

REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR ABUSE AND HARASSMENT

INTRODUCTION

A Youth Exchange student will spend an extended period of time living with a host family in a country other than their own. Rotarians, their families, and non-Rotarian volunteers are expected to use their best effort to safeguard the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, harassment and neglect of every student with whom they come into contact.

Rotary International and District 5000 are committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth program participants and will not tolerate their abuse or neglect. All allegations of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. The safety and well-being of students and youth programs participants should always be the first priority.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions are based upon the Hawaii state statutes for child abuse and neglect.

Physical Abuse Citation: HRS § 350-1 Child abuse or neglect means the acts or omissions that have resulted in the physical health or welfare of the child, who is under the age of 18 years, to be harmed, or to be subject to any reasonably foreseeable, substantial risk of being harmed. The acts or omissions are indicated for the purposes of reports by circumstances that include but are not limited to:

When the child exhibits evidence of any of the following injuries, and such injury is not justifiably explained, or when the history given concerning such condition or death is at variance with the degree or type of such condition or death, or circumstances indicate that such condition or death may not be the product of an accidental occurrence:

- Substantial or multiple skin bruising or any other internal bleeding
- Any injury to skin causing substantial bleeding
- Malnutrition or failure to thrive
- Burns or poisoning
- Fracture of any bone
- Subdural hematoma or soft tissue swelling
- Extreme pain or mental distress

- Gross degradation
- Death

When the child is provided with dangerous, harmful, or detrimental drugs; provided that this paragraph shall not apply when such drugs are provided to the child pursuant to the direction or prescription of a practitioner

Neglect Citation: HRS § 350-1 Child neglect means when the child is not provided in a timely manner with adequate food, clothing, shelter, psychological care, physical care, medical care, or supervision.

Sexual Abuse Citation: HRS § 350-1 Child abuse or neglect means when the child has been the victim of:

- Sexual contact or conduct including, but not limited to, sexual assault
- Molestation or sexual fondling
- Incest
- Prostitution

Obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depiction, or other similar forms of sexual exploitation

Emotional Abuse Citation: HRS § 350-1 Child abuse or neglect includes the acts or omissions that have resulted in injury to the psychological capacity of a child as is evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment in the child's ability to function.

Allegation Reporting Guidelines

For those by all persons whom a student reports an incident of abuse, neglect or harassment. Any person to whom a student reports an incident of abuse, neglect or harassment is responsible for following these Allegations Reporting Guidelines.

1. REPORT FROM THE STUDENT OR OTHER YOUTH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT.

(a) **Listen attentively and stay calm.** Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse/neglect or harassment. It is appropriate to listen and be encouraging. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.

(b) **Assure privacy but not confidentiality.** Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/neglect to make it stop and to ensure that it does not happen again to them or to other students.

(c) **Get the facts, but don't interrogate.** Ask the student questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the student that she/he did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions. Remember, your responsibility is to present the student's story to the proper authority.

(d) **Be non-judgmental and reassure the student.** Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the student. Assure the student that the situation was not their fault and that they were brave and mature to come to you and report the issue.

(e) **Record.** Keep a written record of the conversation with the student as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the student's words and record only what has been told to you.

2. PROTECT THE STUDENT

Ensure the safety and well-being of the student. If at all possible, remove the student from the situation immediately and all contact with the alleged abuser. Give reassurance that this is for the student's safety and is not a punishment.

3. REPORT TO APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES

It is the policy of District 5000 to ensure appropriately prompt notification of allegations of abuse, neglect or harassment of youth program participants, in compliance with all applicable state laws and statutes. Under Section 350-1.1 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, as amended from time to time, persons who believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future, should immediately report the matter to the Child Welfare Services, Social Services Division, Department of Human Services, or the Police Department. D5000 policy requires that all cases of sexual abuse first be reported to the appropriate state's sexual assault response representative for each respective county first and then to the club and district leadership for investigations. The representatives from the sexual assault treatment programs will advise the host club and district representative as to the reporting requirements on a case by case basis. In cases of non-criminal harassment, the District's Youth Exchange Officer and District Governor are responsible for investigating and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.

Upon notification to proper officials, the reporter shall then contact the District Protection Officer concerning the filing of a report on behalf of the student. Also, information concerning the location of the Rotary Youth Exchange Student should be provided to the Club Rotarian Counselor, as well as at the district level, to ensure the student's continued safety. The district is responsible for notifying the RYE student's family in the country of origin, as well as other member with the district responsible for investigating/continuing care of the student. All allegations will be reported to RI within 72 hours; the person responsible for doing so is the District Governor.

4. AVOID GOSSIP AND BLAME

Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation. Information concerning the alleged report will not be disclosed to any individual unless mandated for the purpose of investigation. Failing to adhere to this policy could open up the “reporter,” club and/or district to unwanted litigation.

5. DO NOT CHALLENGE THE ALLEGED OFFENDER

The adult to whom the student reports must not contact the alleged offender. Abuse and neglect interrogation must be left entirely to the proper authorities.

6. FOLLOW-UP

After reporting allegation to the Rotarian counselor and District Youth Protection Officer, follow-up to make sure steps are being taken to address the situation. Any adult against whom an allegation of abuse, neglect, or non-criminal harassment has been made will be removed from all contact with youth until the matter is resolved.

7. POST-REPORT PROCEDURES

For use by Rotarian Counselors and District Youth Exchange Chair of D5000.

(a) The adult to whom the student reports the abuse should follow the Allegations Reporting Guidelines.

(b) Confirm that the student has been removed from the situation immediately and all contact with the alleged abuser. Ensure that contact with the alleged perpetrator will not occur during the investigation.

(c) Contact appropriate state agency immediately (if not already done). If state agency will not investigate, the club or district Youth Protection Officer should coordinate an independent investigation into the allegations.

(d) Ensure the student receives immediate support services.

(e) Cooperate with the investigation

(f) The District Youth Exchange Officer will contact the student’s sponsoring club Rotarian counselor or president for parent notification. Provide the option of staying in the country or returning home.

(g) The Rotarian Counselor must contact the District Youth Exchange Chair and District Governor of the allegation.

(h) District Governor shall notify RI of the allegation within 72 hours.

(i) The District Youth Exchange Chair shall provide written follow-up reports of steps taken, the outcome of the investigation and resulting actions.

8. Allegation Report Guidelines

For use by Rotarian Counselors and District Youth Exchange Chair of D5000.

Responding to the Needs of the Student

There will need to be a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting the student after an allegation report. The student is likely to feel embarrassed, confused, and may become withdrawn and appear to be avoiding members of the host family or club. After a report of harassment or abuse, students may or may not want to remain on their exchange. If they do, they may or may not want to continue their relations with the hosting Rotary club depending on the circumstances. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country, but change to a different host club.

It may be difficult for club members and host families to understand how the student is feeling, but it would be helpful for the student to know that the club remains a support for them. Club members and host families may experience ambiguity toward their roles and may feel unclear regarding their boundaries. However they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

Appropriate Response for Addressing Issues Within the Rotary Club for Allegations Made Against Rotarians and Non-Rotarians

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of the students. Club members should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations, Club members should be cautioned about speculating or commenting on the matter during and after the investigations. Comments made about the alleged victims in support of the alleged abusers do not support our statement of conduct or Rotary ideals. Comments made against the alleged abuser could lead to a slander or libel claim filed against Rotarians or club 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.

These guidelines were adopted and written following Rotary International recommendations and are subject to change without notice.