



# APPENDIX A

## District 7780

### Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegations Reporting Guidelines

District 7780 is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians; spouses or partners of Rotarians; and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children, youth, and other vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact.

Any Rotarian to whom a complainant reports an incident of abuse or harassment must comply with the following guidelines. The Rotarian must record the report from the complainant, take steps to protect the complainant, report the complaint, and ensure privacy and follow-up.

#### **Is it Abuse or is it Harassment?**

Whether the alleged conduct amounts to sexual abuse or sexual harassment is not to be determined by the adult to whom allegations are reported. After ensuring the safety of the vulnerable person, all allegations should be immediately reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

#### **Allegation Reporting Guidelines**

*For use by all adults to whom a youth or other vulnerable person reports an incident of abuse or harassment*

Any adult to whom a complainant reports an incident of sexual abuse or harassment is responsible for following these *Allegation Reporting Guidelines*.

#### **Report from Protected Person**

- Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse. It is appropriate to listen and be encouraging. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.
- Assure privacy but not confidentiality. Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment to make it stop and to ensure that it doesn't happen to other students.
- Get the facts, but don't interrogate. Ask the individual questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the complainant that s/he did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking 'why' questions. Remember your responsibility is to present the individual's story to the proper authorities.

- Be non-judgmental and reassure the complainant. Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the person. Assure the student that the situation was not their fault and that they were brave and mature to come to you.
- Keep a written record of the conversation with the complainant as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the complainant's words, and record only what has been told to you. When circumstances permit, encourage the complainant to write the details of the situation in their own words.

### **Protect the Complainant**

Ensure the safety and well-being of the protected person. Remove the complainant from the situation immediately and all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Give reassurance that this is for the student's own safety and is not a punishment.

### **Report to Appropriate Law Enforcement Authorities**

Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment to the appropriate law enforcement authorities first and then to the club and district leadership for investigation. **In most situations the first Rotary contact is the Club Protection Officer who has responsibility for seeking the advice of and interacting with appropriate agencies.** If the allegation involves the conduct of the Rotarian YEO or YEC, the District Youth Exchange Chairman should also be contacted. All allegations must be reported to RI within 72 hours; the person responsible for doing so is the Chairman of District 7780 RYE. District 7780 will cooperate with police and legal investigations.

### **Report to Protection Officers and District Protection Committee**

- Report allegations to the Club Protection Officer who will then report to the District Youth Protection Officer and, if the allegation involves a youth exchange student, to the District RYE Chairperson.
- The District 7780 Protection Officer will conduct or monitor an independent and thorough investigation into any claims of sexual abuse or harassment. Any adult against whom an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment is made will be removed from all contact with the complainant until the matter is resolved.
- Confirm that the complainant has been removed from the situation immediately and all contact with alleged abuser or harasser.
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency immediately (if not already done). If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the District 7780 Protection Officer should coordinate an independent investigation into the allegations.
- Ensure the complainant receives immediate support services from non-Rotary resources.
- Offer to assist the complainant in locating an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent his/her interests. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with Rotary or the Rotary Youth Exchange program.

- Contact the student’s parents or legal guardian. If away from home, provide the student with the option of either staying in country or returning home.
- Remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with the specific complainant and other vulnerable individuals while investigations are conducted.
- Cooperate with the police or legal investigation. The Club’s Protection Officer will inform the District Youth Exchange Chair and District Governor of the allegation. Either the District Governor or the District Youth Exchange Chair must inform Rotary International of the allegation within 72 hours, and provide follow-up reports of steps taken, the outcome of all investigations, and resulting actions.

### **District Procedures in Response to Allegation**

The District Protection Committee Chair who receives the report of an allegation has the primary responsibility for responding to an allegation and must comply with the following guidelines. The District Committee Chair will work with the advice and support of the DPO, and both must ensure that the District Governor is fully advised of the steps being taken to deal with the allegation. Where appropriate, the District Governor may become directly involved in some or all of the steps set out below.

Following receipt of a report of an allegation of abuse and/or harassment, the following steps must be taken promptly:

- Confirm that the complainant has been removed from the situation immediately and from all contact with respondent.
- The investigation of the complainant lies with the law enforcement agency, and all District personnel should cooperate with any investigation. The District Protection Officer should ask the law enforcement agency to keep him or her advised of the progress of the investigation.
- If the law enforcement agency declines to investigate, complete an investigation plan in collaboration with the DPO. Depending on the nature of the complaint, its severity, and the facts surrounding the case, one or more of the following options can be discussed with the complainant:
  - Pursuing an informal resolution of the complaint;
  - Proceeding with a formal investigation;
  - Taking advantage of counseling, mediation, and other resources
- Ensure that the complainant receives immediate support services. Keep in mind if a youth is involved he or she has the right to have an adult present at all times and to be represented by an adult.
- Offer the complainant an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent his or her interests. Ask the appropriate social service or law enforcement agency to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian nor in any way involved with the program, activity or event in question.
- While investigations are being conducted, remove the respondent from any contact in Rotary programs, activities or events with all protected persons including the complainant.

- Complete the investigation as quickly as possible in accordance with the investigation plan and provide a report on the findings made to the respondent, the complainant and the District Governor.

### **Avoid Gossip and Blame**

District 7780 maintains the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person. The adult to whom the student reports must not contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment (e.g. bullying), the district youth exchange chair and district governor are responsible for investigating, and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.

- The allegations will be shared by Rotarians only with appropriate law enforcement authorities, RI, the District RYE Chair, Assistant RYE Chair, Inbound or Outbound Coordinator, the District 7780 Youth Protection Committee and the District Governor.
- Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.
- Do not challenge the alleged offender

### **Additional Guidelines**

- There will need to be a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting the student after an allegation report. The student may feel embarrassed, confused, or become withdrawn and appear to be avoiding members of the host family or club. After a report of harassment or abuse, students may or may not want to remain on their exchange. If they do, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary club depending on the circumstances. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country, but change to a different host club.
- It may be difficult for club members and host families to understand how the student is feeling, but it would be helpful for the student to know that the club remains a support for them. Club members and host families may experience ambiguity toward their roles and may feel unclear regarding their boundaries. However they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.
- When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of the students. Club members should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. Club members should be cautioned about speculating or commenting on the matter during the investigations. Comments made about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers do not support our statement of conduct or 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.