Guidelines for Counsellors

Youth Exchange Program
Rotary District 9600

(www.youth-exchange.net)

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GUIDELINES FOR COUNSELLORS
For INBOUND STUDENTS

Your Role as Counsellor

Being a Counsellor for an exchange student is a very exacting and personal task, which each Counsellor will handle in his or her own individual manner. However there are many important points to bear in mind.

The Counsellor should be the holder of a "Blue Card" and should complete an "Information and Declaration Form" giving relevant details about themselves, some references, and also confirming they have not committed or been accused and not cleared of committing a crime against a child or young person or been the subject of a Court Order preventing them from being with or within a certain distance of another person because of behaviour which the Court deems is of a threatening or disturbing nature to that person.

In addition, it is important that the Counsellor be:

- A person who has a rapport with young people and is committed to the student's well-being and happiness but who is also a person able to see that the student and host families abide by the Rotary rules.
- Of the same sex as the student, or alternatively the Counsellor's wife or husband is happy to also be involved in caring for and getting to know the student.
- Not a member of one of the student's host families or close to a family to the degree that he would be unable to be impartial in a dispute between the student and the host family.
- Not the club president, or the principal or the teacher responsible for the student at the School the student attends or the Chairman or a Member of the District Youth Exchange Program Committee.
- Prepared to greet the student on arrival and organise this settling in, school enrolment and in particular:
- set up the student's emergency money account requiring two signatures viz that of the Counsellor or one other Rotarian and the student's signature.
- able to operate the account. This should be done within the next two working days following the student's arrival.
- organise safe-keeping for the student's passport and airline tickets (after taking copies of these) in a place where they will be safe, but where the student has access to them
- ensure the student is discouraged from phoning home to frequently (we suggest no more than once every two weeks) but also seeing that the host family will always allow the student to phone home if they really feel they need to. It is better for the student to be in regular email contact with their family.
- A person who has the time and commitment to talk with the student at least every second week and see that the student is involved with the host Rotary club.
- A Rotarian who is prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the student is protected and treated kindly and fairly.
- Prepared to see the student obeys the rules and is fulfilling his/her obligations as a family and school member.
- Prepared to undertake the required District Training Sessions
- Familiar with the requirements of Forms YESP DI 2 and YESP DI 3 and make a copy of each of these available to the student.

- Instruct the student as to the contents and intent of forms YESP DI 2 and YESP DI 3.

The Counsellor is an important part of the student's safety which the District Committee sees as being vital for the well being of the student. The safety net extends to members of the District Committee, with a Country Co-ordinator being appointed to assist both students and Counsellors. The Counsellor should liaise with the current District Country Co-ordinator and seek assistance from him/her when required.

The Counsellor should inform the student about Rotary International's objectives, the Host Club's objectives, and also the projects and fundraising activities in which the Club is involved. The student should be made aware of the structure of the Club and the names of the Office Bearers.

The student should be aware that not all Rotary Clubs conduct their meetings in the same way as does the Host Club**,** and that some do not have the same level of interaction**.**

The student should have a close relationship with the Host Club Counsellor and should ask to be taken to Club meetings whenever possible. Clubs which hold lunchtime meetings make attendance by the student awkward as the club meeting often conflicts with school activities. Nevertheless the student should attend as many meetings (even perhaps at a Club which meets in the evenings) and Club functions/events as possible, fortnightly as a desirable minimum.

The role of the Counsellor is very important and cannot be overstated. The student should be helped to settle in quickly, feel at home, participate fully in the life of the Club and form a good relationship and friendship with you. The student should feel comfortable discussing any matter with the Counsellor, particularly in times of need and stress.

It is important to establish a good rapport as quickly as possible. The Counsellor is effectively the student's guardian, friend and confidante.

First contact

Make contact with the student by e-mail prior to his/her departure and provide some details about yourself and your family, as well as the Club, the city or town and the immediate surroundings. Give appropriate information to assist in the student's final preparations and obtain details of the intended date of arrival and flight.

Welcome

It is important for the Counsellor to be at the airport for the arrival of the student and to make him/her feel as welcome as possible. Make sure that the student gives a quick call to his/her parents to advise of their safe arrival. Counsellors may wish to host the student for the first 3 - 5 days in their home, before they go to the first host parents. This helps form the bond that is really essential between Counsellor and student.

Remember your partner is just as important - the student may relate to your partner even better than to you! The student may feel strange and a little homesick.

Remember, the student is in a foreign country without parents or siblings, in new surroundings and, most significantly, often having to communicate in a new language - it can be tough!

Establishing the rules

Perhaps the most important aspect of this settling in period is establishing the rules. Outline the Club's rules regarding the exchange, and what is expected of the student throughout the year, gently but firmly. Remember, you should establish a caring, friendly relationship: set the guidelines now! Be aware of District rules (below) and make sure that the student is also aware of and understands them.

Ensure that the student knows that smoking (unless the Youth Exchange Program Application Form records that the Applicant is a smoker) and the consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden.

Every student is different and the Counsellor, Host Parents, and the Club and its members should bear this in mind when greeting and assessing the student. The students are growing up fast - at an alarming

rate - and becoming more independent. They are no longer children but young adults, and the hormones too, are working all the time. For some it is great fun, and for others a little daunting. For us, it is great fun observing, and a challenge to assist! It is a great Program and it is a privilege to be involved in it.

Rules

In the student's application for the Rotary Youth Exchange Program, they signed an agreement to follow the rules and conditions which were set out in the application form. These rules apply in every Rotary District all over the world. Rotary International recommends that Districts adapt the rules to suit local conditions. The agreement which follows contains the rules and conditions for exchange in District 9600, which have been established for your safety and well-being. Violation of any of these rules may result in dismissal from the program and your immediate return home, at your own expense. You and your parents are asked to sign this agreement to acknowledge your commitment for a full twelve months to the Youth Exchange Program, to your host Rotary Club and District 9600, to your host families, and to your school in Australia. Please read these rules very carefully, and sign them only if you agree to follow them. **If you are not prepared to sign this agreement, and abide by the rules, you should withdraw your application from consideration by Rotary District 9600.**

Student Agreement

Program Rules

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Agreement

I, …….., agree that:
Student's Name

1. **Rotary District 9600** has established rules and conditions for my safety and well-being while I am a participant in the Youth Exchange Program. Violation of any of these rules may result in my dismissal from the program and my immediate return home, at my own expense.

2. **Ambassador**:
   - I will serve as an Ambassador for my family, my sponsoring Rotary Club, Rotary International and my country.
   - I will be friendly, and show interest in Australian life, and adjust to and be involved in the activities of my host family, my host Club, District 9600, and my school.
   - I will maintain a high standard of dress, grooming, behaviour and personal hygiene at all times.
   - I agree that Rotary commitments take precedence over other activities.

3. **Laws of the country:** I will obey the laws of Queensland and Australia.

4. **Authority:**

- I will be under the authority of Rotary District 9600 while I am an exchange student and I will abide by these rules and conditions of exchange.
- My parents or legal guardians will not authorize any extra activities directly to me.
- Any relatives I may have in Australia will have no authority over me while I am a member of the Youth Exchange Program.

5. **Drugs:** I will not use drugs, except for valid medical reasons. Use of illegal drugs will result in my immediate return home.

6. **Driving:** I will not operate any motorized vehicle, including but not limited to cars, trucks, motorcycles, aircraft, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, boats, and other watercraft.

7. **Drinking:** I will not drink alcohol except in moderation in a home environment and under the direct supervision of my host parents or Rotarians.

8. **Dating:** I will not form a steady and serious romantic attachment. I understand that sexual activities will result in my immediate return home.

9. **Disfigurement:**
   - I agree that I will not radically change the colour, style or cut of my hair, or have any part of my body pierced during my Exchange Year.
   - If I have piercing (other than ears) before my arrival, I will remove any stud/ring, which is visible.
   - I understand that jewellery is generally not allowed in school, and that tattoos are forbidden.

8. **Smoking:**
   - I understand that Queensland has very strict laws governing smoking in public, and that smoking is often socially unacceptable, and discouraged.
   - I will respect the preferences of my host families and of the members of my host Rotary Club.
   - If I indicated that I was a non-smoker on my Application Form, I will not take up the habit during my Exchange Year.

9. **Travel:**
   - I will not travel outside the area of District 9600 unless I am accompanied by an adult, and unless I have permission from my host parents, Club Counsellor, and the District 9600 YEP Chairman. I will apply to the Chairman for permission to travel before I leave, and his decision will be final.
   - I understand that excessive travel is not allowed.
   - I understand that my host parents are under no obligation to provide local transport for me, and that I should use public transport wherever possible.
   - If I am offered an opportunity to go on a trip or attend an event, I will make sure I understand any costs I must pay and my responsibilities before I go.

10. **Insurance:**
    - I will be covered by health, medical, accident and travel insurance acceptable to District 9600. The arrangements for this will be finalized before I arrive in Australia.
    - I will not participate in dangerous activities such as hang-gliding, parachute-jumping, skydiving, and bungee jumping. I will not travel in a motorized or non-motorized glider, or ultralight plane.

11. **School:**
    - I will attend all classes and take part in all normal school activities, including exams, as a full-time student at a school arranged by my Host Club.
    - I will make an honest attempt to succeed.

- I understand that school is the basis of my exchange visa: **no school, no visa, and no exchange!**

12. **Host Families:**
    - I will respect the members of my host families, and the wishes of my host parents.
    - I will not act as a guest, but make genuine effort to become an integral part of the host family, and assume duties and responsibilities normal for a student of my age or for children in the family.
    - I will adapt to the family: I understand that the family is not expected to adapt to me. I will keep my room tidy.

13. **Telephone/Internet:**
    - I will seek permission to make all phone calls. I understand that I must pay for all international calls and Internet access.

14. **Language:** I will make every effort to learn English, and may be responsible for any costs for tutoring, language camps, or other instruction.

15. **Rotary Events:** I will attend regular Rotary meetings, Rotary-sponsored events and host family events, and show an interest in these activities.
    - I will volunteer to be involved without waiting to be asked.
    - I acknowledge that a lack of interest on my part is detrimental to my exchange and can have a negative impact on future exchanges.

16. **My Finances:**
    - I acknowledge that I must have sufficient financial support to assure my well-being during my exchange.
    - I will arrange for AUD $500 to be paid into an Australian bank account as a contingency fund for emergencies. As this fund is depleted, it will be replenished by my parents or guardian. I understand that unused funds at the end of the exchange year will be returned to me.
    - I will arrange for all fees required by District 9600 (including Medibank Private Overseas Student Health Cover) to be paid before I arrive in Australia.
    - I understand that I will be paid a monthly allowance by my host Rotary Club in recognition of my service as an ambassador for the program, Rotary and my country.

17. **Work:** I understand that I am not permitted to do any paid full-time, part-time or casual work while I am on exchange.

18. **Statements on my Application Form:** I acknowledge that I am bound by the statements I made on my application form, that false statements are unacceptable and may have serious consequences for me.

19. **Visits by parents and friends:**
    - I acknowledge that visits by parents and friends from my home country are discouraged. I acknowledge that my parents or friends should not visit me in the first six months, the last month, during the school term, nor at Christmas or New Year, and that they should not expect to spend more than 10 days with me.
    - I acknowledge that I must attend all compulsory District activities, regardless of whether my parents are visiting or not. I will not be permitted to travel around Australia with them and I will not be permitted to return home before my exchange is complete.
    - I will not expect my host family to accommodate my family or friends.

20. **Return:** I will return directly to my home country by a route mutually agreeable to District 9600 and my parents or guardian. I, or my parents or guardian will pay any costs related to an early return home.

Practical suggestions

The following practical suggestions are put forward as having stood the test of time:

Medibank private

The District will strive to send the student's Medibank Private Card (Overseas Student's Health Cover) with the Counsellor's package prior to the student's arrival. If this has not arrived in time, contact the YEP Chairman for advice. Regardless of whether or not the students have the card, they are covered as soon as they arrive in Australia. OSHC provides the same coverage for the students as Medicare does for Australians. There is no bulk billing, and students must pay for medical visits, then claim back the refund from Medibank Private.

Insurance

In addition to the Medibank Private insurance required by the Australian Government, students must have Health and Travel insurance cover to the minimum level of $10,000 for death and disability and $1,000,000 (AUD) for total medical cover. The District YE Committee will verify that the student has the required level of insurance cover. **Host Parents should NEVER pay student's medical or dental bills** as these should be paid by Medibank and their own travel insurance cover.

School

The student is in Australia on a student visa and must attend school regularly. In this District we place a high level of importance on schooling. It is at school that students build lifetime friendships in their own age group, will quickly learn the language if it is new to them, and become accustomed to the "Australian way." Students are here on a student's visa that will be revoked if their attendance at, and commitment to, school is unsatisfactory.

Because of the growing acceptance of fee paying overseas students in our schools, unsatisfactory attendance may result in the Rotary Club being liable for the Education Department fee for overseas students (approximately $8,000). We rely on the support of the schools for the success of the exchange program.

Take the student to school for the first few days and arrange an introduction with the School Principal. Guide the student in choosing subjects that are not going to require huge amounts of study, and subjects that he/she has not studied in his/her own country. The student will become involved in Rotary, have outings and official commitments and also go on the Walkabout Tour. It is better to do fewer subjects and do them welll Some students obviously find the going a little tough at school in the early part of their exchange, particularly if English is not their first language.

Students sometimes need a good result to take back to their own school, so that they do not have to repeat the year at home - so help them wherever possible. 'Private' tutoring from host parents, club members or their partners can often make the going easier.

Suggest perhaps one summer and one winter sport for school. Organise the books (cost to the Club), the uniform, (cost to the student), and let the school know when the student will commence school (within a few days). Let them settle in and get over the jetlag! Check their progress at school regularly, and ask to see their reports. If any problems arise, iron them out with the school.

It is important for you and your club to establish who is responsible for the cost of schooling: school fees, if any, books (or school lending library if applicable), sporting events, school outings and camps. The host dub is responsible for the cost of transport to and from school. Let the student know up front, and in this way avoid confusion.

Clubs should meet the cost of school fees and books and help to organise second hand uniforms. Students should be notified of uniform requirements and, where applicable, the availability of second-hand uniforms. Transport costs, other than to school, are always the responsibility of the student.

Settling in with host families

It is a good idea to have a meeting of host parents before the student arrives to explain the club guidelines and to give 'new' host families an idea of what to expect and how to handle a new son or

daughter in the household. Families that have hosted before should be reminded that each student is different and comparisons should not be made between the newcomer and their predecessors. Treat each one as an individual and you will get along famously. Try not to call them by the previous student's name - they get quite upset!

When the student arrives, introduce him/her to host families and show them where they will be living for the next 12 months.

When the student moves in to the first home, please check that they have gone through the questionnaire with the family - usually the first night, and then again after about 10 days, as some ideas may have changed (all part of the settling in process). Maybe adjustments need to be made.

Sexual harassment /sexual abuse

These are very delicate subjects. Rotary has laid down a procedure to deal with these matters, and you and the student should be familiar with the "Youth Exchange Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines" as set out in Form YESP DI 3. In addition you and the student should be aware of the Rotary document "Tips for Students to Use to Stay Safe" Form YESP DI 2. A copy of each of these forms is attached.

Students will be briefed on these subjects and the process by the District Youth Exchange Committee at Orientation (which takes place in February, August and December each year.)

Protecting our students

All volunteers who work with children must apply for a "Blue Card for Child Related Employment as required by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 (Old). This will include all District Committee members, Club Counsellors and Host Families (every person aged 18 years and over who resides in the host family home). If any of these people have a suitability card through their employment (e.g. teachers), they still must apply for the card for volunteers. The District Chairman will contact Counsellors to ensure the provisions of the Act are complied with. See www.bluecard.ald.aov.au website for details of the steps needed by legislation to protect students from harm and promote their wellbeing.

Regular contact with student

Call your student on a regular basis to see how he or she is settling in. Make sure that they attend Rotary regularly (with most dubs, every week).

The student can become involved in fund-raising as well as other activities: the more involved they are, the more your club will get out of the program. Your student should get to know all club members. If the club is arranging a night at the theatre or other function, remember to include the student.

Club members should be encouraged to take the student for weekends, on theatre outings, picnics, short trips etc. You should invite the student for dinner with your family occasionally, and any appropriate outing. In this way, you maintain a good relationship, and remind them of their responsibilities, as required.

Pocket money

The club should agree the amount to be given to the student for pocket money. At present around $125.00 per month seems reasonable. If the club feels that it can afford more, then it is better to help with other costs, rather than say it is pocket money - the student grapevine is amazing and they all compare! Arrange with the treasurer to make these payments on time. It gets embarrassing for the student if they have to ask for their pocket money all the time.

The District requires inbounders to cover the cost of Orientations. These are all compulsory so get the student to mark his/her diary on arrival.

Work

Many students have worked at home to help to pay the cost of their year away and like to have extra funds available to help defray the cost of the Safari etc. The student is not, under any circumstances,

allowed to take a position, either part-time or casual, which has a regular or rostered work schedule. This is a requirement of the visa.

The student may, with approval from the Counsellor, take casual work such as baby-sitting, language or music tutoring etc. and be paid for this work.

However, there must be no conflict with the student's responsibilities to Rotary, School, Club or Host Family. They come first - a job, a distant second.

The Counsellor must strictly control this aspect of the exchange as the workload should never compromise the student's main purpose for being here - school and the experience of a new culture and a new life style in a foreign country.

Travelling

Host Parents are under no obligation to take the student on holidays or provide tours. Where the host family is going away and cannot take the student, they should advise the Counsellor well in advance and the Counsellor is required to make suitable alternative accommodation arrangements for the student during the period of the host family's absence. However, most students do manage to see a lot of Australia due to the generosity of their host parents, their Rotary club and individual Rotarians. Where this occurs, it is an added advantage to the exchange, not an entitlement.

Any arrangements for the Student to travel outside District 9600 requires the prior written approval of the host family, the Counsellor and the District Chairman who has the final say. Students are advised that they will not necessarily be granted permission to travel even after completion of the form.

Where travel is properly authorized, the student is required to abide by the rules and regulations laid down as a condition for such travel. Travel Request Forms are provided by the District committee, usually at Orientation, and it is essential that this form is received by the District Chairman for consideration of the travel request, before the requested travel is commenced.

Host parents should ensure that contact telephone numbers and addresses of the student while away are obtained in case of emergency or the need to contact the student for any reason. Unaccompanied travel (even with another exchange student) outside the normal community area (including the Gold and Sunshine Coasts) is not permitted. Travel outside the District is not allowed unless the student is accompanied by a Rotarian or other responsible adult. Permission for the student to travel outside the District will be at the discretion of the District Chairman.

Where the student (by approved arrangement) is visiting the Gold or Sunshine Coast, the host parents are required to obtain the names and contact details (e.g. mobile number) of the people with whom they will be travelling, details of where they will be going and how, and where and with whom they will be staying.

Under no circumstances may a student conclude travel arrangements on their own initiative and expect the host parents, Club Counsellor or District Chairman to agree with those arrangements.

As a special dispensation, students travelling to the Gold Coast or Fraser Island with their host family for a weekend (2 days) do not need to seek approval for such travel. Approval is required for trips of 3 days or more. Under no circumstances may such travel be unaccompanied.

As a part of the Youth Exchange Program. the D 9600 District Committee arranges student tours - the Walkabout Tour (optional) and the Sunshine Safari (compulsory). The costs of these tours are borne by the student.

Only recognised public transport or host family approved private car is allowed. Travel on commercial transport company trucks is not allowed.

Visitors

Visits from the student's home country should be strongly discouraged. The student usually wants to

experience the host country without the added worry of entertaining family and friends from home. Not only is it an inconvenience and an added expense for hosts, but it can be very disruptive for the student. Monitor this aspect of the year, use your discretion, and advise wisely. Visits within the first 6 months of the exchange are not allowed. Student's parents should not expect to spend more than 10 days with them and students must not act as tour guides for visiting parents. If parents must visit, they should do so during school holidays. Parents must not disrupt student's school, Rotary or host family commitments.

Reports/letters

Make sure that the student sends their required reports to their respective District back home. Ensure that students keep in touch with their sponsoring club. This contact is important, especially when the student returns home. Everyone is happy that there has been a commitment by the student to Rotary and appreciation for the efforts of those who contributed to their exchange year. Sometimes students forget those back home.

Your commitment

If by chance, you are unable to meet the commitment of being Counsellor due to a move or workload or a holiday, please discuss this with the student. Don't just disappear. Please make sure that your deputy or successor takes over with these guidelines to guide them, and is aware of what you have done to date.

Communication

In this day of easy world communication by e-mail, intemet, facsimile and telephone, it is important to discuss with the student the use of these facilities to avoid conflict with the host family. Ensure that the student establishes the rules of communication with the host families at the outset of each stay. Tying up phone lines, payment of the costs, when and how, etc. should be discussed and agreed upon during the question and answer period on day one in each new home.

Counsellors should also be aware that excessive communication with family and friends at home can make the students settling in period more difficult. This is particularly the case with intemet and SMS contact, which may be difficult to monitor.

Facebook

Facebook is a great tool for students to keep in touch with friends and family both here and overseas. It is their private space but students should be cautioned about what is posted on their Facebook as it might impact adversely on their exchange. They should not comment adversely on host families or Rotarians. Students are advised not to include YEP Committee members or other Rotarians on their Facebook to preserve their privacy.

Lastly, the Counsellor should stress to host families the need for immediate contact in the event of any problem or even suspicion of a problem. **A PROBLEM SHARED IS A PROBLEM HALVEDI**

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 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.

Sexual abuse and sexual harassment

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. You will spend a year, or perhaps just an extended period of time, living with a host family in a country other than your own. Rotarians, their families, and non-Rotarian volunteers are expected to use their best efforts to safeguard your welfare and prevent any physical sexual or emotional abuse or harassment befalling you.
Rotary International is committed to protecting your safety and well-being as well as the safety and well-being of every Youth Exchange student, and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. **Your safety and well-being, and that of your fellow Youth Exchange students will always be the first priority.**

What can you do?

Being alert to the common signs of abuse and harassment is a personal responsibility during your period of exchange. Be aware of being placed in situations where harassment/sexual abuse can occur - shopping, being transported from place to place, family activities, being in a house with one other person, etc. If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, you need to express your opinion to the person or persons with you. You could say for example, "When you do that I feel very uncomfortable, because that behaviour is not acceptable in my culture". As a first line of defence, it is not accusatory or aggressive in any way, but assertive and focuses on the student's feelings rather than the intent of the "offender". Alternatively, you might ask "is this action consistent with the Rotary 4-way test?"

If you continue to be worried about your position, you should discuss the issues with your parents at home. But you should also raise the issues with your host Club Counsellor, and/or partner if that is appropriate. Normally, action will be taken by the Club Counsellor to ensure your safety and protection and to support you in your exchange.

If you feel that the support is inadequate and inappropriate from your host Club, or it is taking too long for any remedial action to occur, you are invited to make contact with your District 9600 Youth Exchange Chair as quickly as possible.

The contact details of helpful contacts are in this Manual on page 2. Or on line at http://www.youth-exchange.net/contacts.htm .The D9600 Student Exchange Committee and Rotary International have a policy that requires immediate involvement in an issue of this nature and you will be given the support that you need and require.

Remember, "You have the right to feel safe all the time, and nothing is so awful that you can't talk to someone about it."

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 offences
- indecent exposure.
- exposing a child to sexual or pornographic material.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances, the request for sexual favours 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 desensitise 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; and
- 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 to be determined by the adults to whom allegations are made. After ensuring the safety of the student, all allegations should be immediately reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities. In some countries, this reporting is required by law.

Allegation reporting guidelines

Any adult to whom a student reports an incident of sexual abuse or sexual 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 students 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. *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 from all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the student that this is for his/her own safety and is not a punishment.

3. Report to appropriate, law enforcement authorities.

Immediately **report all cases of sexual abuse or sexual 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 counsellor who has responsibility for seeking the advice of and interacting with appropriate agencies. If the allegation involves the conduct of the Rotarian counsellor, the District Youth Exchange Chairman should be contacted.

4. Avoid gossip and blame

Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by these 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 sexual abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities*. In cases of non-criminal sexual 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 counsellor or District Youth Exchange Chair, follow up to make sure steps are being taken to address the situation.

Post Report Procedures

For use by Rotarian Counsellors and District Youth Exchange Chairs

The student's Rotarian counsellor and the District Youth Exchange Chair are responsible for ensuring that the following steps are taken following an abuse allegation report. Unless otherwise specified, the steps must be taken immediately following the 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 from all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.

3. Contact appropriate, law enforcement agency immediately (even if already done.) If law enforcement agency will not investigate, Club or District Youth Exchange Chair must coordinate the investigation into the allegations.

4. Ensure the student receives immediate support services e.g. counselling.

5. Offer the student an independent, and non-Rotarian counsellor 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 Programme.

6. Contact student's parents. If away from home, give student the option of either staying in his/her host country or returning home.

7. Remove the alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with the specific student and other youths, while investigations are conducted.

8. Co-operate with police or legal investigation.

9. The student's Rotarian counsellor should inform the District Youth Exchange Chair and District Governor of the allegation. Either the District Governor or the District Youth Exchange Chair must inform Rotary International of the allegation within 72 hours, and provide follow-up reports of steps taken, outcome of all investigations and resulting actions.

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 the 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 towards 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-Rotarian volunteers

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of children and young people. Club members should not speculate, make editorial comment, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Club members should be cautioned about speculating or commenting on the matters during the investigation. 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.

Rotary Youth Exchange - Tips for Students to Use to Stay Safe – YESP DI 2

If you have a problem or are worried about something, always tell someone you trust about it, like your teacher, counsellor or host parents – don't suffer in silence!

Always pack your own suitcase and never carry items abroad for others. Take care that you do not unwittingly or wittingly act as a drug courier for someone else given that some countries impose death penalties for drug offences.

Before you go on exchange find out how to use a public phone in your new country. Carry the telephone numbers for the emergency services in that country and keep them handy.

Have your first host parents send you their address written in that language and the script of their country. Organise this before you go on exchange and take it with you.

Always follow the instructions of your leader, teacher and other supervisors, including those at the venue of the visit.

Always tell someone where you are going and what time you will be home – don't change your plans at the last minute, as this can cause confusion.

Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten you or anyone in your group and tell someone responsible.

If you are out at night in the centre of town, stay in places with street lights – wherever you are, make sure that you don't get separated from your friends.

If you need to use a public toilet, go with a friend.

If you are going to or travelling through an impoverished country, do not carry handbags, cameras, or wear jewellery of any kind, even cheap earrings. Watches, necklaces and earrings may be grabbed and pulled away, causing injuries.

If you do get lost or separated follow your plan – or go to a shop or place where you will be seen by lots of people to ask for directions.

If someone you don't know talks to you, just walk away.

Always have details of your accommodation on you, whether it's your host family's address and telephone number or hotel or campsite details.

Always keep enough money to make a telephone call.

Keep your money hidden in an inside pocket, bum bag, money belt or something similar – choose whichever is comfortable for you.

Always arrange for someone to pick you up – never go home alone.

Make sure you know the person who is coming to pick you up. Never get into a car unless it is with this arranged person.

If you are on a bus or train and someone makes you feel unsafe, move to a seat near the driver.

Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly.

Be sensitive to local codes and customs.

Think things through carefully before you act and do not take unnecessary risks.

Always look and behave confidently.