

# Rotary ROTARY ABUSE and HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES

## DISTRICT 9685 ROTARY ABUSE and HARASSMENT ALLEGATION REPORTING GUIDELINES

**Statement of Conduct for Working With Youth:** District 9685 strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, ALL Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses and partners, Friends of Rotary and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

**Zero Tolerance means - No tolerance - No Law or Rule violation will be tolerated for any abuse or harassment:** Rotary International and its districts are committed to protecting the safety and security of all youth program participants and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines.

The safety and well-being of program participants must always be top priority.

### Definitions:

#### **Cyberbullying behaviour might include:**

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, images or videos
- imitating others online
- excluding others online
- humiliating others online
- spreading nasty online gossip and chat
- creating fake accounts to trick someone or humiliate them

**Emotional, psychological or verbal abuse** — The use of fear, humiliation, or verbal assault to control the behavior of another. Examples include rejecting the person, preventing them from developing normal social relationships, and making derogatory statements about their race, religion, abilities, intellect, tastes, or personal appearance.

**Identity theft** - occurs when someone uses another person's personally identifying information, like a person's name, Social Security number, or credit card number or other financial information, without permission, to commit fraud or other crimes.

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

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

**Sexual abuse** — Engaging in or arranging implicit or explicit sexual acts. This includes pressuring someone to perform a sexual act alone, or sexually engaging directly 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 or youth program participant, or any nonconsensual sexual activity between peers, is considered sexual abuse. Sexual abuse can also include offenses that don't include touching, such as voyeurism, indecent exposure, stalking, electronic harassment, or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

**Sexual harassment** — Sexual advances, requests for sexual acts, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwanted or directed at someone who is unwilling or unable to consent. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitize someone or accustom them to inappropriate behavior. Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets or jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, gossip about someone's sex life, or comments about a person's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Giving private or secret gifts, including those of a sexual nature
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of sexually suggestive objects or images

- Sexual leering or whistling
- Inappropriate physical contact, such as intentionally brushing against a person
- Obscene language or gestures, suggestive or insulting comments

**Grooming** — Establishing an emotional connection with someone to lower their inhibitions and gain their trust with the intent to be sexually abusive.

**Stalking** in NSW or intimidation is an offence under section 13 of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. An offence is committed if a person stalks or intimidates another person with the intention of causing the other person to fear physical or mental harm. Attempting to commit the offence of stalking or intimidation is also considered to be an offence with the same penalties as if the offence was actually committed.

#### **Spiritual abuse is sometimes called Religious abuse**

- It happens when someone uses spiritual or religious beliefs to hurt, scare or control you
- Spiritual abuse can be a form of domestic and family violence

#### **Reproductive abuse**

- Reproductive abuse can also be called reproductive violence or reproductive coercion
- It happens when you are stopped from making your own choices about your reproductive system
- You should never feel pressure to do something you are confused or unsure about

**Consent** — An informed, knowing, and voluntary permission for something to happen, including sexual activity.

**Image-based abuse** is when someone shares, or threatens to share, intimate images without the consent of the person in the photo. **Image-based abuse** includes photos or videos of:

A nude person, A person whose breasts or genitals are visible, A person engaged in a sex act, A person showering or bathing 'upskirting' and 'downblousing': taking photos up someone's skirt or down their top A person's face digitally added to a pornographic or sexualised image.... It includes images that were taken with and without a person's consent

**Financial abuse** is when someone takes away your access to money, manipulates your financial decisions, or uses your money without consent. Once you know this, there are ways to get help and regain your independence. **Financial abuse** is a type of family violence. It often happens alongside other types of violence, such as physical or emotional abuse. It can leave you feeling vulnerable, isolated, depressed and anxious. It can also take away your independence.

**Harassment abuse** - Anti-discrimination law defines harassment as any form of behaviour that: you do not want. Offends, humiliates or intimidates you. Creates a hostile environment.

#### **Receiving a Report of Abuse or Harassment – What To Do!!**

**Any adult- Rotarian or non-Rotarian** to whom a program participant reports abuse or harassment must:

- **Listen attentively and stay calm.**
- **Acknowledge that it takes courage to report abuse or harassment.**
- **Be supportive, but remain neutral; do not express shock, horror, or disbelief.**
- **Assure privacy but not confidentiality.**
- Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse or harassment to make it stop and to prevent it from happening to others.

*(NB: The Working with Children Legislation requires confidentiality at all times. Be sure to only contact those people who are on the "Need to Know List" – such as the District Governor and the District Youth Protection Officer)*

- **Get the FACTS, but don't interrogate the participant.**

Ask questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Reassure the young person (or Rotarian) that they did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking why questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the young person's or Rotarian's motives, implying they are at fault, or suggesting that you don't believe them. Remember that your responsibility is to report this information to the proper authorities.

*(In some if not all cases this may be the Police. Take Notes of what you were told by the complainant and or Rotarian*

*–what you saw – what observations you made – retain your notes for future reference)*

- **Be nonjudgmental and reassuring.**

Avoid criticizing anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved — It is especially important not to blame or criticize the young person or Rotarian. When speaking to a young person emphasize that it was not his – her fault and that they were brave and mature to come to you.

- **Be patient and understanding.**

A person who has experienced trauma might find it difficult to talk about the details of their experience. Encourage them to report as much as they can or as they feel comfortable discussing. Try to minimize any need for them to explain their experience again.

- **Document the allegation.**

Take confidential notes that include details such as dates, times, other people present and locations they reference, as soon after the report as you can. Try to use the young person's exact words. The **Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report – see Attachment A** can be downloaded from the District 9685 website. **(insert web link)**

## **Responding to an Allegation**

The following steps must be taken immediately after alleged abuse or harassment is reported. Some of them may be performed by any program volunteer. Others, as specified, should be performed by a district officer.

## **Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report**

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

1. **Protect the young person or Rotarian.**

Ensure the safety and security of the young person by removing them from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the young person that this is for their safety and is not a punishment.

Take immediate action to safeguard the young person's health and well-being, and get them medical or psychological care, if necessary. If both the person who reported the problem and the person who is accused are young people, provide support to both of them.

2. **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 (DYPO), who will update the District Governor on all aspects of the allegation. The district will cooperate with police and legal investigations.

3. **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.

Follow district-established criteria and procedures for removing a Rotary Youth Exchange student from a host family if the student makes an allegation against a host family member. Move the student to another host family that was screened in advance.

4. **Avoid gossip and blame.**

Do not tell anyone about the allegation other than those who need to know. Take care to protect the rights of everyone who is involved during the investigation in particular the young person and any accused person or persons.

5. **Follow up and implement safeguards.**

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 and if necessary the District Youth Protection Committee (DYPC) will assist accordingly. The results of the investigation are to be retained by the DYPC formed to assist the District Youth Protection Officer as set out in District 9685 and Rotary International protocols.

The district will also make sure that the parents or legal guardians of the participants (whether they are accused or making the accusation) have been notified. The district will refer all involved young persons to an independent, non-Rotary counselor who can provide them professional emotional – psychological support.

#### **Contact List.**

The current **District Youth Protection Officer (DYPO) is: PP Paul Rogers**

Rotary Club of Kurrajong North Richmond

He can be contacted on mobile 0410 531 314 or by email on [youthprotection9685@outlook.com](mailto:youthprotection9685@outlook.com)

OR [p.rogers54@internode.on.net](mailto:p.rogers54@internode.on.net) –

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

#### **Committee members 2021-2022:**

|                         |                             |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| PP. Mentie Knowles      | Wahroonga RC                | M: 0407 945 038 |
| PP. Ken Fairfax         | Blacktown City RC           | M: 0417 687 185 |
| Rtn. Ally Cox           | Picton RC                   | M: 0408 915 843 |
| Rtn. Dallas Booth       | Turramurra RC               | M: 0412 445 454 |
| Rtn. Darren Bark        | St Ives RC                  | M: 0439 828 508 |
| PP. Max Fleming         | Kurrajong North Richmond RC | M: 0412 539 673 |
| PDG. John Wakefield OAM | Lower Blue Mountains RC     | M: 0418 411 449 |

Paul Rogers

District Youth Protection Officer (2021-2022)

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