



Rotary District 5080

YOUTH EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

POLICY & PROCEDURE DIRECTIVE

Subject: SEXUAL AND OTHER ABUSE

Adopted on: March 8th, 2003

Revised on: (for formal adoption of April 8, 2006)

Preamble:

District 5080 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 physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people participating in Rotary District 5080 programs.

1. Purpose of this Policy

Rotary, as an organization devoted to Peace and Understanding considers the hosting of young persons from other cultures to learn about our culture, as desirable. While students must be protected from abuse, it is not expected that will be a problem, given the good moral character of Rotarians. Further, protection must be fostered within reasonable limits so that the program itself can survive. There is often difficulty in finding host parents for students. Therefore, while recognizing that abuse can happen no matter how well we know fellow Rotarians or take steps to protect our students, and considering the benefits of the program are a desirable end for the thousands of students who participate in the program world wide, this District adopts the following reasonable measures to prevent the abuse of students.

This directive shall be reviewed on an annual basis, and shall be revised when necessary to comply with abuse policies of Rotary International or District 5080.

2. Guiding Principles

- Abuse, in any form, will not be tolerated by Rotary.
- The District Committee adopts in its entirety, the RI Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth, adopted by RI in November 2002. [this statement is provided in the appendix to this directive]

3. General Statement

Rotary believes that young people are our most precious gift and best hope for the future, and that we must protect and nurture our youth at all times.

We believe that the very best defence is for our youth to be well informed, and to have a support system that makes them an unlikely target and gives them the tools to prevent abuse through a strong link to Rotary, their school, and community resources.

For the purposes of this directive, “abuse” includes neglect; violence or a threat of violence; threatening remarks; unwanted and sexual touching; and inappropriate or suggestive language including, but not limited to, talk of sexual desires or gratification.

4. Prevention of Abuse

- 4.1 The District 5080 Youth Exchange Committee has developed curriculum and provides training for members of the District Youth Exchange Committee, Club Youth Exchange Officers, inbound exchange students, outbound exchange students and their parents, and host families.
- 4.2 Information and education will be provided to all students at the Inbound Orientation and to both outbound students and parents at the Outbound Orientation on sexual and other abuse.
- 4.3 Every Rotary club hosting an inbound student in District 5080 will be required to appoint at least one responsible Rotarian, per student and of the same gender as the student to act in the role of a counsellor, to maintain frequent and close contact with each inbound student and his or her host families.
- 4.4 District 5080 Rotary clubs participating in the Youth Exchange Program should ensure that Rotarians and non-Rotarians who have unsupervised interaction with students are of good character and reputation in their community.
- 4.5 Host Rotary clubs in District 5080 will be strongly encouraged to utilize the “Host Family Information Sheet and Screening Check List” found in the Club Youth Exchange Manual.
- 4.6 Criminal Record checks will be required from persons as outlined in the current RI policy. The current policy is outlined as an appendix at the end of this directive.
- 4.7 Each participating club will have in place a counsellor for each student, the gender of the counsellor matching that of the student, who will make regular contact with each inbound student and be available for assisting the student as needed.

5. Reporting and Required Action on Alleged Abuse

- 5.1 District 5080 will treat all allegations of abuse seriously, and will make every effort to assist police or other agencies responsible for investigating any incident or allegation of abuse.
- 5.2 When abuse is suspected or reported, the situation must be documented as soon as possible and immediately reported to the Rotary Club President, the Chair of the District 5080 Youth Exchange Committee and other agencies as required.
- 5.3 Immediately upon receipt of a report of abuse, the Rotary Club President shall notify the District Governor and all appropriate authorities as needed, including the police and any State or Provincial agency responsible for child protection.
- 5.4 Where it is considered appropriate or necessary to do so, the Rotary Club President shall contact the Chair of the District Youth Exchange Committee to arrange for an immediate transfer of an inbound student to another host family on either a temporary or permanent basis.

Appendix

Current Rotary International Policy references are available at the RI website. The relevant ones are 2.110 and 41.080 and their sub-sections.

The RI Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth:

Rotary International is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarian's spouses, partners and 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.

2.110.1 RCP Adopted by the RI Board of Directors, November 2002

RI current policy on Criminal Record Checks:

All adults (Rotarian and non-Rotarians) involved in the program including but not limited to committee members, host families, club counsellors and others, must complete and sign a Youth Volunteer Affidavit and agree to undergo a criminal background check and reference check.

Made policy by the RI Board of Directors, November 2002