

Four critical actions for Rotary

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

1. Respond to an emergency

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a Rotary contact person for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2. Report to authorities / refer to services

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

Within Rotary

Police

You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a Rotary member, contractor, or other volunteer to Police.

District protection officer

After reporting to police, and following their advice, you must report to the district protection officer or if they are not reachable the district governor. They will advise on next steps, including contacting Rotary International within 72 hours.

Within the community or family

Police

You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Police.

District protection officer

After reporting to police, and following their advice, you must report to the district protection officer or if they are not reachable the district governor. They will advise on next steps.

Child Protection

You **must** report to Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

Other concern

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:

- The Orange Door (VIC only) in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support
- Child Protection
- Police.

You **must** take action

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident or receive a disclosure that a child has or is at risk of being abused.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).

3. Contact parents/carers

- Upon advice from the District protection officer, you **must** consult with Child Protection or Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:
- not to contact the parents/carer
- (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4. Provide ongoing support

Your club / program **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

Contacts

Police - 000 or your local police station
Child Protection Victoria - 13 12 78
Child Protection NSW - 13 21 11

District Protection team

- Tim Huggins, 0410 540 421
- District Governor
- Grant Godino, 0402 733 064

Orange Door (VIC only) - <https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/>

Four critical actions for Rotary

Responding to Child Sexual Offending at a Rotary program/project

1. Respond to an emergency

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a Rotary contact person for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2. Report to authorities / refer to services

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report incidents, suspicions and disclosures of student sexual offending as soon as possible:

- **Police** - all instances on **000**
- **District Protection Officer** - all instances after calling police
- **Child Protection** - If you believe that:
 - the victim's parent/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
 - the child who is alleged to have engaged in the student sexual offending is:
 - aged over 10 and under 15 years and may be in need of therapeutic treatment to address these behaviours
 - may be displaying physical and behavioural indicators of being the victim of child abuse.

Contacts

Police - 000 or your local police station
Child Protection Victoria - 13 12 78
Child Protection NSW - 13 21 11

District Youth Protection team:

1. Tim Huggins, 0410 540 421
2. District Governor
3. Grant Godino, 0402 733 064

You **must** take action

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident or receive a disclosure that a child is a victim of child sexual offending and/or a child has engaged in sexual offending.
- You must act even if you are unsure and have not directly observed the child sexual offending (e.g. if a victim, or another person tells you about the offence).

3. Contact parents/carers

Upon advice from the District protection officer, you **must** consult with Child Protection or Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact the parents/carer
- (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- how to communicate with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4. Provide ongoing support

Your club / program **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.