

ROTARY DISTRICT 5750 POLICY PROTECTING YOUTH FROM PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, EMOTIONAL OR VERBAL ABUSE, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

I. SUMMARY OF POLICY

Rotary International is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners, and other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse, the sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment of children and young people with whom they come into contact.

District 5750 hereby adopts and adheres to this policy. All Rotary Clubs in District 5750 engaging or participating in any program involving youth shall adhere to this Rotary District 5750 abuse, exploitation and harassment prevention policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

Emotional or verbal abuse. Incidents in which an adult uses fear, humiliation, or verbal assaults to control the behavior of a young person in his or her care. Examples include rejecting the young person, preventing him or her from developing normal social relationships, and making derogatory statements about the youth's race, religion, or personal appearance.

Neglect. Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care necessary for a youth's well-being.

Physical abuse. Mistreatment of a young person by use of physical contact intended to cause pain, injury, or other physical suffering or harm.

Sexual abuse. Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite sex. This includes nontouching offenses, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material. It includes harm or threatened harm to a child's health, safety, or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health safety, or welfare. "Sexual abuse" includes sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It includes, but is not limited to, rape, incest and lewd or indecent acts or proposals made to a child, as defined by law, by a person responsible for the child's health, safety, or welfare.

Sexual exploitation. Includes, but is not limited to, allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution, as defined by law, by a person responsible for the child's health, safety or welfare or allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the lewd, obscene, or pornographic, filming, or depicting of a child in those acts as defined by the state law, by a person responsible for the child's health, safety or welfare.

Sexual harassment. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims. Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments

Youth, Child or Student. Includes any person under 18 years of age.

Youth Protection Officer. The Rotarian, appointed by the Club President, to administer Club Youth programs, monitor compliance with this Policy, and perform other duties as provided in this Policy.

Worker with youth. Any adult, paid or unpaid, involved with a Rotary youth activity who has regular interaction with youth, either supervised or unsupervised. This includes, but is not limited to Rotarians and non-Rotarians, and their spouses, partners, and adult children. For the purposes of this policy, the definition of a worker with youth does not include adults who will have only casual or occasional group interactions with Youth.

III. WORKER WITH YOUTH SELECTION

1. The following individuals must complete an application to participate in Rotary youth activities:
 - a. All adult residents of a host family home;
 - b. The Club's Youth Protection Officer;
 - c. All workers with youth;
 - d. All Rotarians and non-Rotarians who regularly host, chaperone, or transport Youths for activities or outings; and
 - e. all other persons, as determined by the President, who come into regular contact with youth involved in or sponsored by Rotary.
2. The application form will include:
 - a. A copy of this Policy; and
 - b. A form allowing District 5750 to perform or cause to be performed a criminal background check and authorizing disclosure of the results of the background check to Officers and Board Members of the Rotary Club.
3. The Club's Youth Protection Officer and the Club President shall ensure that the

completed application forms are submitted for processing and are approved before a worker with youth may participate in a program involving youth.

4. Screening Costs – With each application, the Club will remit the fee for each background check.

5. No person shall be eligible to serve as a worker with youth if the person has a record of any of the following:

- a. active warrants;
- b. active restraining orders;
- c. registered as a sex offender;
- d. felony conviction;
- e. sex offense conviction;
- f. controlled substance conviction within the last 10 years; or
- g. conviction of any crime within the last 10 years.

6. The background check will be conducted in a manner that will provide District 5750 with a simple statement indicating whether or not the worker with youth applicant meets the criteria specified in this Policy. Any record matching one or more of the specified criteria will result in a determination that the applicant does not meet the criteria to participate as a worker with youth. District 5750 will share the result of the background check with the Club President, the Club Youth Protection Officer, and any other person the Club President authorizes to receive the information. No person who has not satisfactorily completed the application and approval process and who has been approved as eligible, may serve as a worker with youth.

7. District 5750 may contract with an independent company to conduct criminal background checks and maintain the background check records for the District. The provider must obtain its information from a government source.

8. The Youth Protection Officer will provide written notice to the Club President and Committee Chair from which the Volunteer Application originated when a Volunteer applicant has been declined for service as a Volunteer in a Youth Service Program. The Volunteer submitting the application may request information as to who to contact for an explanation and how to appeal the decision.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURE

A. Oklahoma Law requires any person who holds a good faith belief that child abuse has occurred to make a telephone report to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1.800.522.3511).

B. Any adult to whom a Rotary youth program participant reports an allegation of sexual

abuse or harassment must follow these reporting guidelines:

1. Receive the report.
 - a. Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse or harassment. 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/harassment in order to make it stop and ensure that it doesn't happen to others.
 - c. Get the facts, but don't interrogate. Ask questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Reassure the young person that he or she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the young person's motives. Remember that your responsibility is to present the story to the proper authorities.
 - d. Be nonjudgmental and reassure. Avoid criticizing anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It's especially important not to blame or criticize the young person. Emphasize that the situation was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature to come to you.
 - e. Document the allegation. Make a written record of the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Try to use the young person's words and record only what he or she told you.
2. Protect the young person. Ensure the safety and well-being of the youth program participant by removing him or her from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the youth that this is being done for his or her safety and is not a punishment.
3. Report the allegations to appropriate authorities — child protection or law enforcement. Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment — first to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation and then to the Club and District leadership for follow-through. In most situations, the first Rotary contact is either the Club President or the Youth Protection Officer, who shall seek the advice of appropriate agencies and interact with them. If the allegation involves the conduct of this Rotarian, the District Safety Officer or the District Governor should be the first Rotary contact. District 5750 will cooperate with police or legal investigations. Upon receipt of a report, the Club President or Youth Protection Officer shall inform the District Governor or the District Safety Officer of the report within 24 hours.
4. Avoid gossip and blame. Don't tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Be careful to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.
5. Do not challenge the alleged offender. Don't contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of noncriminal harassment, the District Governor is responsible for follow-through and will contact the alleged offender after the young person has been moved to a safe environment. The District Governor may designate this task to the District Safety Officer or other appropriate District officer or assistant District Governor.

C. Follow-through Procedures

The District Governor, the District Safety Officer, or the District Governor's designee must ensure that the following steps are taken immediately after an abuse allegation is reported:

1. Confirm that the youth program participant has been removed from the situation immediately and has no contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.

2. If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the District Safety Officer or district review committee should coordinate an independent review of the allegations.

3. Ensure that the student receives immediate support services.

4. Offer the young person an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent his or her interests. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with the youth program.

5. Contact the student's parents or legal guardian. If the student is away from home, the student and his or her parents should decide whether to stay in country or return home. If the student stays in country, written authorization from the student's parents or legal guardian is required. If the student and the student's parents choose for the student to return home, consult with police before making travel arrangements. If an investigation is pending, the police may not approve of the student leaving the country.

6. Remove the alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with any other young participants in Rotary programs and activities while investigations are conducted.

7. Cooperate with the police or legal investigation.

8. Within 24 hours, inform the District Governor and the District Safety Officer of the allegation. The District Governor, District Safety Officer, or other appropriate district officer must inform RI of the allegation within 72 hours and provide follow-up reports of steps taken and the status of investigations.

9. After the authorities have completed their investigation, the district must follow through to make sure the situation is being addressed. Specifically, District will conduct an independent and thorough review of any allegations of sexual abuse or harassment.

D. Postallegation Report Considerations

1. Responding to the needs of the youth program participant.

District 5750 will adopt a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting a young person after an allegation report. The youth program participant is likely to feel embarrassed or confused and may become withdrawn. After a report of harassment or abuse, students may have mixed feelings about remaining on their exchange. If they do choose to stay, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary Club. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country but change to a different host Club. Although Club members and host families

may have trouble understanding how the student is feeling, the student would find it helpful to know that the Club continues to be reassuring and supportive. Club members and host families may feel ambivalent about their roles and unclear about their boundaries. However, they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

2. Addressing issues within the Club

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of youth. Club members should not speculate or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Rotarians must not become involved in investigations. Making comments about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers violates this Policy, the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth and 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.

E. CONFIDENTIALITY

All directors, officers, members and volunteers shall refrain from public comment regarding a report of suspected child abuse. Information provided by or to DHS shall be kept confidential and shall not be discussed with others, except those involved in the investigation. Completed reports and forms shall be kept confidential.

F. PREPARATION

1. The Club President or a designee of the Club President shall be the spokesperson for the Club. The spokesperson shall inform the Club board of directors of the incident, when appropriate, and shall interact, as appropriate, with the media. Insofar as any public statements are concerned, the spokesperson shall coordinate efforts with the District Governor.

2. A copy of this policy and procedure shall be distributed to each Club board and staff member.