

## Rotex Code of Conduct

This document represents a summary of guidelines agreed upon by the Rotex of District 5100, with input from the District Youth Exchange Committee and District Leadership.

Exchange was a formative experience for every Rotex, and as such we have a desire and even a right to share our own experiences and stories. However, in the context of RYE events and trainings, the first priority is to ensure the safety and growth of the current and future participants in the program. Rotex are therefore expected to respect particular guidelines regarding how we portray the Youth Exchange program and our own personal experiences of exchange to participants.

The expectations described in the Rotex Code of Conduct apply to any situation where a Rotex is interacting, in person or electronically, with a participant in RYE (IB, OB, OBC, or RB). This applies to sanctioned events as well as personal meetings and otherwise.

For more information on the purposes and structure of Rotex, see the District 5100 Rotex Constitution and By-Laws.

### 1. Definitions

**RYE:** Rotary Youth Exchange

**LTEP:** Long-term exchange program; 1 school year

**STEP:** Short-term exchange program; variable length, usually a few weeks

**DYEC:** District Youth Exchange Committee

**YEO:** Youth Exchange Officer; a member of the DYEC

**CO:** Country Officer; a YEO who oversees all exchange matters related to a particular country

**IB:** Inbound; a participant in RYE (LTEP or STEP) from another country in District 5100

**OB:** Outbound; a participant in RYE (LTEP or STEP) from District 5100 currently in

another country

**OBC:** Outbound candidate; a student who has been selected for RYE (LTEP or STEP) in District 5100 but has not yet departed

**RB:** Rebound; a participant in RYE (LTEP or STEP) from District 5100 who was an OB the prior year

**Rotex:** A person who participated in RYE (LTEP or STEP) in District 5100 at least one year prior. Inclusion in this group is automatic if the definition is met, and can include people from other districts upon approval

**Active Rotex:** A Rotex who has demonstrated a desire and commitment to supporting RYE in District 5100, and regularly attends events and trainings. Individual inclusion in this group is dependent on requirements for active membership as defined in the District 5100 Rotex Constitution and By-Laws

## 2. Expectations

### 2.1. General Expectations

It is expected that Rotex will be leaders, role models, and mentors and prioritize the interests of the RYE program over our own desire to share our experiences. General expectations include the following: (1) without being misleading, do not glorify rule-breaking; (2) attempt to share and embody the positive experiences and outcomes of exchange, but do not deny the negatives; and (3) remembering that each exchange is different, do not judge or set expectations based on your own experience.

Rotex are in a position to be more approachable than YEOs--because of shared experiences and often age--and therefore need not always act like authority figures. Every effort should be made to preserve this approachability, but only if it does not conflict with our responsibility. It is important to provide a united front along with the DYEC.

Expectations vary depending on which group of students Rotex are interacting with. For instance, with RBs, it is more acceptable to discuss violations of the rules than with the other groups, because their exchange is complete and the emphasis is now on readjustment and making the most out of it.

When engaging in private one-on-one conversations, be aware at all times of safety, responsibility, and growth. Regarding safety, avoid being alone with a student

whenever possible; if you must, maintain appropriate boundaries and make sure others know where you are (by sharing your phone's location, or even by calling), and check in regularly. Regarding responsibility, realize that your word can carry a lot of weight, so be careful with what you say. Regarding growth, try to let students figure out their own boundaries and expectations, so that they can learn to do so independently.

## 2.2. Expectations Regarding Inbounds and Outbound Candidates

The goal when interacting with IBs and OBCs is to ensure a safe and successful exchange, and in the case of OBCs, to prepare them for their time abroad. To do this, we should attempt to facilitate opportunities for growth and treat them like responsible young adults. It is still important, however, to uniformly apply Rotary rules. If Rotex see or learn of a violation, we must inform a YEO and stop the activity if applicable (e.g. by confiscating alcohol). It is particularly important to stress the rules early in the selection (if an OBC) and training process; later, the emphasis can be placed on rewarding positive behavior. See Section 3 for details.

If we see IBs or OBCs acting in a way that does not concern rules but is concerning or potentially detrimental to exchange, we should bring up our concern with a YEO. Examples include antisocial behavior, disrespect, etc.

## 2.3. Expectations Regarding Outbounds

Expectations when interacting with OBs are similar, but rules and follow-through are generally left up to the host district. If you are working with a particular student regularly, you should make an arrangement with their country officer about what details they want to be apprised of and what you can keep between yourself and the student. Because all contact is obviously electronic, you should have time to confer with another Rotex or a YEO if questions arise. Always err on the side of transparency rather than privacy, and never promise confidentiality (see Section 3).

## 2.4. Expectations Regarding Rebounds

When working with RBs, the primary focus should be on reintegration and the psychological, social, and personal challenges that can be associated with it. Therefore, active listening, a supportive tone, and a willingness to switch between serious and light-hearted conversation depending on the students' needs, are useful in this setting.

We do not want the RBs to dwell on rule-breaking or try to out-compete each others'

rule-related stories, because this takes away from the processing and growth they and other RBs can get out of their time together. However, everyone should feel comfortable talking freely about specific instances that a rule was broken if it is productive (e.g. a bad experience after drinking, or what to do with a relationship that began on exchange). One way to facilitate this might be to ask for examples in which a RB turned a rule-breaking situation into a fun situation within bounds, such as leaving a party with some friends to do something fun elsewhere. See Section 3 for guidelines on what information should or must be reported to a YEO.

RBs are expected to adhere to Rotary rules while at RYE events, and Rotex are accordingly expected to ensure that this is the case, as described in Section 2.2.

### 3. Chain of Command and Reporting

In this section, it is useful to understand the distinction between RYE rules (sometimes referred to as “the D’s”) and rules governing Mandatory Reporting (as defined by state and federal law). However, in all cases a report of some kind must be made to a supervisor. If you are ever unsure, discuss the situation with a YEO.

#### 3.1. Chain of Command

All District 5100 volunteers, including Rotex, are mandatory reporters and therefore obligated to pass on certain information. To ensure both the greatest measure of safety and the fullest adherence to policy, a chain of command is in place so that nothing is overlooked due to improper reporting. In the chain of command, *all Rotex must pass on information regarding a violation of Rotary rules (Section 3.2), as well as any non-reportable violation of law (Section 3.3) to a YEO and any reportable situation (Section 3.3) to the DYEC Chair.* If an incident involves a YEO, all reporting should be to both the DYEC Chair (unless involved) and [District 5100’s Youth Protection Officer](#) (Jason Schermerhorn as of 2020). For more information, see the [District 5100 Youth Protection Policy \(YPP\)](#) and the volunteer training modules administered by NAYEN, which must be renewed annually.

#### 3.2. Reporting a Violation of Rotary Rules

Actions which violate Rotary rules but no laws, such as dating and disfigurement (tattoos, piercings, dyeing hair), are not legally reportable and thus carry less weight, but it is expected that Rotex still pass on the information.

Smoking is illegal, however may be permitted under particular circumstances. This

decision is made by the DYEC, and therefore must be reported unless permission has been given for a particular student and situation.

For RBs, only current violations of Rotary rules (namely, at a Rotary event) need be reported; rules violated on exchange need not be reported unless they still present a problem.

### 3.3. Reporting a Reportable or Concerning Situation

Any report or implication, whether ongoing or in the past, of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse *must be reported*. This includes but is not limited to, sexual assault and harrassment, physical assault, and any behavior or action a student feels may be inappropriate. Additionally, according to Rotary's Policies for Youth Protection, "inappropriate sexual behavior, whether legal or not, is prohibited."

*In such situations, do not ask a lot of questions to try and get as detailed a story as possible; this will be done later in the process. Collect the essentials, create a written record, affirm the student, and pass everything on to the next person in the chain of command. As few people should be included as possible. You may ensure privacy but never guarantee confidentiality. Additionally, do not call law enforcement unless you feel the safety of the student is at risk (call 911 immediately in this case), as the decision to involve law enforcement will be made by the student(s) involved, their guardians, and District leaders.*

Some situations may not necessarily be reportable under mandatory reporting laws, but it is expected that Rotex will treat them in the same manner. This includes any serious concern for a student's physical or mental well-being, such as suicidal ideations and attempts, depression, an untreated or previously undisclosed mental health issue. The purpose of reporting these is so that the student will remain safe and can be provided access to whatever resources may be necessary, whether at home or abroad.

Drinking, driving, the use of illegal drugs, and any other non-reportable illegal behavior must be stopped if possible and reported to the next person in the chain of command as soon as possible. Discretion is encouraged as with any other concern.

In general, a detailed report to the next person in the chain of command is a sufficient response, regardless of the nature of the situation. Rotex will not be responsible for making decisions regarding further steps.

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