

Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Rotary International District 5340 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being 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

Emotional or verbal abuse — Use of fear, humiliation, or verbal assaults to control the behavior of another. Examples include rejecting the person, preventing him or her from developing normal social relationships, and making derogatory statements about his or her race, 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 explicit 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 offenses, such as voyeuristic behavior, indecent exposure, or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

Sexual harassment — Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, 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, and 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, and suggestive or insulting comments

RECEIVING AN ALLEGATION REPORT

Any adult to whom a program participant reports abuse or harassment must do the following.

- *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.

- *If at all possible, have 2 adults present when the report is taken.* This is for the protection of the program participant and the adults taking the report.
- *Listen attentively and stay calm.* Acknowledge that it takes courage to report abuse or harassment. Be encouraging, 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 ensure that it doesn't happen to others.
- *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 report this information to the proper authorities.
- *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 it was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature 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's exact words. If possible, complete the District 5340 Incident Report Form at the time the allegation is made. If the Form is not readily available, gather the information in writing and transcribe the information to the Form as soon as practicable.

District 5340 will cooperate with all law enforcement agencies, child protective services, and legal investigations and will not interfere with official investigations when conducting its own independent review.

ALLEGATION RESPONSE

The following steps must be taken immediately following an allegation of abuse or harassment. Most steps may be performed by any program volunteer, while others should be performed by a District officer, as specified.

1. Protect the young person.

Continue to 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 by getting get him or her medical or psychological care, if necessary.

2. Report the allegations to appropriate authorities.

All cases of abuse or harassment must be reported immediately. In an emergency where outside intervention is immediately required to protect the health and welfare of any person, call 911 and summon law enforcement authorities and/or emergency medical services to the scene.

In most situations where additional harm is not imminent, the first report is to the chair of the Rotary youth program where the incident is alleged to have occurred, and who is responsible for seeking advice from and interacting with appropriate agencies. If the allegation involves the conduct of this Rotarian, the District Governor or the District youth protection officer should be the first Rotary contact.

Ensure that the Rotary youth program chair or other District officer contacts the appropriate local law enforcement agency for investigation. If this cannot be done immediately, then the volunteer must contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency for investigation, and then notify Rotary youth program and District leaders for follow-through. Interrogations related to allegations of abuse or harassment must be left entirely to law enforcement agencies.

District 5340 will cooperate with police or legal investigations.

District 5340 has researched local, state, and national laws related to youth protection, including reporting allegations, and notes the following legal requirements of which all volunteers must be aware:

- Report alleged child abuse to the **California Child Abuse Hotline at 1(800) 344-6000**.
- Report all alleged abuse and harassment to law enforcement. The appropriate law enforcement agency will depend upon the location of the alleged abuse or harassment. The correct agency may be the local City Police Department or the County Sheriff's Department. If in doubt, call 911. The allegation should be reported in the jurisdiction where the alleged abuse took place, NOT the location where the student may be at the time of reporting to an adult.
- District 5340 believes the training and implementation of its Youth Protection Policy follows all legal and law enforcement requirements, and that the Youth Protection Policy meets all law enforcement reporting requirements.

3. Remove the accused person from contact with youth.

District 5340 will remove the alleged offender from all contact with Rotary youth program participants until the matter is resolved.

Follow established criteria and procedures for removing a Rotary Youth Exchange student from a host family if they report a problem with, or make an allegation against, a host family member. If appropriate, move the student to the temporary housing that was screened in advance.

4. Avoid gossip and blame.

Don't 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.

District 5340 maintains the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person by enforcing the following procedures:

- Rotarians must not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines.
- Emphasizing in training the conditions of "innocent until proven guilty" and the importance of maintaining the privacy of both the alleged victim and accused

- Limiting to no more than two the Rotarians reviewing the background check information (secured by an outside source)
- Confirming the reliability of the contract services used for background checks to ensure they have privacy policies and procedures in place
- Keeping records in a secure location with access limited to those with a need to know.

ALLEGATION REPORTING TO ROTARY

The following steps must be taken immediately after receiving an allegation report of abuse or harassment. The steps will be performed by any program volunteer or by a District officer, as specified.

Any allegation of abuse or harassment received by a Volunteer must be reported to District 5340 not later than 48 hours after receiving the report as follows.

- If not already done, the person receiving the report will complete the District 5340 Incident Report Form at the time the allegation is made. If the Form is not readily available, the incident information will be recorded in writing and will be later transcribed to the Form as soon as practicable.
- The person receiving the allegation must personally insure that one of the following is done:
 1. The District 5340 Incident Report Form is personally delivered to Rotary District 5340, 2247 San Diego Avenue, Suite 236, San Diego, CA 92110; or
 2. If personal delivery is impractical, the District 5340 Incident Report Form is scanned to a PDF file and the file is emailed to the District youth protection officer at ypo@rotary5340.org.

A District officer must inform RI of the allegation within 72 hours and provide ongoing status reports.

District 5340 will ensure that the program participant's parents or legal guardians have been notified and offer the young person an independent, non-Rotarian counselor to represent his or her interests.

If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, or if the investigation is inconclusive, the District Governor will appoint a District review committee to coordinate an independent review to ensure that District youth protection policies were followed, confirm that youth safety was the highest priority, and determine any necessary modifications to District procedures. This review is not responsible for determining the validity of any allegations; that can only be done by youth protection agency personnel or trained law enforcement professionals.

If law enforcement has found the allegations to be noncriminal, the District Governor is responsible for contacting the alleged offender. The District Governor may delegate this task to a District youth protection officer or the District review committee.

District 5340 will document all accusations of inappropriate behavior and the actions taken to resolve the situation, so that patterns of inappropriate behavior are identified and addressed.