

APPENDIX D

Rotary International District 5580 Youth Protection Policy Abuse and Neglect Allegation Reporting Guidelines

For use by all Certified Volunteers and Rotary Volunteers to whom a youth reports an incident of abuse or neglect

Any Rotary Certified Volunteer or Volunteer to whom a youth reports an incident of abuse or neglect is responsible for following these ***Allegation Reporting Guidelines***.

1. Report from Youth

a. Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse or neglect. It is appropriate to listen and be encouraging. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.

b. Assure privacy but not confidentiality. Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/neglect to make it stop and to ensure that it doesn't happen to other youth.

c. Get the facts, but don't interrogate. Ask the youth questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the youth that s/he did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking 'why' questions. Remember your responsibility is to present the youth's story to the District Youth Protection Officer.

d. Be non-judgmental and reassure the youth. Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the youth.

e. Record. Keep a written record of the conversation with the youth as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the youth's words, and record only what has been told to you.

2. Protect the Youth

Ensure the safety and well-being of the youth. If feasible, remove the youth from the situation immediately and all contact with the alleged perpetrator. Give reassurance that this is for the youth's own safety and is not a punishment.

3. Reporting Requirements.

Immediately report all cases of alleged abuse or neglect to the District Youth Protection Officer. You may also report any allegation of suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to child protective services. You may also make a report directly to your Club Youth Protection Officer. In the event you make a report directly to your Club Youth Protection Officer, you or the CYPO must immediately also report to the District Youth Protection Officer. In Canada, where it is determined that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection within the meaning of the Child and Family Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER C.11, the Club and the volunteer or volunteers providing the source of those reasonable grounds shall report their suspicions and the reasonable grounds to support them to a local Children's Aid Society.

4. Avoid Gossip and Blame

To protect the privacy of the victim, the report should be kept confidential. Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during any ensuing investigation.

5. Do Not Challenge the Alleged Offender

The adult to whom the youth reports must not contact the alleged offender. In cases where the reporter or the District Youth Protection Officer notifies law enforcement or child protective services, and either of those organizations initiates an investigation, any interrogation must be left entirely to the investigating authorities. In cases of allegations of abuse or neglect which do not appear to rise to the level of a violation of state law, and which are not reported to law enforcement or child protective services, the District Youth Protection Officer, the District Youth Protection Committee and the District Governor are responsible for investigating, and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the youth has been moved to a safe environment. Any adult against whom an allegation of abuse or neglect is made will be removed from involvement in Rotary youth programs until the matter is resolved.

Post Report Procedures

The District Youth Protection Officer is responsible for ensuring that the following steps are taken immediately following receipt of an allegation of abuse or neglect:

1. Confirm that steps have been taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the youth.
2. In those cases where the allegations made, if true, might rise to the level of a violation of state law, report the allegations to a law enforcement or child protective services agency. In those cases where the allegations made, if true, might not rise to the level of a violation of state law, the District Youth Protection Officer will conduct an independent investigation of the allegations. In those cases where the allegations are reported to a law enforcement or child protective services agency, and the authorities choose not to conduct an investigation, the District Youth Protection Officer will conduct an independent investigation of the allegations.
3. Ensure the youth receives immediate support services.
4. Offer the youth an independent, Rotarian or non-Rotarian counselor to represent the interests of the youth.
5. Contact the youth's parents or legal guardian.
6. Remove alleged abuser from all contact with the alleged victim and other youth participating in Rotary youth programs while investigations are conducted.

7. Cooperate with any law enforcement or child protective services investigation.
8. Notify Rotary International and other entities (such as the U.S. State Department) of the allegations as required by RI policy or law.

Appropriate Response for Addressing Issues Within the Rotary Club for Allegations Made Against Rotarians or Non-Rotarians

When addressing an allegation of abuse or neglect, the most important concern is the safety of the youth. Club members should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Club members should be cautioned about speculating or commenting on the matter during the investigations. Comments made about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers do not support our statement of conduct or Rotary ideals. Comments made against an alleged abuser could lead to a slander or libel claim filed against Rotarians or clubs by the alleged abuser.

Potential Disciplinary Action upon Conclusion of District, Law Enforcement or Child Protective Services Investigation

The District Youth Protection Officer will inform the District Governor of the findings of any investigation conducted pursuant to these Guidelines. The District Governor may take any appropriate disciplinary action, including barring the alleged offender from participating in any Rotary youth programs.