



## Club Counselor **Handbook**

A comprehensive guide to nearly everything the Club Counselor needs to know, including Club Counselor To-Do's for Inbounds and Outbounds; expanded detail on specific subjects; using the HUB; and Appendix containing relevant documents.



**Updated: August 2025**

This handbook is adapted from one prepared by Jesse Steed for use by the Northfield Rotary Club. Many thanks to Jesse Steed and the many helping hands of the Rotary Club of Northfield in the preparation of this handbook.

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## INTRODUCTION

Included in this handbook are the specific tasks for the **Club Counselor** and a description with tips and tricks for a successful exchange year presented in a calendar format.

## HOW IT WORKS

Your Rotary club participates in youth exchange via North Star Youth Exchange, which facilitates one to one exchange for Rotary Districts 5950 and 5960 covering much of Central and Southern Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. Students must apply directly to North Star for the opportunity to have an outbound experience in one of many countries in the program.

Your club works in partnership with North Star to help outbound students prepare for their exchange year. When a Rotary club sends a student to another country, it is expected to host a student in return. North Star notifies your club of inbound student assignments for which it is responsible. For every student that North Star accepts, one student will be assigned to North Star from the same destination country. Typically, more than 50 students participate.

# **SUCCESS FACTORS FOR A STRONG ROTARY**

## **YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

- The leadership has a positive and committed attitude and knows why this is an important program.
- There is a Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) committee of at least three
  - Having someone else know what the Youth Exchange Officer (YEO) does is important for succession or emergency.
- The Hosting Club gives strong and unwavering support to the student and the Club Board receives monthly updates about the status of the program.
  - The Club President is notified immediately if a major issue arises.
  - The Club is provided with news about the Outbound student and information about the Inbound student.
- The emergency fund is not used for anything except to pay debts of the student (never disbursed for the East Coast Trip, etc.)
  - If the student has debts pending at the time they return home, retain the security deposit and return it after all debts are paid. If there are no pending debts, give the security deposit to the student at the airport when they fly home.
- The YEO and the Club Counselor are not related.
- The YEO and the Club Counselor are never the Host Family, except in circumstances when it is for a very short period of time (one week or less).
- The Club Counselor has a strong relationship with the Inbound Student.
- The Student has three Host Families.
- The RYE Committee has information on the Local Rotary Club website and include these sources of assistance:
  - Link to [www.northstarrotary.com](http://www.northstarrotary.com)
  - Contact information to the YEO
- The Club is always looking for potential Host Families. Host Families should always be looked for outside of the Club first.
  - Remember to invite Host Families to join Rotary.
- Develop and maintain a good relationship with the High School.

# **NORTH STAR VOLUNTEER TEAM**

Chair  
Executive Assistant

chair@northstarrotary.com  
[office@northstarrotary.com](mailto:office@northstarrotary.com)

[CLICK HERE](#) or Scan this QR code to view the North Star Contact List



Go to our website at: [NorthStarRotary.com](http://NorthStarRotary.com)  
Contact List is on Volunteer page under Officer & Volunteer Resources

## **CLUB SUPPORT GROUPS**

The North Star Club Support Team has multiple members that each support a list of clubs. To find your Club Support Team contact, use the link or QR code above to view the North Star Contact List.

## **CLUB ROLES (This may vary from club to club)**

### **YEO - Youth Exchange Officer**

The YEO oversees the club's youth exchange program for inbound and outbound students and works closely with the CCs, OC, HFC, and YPO and other club members who assist with various events like excursions such as sporting events trips to the zoo, host family orientation, student orientation, graduation party, etc. The YEO works closely with school officials, host families, inbounds and club members and handles the required paperwork and its processing for inbound and outbound students.

**CC - Club Counselor**

The CC works one-on-one with an inbound student as their advocate and confidant throughout their entire exchange year which begins months before their arrival. The CC maintains regular contact with the student and host families and files monthly reports in the HUB.

**OC - Outbound Coordinator**

The OC oversees the outbound students including presentations to the high schools in the fall, helping with the applications, organizing the preliminary interviews at the club level, recruiting correspondents, organizing practice student presentations, etc.

**HFC - Host Family Coordinator**

The HFC works closely with the host families throughout the year assisting the YEO with the student binders such as the traveling notebook, the host family binders, and assists with the host family interviews.

**YPO - Youth Protection Officer**

The YPO is a North Star resource, providing advice on serious issues relating to safety or of a criminal nature.

**CO – Country Officer**

North Star volunteers, the COs coordinate exchanges with their counterparts overseas.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE UNITED STATES** **DEPARTMENT OF STATE REGULATIONS AND** **NORTH STAR REQUIREMENTS**

1. Club Counselors must submit a volunteer application through our website: [northstarrotary.com](http://northstarrotary.com).
2. Club Counselors must submit a background check. A link will be sent to the volunteer upon completion of the volunteer application.
3. Club Counselors must take the Department of State training each year. A link will be sent to the volunteer upon completion of the volunteer application.
4. Club Counselors (and all volunteers) must complete the NAYEN Volunteer Training following submission of their volunteer application.

5. Club Counselors (and all volunteers) must complete the NAYEN Youth Protection Training once every three years. A link will be sent to the volunteer upon completion of the volunteer application.
6. Club Counselors are encouraged to complete the NAYEN Club Counselor Training following submission of their volunteer application.

Inbound students must be provided with a profile of the first host family, school and community prior to arrival. (Copies of the Welcome Letter/Email are to be uploaded to the students' HUB documents and the document type is YEO Welcome Letter.)

Two in-home visits with all host family members present must be completed. Two different vetted volunteers must complete each visit. (If the YEO completes the initial interview visit, they cannot complete the second interview visit.)

The initial in-home interview visit must be completed as part of the vetting process for the Host Family. Once done, the "Home Interview Report" must be submitted in the HUB or Web Portal.

The second in-home visit is required within 60 days of the student moving in. It must be conducted by a vetted volunteer (who did not complete the initial interview visit). This should be a scheduled visit. They need to check in with the family to see if everything is ok and the student is well cared for. They also need to check the student's bedroom and bathroom. Once done, the "Follow-Up Visit Report" must be submitted in the HUB or Web Portal.

Make no monetary payments or other incentives to Host Families.

- Small gifts, such as gift cards, are allowed.

**Do not take the student's passport or other government documents from the student unless the student requests your assistance for safe storage of these documents.**

These documents must be in their possession or accessible to the student at all times.

**Never place the passport in a safe deposit box that does not have 24 hours a day accessibility.**

Provide the hosting High School with the student's translated graded transcripts in English. The entire student application can be given to the High School. Ask your school if they want this electronically or in paper form.

- The school nurse will want to see the immunization record. Country Officers will communicate with the student that these need to be updated prior to arrival. Any boosters needed, once in the country, will be at the cost of the

student. The status of these immunizations will be noted on the HUB under the 'Documents' tab.

The student will receive an ID card before they arrive. The card will have information about the student, their SEVIS number, insurance information, information about their first Host Family. Every time thereafter that a student moves, it is the responsibility of the Club Counselor or the YEO to update their student's ID card via the HUB to reflect the new Host Family information and provide a copy of the ID card to the student.

## **CLUB COUNSELOR ROLE**

First and foremost, the Club Counselor (CC) is **the student's advocate – a confidant, guide, and resource when help is needed.** It takes time to build the relationship, but it can start with the first email sent before they even arrive. Being available, listening to and addressing all their questions, and providing them with the information they need are major strengths of the CC. Helping them to adapt to our culture and language, assisting in navigating difficult situations with friends and host families, and doing something fun with them are important functions of the CC. Close contact like this often results in a life-long relationship!

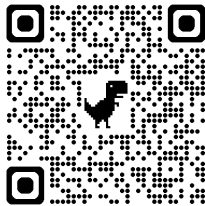

## **GETTING TO KNOW YOUR STUDENT - FIRST & SECOND NIGHT QUESTIONS**

There is a list of First Night Questions and Second Day Questions available using the QR code or link below. Although they are called first and second day questions, we do not advise trying to get through all of these questions in the first two days after your student arrives! It is too much to go through that quickly. But these are great starting points for conversations and there are some really important questions that the student will need the answers to in order to have a smooth transition to the US and to each additional Host Family later on. Review them in priority order with the student within the first few days or weeks.

Please review all of the questions in the First Night Questions and the Second Night Questions. Many of the First Night Questions are things the Student and Host Family will need to discuss. Many of the Second Night Questions are things the Student will need to discuss with you or other members of the Rotary Club.



*Remember to remind the student to review the appropriate questions with each new Host Family when they move.*

<p><b>Interactive First Night Questions:</b> <a href="https://nayen.org/first-night-questions/">https://nayen.org/first-night-questions/</a></p> 	<p><b>Interactive Second Day Questions:</b> <a href="https://nayen.org/second-day-questions/">https://nayen.org/second-day-questions/</a></p> 
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## **TIMELINE OF CLUB COUNSELOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

(A general calendar for North Star Inbound Students is attached for reference.)

### **MARCH / APRIL**

#### **STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS**

Each CC is assigned a specific inbound student who will arrive in August. Most exchanges are from August to July, though there is the occasional exchange from January – December for a few countries like Australia or South Africa. The CC should connect with the inbound student by email with a personal introduction and general introduction to your club's city. By exchanging emails, WhatsApp messages, DMs, etc., with the student, questions will come up. The CC should direct any questions about paperwork or visas to the YEO or North Star support.

After host families are vetted and approved, the CC will help connect the student with host families by sending the student's application to the host family. The student will be getting emails from various people such as the country officer, North Star chair and others, and may ask questions or send documents to the CC that should be directed to other people. The YEO should be consulted on these matters to help get the information to the right place.

## **MAY / JUNE**

### **HOST FAMILY INTERVIEWS**

Host family recruitment is a year-round process but the applications and interviews usually happen in May and June. The CC assists the YEO with host family interviews and initial home visits. A potential host family begins the application online on the North Star website which also requires background checks, two references and a face-to-face interview at their home. The home interview is usually given by the YEO, CC and host family coordinator. It is a time to review all the rules with the family, answer any questions they have, talk about the structure of Rotary, North Star, local club support, and the yearly calendar. The home is not given a complete inspection, though the bedroom and bathroom to be used by the student are viewed. Following the visit, the YEO or CC files a report on the HUB under the host family record. Crucial questions relate to the suitability of the host family to participate in the program. They must agree to follow the rules, engage completely in collaboration with the CC and YEO in supporting the student's academic success, and promote the values of Rotary. Every host family member must be on board with hosting, which can be as simple as asking each family member individually, "Are you ready to host a student?"

## **JULY**

### **TRAVEL ITINERARY**

The CC should find out the student's travel info and arrival date, entering all the travel details in the hub. A clear copy of the itinerary should be uploaded in the HUB as a PDF or image file. The travel info must include arrival and departure dates **(it must be a round trip ticket)**. The CC should coordinate the arrival arrangements with host families and help coordinate the airport welcome party.

### **MID-YEAR & YEAR END TRIPS**

Even though it's a long way off, talking about the end of year East Coast Trip (ECT) is recommended, sending the most recent flyer for general details so the student knows the approximate cost, which is usually around \$3,000. There may also be a Hawaii trip or other RYE organized trip through North Star or other regional Rotary entities. The student cannot hope to earn enough money through small odd jobs to pay for the trips, so they must fund it with money from their parents or other means if they are to attend the special ECT or other RYE trips.

## **SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES**

It is important to get a head start on the academic and social interests of the student and start thinking about ways to help the student get connected at school and in the community. Inbound students that get involved in sports or extracurricular activities right away have the best experience and cope well with culture shock, homesickness, and adjusting to host family life. While the Host Rotary Club pays for at least one activity fee for each inbound, some sports and activities have extra fees which the Host Rotary Club might pay for on a case-by-case basis. Cross country is a very social fall sport that is suitable for all skill levels. Students may not be eligible to participate in varsity sports if they have already graduated from high school in their home country. Specific questions about eligibility should be addressed to coaches and school guidance counselors. If the student is being hosted by a coach or teacher, they may not be able to play varsity sports. Some sports do not allow inbounds to play JV or B level, so it is varsity or nothing for some sports.

## **MEDICAL PREPARATION**

The CC should help review immunization records and communicate any additional shots that are needed, upload medical documents to the HUB, and encourage the student to get all shots in their home country. Available medical care should be explained to the student, such as what to expect from doctor visits, prescriptions, expenses, the time gap between the doctor visit and receiving the bill after insurance has paid, etc. To help with surprise medical bills, each student must arrive with the \$400 emergency fund to be delivered to the YEO/CC within one week of their arrival. This money is available to the student during the year for significant medical expenses and is returned after clearing any debts in June/July, a few days before their final departure.

When a student gets sick, the host family might consult the CC prior to taking the student to the doctor, though the general advice is for the host family to treat the student as they would their own child. The student has their own medical insurance and is responsible for paying their own medical bills. The CC should ensure the YEO's or the CC's address is used for medical expenses and not the host family's address. The student and the host family may need help to submit reimbursement claims to insurance. The forms are in the HUB under utilities and documents. All medical bills go to the YEO or the CC to ensure they are paid by the student prior to departure. Chasing down payment for bills after the student returns to their home country can be nearly impossible. It is best to set the expectation from the beginning. One option is to make note of every medical visit the student does, and track that each one has been paid. Since insurance

companies can take several months to process claims, it can be a challenge to account for all the medical bills by the time the student leaves.

### **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

Not every student going on exchange needs academic credit, but it is important to find out and discuss the school requirements along with their academic interests. Sending links to local high school resources and class information ahead of time will help the student make decisions about classes to take. Many students will still have a year or two left to finish high school in their home country and they may want to take classes focused on American culture, or they may choose to take advanced chemistry and engineering. It is important to talk about the daily routine, school holidays, and leaving the school to attend Rotary meetings for lunch on Thursdays. **Please note that students are not allowed to take classes in their home country while on exchange, whether online or through other means.**

## **AUGUST**

### **VETTING AND BACKGROUND CHECK**

There are three levels of vetting/background checks: North Star, District 5960, and US State Department. The YEO will check the status of all volunteers on August 1 and send appropriate update notices. Access to the HUB requires a valid background check.

### **CELL PHONE**

Rotary clubs vary in how they address providing cell phone coverages for exchange students. One example is to provide a sim card to students and have the local club pay for a basic cell phone plan, with the student paying for cost overages. Discuss with your Club YEO how cell phones are handled and explain to the student any phone plan limits, such as local calling only and limited data. When the phone number is available make sure it is recorded in the HUB, in the traveling notebook, and in your own phonebook.

### **AIRPORT ARRIVALS**

Coordinate & attend pickup of student at the airport. Note the terminal. Invite all three host families and if possible, arrange for a meal together (at a restaurant) on the way home from the airport. When you are at the airport, greet the student, take a group picture, send the picture to the student's natural parents by email/text, Report arrival on the HUB and mark as arrived. Give the student's traveling notebook to the first host family.

### **BANK ACCOUNT AND EMERGENCY FUNDS**

The student will need to deliver the emergency fund to you. Upload the receipt for the emergency funds to the HUB. Talk with your YEO as to how the funds are to be held.

Take your student to open a bank account. The appointment can take up to two hours. You are a cosigner on the bank account and should monitor the activity online on a regular basis. The student will receive \$100/month from your Rotary club, deposited into their bank account. The student may want to deposit money from back home, or the student's family may choose to make a transfer to fund the account. One of the common problems after opening the account is activating the debit card when it arrives a week after the bank account is opened. Pay attention to the pin code that will be needed to activate the card. Write down this information in the student's white binder and be prepared to help them a week later to activate the debit card.

### **SCHOOL REGISTRATION**

An appointment must be scheduled with the high school guidance counselor to register the student for classes. The school staff should be reminded that the student will miss school for Rotary meetings, which should be considered when scheduling. The student should also receive help in registering for sports and activities. Other appointments may be required for the student to meet with the technology specialist, pick up a computer, and other orientation activities. Part of the start of school requires setting up online accounts. The YEO and/or CC needs to have access to school accounts for grades, lunch account, sports registration, and other potential online accounts. There can be a lot of usernames and passwords to keep track of. The Host Rotary Club pays for school lunches, if applicable, and the CC should alert the YEO when the student's lunch account balance gets low. It is important for the CC to check all these accounts on a regular basis and communicate with the student as needed to prod to submit late homework or suggest bringing an extra sandwich or bottle of water from home to save money at lunch time.

### **YMCA**

Many local YMCAs offer inbound students free memberships. The CC should take the student to the YMCA to sign them up.

## **SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER**

### **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

The CC should attend conferences or check-in with teachers to address any concerns about the student's academic performance. Tracking the student's

grades online is an easy way to keep up on when you remind the student to turn in missing assignments. It is common for the students to want to switch classes to find the right fit when it comes to understanding the vocabulary of complex subjects, or the right level for math. The teachers should be asked about how the student is participating in class and whether the student should be encouraged to work harder at participation.

## **NOVEMBER / DECEMBER**

### **THE FIRST MOVE**

The CC should coordinate, schedule, and move the student from one host family to the next. Since the move from one family to another can be an emotional time for the host family and the student, the counselor is the one to physically drive the student from one family to the next. Specific times should be arranged with both families and the student so everyone knows the schedule for the move. The HUB should be updated as soon as the student is dropped off. The traveling notebook should be given to the new family. A new ID Card should be printed and delivered to the student after updating the HUB because it contains all the current contact info for Rotary support and the student and current host family.

## **JANUARY / FEBRUARY**

### **JANUARY ARRIVALS**

Some countries send us students in January and they stay until December, such as Australia and South Africa. If we have a January arrival, we need to line up host families and do the airport run around the start of the 2nd semester, usually in mid January.

### **NORTH STAR ORIENTATION**

There will be a Saturday orientation in Roseville, usually in late February, for the future outbounds, and the inbounds are required to attend. The CC will be asked to help the YEO coordinate rides as needed.

## **FEBRUARY / MARCH**

### **THE SECOND MOVE**

The inbound moves to the third host family around spring break which is usually mid to late March. Make plans well in advance as families may have vacations to work around. The host families should be put in contact to share details about the student as needed.

## **APRIL**

### **DEPARTURE TRAVEL**

The student needs to confirm their final departure flight details. Arrangements should also be made for who will take the student to the airport. It is good to plan a few months ahead due to summer vacation plans. The travel flight details and the PDF of the itinerary need to be added to the HUB.

Make sure that the inbound's departure date is consistent with the departure dates set forth in the North Star calendar. Variance from those dates can only be allowed with the prior written approval of the North Star Chair.

## **MAY / JUNE**

### **FAREWELL PARTY**

The CC may help coordinate and schedule a gathering of the student's host families, perhaps one of the families would be willing to host it. This is a casual event to lightly reminisce and help bring closure to the exchange year.

### **DEPARTURE**

The CC should confirm the inbound's departure date with the current host family, once again making sure all the travel itinerary and tickets are uploaded in the HUB. It is a good idea to talk to the student about a communication plan after their return, such as, "Will you message me after you have returned safely?", how to convey medical bills that show up late, etc. The current host family usually takes the student to the airport. It is typically a more subdued affair than the arrival with little fanfare.

### **CHECKOUT CHECKLIST**

A few days before departure the student needs to be taken to the bank to close out the account. The YEO will provide updated instructions as to how the emergency money will be handled. All the inbounds' host families should be consulted to see if there are any debts to be paid and any medical bills that are expected.

**Note:** Many times a stray medical bill will be sent to a host family or the counselor several months after the student leaves. The host families should deliver any bills or mail intended for the student to the CC so the Host Rotary Club can handle asking the student to pay it or the Host Rotary Club will pay it. The host family should not pay the bill. The emergency money will be returned to the inbound less any amount reserved for medical bills.

The student must return school items such as books, sports equipment, and computer/tablet. The traveling notebook must be returned to the YEO after the student departs. If any items have been loaned to the student by Host Rotary Club or others, such as bikes, ski equipment, electronics, clothes, etc., the CC should help organize the return of these items back to their owners. The CC should enlist the help of the YEO and other counselors at any point as needed.

## **MONTH VARIES**

### **STUDENT ROTARY PRESENTATION**

The CC should assist the inbound with their Rotary presentation - offering to help them practice, ensuring they have their presentation available 100% offline on a portable drive, etc. The usual format is a PowerPoint presentation on a laptop computer. Showing videos with audio can pose problems so practicing first on the Rotary system is recommended. The most enjoyable presentations include the inbound's personal perspectives on their country, their food, their world, their school, their family, their reason for being a Rotary Exchange student, etc. The inbounds are told by other sources in the exchange program to give standard background information about their country, for example, the size of the country, the population, food and culture, exports, etc. Feedback from Rotary club members show that the most valuable components of the presentation are what may seem to the student as the most boring and easily overlooked such as including "a day in the life", what the student does on an average day back home, school schedule, the subjects they learn in school, the extracurricular activities, jobs, the things they do with their friends, etc.

## **PERIODIC TASKS**

### **WEEKLY**

#### **CHECK-IN WITH THE INBOUND**

Every week at your Rotary meeting, the CC should greet the inbound, ask how school is going, ask if they need anything, and have a chat to check in. Paying attention to their birthday and any special holidays from their home country along with learning a few words in their native language are easy ways to show care and concern. An occasional call or text with notices of local events, an



invitation to Dairy Queen, and staying in communication, are thoughtful ways to vary the check-in process.

## **MONTHLY**

### **GRADES**

The CC should monitor the inbound's grades and missing or late assignments, prompting that missing assignments may be part of the grade. Reminders to participate in class may not go amiss. Remember that straight As are not required, however. Students are expected to do their best in school.

### **BANK**

Check the bank account balance regularly for any concerns.

### **LUNCH ACCOUNT (IF APPLICABLE)**

Check the school lunch account balance regularly and notify the YEO when the balance gets low.

### **HOST FAMILY**

The CC should check in with the host family by phone or email or in person to ask how hosting is going. The host families often forget the rules of the program so it may be helpful to remind them that the Host Rotary Club pays for school lunches (lunch account), school fees, and monthly stipend. At times it may be helpful to remind both the host family and inbound to have open conversations about money so each understands who should pay for what items at the store, online, dinners out, etc.

### **COUNSELOR REPORT**

The CC must submit an inbound contact report in The HUB every month. This report should include a narrative of how the student is doing, including any seemingly minor things, as they can sometimes become big things. This includes a monthly check-in with the host family - even if it's just to say thank you for hosting and asking if they have any concerns. This report is viewed by the Country Officer, District Officers and your Club's Youth Exchange committee that has access to the HUB. It is not viewed by the Host Family or the student. Every report should have at least a couple sentences of narration, to give a more in depth idea of how the student is doing.

### **COUNSELOR MEETING**

The CC should connect every month with the YEO to share highs and lows, concerns, questions, areas of frustration and tips to manage any challenges. Working as a team and sharing the load are essential to a successful exchange year and to prevent burnout. Leaning on each other and being ready to jump in can help create a positive and energetic response in other members of the team.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **TRANSPORTATION**

The CC should offer to help with transporting the inbound to North Star events, school events, local Rotary events, and the occasional social activity. The student may be required to attend North Star events, which usually occur on Saturdays throughout the year.

The weekly school pickup and drop off is also a good time to connect with the student briefly.

### **HOST FAMILY SUPPORT**

Both big and small issues should be reported to the YEO and noted in the monthly HUB reports. Serious issues should be reported to the North Star Youth Protection Officer and YEO immediately. Providing support, advocating for the student, and assisting with resolving issues and conflicts between host families and student should be done with the help of the YEO and the HFC.

### **HOST FAMILY TRAVEL**

The inbound is allowed to travel with the host family. The CC and the YEO need to be notified of travel plans. Travel within the United States is fine, but we need to be notified of planned overnight stays. In case of an emergency, either with the inbound or with the inbound's natural family back in their home country, we need to know where the inbound is and how to reach them. The traveling notebook, passport, and insurance information should always travel with the inbound.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

Students may travel to only Mexico or Canada, and only with a host family or Rotarian, upon obtaining the prior written approval of Inbound's natural parents/guardians, the YEO, Country Officer and North Star Chair (e.g. Local Rotary member invited the inbound to go to Mexico on spring break with their family). Please note that some VISAs are single entry VISAs, and returning to the United States may be difficult.

Before departing on out of country travel, the inbound's DS-2019 must be signed off by the North Star Responsible Officer and North Star recommends that the inbound's natural parents sign a Consent to Travel form and a Medical Authorization form.

## **TRAVEL REQUESTS**

The student may ask to travel solo, hang out with other inbounds from other clubs in other cities, or visit with their natural parents. The student's natural parents may want to come in June and travel for three weeks with the student before returning home. These are all against our policies, but in special circumstances we may be able to gather details of the request and let the North Star Chair have the final say, with input from the country officer, club counselor, host families, and YEO.

## **HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS & EXPENSES**

The student is responsible for all expenses related to attending Homecoming, Prom, or any other school events. These items may include buying a dress or renting a tuxedo, tickets, limo rentals with friends, photos, meals, parties, yearbooks, etc.

## **COVID-19**

The start of the global pandemic raised many questions and brought many changes. North Star has a Crisis Management Plan in place that addresses many different situations, including students contracting COVID. If a student or a host family is exposed to or contracts COVID, advise your YEO immediately.

## **WEBSITES/EMAILS/CONTACT INFO**

North Star Youth Exchange website  
The HUB  
North Star Office (763) 200-4036

northstarrotary.com/  
<https://yehub.net/NOR.php>  
[office@northstarrotary.com](mailto:office@northstarrotary.com)

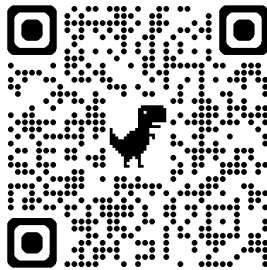
[CLICK HERE](#) or Scan this QR code to view the North Star Contact List



Go to our website at: [NorthStarRotary.com](http://NorthStarRotary.com)  
Contact List is on Volunteer page under Officer & Volunteer Resources

## **CALENDAR FOR INBOUND PROGRAM**

Subject to change - See exact dates on northstarrotary.com Calendar page  
(under About), or on the HUB Document Library, under Utilities tab.



# **SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT**

## **ALLIGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES**

Rotary International is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth program participants 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 young people must always be the first priority.

### **Definitions**

#### **Sexual abuse**

Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite sex. This includes non-touching offenses, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

#### **Sexual harassment**

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 used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims.

Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments

#### **Who should determine if it is abuse or harassment?**

Upon hearing allegations, adults should not determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes sexual abuse or harassment. Instead, after ensuring the safety of the

student, the adult should immediately report all allegations to appropriate child protection or law enforcement authorities. In Minnesota and Wisconsin, this reporting is required by law.

### **Allegation Reporting Guidelines**

Any adult to whom a Rotary youth program participant reports an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment must follow these reporting guidelines:

1. Receive the report.
  - a. Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse or harassment. 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 in order to make it stop and ensure that it doesn't happen to others.
  - c. Get the facts, but don't interrogate. Ask questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Reassure the young person that they did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the young person's motives. Remember that your responsibility is to present the story to the proper authorities.
  - d. Be nonjudgmental and reassuring. Avoid criticizing anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It's especially important not to blame or criticize the young person. Emphasize that the situation was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature to come to you.
  - e. Document the allegation. Make a written record of the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Try to use the young person's words and record only what they told you.
2. Protect the young person.

Ensure the safety and well-being of the youth program participant by removing them from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the youth that this is being done for his or her safety and is not a punishment.

3. Report the allegations to appropriate authorities - child protection or law enforcement.

Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment - first to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation and then to the club and district leadership for follow-through. In North Star, the appropriate law enforcement office is first the local police and then the Youth Protection Officer for North Star.

In most situations, the first Rotary contact is the North Star Youth Protection Officer, who is responsible for seeking the advice of appropriate agencies and interacting with them. If the allegation involves the conduct of this Rotarian, the district youth program chair will be the first Rotary contact.

North Star will cooperate with police or legal investigations.

North Star has researched local, state, and national laws related to sexual abuse and harassment prevention and notes the following legal requirements of which all adult volunteers participating in the program must be aware: Minnesota and Wisconsin state mandatory reporter guidelines apply to all adult volunteers.

#### 4. Avoid gossip and blame.

Don't tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Be careful to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

North Star maintains the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person by enforcing the following procedures: the names of the student and the alleged perpetrator will be held as private by the reporter, the Youth Protection Officer, the North Star Chair, and the student's Country Officer(s).

#### 5. Do not challenge the alleged offender.

Don't contact the alleged offender. In case of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of noncriminal harassment, the district governor is responsible for follow-through and will contact the alleged offender after the young person has been moved to a safe environment. The district governor may designate this task to a district youth protection officer or district review committee.

## Follow-through Procedures

Either the district youth programs chair or district youth protection officer must ensure that the following steps are taken immediately after an abuse allegation is reported.

1. Confirm that the youth program participant has been removed from the situation immediately and has no contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
2. If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the district youth protection officer or district review committee should coordinate an independent review of the allegations.
3. Ensure that the student receives immediate support services.
4. Offer the young person an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent his or her interests. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with the youth program.
5. Contact the student's parents or legal guardian.
  - a. If the student is away from home, the student and his or her parents should decide whether to stay in country or return home. If the student stays in country, written authorization from the student's parents or legal guardian is required. If the student and the student's parents choose for the student to return home, consult with police before making travel arrangements. If an investigation is pending, the police may not approve of the student leaving the country.
6. Remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with any other young participants in Rotary programs and activities while investigations are conducted.
7. Cooperate with the police or legal investigation.
8. Inform the district governor of the allegation. **Either the district governor, district youth protection officer, or other district youth program chair must inform RI of the allegation within 72 hours and provide follow-up reports of steps taken and the status of investigations.**
9. After the authorities have completed their investigation, the district must follow through to make sure the situation is being addressed. Specifically, North Star will conduct an independent and thorough review of any allegations of sexual abuse or harassment.

## Post-allegation Report Considerations

1. Responding to the needs of the youth program participant North Star will adopt a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting a young



person after an allegation report. The youth program participant is likely to feel embarrassed or confused and may become withdrawn.

After a report of harassment or abuse, students may have mixed feelings about remaining on the exchange. If they do choose to stay, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary Club. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country but change to a different host club.

Although club members and host families may have trouble understanding how the student is feeling, the student would find it helpful to know that the club continues to be reassuring and supportive. Club members and host families may feel ambivalent about their roles and unclear about their boundaries. However, they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

## 2. Addressing issues within the club

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of youth. Club members should not speculate or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Rotarians must not become involved in investigations. Making comments about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers violates both the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth and 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 INTERNATIONAL'S 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' spouses 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.

Adopted by the RI Board of Directors, Nov. 2006

# **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR INBOUND** **STUDENTS**



**North Star Rotary Youth Exchange  
Behavior Expectations for  
Inbound Students**

## **Responses for Clubs and Country Officers**

### **Purpose:**

1. To ensure compliance with the Rotary International Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth “to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, Rotarians’ spouses 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.
2. To establish a clear process for response related to North Star behavior expectations for the District, Clubs, and Students.
3. To ensure, to the best of our ability, that each student and club has a successful exchange experience.

### **Guiding Principles:**

1. The behaviors discussed in this document are *mistakes* that exchange students make at times. All Rotary volunteers should refer to these behaviors as *mistakes* in recognition of the fact that teenage brains are not fully developed with respect to impulse control and judgment *and* to ensure that students are not labeled as “bad exchange students” when they make these errors.
2. The system of managing student behavior is based on both the Rotary International and North Star Guidelines for a transparent process to handle student mistakes.
  - a. In our transparency, we will do our best to keep our country counterparts informed of both Student Improvement Plans, and Yellow/Red Cards. It is our goal that by keeping them informed, we will have our country counterparts’ assistance in helping students have a successful exchange.
  - b. When we inform our country counterparts of an issue, we will courtesy copy the student’s biological parents in hopes that they can be a positive influence for their student’s successful exchange as well.
3. Students send themselves home, we do not.

## Procedures for Rotary Volunteers:

1. The Club Support Team will continue to support the clubs.
2. The Youth Protection Officer and Youth Protection Team will be a stand-alone Team reporting directly to the Chair.
  - a. The Youth Protection Team will act as a resource on abuse, harassment, and other risks and crises.
  - b. The Youth Protection Officer and Team members should have professional experience in counseling, social work, law, law enforcement, or child development.
3. The Critical Incident Team will be reorganized to form the Incident Review Team. These are the district level Response Teams for mistakes or safety issues.
4. All three groups - the Club Support Team, the Youth Protection Team, and the Incident Review Team - are available Response Teams for student behaviors.
5. The Behavior Expectations document (found later in this document) is meant for the YEO as a resource to allow them to effectively manage their student issues.
6. Student behaviors will be categorized into 4 areas:
  - a. Relationship Issues
  - b. Yellow Card Issues
  - c. Orange-level Issues: behaviors that could result in a Yellow Card and Final Warning or Red Card, depending on the circumstances.
  - d. Red Card Issues
7. The Youth Exchange Officer can seek assistance from the Club Support team at any time.
  - a. The Youth Protection Team is also available for the Youth Exchange Officer as a resource.

## Best Practices:

- Always remember that “the adolescent must never be treated as a child, for that is a stage of life that he has surpassed. It is better to treat an adolescent as if he had greater value than he/she actually shows than as if he had less and let him feel that his merits and self-respect are disregarded” (M. Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*).
- All volunteers should listen to students about issues with their host families, especially if the student is “failing” according to the host family or club.

- There are times when the host family and student are not a good fit. *It is not a personal failing* for the host family or student if the student is moved to a different family in these situations.
- The host family and student will be encouraged to continue their relationship with each other if the student is moved to another family.

## Processes:

1. Most student mistakes fall into the category of Relationship Issues, that is, the student needs help improving behaviors so that they can have a successful exchange.
  - a. In this case, the issues will be handled at the club level with the Club Support Team as a resource.
  - b. Students will be given a Student Improvement Plan\* developed with the club Youth Exchange Officer and Counselor, who may also include the host family, Country Officer, Club Support Team, etc. in the process.
  - c. Student Improvement Plans are generally considered to be a non-disciplinary response.
  - d. All Student Improvement Plans will be copied to the student's Country Officer and Youth Protection Team.
  - e. Country Officers will send a copy of the Student Improvement Plan to their counterpart and the student's biological parents so that they can keep in the loop and assist the student as well.
2. Behaviors that rise to a Yellow, Orange, or Red level will be worked on as a team that will include the Youth Exchange Officer, Counselor, Club Support Team, and also potentially the Youth Exchange Team and Incident Review team.
  - a. If it is best for the student and/or host family, the student may be placed in a neutral home, locally or outside of the community, for a cooling off period for all concerned.
  - b. The Youth Protection Team and the Incident Review Team are available to assist the Club Support Team.
  - c. The Chair will make a final decision on any Yellow, Orange, or Red Card issues based on the findings and recommendation of the Response Team(s).
  - d. Any Yellow Card\* or Red Card\* will be routed through the student's Country Officer and Youth Protection Team.

- i. The Country Officer will relay a copy of the Yellow or Red Card to their counterpart in the student's home district and biological parents. (Sample email to be provided.)\*
  - ii. The Youth Protection Team will review the document to upload it to the HUB and take any further actions as required by Rotary International and/or the US State Department.
3. All reports involving alleged safety issues (student as victim of a crime, sexual harassment, or abuse) will be sent to the Youth Protection Team and the student's Country Officers.
  - a. The Youth Protection Team will be the primary resource for student safety issues and will work with the Club Support Team to ensure the student's safety in a prompt manner.
  - b. This will help ensure that we continue to be in compliance with Rotary International and US State Department rules in reporting to them for any serious incidents involving students in a timely manner.
4. The students will be provided with a written copy of the North Star Behavior Expectations at the first orientation.
  - a. They will review these behavior expectations with their County Officer and must sign a copy of the Behavior Expectations, indicating their understanding.
  - b. This signed copy will be collected by the Country Officer to be uploaded to the HUB and copied to their country counterpart and the students' biological parents. (A sample email will be provided.)\*
  - c. Ultimately, this will help students understand that they choose to send themselves home based on their actions that are in violation of North Star Behavior Expectations.
5. Online training and supporting documents (including a sample timeline) will be made available for Youth Exchange Officers and Country Officers on these behavior expectations and procedures prior to the First Inbound Orientation

*The following is taken from the Behavior Expectations Document that the inbound students sign:*

**You will NOT be punished or sent home if you are the victim of sexual harassment or assault.**

**You will NOT be punished or sent home if you are a victim of a crime or abuse.**

**North Star will do whatever we can to make sure you are safe.**

The issues listed below are not a list of all behaviors that can result in a consequence from North Star. These are common examples so that you know what is generally expected of you.

We will abide by the Rotary 4-Way Test and expect that you will, too:

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

We at North Star - your Youth Exchange Officer, your Counselor, your Country Officer, and the District Leadership - want you to have a successful exchange year.

**Relationship Issues:** These are things that make it difficult for you to have a successful exchange. You will generally not be sent home for relationship issues.

Examples of Behaviors:

- Not making friends.
- Not participating in after-school or community activities.
- Being in your room so much that it is interfering with your exchange.
- Internet or cell phone use that is interfering with your exchange.
- So much contact with your biological family that it is interfering with your exchange.
- Failing grades, so long as you are participating in class, turning in homework, and taking exams as required by your teacher(s).

*Reminder:* You agreed in your exchange application and acceptance to attend high school, even if you have graduated in your home country.

- Area high schools do not permit students participating in an after-school activity (sports, theater, etc.) to use tobacco of any kind. You are most likely to make friends during after-school activities, so if you are using tobacco products, you will find it difficult to have a successful exchange.
- Debt
- Irresponsible or disrespectful use of social media, including, among others, the following: Intimidating or threatening persons, Threats against the school or another person's property, Sending inappropriate messages and images, Creating fake profiles of other persons, Creating websites to embarrass, threaten, or socially isolate another person, Circulating offensive photos or videos, Texting offensive messages, Creating rumors and Posting false information about people or organizations

Consequences:

- Placement on a Student Improvement Plan. A copy of this plan and your behavior(s) will be sent to your home District Chair, your parent(s)/guardian(s), and your North Star Country Officer.
- Your host family may also impose other disciplinary measures (curfew, being grounded, restriction of internet or electronics, etc.) as they would for their own child. They may *not* keep you from reasonable contact with your biological parent(s)/guardian(s).

When North Star learns that you may have engaged a Yellow, Orange, or Red Card behavior, you will be referred to a response Team of trained North Star volunteers. The Response Teams will investigate the claim by contacting you, your Youth Exchange Officer, Club Counselor, Country Officers, and any other person they think is important. The Response Team will make findings and recommendations that will be reviewed by the District Chair for a decision.

If you are given a Yellow Card or Red Card, your home District and your parents will be informed immediately.

**Yellow Card:** Warning. You generally will not be sent home for your first yellow card. You are expected to change your behavior.

Examples of Behaviors:

- Serious/committed dating. This does *not* include one-time dates for Homecoming or Prom.
- Final grade of F in any class if you are capable of doing schoolwork but are choosing not to do so.
- Lying or deception.  
“Lying” means being untruthful or selectively admitting to part but not all of a behavior or failing to admit to your mistake. *Americans generally believe that lying is worse than the behavior itself. If you immediately admit you made a mistake (or think you might have made a mistake), we are more likely to forgive you than if you try to hide a mistake.*
- Smoking, vaping, chewing, or any other use of tobacco.  
*Reminder:* You agreed to in your application and acceptance to the North Star District that you will not use tobacco during your exchange. If you need assistance to quit smoking, talk to your Youth Exchange Officer.
- Failing to make reasonable efforts to follow a Student Improvement Plan *and* North Star volunteers have made reasonable efforts to assist you in doing so.
- Unauthorized travel.  
*All requests for travel must be consistent with the Travel Guidelines as established by North Star.*

Consequences:

- You will be given a Yellow Card. A copy of this will be sent to your home District Chair and your parents.
- Your host family may also impose other disciplinary measures (curfew, being grounded, restriction of internet or electronics, etc.) as they would for their own child. They may *not* keep you from reasonable contact with your biological parent(s)/guardian(s).

**Orange Card:** These behaviors may result in you being returned home, depending on the circumstances at the discretion of North Star.

Examples of Behaviors:

- Two Yellow Card behaviors.



- Driving any motorized vehicle. A motorized vehicle includes a car, motorcycle, moped/Vespa, scooter, golf cart, jet-ski, snowmobile, ATV, 4-wheeler, etc.
- Use or possession of alcohol.
- Sexual conduct, including oral sex.
- Viewing or possession of pornography.
- Any behavior resulting in police contact or being issued a citation (ticket) by police.

Consequences:

- If you are given a Yellow Card as a result of one of these behaviors, this will be a FINAL WARNING. This means that if you receive another Yellow Card, you will generally be sent home. You will also receive these additional consequences:
  - A copy of the Yellow Card and notice of Final Warning will be sent to your home District Chair and your biological parent(s)/guardian(s).
  - Your host family may also impose other disciplinary measures (curfew, being grounded, restriction of internet/electronics, etc.) as they would for their own child.
- If you are given a Red Card, you will most likely be sent home.

**Red Card:** Student will almost always be sent home for these behaviors.

Examples of Behaviors:

- At least 2 Yellow Card violations.
- Use, possession, or sale of illegal drugs.
- Sale of medications prescribed by a doctor that were not prescribed for you.
- Viewing of pornography with another person.
- Becoming pregnant or getting someone pregnant.
- Sexually harassing others.
- Driving any motorized vehicle resulting in an accident, injury, or property damage. A motorized vehicle includes a car, motorcycle, moped/Vespa, scooter, golf cart, jet-ski, snowmobile, ATV, 4-wheeler, etc.
- Expulsion from school.

Consequences:

- Your home District Chair and biological parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed immediately of the Red Card and that you will be coming home as soon as possible.
- You will take the most direct route home possible.

I have read these behavior expectations and understand them. I understand that I will be given consequences stated above if I choose to engage in one of these behaviors or another similar behavior not listed above.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_