing behavior) and law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the District Youth Exchange Officer and the District Governor (or his/her designee of the Youth Protection Advocate) should coordinate a confidential, independent investigation into the allegations.
4. Ensure the student receives immediate support services.
5. If appropriate in certain circumstances, offer to the student an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent the interests of the student. Ask social services or the student’s school administration 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. Provide the student with the option of either staying in country or returning home. Defer to local law enforcement requirements as to the students’ ability to leave the country and return home if there is an ongoing investigation.
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 student's Rotarian Counselor should inform the District Youth Exchange Officer and District Governor of the allegation. The District Governor shall 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.

### **Responding to the Needs of the Student**

There may need to be a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting the student after an allegation report has been made depending on the severity of the situation and the student's response. 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, or may be required to do so in support of an ongoing investigation, but change to a different host club.

### **Appropriate Response for Addressing Issues within District 5300 for Allegations Made Against Rotarians or Non-Rotarians**

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the overriding concern is the safety of the students. Rotary members should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Rotary 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 and/or District 5300 by the alleged abuser, and are never appropriate.

### **Appeal process for negative decision regarding youth activities participation**

Should a host family (in the case of Youth Exchange) wish to file an appeal, regarding the decision to remove a student from their home, either during such time as an investigation is ongoing, until the matter has been resolved, or permanently, there is no appeal. The District Policy is clear on removal of the student from the home until such time as the matter is completely resolved.

However, if after the results of a background check have been conducted and a host or host family is decided to be inappropriate and denied the ability to participate in the Youth Exchange program, there may be an appeal.

A written request for re-consideration may be filed with the District Youth Exchange

Officer. Said appeal should include detailing the circumstances of the items appearing on the record with an explanation, and should include any attendant facts that should be considered in making a decision. To keep the matter under consideration private and confidential, a small sub-committee consisting of the District Governor, the Youth Exchange Officer and the Youth Protection Advocate, will review the materials presented and may request, or grant a request for an oral interview. After a careful and comprehensive review of the facts, considering all other pertinent information, a decision shall be rendered by the sub-Committee and the results shared with the host or host family by the Youth Exchange Officer. Said sub-committee's decision is final.

As the Youth Protection Committee members may change from Rotary year to Rotary year, this does not preclude a host or host family from ever participating, and they can apply, and or appeal in subsequent years.