



DISTRICT 5040 YOUTH EXCHANGE MEDIA GUIDELINES

Well prepared organizations should have guidelines to deal with the media.

Many events involving children or youth can become newsworthy very quickly. If an organization does not have guidelines to deal with the media, rumors can abound and result in a „firestorm“ of misinformation that can hurt an organization as well as the relatives and family of the student.

Because we in Rotary have an exchange that deals with youth from all around the world any serious incident involving our students can be seen by their country in seconds. We have to be prepared.

The D5040 Youth Exchange Media Relations Team will consist of:

1. The District Youth Exchange Chair
2. The District Governor
3. The Area Coordinator responsible for the area where the incident or where the student is located.
4. Youth Exchange Officer for the club where the student is assigned to.
5. Past District Governor assigned by the District Governor
6. A person assigned by the District Chair to be the single spokesperson for D5040 Youth Exchange when dealing with the media. Preferably this person would be a Rotarian and would have received media training

In the event of a serious incident involving our youth exchange students e.g. sudden deaths caused by an accident, victim of sexual assault etc., the District Youth Exchange Chair will immediately initiate the D5040 Youth Exchange Media Guidelines by:

- 1 Contacting all members of the D5040 Youth Exchange Media Relations Team.
- 2 Assign a spokesperson to be the single point of contact for any information in relation to the incident.
- 3 Arrange for the team to meet or speak via conference call.
- 4 The District Chair will decide where the team will meet and if it is necessary to travel to the location where the incident took place or, the town or city where the student was residing.

- 5 The District Chair will liaise with the Area Coordinator and the Club Youth Exchange Officer to arrange for a location where the team can be based and find lodging for the team.
- 6 The District Chair will assign roles and responsibilities to all members of the media relation team for the entire time of the emergency or incident. These will include
 - o Member to liaise with the natural and host parents of the student
 - o Member to liaise with Rotary International Media Liaison
 - o Member to liaise with the local law enforcement authorities (team spokesperson)
 - o Member to handle any enquiries from outside interested parties such as Rotarians, friends & relatives
- 7 The assigned Liaison member will confer with the local law enforcement authorities as to whether a news conference should be required and if so assist the enforcement authorities in organizing one.
- 8 The District Governor will contact Rotary International and brief them on the incident or event.

It is important to understand that there will be only one spokesperson for the District media relations team. No other Rotarian will be allowed to speak about the incident. Keeping the release of information to one person will not allow false rumors to surface.

After an incident the District Chair will convene the media relations team and will conduct a debriefing on:

1. What went right?
2. What went wrong?
3. What can we do better next time and,
4. Do we need to make any changes to the Media Relations Policy

After this review is completed the District Chair will forward a report on the entire incident to the District Governor.