

WERRIBEE ROTARY

POLICY & PROCEDURE - PROTECTION OF CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS

1. BACKGROUND

All members of Werribee Rotary desire to ensure that all children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in Rotary Organised Programs (ROPs) are respected, protected and safe from abuse and harassment.

This policy seeks to provide a clear statement of principles and strategies aimed at protecting all children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in ROPs from abuse and harassment.

The policy extends to spouses or partners, and other volunteers engaged in ROP's.

This policy is complimentary to the Working with Children's Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Wellbeing & Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

2. COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

The Board & members of Werribee Rotary:

- i. Are committed to creating & maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in ROPs
- ii. Accept the responsibility to safeguard, to the best of their ability, the welfare of all children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in ROPs
- iii. Will act to ensure that their spouses or partners and other volunteers engaged in ROPs understand the core principles and strategies of this policy, and apply them in their dealings with children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in ROPs.
- iv. Will act at all times, to reduce or eliminate the likelihood of child abuse.
- v. Child Safety includes;
 - i. Verbal abuse
 - ii. Sexual abuse
 - iii. Physical abuse
 - iv. Emotional abuse or harassment
 - v. Exploitation
 - vi. Abandonment
 - vii. Neglect
 - viii. Financial

3. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct lists the expectations of club members, spouses, partners and volunteers, when working on ROPs, that supply programs or services to children.

Each of us is responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- i. taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- ii. treating everyone with respect.
- iii. listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.

- iv. having a zero tolerance of discrimination
- v. taking reasonable steps to protect the safety of children with a disability
- vi. ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child in vulnerable circumstances
- vii. act quickly and decisively if an allegation of child abuse is made, and ensure as quickly as possible that the child is safe.
- viii. Report any concerns as a matter of urgency, to the club Protection Officer or President, to the D9800 Protection Officer, or Victoria Police.

Club members, spouses, partners and volunteers, must not:

- i. develop a relationship with children that could be interpreted as favouritism.
- ii. exhibit behaviour with children which may be construed as unnecessary physical contact.
- iii. put children at risk of abuse.
- iv. engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.
- v. use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- vi. express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- vii. discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- viii. ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES

Legislation now requires organisations to undertake checks, to ensure that any persons involved in club ROPs that involve children, are of sound character.

The Working with Children's check (WWC), can no longer be relied upon as the sole check, as all a WWC tells us is that a person has not been convicted of an offence.

Werribee Rotary will ensure that:

- i. Every current member of the club, obtains and maintains a current Working with Children's check, regardless of whether they will be involved in projects with children.
- ii. Any costs associated with obtaining the WWC, will be paid by Werribee Rotary.
- iii. Every new member joining Werribee Rotary, will be required to obtain a WWC.
- iv. Werribee Rotary will undertake a reference or background check of any new or potential member. Up to three references should be checked.
- v. Werribee Rotary will respect privacy and confidentiality, and information gained will only be available to the club Protection Committee.
- vi. As there is no statutory limitation on child abuse claims, records will be maintained indefinitely.

5. PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Werribee Rotary will immediately establish and maintain a Protection Committee.

The committee will comprise;

- i. Current President
- ii. Current Secretary
- iii. Incoming President
- iv. Protection Officer who will be Chairman of the Committee

The committee will meet as often as required.

All ROPs must be referred to the committee, including a list of people who will be in attendance, and their roles.

The committee will review all roles at the ROP, and determine whether vulnerable children are protected, and whether volunteers require a WWC.

The committee will handle all allegations or cases of abuse.

6. SUSPECTED ALLEGATION OR ACTUAL ALLEGATION

The process where an abuse is suspected or where a specific allegation is made is:

- i. The Protection Officer or the President shall be informed immediately, if any suspicion or allegation is reported.
- ii. The Protection Officer or the President shall take all immediate steps to remove the child from any vulnerable situation, and provide or arrange support or counselling if necessary.
- iii. The members of the Protection Committee should be informed as soon as possible.
- iv. If deemed necessary, any two Protection Committee members may refer a matter immediately to Victoria Police.
- v. The Protection Committee will investigate any allegations, and may obtain external support if necessary.
- vi. The Protection Committee may recommend the termination of membership of a member, and their decision will be final.

7. CONCLUSION

This policy is implemented for the purpose of providing, as best as one reasonably can, protection from abuse and/or harassment by children, vulnerable adults, and other persons participating in ROPs.

8. ADOPTION

This policy & procedure, was developed in conjunction with members at a club meeting on 19.09.2017, and was formerly adopted by the Board of Werribee Rotary on/...../.....

Signed

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PRESIDENT 2017/18