

Document B (Document 3 in email package takes precedence)

Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Rotary is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth and has a Zero tolerance policy.

All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. The safety of the young person is our first priority. Sexual abuse and harassment take many forms and all Rotarians should access the District web site and read the full policy.

Upon hearing allegations, members should not determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes sexual abuse or sexual harassment, instead, after ensuring the safety of the student, the member should immediately report all allegations to the club counsellor (if YEP student) or the club president or the D9650 Youth program leader, e.g. RYLA, RYAG etc **IF THEY ARE NOT MAKING A REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE CHILD PROTECTION HELPLINE**. The YEP counsellor/president/ Youth program leader must immediately contact the District Youth Protection Officer. The DYPO will, in consultation with the District Governor and after considering the rules of natural justice and the seriousness of the allegation determine if the matter should be reported to the appropriate child protection or law enforcement authorities in accordance with the law of New South Wales.

Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Any adult to whom a Rotary youth program participant reports an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment must follow the following reporting guidelines:

(a) **Listen attentively and stay calm.** Remember it takes a lot of courage to report abuse or harassment. Do not express shock, horror, or disbelief.

(b) **Assure privacy but not confidentiality.** Explain that you will have to tell someone in order to make it stop and ensure that it doesn't happen to others.

(c) **Get the facts, don't interrogate.** Ask questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Assure the young person that he or she did the right thing in telling you. Don't ask "why" questions.

Your job is to present the story to the proper authorities. (The club youth protection officer and or the President)

(d) **Don't judge**, but reassure. **Don't criticise** anything that has happened or anyone involved. **Do not blame** or criticise the young person. State it is not his or her fault and that it was brave to come to you.

(e). **Make a written record** of the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Use the young person's words and record only what he or she told you.

2. The District Governor and the District Youth Protection Officer (DYPO) will ensure the safety and well-being of the young person by in appropriate case and subject to consideration of the rules of natural justice removing him or her from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Assure the young person this is being done for his or her safety and is not a punishment.

3. The DYPO and the District Governor after considering the rules of natural justice and the seriousness of the allegation promptly report appropriate cases of sexual abuse or harassment to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation. In District 9650, the appropriate law enforcement authority is either the Child Protection Helpline or the NSW Police depending on the nature of the allegation.

The Rotary contact is the DYPO who will seek the advice of appropriate agencies and interact with them.

District 9650 will cooperate with police or legal investigations.

4. Avoid gossip and blame. Don't tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines.

Be careful to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

5. Do not challenge the alleged offender, or make contact with him or her. In cases of abuse, this must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment, the District Governor is responsible and will contact the alleged offender after the young person has been moved to a safe environment.

The District Governor may delegate this task to the DYPO or district review committee.

There are a wide variety of complaints and they will require different responses. At one extreme any allegation of rape by a student would obviously have to be immediately reported to the police without any contact with the alleged perpetrator. At the other extreme an anonymous and unsubstantiated complaint that a Rotarian was hugging students inappropriately the person accused should be accorded natural justice before a decision or any action was to be taken at all.

It is not possible to have one rule which fits all circumstances.

VERY IMPORTANT

Addressing issues within the club after an allegation of abuse or harassment is difficult, however the most important concern is the safety of youth. Club members should not speculate or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations.

Rotarians must not become involved in investigations. Making comments about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers violates both the Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth and 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.