

## District 5100 Youth Exchange Program Policy Guidelines

### Rotary International Youth Exchange Program:

*Youth Exchange is a structured program of Rotary International, adopted by the Board in 1974.* The Rotary Youth Exchange program provides young people with the opportunity to meet individuals from other countries, experience new cultures and to learn firsthand about all aspects of life in another country. Host clubs, host families, and entire communities are enriched by extended, friendly contact with someone from a different culture. The program instills in young people the concept of international understanding and goodwill. The Board of Directors of Rotary International has established policies to assist clubs and districts in implementing Youth Exchange activities effectively and responsibly. These policies pertain to all types of exchanges, including Long-term, Short-term, and New Generations exchanges unless otherwise indicated.

Any other provisions consistent with these policies and which are deemed necessary or convenient for the operation of an exchange program may be adopted by the clubs or districts concerned. By mutual consent of the parties concerned, any of the volunteer responsibilities indicated below may be assigned to someone other than the party specified.

*Note: District 5100 regularly reviews and amends, where necessary, these policies.*

### RI District Certification Program:

The general secretary shall administer and maintain a district certification program. All club and District Youth Exchange programs shall comply with RI youth protection policies and other requirements set forth by the general secretary in order to be certified. In order to participate in the Youth Exchange program a district must be certified by the general secretary.

The certification process requires all district Youth Exchange programs to provide RI with evidence that they have adopted the certification requirements in their Long-term, Short-term and New Generations exchange programs (including any tours or camps). The general secretary may grant waivers to districts that have implemented alternative policy and alternative procedures that meet the intent of RI policy in instances when RI policy or certification requirements are contrary to local law and customs. If local circumstances are such that a district cannot meet any of the requirements, districts must provide the general secretary evidence of the specific circumstances that prohibit compliance and a written explanation of alternative procedures that maintain the intent of the policy or requirements. The general secretary will evaluate and determine whether the alternatives posited by districts meet the intent of the policy, and may bring matters to the Board should circumstances warrant.

Other RI certification policies include:

**A. Certification of Districts for Sending Students Only**

In circumstances where districts may only wish to send Youth Exchange students without serving as hosts for inbound students, the general secretary may waive certification requirements related to hosting inbound students in these districts.

**B. Certification of Multi-country Districts**

In circumstances in multi-country districts where not all countries within the district wish to participate in the Youth Exchange program, the general secretary may waive certification requirements for non-participating countries in these districts.

**C. Certification and Multidistrict Youth Exchange Activities**

The general secretary may remove a district from a multidistrict Youth Exchange activity upon notice that they have failed to comply with the district certification program with or without the consent of the district governor.

District 5100 Youth Exchange Program:

District Governor Authority:

The District Governor has the responsibility for the supervision and control of the Youth Exchange program within the district. The district Youth Exchange officers, or committees, are under the supervision of the Governor and should report to them. The Governor is encouraged to use the period between their nomination and assuming office to learn as much as possible about the Youth Exchange program in the district and the qualifications and skills of those who administer it.

District 5100 Incorporation:

District 5100 must establish a corporation or similar formal legal entity that includes the District Youth Exchange program. This requirement may be met by incorporating the District Youth Exchange program, a group of programs that includes Youth Exchange, or the District as a whole in accordance with *Rotary Code of Policies* 17.020.

General Liability Insurance:

District 5100 must secure general liability insurance for the district Youth Exchange program with coverage and limits appropriate for their geographic location. District 5100 and the Youth Exchange program is located entirely within the United States and meets this requirement through participation in the U.S. Rotary Club and District General Liability

Reporting to Rotary International:

District 5100 will provide to RI a copy of the Guarantee Form of the standard Youth Exchange applications for each inbound student hosted by the district prior to the beginning of an exchange.

All serious incidents, including but not limited to, accidents, death, early returns, and crimes, and any allegations of abuse or harassment shall be reported by the district to RI within 72 hours of the time a district officer learns of the incident. District 5100 will identify a person within the district who will be responsible for reporting to RI.

Types of Exchanges District 5100 participate in:

District 5100 Youth Exchange program includes three distinct program types:

A. Long-term Exchange Program (LTEP)

These exchanges are open to students aged 15 to 18 years old. Long-term exchanges should be for one academic year but may be extended to include part or all of the holiday periods immediately preceding and immediately following the academic year.

During this time the student lives with more than one family in the host country and is required to attend school in the host country. Students must have more than one host family; three successive host families are preferable.

Parents of outbound students shall not be required to host inbound students. However, parents of outbound students may volunteer to host or may be asked to assist in finding suitable host families.

The host club must select an individual Rotarian counselor for each student to be in regular contact with the student and to serve as a liaison between the student and the club, the student's parents or guardians, host family and community at large. The club counselor must not be a member of the student's host family and must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

The host club should provide for all educational expenses, arrange an appropriate academic program, and provide a program of orientation and continued contacts to familiarize the student with the host community. The host club shall provide a monthly allowance for the student. Where meals eaten at school are not otherwise provided for, the monthly allowance should be sufficient to include the cost of such meals.

The sending and host club or district should require, at a minimum, quarterly reports from the students. This report should include information on their current hosts, feelings, concerns, ideas and suggestions regarding their exchange experience thus far. The designated Youth Exchange officer should review the reports carefully and, when necessary, take action to respond to any irregularities reported by the students.

Exchanges arranged outside of the District 5100 structure (so-called "backdoor" exchanges) are prohibited.

### B. Short-term Exchange Program (STEP)

These exchanges are open to students aged 15 to 19 years old, and vary in lengths of time. They often take place when school is not in session and usually do not include an academic program. Short-term exchanges generally involve a home stay experience with family-to-family hosting in both countries.

The sending and host District must select an individual Rotarian counselor for each student to be in regular contact with the student and to serve as a liaison between the student and the club, the student's parents or guardians, host family and community at large. The counselor must not be a member of the student's host family and must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange, including the prevention of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The host club should also provide a program of orientation and continued contact to familiarize the student with the host community.

### C. New Generations Exchange Program (GNEP)

Young adults aged 18 to 25 years old may participate in a New Generations exchange which lasts between three weeks and three months. These exchanges may include a vocational element. The schedule of activity for the visitors shall be people-to-people contact related to Rotary activities, for goodwill and understanding and for better cultural education and exposure. The host district may home host participants and provide local transportation. District 5100 currently does not participate in this type of exchange and looks at all requests for this type of exchange on a case-by-case basis.

#### Eligibility:

Participants in the Long-term and Short-term programs should be between the ages of 15 and 18 at the beginning of the exchange and participants in the New Generations Exchange program should be between the ages of 18 and 25 at the beginning of the exchange unless the laws and regulations of a specific country deem otherwise. District 5100 Youth Exchange welcomes any young people, including sons and daughters of Rotarians, who meet the requirements of the program and who are recommended and sponsored by a club in the District. All participants should be above average in their schoolwork, preferably in the upper third of their school class.

#### Application:

Candidates of ages acceptable to both sending and host districts and according to the laws and regulations of both countries must submit a written application and must undergo a selection process including personal interviews with the applicant and the applicant's parents or legal guardians at the club level and at the district level. Clubs are encouraged to use the standard Youth Exchange applications which can be obtained from the District YE committee.

#### Selection and Placement:

Selection procedures should occur in a similarly thorough manner for all exchange programs. District 5100 is responsible for ensuring that each student is accepted and hosted by a club in a partner district. District 5100 will utilize agreements, if necessary, with their exchange partners to establish Short-term, Long-term, and New Generations exchange activities to ensure that all

expectations of the exchange relationship are met, such as certification of exchange partners, logistics, and student selection and orientation.

All individuals involved in the exchange, including students and their parents or legal guardians, host family members and Rotarian counselors, must agree in writing to all the requirements of the program as determined by the sending and host clubs or districts. Student travel itineraries must be agreed upon by the students' parents or legal guardians and the host club and District.

#### Student Travel Insurance:

District 5100 Youth Exchange should determine the minimum level of insurance adequate for the exchange length and local conditions in which the student will live and travel during the exchange. This will also comply with any RI insurance standards as set forth by them. The parents or legal guardians of each student shall subscribe to travel insurance, including medical coverage for accidental injury and illness, death benefits (including repatriation of remains), disability/dismemberment benefit (also known as capital benefits), emergency medical evacuation, emergency visitation expenses (for transportation of parent or guardian to student's location), 24-hour emergency assistance services, and legal liability (covering the student for any of his or her acts or omissions in connection with the Youth Exchange program). This must be done through the District 5100 authorized provider, either in the USA or the hosting country. The coverage will be from the time of the student's departure from home until the student's return home. At the option of the parents or legal guardians, additional insurance may also be purchased to include cancellation expenses, loss of property, loss of money, or kidnap, and ransom from any provider.

Participation in extreme sports, such as hang gliding, rock climbing, and bungee jumping, is discouraged. If students are allowed to participate in extreme sports, these activities should be undertaken with the host districts' and parents' written permission and adequate insurance should be required.

#### Preparation:

The parents or legal guardians of the student are responsible for providing appropriate clothing and round-trip transportation to and from the host district.

The student and the prospective host family should communicate with each other before the student leaves home.

District 5100 will provide students with a list of individuals to contact in the case of a problem or emergency. This list must include the name and contact information for the student's Rotarian counselor, host club president, host district chair, host governor, sending district chair, sending governor, sending club president and two non-Rotarian resource persons (one male and one female). Students have a means to contact the district committee members at all times (24 hours per day). This list must also include local resources for medical, dental and mental health care and law enforcement professionals. Where available, this list should also include local resources, suicide prevention hotlines, rape crisis hotlines, and local child protection agencies.

#### Orientation:

District 5100 will organize a mandatory orientation for students and their parents or legal guardians prior to departure. This orientation must inform the participants about the rules, procedures and expectations associated with the Youth Exchange program and should include a briefing about the local Rotary club and its activities. The sending club or district must provide abuse prevention and awareness training for both students and parents or legal guardians. The host club or district must also provide an orientation program for inbound students. This must include guidance for students should they encounter any aspects of neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, and contact information for local resources and their appointed counselors. Because local laws and customs in one country may differ greatly from those in others, orientation for students must include information on local laws and customs, which may apply to young people.

#### Student Responsibilities:

Students should display comportment at all times reflecting credit on self, the home country, and Rotary and should respect each other and act responsibly, befitting their role in the program. Students should strive to adapt to the way of life, including language acquisition, of the host country and host family members should assist students to ease that transition.

Students should not under any circumstances be permitted to operate or drive a motorized vehicle of any kind during the exchange, nor to own a motorized vehicle in the host country. Students should undertake no travel outside the immediate area of the community in which the host club is located without the consent of the students' parents or legal guardians and of the participating clubs and districts. Students should accept the supervision and authority of the host family and the host club and district during the exchange.

#### Student Debriefing:

Due to the likely effects of reverse culture shock, following their return, students and their parents or legal guardians should be encouraged to attend a debriefing meeting for the purpose of assisting them to transition to their home, school, and community environment.

#### Volunteer Selection and Screening:

Careful selection of all individuals involved in Youth Exchange should be of paramount concern and be done with the utmost care and consideration. All adults (Rotarian and non-Rotarians) involved in the program, including but not limited to committee members, host families, club counselors, and others, must be interviewed to determine suitability to work with youth, complete and sign a Youth Volunteer Affidavit, and agree to undergo background checks, including law enforcement public record checks and reference checks.

The host club or district must conscientiously screen and select host families on the basis of a written application, background checks for all adults in the home, including law enforcement

public record checks and reference checks, personal interview, and home visits, both announced and unannounced.

Any participant who does not comply with the requirements of the program should be removed from participation in the program. In the case of adult volunteers (both Rotarian and non-Rotarian), those who have not complied with program requirements will be permanently removed from involvement with youth in a Rotary context.

#### Volunteer Training:

All adults (Rotarian and non-Rotarians) involved in the District 5100 program, including but not limited to committee members, host families, club counselors, and others, must receive training that includes information on program administration and rules and abuse and harassment awareness and prevention.

#### Host Family Rules and Expectations:

The host family will provide room and board for the student and exercise appropriate supervisory and parental responsibility to ensure the student's well-being.

#### Early Returns:

Any participant who does not comply with the requirements of the program should be removed from participation in the program. In the case of students, the host and sending clubs and districts, host families and the student's parents or legal guardians, must be fully informed prior to the student being sent home. Such decision requires the agreement of the host and sending districts. The student should be returned home at the earliest practical time by a route agreed upon between the parents or legal guardians and the sending district. In the event of an impasse, districts may appoint an independent Rotarian to serve as a mediator.

#### Youth Exchange Alumni:

District 5100 encourages returning Youth Exchange students to be involved in alumni groups.

#### International Travel by Youth:

No individual Rotarian, or club, in District 5100 shall undertake an alternative program structure to send minors abroad that circumvents RI youth protection policies, the foregoing Youth Exchange policy, or the immigration and travel policies of any nation or government.

No individual Rotarian, or club, in District 5100 shall assist or cooperate in sending a young person abroad on an international travel activity unless careful plans are made in advance covering every aspect of the proposed trip, including approval from the District 5100 youth protection officer or governor and District 5100 Youth Exchange chair.

No club should provide an identification card, letter of introduction, and request for assistance or other credential or document intended to identify or introduce a young person to a club or clubs in another country, unless complete mutual agreement has been reached in advance with respect to the hospitality or assistance to be provided by the host club. No club is obliged to provide hospitality or assistance to any young person from another country, despite any documented or claimed sponsorship of a Rotary club, unless the host club has specifically agreed in advance to provide such hospitality or assistance.

**Involvement by Persons with Disabilities:**

District 5100 encourages the involvement of people with disabilities in the Youth Exchange program when this is possible and agreed upon between the sending and hosting clubs and districts. The Governor may appoint one member of the District Youth Exchange committee to be responsible for encouraging and aiding in the participation of people with disabilities in Long-term, Short-term, and New Generations exchanges.

**Paid Wages for Youth Exchange Students:**

Students are not allowed to take on employment. Students are allowed to do babysitting and yard work type activities to make some spending money.

There is a separate policy document for the Youth Protection Policy for District 5100. Procedures and forms to comply with all policies are in three binders. They are the Club/Counselor Binder, Host Family Binder, and Inbound or Outbound Student Binder. These are distributed at all training sessions and are available on the District 5100 Youth Exchange website at [www.youtheexchange5100.org](http://www.youtheexchange5100.org)

*(Adopted by District 5100 Youth Exchange Committee 10.14.12)*