District 9685

Reporting an allegation

of abuse or harassment

by or against a young person

or Rotarian

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# Background

In recent times, the State of New South Wales and Rotary International have invoked new legislation and protocols that affect the way D9685 conducts all Rotary Youth Programs. This refers to the Working With Children legislation and the Rotary Youth Protection Manual which came into force in 2016.

In order to comply with the requirements of both the Working With Children legislation and Rotary International Youth Protection requirements, RI District 9685 has adopted a Child Protection Policy that complements the requirements of both the State legislation and Rotary International protocols.

In each case, for the reporting of an incident involving a young person or Rotarian both organisations require that a set of protocols and procedures be put in place.

# D9685 District Youth Protection Officer

Rotary International have requested that all District Governors establish a designated role of District Youth Protection Officer to foster safe operations across all youth programmes. This officer should be a resource on abuse, harassment and other risks and crises. He or she should have professional experience in any of the following:

* counselling,
* social work,
* law,
* law enforcement, or
* child development.

The D9685 Youth Protection Officer should:

* Monitor changes in national and local laws related to youth protection, as well as any changes in RI policies, and report the changes to the Governor and District programme chairs.
* Work with the District and clubs to inform all Rotarians of their youth protection obligations.
* Confirm that appropriate screening measures are conducted for all youth programmes, in compliance with Rotary policies and local laws.
* Direct the selection of Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers and ensure that volunteer screening is documented appropriately.
* Ensure that appropriate training is provided to Rotarians, other volunteers and youth programme participants and their parents.
* Oversee proper handling of allegations and protect the interests of all who are involved.
* Maintain records of all allegations of abuse, harassment or other crises.

# Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines.

District 9685 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth programme participants and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations will be taken seriously and must be handled with the following guidelines. The safety and well-being of programme participants must always be top priority.

# Definitions.

## Emotional or verbal abuse

The use of fear, humiliation, or verbal assaults to control the behaviour of another. Examples include rejecting the person, preventing him or her from developing normal social relationships and making derogatory statements about his or her, religion, ability, intellect, tastes or personal appearance.

## Physical abuse

Physical contact intended to cause pain, injury, or other physical suffering or harm.

## Neglect

Failure to provide the food, shelter, or medical care that is necessary to well-being.

## Sexual abuse

Engaging in or arranging implicit or explicitly sexual acts, whether they are performed alone or with another person of any age or gender, through force or coercion or with anyone who is unable to give consent. Any sexual activity between a legal adult and a minor is considered sexual abuse. Sexual abuse can also include non-touching offences, such as voyeuristic behaviour, indecent exposure, or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

## Sexual harassment

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted or directed at someone unwilling or unable to provide consent. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

* Sexual epithets or jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, gossip about one’s sex life, including comments about a person’s sexual activity, deficiencies or prowess.
* Verbal abuse of a sexual nature.
* Display of sexually suggestive objects or images.
* Sexual leering or whistling.
* Inappropriate physical contact, such as brushing against a person.
* Obscene language or gestures, including suggestive or insulting comments.

# Receiving an Allegation Report (refer to Attachment B)

**ANY ADULT** who receives an allegation of abuse or harassment from a Youth Programme participant or a Rotarian, **MUST**:

* Listen attentively and stay calm.
* Acknowledge that it takes courage to report abuse or harassment.

## Assure privacy but not confidentiality.

Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse or harassment to make it stop and ensure that is doesn’t happen to others.

(*NB: The Working with Children Legislation requires confidentiality at all times. Be sure to only contact those people who are on the ‘Needs to know list’. such as the District Youth Protection Officer)*

## Get the facts, but do not interrogate.

Ask questions that establish the facts; who, what, when, where, and how. Reassure the young person (or Rotarian) that he or she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking “why” questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the young person or Rotarian’s motives. Remember that your responsibility is to report this information to the proper authorities.

(NB. *In some cases this may be the Police. It is important that you take notes of what you have been told by the complainant and retain those notes for future reference.)*

## Be non-judgmental and reassure.

Avoid criticising anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It’s especially important not to blame or criticize the young person or Rotarian. When speaking to a young person emphasize that it was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature for them to come to you.

## Document the allegation.

Record the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Try to record the young person or Rotarian’s exact words. The Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report can be downloaded from the District website. Please complete this document and forward to the District Youth Protection Officer via email:- [hensonb@bigpond.net.au](mailto:hensonb@bigpond.net.au) This form can also be used to report an incident which relates to an adult Rotarian.

# Allegation Response.

The following steps must be taken immediately after alleged abuse or harassment is reported. Some steps may be performed by any programme volunteer, while others should be performed by the District Youth Protection Officer or a member of that committee.

## Protect the young person or Rotarian.

Ensure the safety and well-being of the young person by removing him or her from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the young person that this is for his or her safety and is not a punishment.

Take immediate action to ensure the young person’s health and well-being. If necessary get medical or psychological care as soon as is possible.

# Report the allegations to appropriate authorities.

Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment – first to the NSW Police Station closest to your location, or if urgent, contact 000 and ask for Police. Once reported to Police, contact your club or District leaders to follow up. Police investigators will carry out any interrogation that is required by them. Any follow up required will be carried out by the District Youth Protection Officer, who will update the District Governor on all aspects of the allegation.

## Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report

All incidents are to be reported to Rotary International using the form at Attachment A.

# Remove the accused person from contact with youth.

This action is particularly important in the case of a Youth exchange student where he or she must be removed from the home of a host family. This can arise because of an allegation by the student against a member of the household or where a member of the household makes an allegation about the actions of the youth.

# Avoid gossip and blame.

Do not tell anyone about the allegation other than those who need to know. Be careful to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

# Follow through.

The District Governor must inform Rotary International, Parramatta of the allegation within 72 hours of the matter being reported to them and must supply ongoing updates to the Parramatta office as to the status of the allegation and investigation.

The District Governor will be given regular updates on any investigation by the District Youth Protection Officer.

In the event of the Police not investigating the allegation owing to the matter not being a criminal matter, then an investigation will be carried out by the District Youth Protection Officer to the satisfaction of all parties involved. The results of the investigation are to be retained by the committee formed to assist the District Youth Protection Officer as set out in Rotary International protocols.

# Contact List.

The current District Youth Protection Officer is PDG John Wakefield OAM

He can be contacted on mobile 0418 411449 or by email on [youthprotection9685@outlook.com](mailto:youthprotection9685@outlook.com)

If for any reason he is not readily contactable, contact the following members of the District Youth Protection and Sexual Harassment Committee.

Committee member: Kalma McLellan on mobile 0417 696 156 or email on

<http://kalmamclellan@optus.com.au>

# Attachment A - Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report form

The Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report form follows.

** ROTARY YOUTH PROTECTION INCIDENT REPORT**

**Instructions:** Complete the following report leaving no field blank. If a question does not apply to this situation, please enter “NA.” Incident reports should be emailed to RI (email: [youthprotection9685@outlook.com](mailto:youthprotection@rotary.org)). After submitting the report, please continue to update staff as further information develops.

**REPORTER INFORMATION**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reporter’s Name: |  | Title/Role: |  |
| District: |  | Telephone(s): |  |
| Date & time of report: |  | Email: |  |

**ALLEGED VICTIM INFORMATION**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Last Name: |  | First Name: |  |
| Date of Birth: |  | Citizenship: |  |
| ***If incident occurred during a Rotary Youth Exchange, please provide the program details listed below:*** | | | |
| Host District: |  | Host Club: |  |
| Sponsor District: |  | Sponsor Club: |  |
| Host Family  Name & Address: |  | Host Family Phone: |  |

**ALLEGED OFFENDER INFORMATION**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Last Name: |  | First Name: |  |
| Relationship to the youth named above: |  | Title/Role  (if applicable: |  |
| Club name  (if Rotarian): |  | | |
| Other Parties Involved:  (contact information) |  | | |

**SUMMARY**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date and time of incident: |  |
| Location of incident: |  |
| *Please provide details of the incident:* | |

**ACTION TAKEN**

|  |
| --- |
| *Provide details on the action taken after the incident was reported to you/your organization:* |
| Is the youth currently in a safe place? |
| Has the alleged offender been removed from youth programs while the investigation is performed? |
| Please list all individuals or organizations that have been informed of the alleged incident to date?  *(Example: districts, clubs, youth participant’s legal guardians, district governor, youth protection officer, etc)* |
| Has the alleged incident been reported to local law enforcement? If not, why? |
| Is local law enforcement investigating the allegation, or have any official charges been filed? If so, please describe: |
| Have any support services been offered to the youth? If so, please describe the service/provider: |

**FUTURE STEPS**

|  |
| --- |
| *Provide details on any future action that you/your organization plan to take regarding this allegation:* |
| Have you received any media inquiries regarding the allegation? If so, please describe: |

**UPDATE**

|  |
| --- |
| *Provide any additional details or results of investigations relating to this incident since the initial report to RI:* |

# Attachment B Reporting Flowchart

