

## District's Abuse and Harassment Policy Clarification

May 16, 2017

Since Rotary Weekend, there have been some questions about the District's Abuse and Harassment Policy. This is a very important policy so I thought some clarification would be helpful.

The [District Abuse and Harassment Policy](#) was adopted at the District AGM in 2005 and subsequently updated in 2008. The voting officers of District 7010 are the club presidents.

You can find a copy of the policy posted on the District 7010 website. A copy is always included in the incoming Club Presidents' binders.

The District policy applies to *"all Rotarians and volunteers in District programs, activities or events involving youth or vulnerable people, including all host families and Club counsellors in Youth Exchange programs and leaders in RYLA or Interact clubs. This policy also applies to all adults over the age of 18 who are ordinarily resident in homes in which a youth exchange student is residing"*.

The policy lays out the behaviour that is expected of Rotarians and others involved in District programs, specifically those involving youth and vulnerable people.

The District appoints a District Protection Officer. The duties of that person are to raise awareness of the policy and advise the District Governor with respect to matters of harassment or abuse. They also encourage clubs to adopt the District policy or one of their own and provide training as requested.

[Schedule A](#) of the policy addresses the specific actions that should be taken in the case of allegations of abuse or harassment involving a youth exchange student. The policy directs that these actions include ***"immediately reporting the complaint to the appropriate law enforcement authority, the District Protection Officer, the District Youth Exchange Chair and the Club Youth Exchange Chair"***. The District Protection Officer will notify the District Governor. The student's counsellor should be kept fully informed of all steps being taken. Once the situation is in hand, the District Protection Officer, District and Club Youth Exchange Chairs and Counsellor should work together to support the student.

[Schedule B](#) provides recommendations to the Clubs regarding actions they can take to address abuse and harassment. This can involve adopting the District policy as club policy or creating policies of their own which incorporate the guidelines provided by the District and Rotary International. If they chose to enact club policies, the District policies will supersede club policies for activities related to District programs and for youth exchange. If the club adopts its own policies they can also appoint a club protection officer or use the District protection officer. Regardless of whether a club adopts its own policy or the District policy they should have an approved policy that their members are familiar with.

The District policy is based on Rotary International Guidelines. New Guidelines were released in December 2016. We are currently reviewing these new guidelines to determine if and how the current policy should be updated in response. If changes are proposed they will be presented at the 2018 AGM for ratification.

If you have any questions about this please contact me.

*Margaret Walton*  
7010 District Governor  
2016-17