

Prevention of Abuse and Harassment

Recommendations for Rotary Clubs in D5550

The following will assist Rotary clubs to comply with the District Harassment Policy.

- 1. Adopt a Club Policy Statement on safeguarding the safety and welfare of people at risk.**

Sample Club Policy Statement

"It is every Rotarian's responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every person with whom they come into contact during their activities as a Rotarian. Special attention must be given to children, the elderly, disabled and other vulnerable persons. This includes the prevention of physical, sexual or emotional harassment and all types of harassment."

- 2. Develop procedures to protect vulnerable persons and apply these to Rotarians and volunteers.**

In any event or activity where vulnerable persons are present, club procedures such as those outlined below should apply to everyone involved, including, for example, Rotarians, Rotarians' partners, Rotaractors, Interactors, volunteers and any paid staff.

- 3. Delegate responsibility for implementation and maintenance of the policy to a member of the club.**

Identify one member responsible for dealing with prevention and allegations or disclosure. Members and volunteers must know how to contact this individual quickly, as well a named alternate. This person and his or her team would be responsible for raising awareness in the club and training all members in the procedures they should follow when concerned with the personal security of others.

- 4. Plan club activities so as to minimize situations where harassment could occur.**

Access to and from event venues should be arranged so that people at risk are not required to use a route to and from an event or venue that is unsupervised, lonely, dark or otherwise potentially open to danger.

Resources should be organized in such a way so that children have a supervisor of the same gender. Whenever possible, avoid situations where one child is supervised by one adult. For example, another adult if practicable should accompany Rotarians providing transportation to one child.

- 5. Introduce a process where children can talk safely and in confidence with an independent person.**

Adults who harass often exploit their role or situation to gain the submission and/or silence of the child. This could be particularly true in residential situations, such as home hosting. Clubs should identify someone of demonstrated trustworthiness to be available for children wanting to report harassment. This person, for example the

person identified in 3 above, should have clear written guidelines explaining what action must be taken when harassment is disclosed.

In non-residential situations it is also appropriate to ensure that children are aware they have the right to talk privately to someone responsible for their overall safety and welfare. It is important that children know the name and contact details for this person.

6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children.

Rotary event supervisors are responsible for protecting vulnerable persons from harassment, and should receive and be expected to understand the material contained in this document. Supervisors should remain alert to monitor and assess a volunteer's relationships with children, looking for signs that a particular child is receiving exceptionally harsh or favourable treatment. Supervisors suspecting that harassment may be occurring must intervene as required and report their concern to the individual responsible for the overall conduct of the club and its members and volunteers.

7. Prepare Rotarians and volunteers to work effectively with all vulnerable persons.

Clear club policies, effective procedures for various events and programs, and regular proactive education programs for all Rotarians and volunteers – all supported with written materials and wallet cards - will provide a healthy, prevention-oriented approach for this serious responsibility we all share.

8. Issue guidelines on dealing with the disclosure or discovery of harassment.

The following suggestions may help clubs develop suitable procedures:

- Rotarians and volunteers should know they have a responsibility to report anything that concerns them about the personal security of others.
- Rotarians should be trained to be sensitive to changes in behaviour or signs of physical injury that might indicate something is wrong.
- Clubs should promote the attitude that reporting suspicions reasonably and in good faith and/or taking action are the right things to do. It should be clear that anyone doing so will not be discriminated against in the future.
- Rotarians should not attempt to deal with a problem alone. All complaints, allegations or suspicions should be reported to the club's designated person who will be responsible for deciding at what stage and in what circumstances the authorities will be informed.
- Debriefing sessions following a reported incident are excellent for improving procedures and identifying new training requirements.
- Rotarians and volunteers often are required to drive their personal vehicle in the delivery of service. Procedures should be established to ensure driver's licenses are valid and insurance adequate for the proposed activity.
- In some instances it may be appropriate for a Rotarian to lift a child. Where clubs undertake such programs, training in proper lifting techniques should be provided to all Rotarians and volunteers.

- Rotary clubs should provide each Rotarian and volunteer with a wallet card outlining the club's policy regarding the protection of children, the elderly, the disabled and other persons at risk. This card could also contain a checklist detailing what to do if harassment is discovered or suspected.

9. Reinforce our legal and moral responsibilities in everything we do in Rotary.

All Rotary Clubs, individual Rotarians, and volunteers are responsible for protecting the safety and security of everyone we encounter in the provision of service to our community. We have a special obligation to those individuals with greater vulnerability due to age, physical, or mental limitations.

Rotarians are obliged to intervene if we become aware of information about the harassment of a child through that child's involvement with a Rotary club activity, even when harassment disclosed may have occurred in the school or other non-Rotary environment.

Rotarians are obliged to do those things that protect and reinforce the physical and emotional safety and security of themselves and others. This includes operating a motor vehicle safely, ensuring the proper use of safety equipment, avoiding the use of illegal drugs, and avoiding the misuse of alcohol while providing service to others.

Rotarians are obliged to prevent the bullying of a child by other children whenever it is observed or disclosed.

Rotarians are obliged to discourage so-called humour targeted at age, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, occupation, physical or emotional condition, family status or sexual orientation.

Rotarians are obliged to take appropriate action when they observe other Rotarians or volunteers behave in ways that conflict with the values embraced by our district and club policies.