

SOUTH CENTRAL ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE, INC. YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Note: Bold numbers at the end of paragraphs correspond to the Rotary International District Certification Application. (Each of the squares on the certification was numbered sequentially, from 1 to 84.)

Beginning with the 2006-2007 Rotary year, all clubs and districts that wish to participate in Youth Exchange are required to be certified by Rotary International (RI). In order to conduct Rotary's Youth Exchange Program within South Central Rotary Youth Exchange, Incorporated (SCRYE), a member district must be certified by RI.

Developing an effective district abuse and harassment policy for SCRYE is a critical first step in this certification process for the SCRYE member districts. Implementing an effective policy is a tangible demonstration of a district's commitment to protecting youth while offering them an unparalleled opportunity to meet people from other lands and experience other cultures. This document provides a basic framework in keeping with the RI Board policy for districts to follow in developing or refining district youth protection policies.

This policy complies with the requirements of Rotary Code of Policies 2.110 and 41.080 and the RI letters of June 15, 2005 and December 2005 providing instructions on this subject.

1. STATEMENT OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH

South Central Rotary Youth Exchange, Inc is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact. (RI Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth) 12

2. DEFINITIONS:

Criminal Background Checks: Criminal background checks will be a check of criminal records from governmental sources that will, at a minimum, provide information on an individual's criminal record as reported by governmental authorities so that a decision may be made as to the appropriateness of a volunteer candidate. This may come in the form of a complete record of criminal activity or as a "yes or no" recommendation issued by a government agency, based on criminal records maintained by governmental sources. Internet sex offender registries are not sufficient. **25, 32**

Volunteer: Any adult person 18 years or older involved with Rotary Youth Exchange activities who has direct interactions with students, either supervised or unsupervised. This includes, but is not limited to, club and district Youth Exchange officers and

committee members, Rotarian counselors, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses and partners that host students for activities or outings or who might drive students to events or functions, host parents, and other adult residents of the host home (including siblings and other family members). See Appendix A.

Student: Youth involved with Rotary Youth Exchange, regardless of whether they are of the age of majority.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse refers to engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts, alone or with another person of any age of the same sex or the opposite sex. Additional examples of sexual abuse could include, but are not limited to:

- Non touching offenses
- Indecent exposure
- Exposing a student to sexual or pornographic material

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment refers to 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 a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or “groom” their victims. Examples of sexual harassment could include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual advances
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sex life, and comments about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies or prowess.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings.
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact, such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments.

3. **INCORPORATION OF DISTRICT YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM AND LIABILITY INSURANCE: 3, 4**

SCRYE is incorporated under the laws of the state of Missouri. It is recommended that member districts investigate to determine whether there may be state laws requiring SCRYE to register in their state. See Appendix C.

SCRYE and member districts, clubs and Rotarians are covered by the general liability insurance policy provided by RI. Member districts may carry additional general liability insurance with coverage and limits appropriate for their geographic location. Students must be covered by an individual liability policy.

4. VOLUNTEER SCREENING AND SELECTION:

SCRYE requires that each member district conduct and maintain a volunteer selection and screening process. Member districts will maintain all records of criminal background checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with students for as long as required by local or state laws. 8

Volunteers:

The selection process for all volunteers will be conducted in a similarly thorough manner for both the long-term and short-term programs. 11

All volunteers interested in participating in a member district's Youth Exchange program must:

- Complete a *Youth Volunteer Affidavit* form (Appendix A) which authorizes the member district to conduct a criminal background check on, and to screen, the volunteer candidate. 21, 25,29,32
- Undergo personal interview. 22, 30
- Provide a list of references for the member district and/or a local Rotary club to check. See Appendix A. 24, 31
- Meet the RI and member district's eligibility requirements for working with students. RI requires that any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context. If an individual is accused of sexual abuse or harassment, and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, then, for the safety of youth participants and the protection of the accused, additional safeguards must be put in place to assure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future conduct. A person later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated to participate in youth programs. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former position. 71-73
- Understand and comply with RI, SCRYE and district guidelines for the Youth Exchange program.

Host Families:

Host families must meet the following selection and screening requirements in addition to those listed above:

- Host families must undergo a comprehensive interview that determines their suitability for hosting exchange students. This should include: 22
 - Demonstrated commitment to the safety and security of students.
 - Motivation for hosting a student that is consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange.

- Financial ability to provide adequate accommodations (room and board) for the student.
- Aptitude for providing appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well being.
- Host families must complete a written application and be interviewed in their home. **21**
- Home visits must be conducted for each family and should include both announced and unannounced visits, both prior to and during the placement. Home visits must be conducted annually, even for repeat host families. **23**
- All adult residents of the host home must meet the selection and screening guidelines and undergo a criminal background check. This includes adult children of the host family and other adult members of the extended family that reside in the home on either a full- or part- time basis. **25**

Rotarian Counselors:

Clubs will select a Rotary counselor for every inbound and outbound student in all exchange programs. **50**

Rotarian counselors must meet the criteria for all Volunteers, as well as the following:

- Counselors must not be a member of the student's host family. **33**
- Counselors must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, which may include instances of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or harassment. **48**
- Counselors will maintain regular contact with Youth Exchange students and serve as a liaison between the students and the Rotary club, natural family, host family and the community at large. **51**

5. STUDENT SELECTION AND SCREENING:

All students (short-term and long-term) interested in participating in a SCRYE member district's Youth Exchange program must: **11**

- Complete the standard RI written application and be interviewed for their suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program both at club and district levels **16**
- Attend and participate in all district orientation and training sessions.

All parents or legal guardians of students interested in participating in a SCRYE member district's Youth Exchange short-term or long-term program must:

- Be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the Youth Exchange program.
- Be interviewed to determine the family's support for the student. **16**

6. TRAINING

SCYRE member districts will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all Youth Exchange program participants. The Youth Exchange Officers will ensure that the training sessions are conducted in accordance with RI requirements. **34**

The SCRYE member districts will:

- Adapt the *Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual* to include relevant information on specific district guidelines, local customs, cultural issues, and legal requirements.
- Develop a calendar for training and define the content and frequency of training required for each volunteer position, including descriptions of who is to participate, when training should occur, and how training will be conducted.
- Conduct specialized training sessions for the following Youth Exchange program participants: **34, 47**
 - District governor
 - District Youth Exchange chair and committee members
 - Club Youth Exchange chair and committee members
 - Rotarian counselors
 - Other Rotarians and non-Rotarians who participate in Youth Exchange activities, such as local tours and district events
 - Host families
 - Students (outbound and inbound)
 - Parents and legal guardians of students
- Establish guidelines to ensure that all those required to be trained have participated. **35**
- Maintain records of participation to ensure compliance. **8, 35**

Host family:

Host families will undergo training and orientation that includes information on program administration and rules and abuse and harassment prevention. This training will be conducted before a student is placed in their home. **44, 45**

Outbound Student:

Outbound students in both the long-term and short-term programs will attend and participate in district orientation and training sessions prior to departure. Content of orientation will include information on program rules, procedures, expectations, abuse and harassment procedures, and awareness training. **39, 41,**

Outbound students must be provided information on the following contacts before departure. **53**

- Sponsor district YEO chair and governor
- Sponsor club president
- Sponsor club's Rotarian counselor
- Two non-Rotarian resource persons, one male and one female

Inbound Student:

Inbound students in both the long-term and short-term programs will attend and participate in district orientation and training sessions shortly after arrival. Content of orientation will include information on program rules, procedures, expectations, abuse and harassment procedures, and awareness training. **39, 41,**

The content of orientation is to include contact information for counselor so that students may report problems, including reports of abuse or harassment, and information on local laws and customs that may apply to young people. **42**

Inbounds must be provided information on the following contacts before or upon arrival:
60-66

- Hosting club's Rotarian counselor
- Hosting district's Youth Exchange chair and governor
- Hosting club's president
- Two non-Rotarian resource persons – 1 male and 1 female –
- Local medical, dental, and mental care professionals
- Local law enforcement agencies
- Local social service resources, where applicable

Post exchange evaluations are conducted with students and host families. **66**

7. ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES:

SCRYE and its member districts are committed to protecting the safety and well being of Youth Exchange students and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled in accord with the *Youth Exchange Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines*, found in *Appendix B*.

67, 74, 76-83

8. INVESTIGATION GUIDELINES:

SCRYE and its member districts take all allegations of abuse or harassment seriously and will investigate each allegation thoroughly. The member districts will cooperate with all law enforcement, child protective services, and legal investigations and will only conduct their own independent investigations such that it does not interfere with other investigations.

9. OTHER DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

Each district in SCYRE

- Shall conduct their Youth Exchange program within the scope of SCRYE's program guide, including, but not limited to, the policies set forth in this document.
- Shall appoint a Rotarian as the District Youth Protection Officer who is well versed in RI's and SCRYE's Abuse and Harassment Policy and will be available to consult with clubs and districts and to perform investigations as requested. He or she will act as the Rotary District Compliance Officer and be on the Rotary District YE Committee.
- Shall obtain criminal background check on a volunteer candidate as requested by a local club.
- Shall have procedures for reporting, investigating, and proper handling of non-criminal offenses or historic cases that law enforcement will not investigate.
- Shall have procedures for reporting and handling incidents that may arise during exchanges, including, but not limited to, early returns and reports of abuse or harassment. **67**
- Shall have procedures for removal from the program of any Youth Exchange participant who does not comply with requirements of the program, with proper procedures to report to all parties involved with the exchange and for sending the student back home. **68, 69, 70**
- Shall have procedures and guidelines for completing an independent and thorough investigation of reports of abuse or harassment including an independent non-Rotary counselor. **82**
- Shall recommend that all inbound and outbound Youth Exchange students maintain insurance at the RI required minimum levels. Shall work with partner Rotary districts to ensure compliance with this recommendation. **18**
- Shall provide each student with a list of local services in the district (rape and suicide crises hotline, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, proper law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.). **62-65**
- Shall complete a student data request form for all participating Youth Exchange students and return it to RI one month before the beginning of the exchange.
- Shall maintain and provide to Youth Exchange students a "district hotline." **52**
- Shall follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites and usage of the Rotary Marks. **9**
- Shall appoint an independent lawyer, therapist or counselor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment. **82**
- Shall report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours. **76**
- Shall report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to RI within 72 hours. Member districts will identify person(s) in district who will assume reporting function. **76**

- Shall evaluate and review this policy and accompanying procedures on a regular basis.
- Shall submit Youth Exchange annual survey to RI. **10**
- Shall develop a records retention policy for youth exchange records that assures confidentiality of information and availability only to authorized persons. **8**

10. CLUB COMPLIANCE

SCRYE member districts will monitor and ensure that all participating clubs within the district comply with RI guidelines for abuse and harassment prevention. All clubs, to support the district certification process, must provide the district with a copy of the following for review and approval: **6**

- Copies of all materials produced in the club to promote and support the Youth Exchange program, including, but not limited to, promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, Web site links, etc.
- List of services in area (rape and suicide crisis hotline, alcohol and drug awareness programs for teenagers, proper law enforcement agencies, community services, private services) **62 - 65**
- Club abuse and harassment prevention training program

Participating clubs must agree to:

- Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the club is operating their program in accordance with District, SCRYE, and RI policy. **6**
- Request criminal background check by district and conduct reference checks for all Volunteers involved with the program, including, but not limited to adult full-time residents of host homes, counselor, club chair, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact. All Volunteers must complete and sign the *Youth Volunteer Affidavit* found in *Appendix A*. **24-25**
- Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both prior to and during the placement.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
- Follow the *Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines* found in *Appendix B*. Report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment to the appropriate law enforcement authorities immediately and then to the club and district leadership for investigation.
- Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the District Youth Exchange program structure (e.g. "backdoor exchanges"). **7**
- Set procedures for removal of a student from the host family (criteria for moving a student and back-up temporary housing available in advance).
- Develop contingency plans for hosting that include pre-screened and available back-up families
- Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and club members must not be required to host students. **17**

- Ensure that long-term exchange students have multiple host families. **26**
- Provide students with comprehensive local social services resource list. **62-65**
- Appoint a Rotarian counselor for every inbound and outbound student in the program. **49,50**
- Ensure that the host counselor for each student is not a member of the student's host family. **33**
- Ensure that the host counselor is trained in responding to any problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse or harassment. **48**
- Provide mandatory training on sexual abuse and harassment prevention for host families, outbound students, inbound students, and their parents or legal guardians.
- Provide the names and contact information of at least two non-Rotarian people (one male and one female) to contact for assistance with any issues or problems to all Youth Exchange students. These people must include both males and females, not related to each other, and individuals independent of the host family and club counselor.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites and usage of the Rotary Marks
- Retain records as prescribed by District. **8**
- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange students to the district youth exchange officer and / or district governor immediately.
- Conduct interviews of all applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians.

11. **NOTES**

A SCRYE Sexual Abuse, Harassment and Reporting Manual will be published prior to June 30, 2006, and will provide forms, scripts, checklists and other items to assist all member Districts in complying with this policy. This Manual will be a supplement to RI's Youth Exchange Handbook and will be incorporated into SCRYE's Program Guide which directs the administration of the Youth Exchange Program.

Included, and part of this policy:

Appendix A, Volunteer Affidavit

Appendix B, Sexual Abuse Reporting Guidelines

Appendix C, Articles of Incorporation of South Central Rotary Youth Exchange, Inc.

President, South Central Rotary
Youth Exchange, Inc 2006-2007

Alan Wylie

