



North Star Youth Exchange Club Counselor Handbook

May, 2023

Rotary
Districts 5950/5960



**rotary
youth
exchange**

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 from 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 must 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.

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.

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!

REQUIREMENTS

Club Member in good standing

North Star Volunteer Application

NAYEN Youth Protection Training

Department Of State (DOS) Training/Testing

Training with the YEO

Learn the HUB & Web Portal

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. January arrivals begin correspondence in November. 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 host family's application to the student and 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 two references and a face-to-face interview at their home. The home interview is usually given by the YEO, host family coordinator and counselor. 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 counselor 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 club

counselor 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 Rotary pays the general activity fee for all inbounds, some sports and activities have extra fees which Rotary *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 \$400 of emergency money to be delivered to the YEO 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 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 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 has proved 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.

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 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 \$400 in emergency funds to you. Upload the receipt for the emergency funds to the HUB. Talk with your YEO as to how the \$400 is to be held.

Take your student to open a bank account. The appointment takes 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 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. Rotary pays for school lunches 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 at NHS 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 along with a newly generated student ID card from the HUB. The ID card must be printed off 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, in mid to late January.

NORTH STAR ORIENTATION

There will be a Saturday orientation in Roseville, usually around February 22, for the next group of 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 the end of 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.

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. Any bank employee can close out the student's 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: it has happened many times that 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 Rotary can handle asking the student to pay it or Rotary will pay it. The host family should not pay the bill. The \$400 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 Rotary 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 perspective 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 Rotary, 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.

BANK

Check the bank account balance regularly for any concerns.

LUNCH ACCOUNT

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 Rotary 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.

COUNSELOR MEETING

The counselor team 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 is required to attend North Star events which occur on Saturdays throughout the year.

The weekly school pickup and drop off is also a good time to connect with the students 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 YPO 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 Minnesota is fine, travel within the continental USA is fine (usually), but we need to be notified of planned overnight stays so we can advise the host family and inbound of any changes to the travel policy. The traveling notebook, passport, and insurance information should always travel with the inbound. 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.

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

North Star Youth Exchange website <https://northstaryouthexchange.com/>

The HUB <https://yehub.net/NOR.php>

NAYEN Youth Protection Training Module
is available upon request to the North Star office: rotarynorthstaroffice@gmail.com

CALENDAR FOR INBOUND PROGRAM

(See exact dates at northstaryouthexchange.com under Calendar (top right), or on the HUB Document Library, under Utilities tab)

August/September	Inbound Student, Host Family, Youth Exchange Officer Orientation (½ day)
October	District 5950 & 5960 Conference - All District 5950 & 5960 inbounds participate - attendance of inbound students is required.
November/December	Country Fair - Inbound students promote their countries at the Outbound District Interviews. Students are to wear national costume or Rotary blazer.
January	January Arrivals - Inbound Orientation Session (½ day) for all January arrivals and all of their host parents and host club exchange officers.
January/February	Hawaii Rotary Trip for inbound students
February	Inbound students assist with Outbound Orientation Session #2.
June	Inbound Farewell Event
June	Summer Eastern States Rotary Trip for inbound students

Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation

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.

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, Rotarians' 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.

Adopted by the RI Board of Directors, November 2002