

2022-2023

DISTRICT 7780 PROTECTION POLICY
Prevention of Abuse and Harassment

CLAUDIA FROST

DISTRICT GOVERNOR

GREGG DOWTY

DISTRICT PROTECTION OFFICER

GARY DECOLFMACKER, PHIL RINALDI, ROBERT KNUPP,
NICOLE ALBERT, MELISSA LESNIAK

DISTRICT PROTECTION COMMITTEE

In keeping with our Four-Way-Test of the things we think, say or do, Rotarians and volunteers should always follow the
Rotarian Code of Conduct

- ▶ Be a model of appropriate behavior.
- ▶ Treat others with respect.
- ▶ Respect each person's right to privacy.
- ▶ Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on Rotary and Rotarians.
- ▶ Challenge unacceptable behavior.

Rotary Clubs place great emphasis on their work with people in the community.

- ▶ It is important that our Rotary Clubs protect the interests of everyone involved, and create and maintain a safe and respectful environment for all participants.
- ▶ Therefore, all allegations of abuse or harassment must be taken seriously and handled in accordance with the policy.

Scope

- ▶ This policy applies to children, youth, young adults and other vulnerable persons, regardless of age who come into contact with Rotarians and volunteers in District or Club programs activities and events.
- ▶ This policy also applies to all fellow Rotarians, volunteers, spouses, partners, guests and community members participating in such activities.

Important Definitions

PROTECTED PERSON

- ▶ Children, youth, young adults under the age of 21, or other “vulnerable person”.
- ▶ Individuals with a disability or a diminished capacity for rational decision making.
- ▶ Anyone to whom Rotary has a “Duty of Care”
- ▶ However, ALL PERSONS are protected under the law!

SEXUAL ABUSE

- ▶ Refers to engaging in any type of sexual act, implicit or explicit with a protected person(s), with or without the protected person's consent.
- ▶ Exposing a protected person to verbal and/or visual displays of sexual content and material is considered a sexual act.

Harassment Free Environment Rotary International Policy

Harassment is broadly defined as any conduct, verbal or physical, that denigrates, insults or offends a person or group based on any characteristics.

(age, ethnicity, race, color, abilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- ▶ Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- ▶ Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess.
- ▶ Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments.
- ▶ Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings.

VOLUNTEER



- ▶ Any person, Rotarian or otherwise, who hosts or is involved with any Rotary sponsored activity. This specifically includes persons involved with:
- ▶ RYLA, Interact, Rotaract, Mentoring, Youth Exchange or other club or District program.
- ▶ Please Note:

Rotary District 7780 has specific Guidelines Regarding Abuse and Harassment that apply specifically to Youth Exchange volunteers. The District Youth Exchange program has more specific and detailed procedures than those outlined in this policy. Please refer to District Protection Policy when considering participation in the Youth Exchange Program.

Volunteer Selection and Screening

- ▶ 1. Complete a Volunteer Application (Appendix B of this policy) form **every three years**:
- ▶ 2. Authorize the Club Protection Officer to conduct background checks (subject to jurisdictional law, ordinance, and/or policy) Appendix C of this policy.
- ▶ 3. Provide references to be checked by the Club Protection Officer Appendix D of this policy.
- ▶ 4. Provide personal interviews by the Club Protection Officer.

Volunteer Selection and Screening

- Acceptable background checks include documented checks completed through school systems, law enforcement or other national data bases.
- InforME www.maine.gov/informe
- www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/nhsp/jib/crimrecords/
- for participation in the Rotary Youth Exchange program must be completed through the ESSEX web-site:

www.exchangestudent.org

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

- ALL VOLUNTEERS must meet eligibility requirements for working with youth and other protected persons.
- Understand and adhere to any volunteer policies of organizations with whom Rotarians interact.
- Any volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or has engaged in sexual abuse or harassment is prohibited from working in a Rotary sponsored program and may not become a member of Rotary.

Allegation Reporting Guidelines

- ▶ Allegations of abuse or harassment must be taken seriously and handled in accordance with the District Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines of the District Protection Policy.
- ▶ Zero tolerance is the standard.
- ▶ You may also have legal reporting requirements within your jurisdiction, depending on the nature of the incident. The District Protection Officer or Club Protection Officer can guide you.

Investigation Guidelines

- ▶ Every Club must cooperate with all law enforcement, child protective services, and legal jurisdictional investigations. If Rotary District 7780 conducts its own independent investigation, clubs will cooperate to the extent that it does not interfere with other official investigations.
- ▶ Any volunteer accused of sexual abuse or harassment will be prohibited from participating in any Rotary sponsored activity until an investigation into the claim is completed.

Investigation Guidelines

- ▶ If the investigation is inconclusive, for the safety of participants and the protection of the accused, that volunteer will be prohibited from having any **unsupervised one on one contact** with a youth or other protected person.
- ▶ A volunteer accused but later cleared of misconduct will be allowed to participate in Rotary programs.

Investigation Guidelines

- ▶ A volunteer accused but later cleared of misconduct will be allowed to participate in Rotary programs. However, reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that they will be reinstated to their former position.

Training in Protection

- ▶ All club members and volunteers must receive Protection Training at least **every three years** from their Club Protection Officer or District Protection Officer.
- ▶ In the absence of a Club Protection Officer, the Club President assumes all responsibilities assigned to the CPO

Club Responsibilities

- ▶ Rotary clubs are required to be Certified by the District by demonstrating the following:
 - ▶ Compliance with a District approved Protection Policy.
 - ▶ That the Club Protection Officer is carrying out their duties.
 - ▶ Include the CPO as an official reporting directly to the Club President

Club Responsibilities

- ▶ Club Protection Officers may or may not be a member of the club's Board of Directors as determined by the club. However, the CPO reports directly to the Club President.
- ▶ Rotary clubs are required to be certified by the district by demonstrating the following:
 - ▶ Annually complete a resolution that they are in accordance with a District 7780 approved policy.
 - ▶ Conduct background checks on all volunteers and a check of personal references.

What do we do if it's true?

- ▶ The club, through its President shall terminate the membership of any Rotarian who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise found to have engaged in sexual or physical abuse or sexual harassment.
- ▶ If they fail to, the District Governor will make appropriate recommendations to Rotary International for further action.
- ▶ A non-Rotarian who is found to have engaged in sexual or physical abuse or sexual harassment shall be prohibited from working in any Rotary sponsored activity or from becoming a member of Rotary.



Questions?

Questions regarding this policy or about how to handle or respond to a situation may contact:

District Protection Officer
Gregg Dowty
gdowty60@gmail.com