



Rotary District 6900

Policy for Prevention of Abuse or Harassment

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Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

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

Adopted by the RI Board of Directors, November 2002

Introduction

Rotary Clubs place great emphasis on their work with people in the community, including children, young people, and other vulnerable persons, through Rotary's many programs, including Rotary Youth Leadership Awards ("RYLA"), Interact clubs, mentoring programs and Rotary International Youth Exchange ("Youth Exchange"). This volunteer effort is vital to the quality of life in our communities and to the good reputation of Rotary and Rotarians. For this exemplary work to continue, 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 in Rotary programs, activities or events.

Rotarians, their families, and non-Rotarian volunteers are expected to use their best efforts to safeguard the welfare and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or harassment of every young or vulnerable person with whom they come into contact in connection with any Rotary program, activity or event.

Rotary District 6900 (the "District") is committed to protecting the safety and well being of all our program participants and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled in accordance with the Rotary District 6900 Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines (the "Guidelines") attached as Schedule "A" to this Policy. The Guidelines will also assist in ensuring that an adult against whom an allegation is made is treated fairly, since an allegation of abuse or harassment does not necessarily mean that abuse or harassment actually occurred. Nonetheless, whenever an allegation is made, the safety and well-being of youth or vulnerable persons should always be the first priority.

Scope

This Policy applies directly to all Rotarians and volunteers in District programs, activities or events involving youth or vulnerable persons, including host families and Club counselors in Youth Exchange programs and leaders in RYLA or Interact clubs. This Policy also applies to all adults over the age of 18 years who are ordinarily resident in homes in which an Exchange student is residing.

Furthermore, each club that belongs to the District is asked to follow the "Recommendations to Clubs" that are attached as Schedule "B" to this Policy. This includes adopting this Policy, either directly or by incorporating it into the club's own written policy for the prevention of abuse and harassment.

Definitions

In this Policy and in the Guidelines:

1. "*Abuse*" means physical, emotional or sexual abuse, as more particularly defined herein.
 - a. "*Physical abuse*" means the intentional use of force to the body that results in injury. It may be a single incident or a series or pattern of incidents;
 - b. "*Emotional abuse*" means verbal attacks on a person's sense of self, repeated

rejection or humiliation. It also means exposure to domestic abuse, isolation or existing in an environment of fear and/or anxiety;

- c. “*Sexual abuse*” means improper and unwanted exposure to sexual conduct, activity or behavior. This includes any sexual touching, intercourse or exploitation.

2. “*Harassment*” means any conduct by an individual that is directed at, and offensive to another person or persons within Rotary or with Rotarians interacting with non-Rotarians, and which the individual knew, or reasonably ought to have known, would cause offense or harm. This includes any objectionable act, comment or display that belittles, demeans or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment or any act of intimidation or threat.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Conduct that erodes the dignity of the person, particularly based on the person’s color, race, national origin, ethnic origin, age, sex, gender, physical characteristics, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability;
- b. Unwelcome and demeaning remarks, jokes, and innuendos about race, religion, age, national origin, marital status, color, or disability;
- c. Use, display, or distribution of racist, pornographic, derogatory, or other offensive written material;
- d. Practical jokes based on race, sex, or other discriminatory grounds;
- e. Inappropriate or offensive gestures.

3. “*Sexual harassment*” means any unwanted or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Sexual harassment can take many different forms and may include physical contact, verbal comments, jokes, propositions, and the display of offensive material or other behavior that creates a sexually hostile environment. An act may constitute sexual harassment even if it was not intended to offend, humiliate or intimidate. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Uninvited or unwanted touching;
- b. Uninvited or unwanted kisses or embraces;
- c. Crude or sexist jokes or comments;
- d. Sex-based insults, taunts, teasing or name-calling
- e. Making sexually suggestive or obscene comments or gestures;
- f. Staring or leering at a person or at parts of a person’s body;
- g. Making promises or threats in return for sexual favor;
- h. Making requests for sex or sexual favors;
- i. Repeated invitations to go out after prior refusal;
- j. Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- k. Persistent or unwelcome questions or insinuations or comments about a person’s private or sex life;
- l. Offensive phone calls or letters; and
- m. Sexual assault.

4. “*Protected person*” means a youth, young person, or other vulnerable person.

5. “*Youth*” means any person less than 18 years of age involved in a Rotary program

(such as Youth Exchange, RYLA, Interact, or any other community or youth service project), activity or event and to whom Rotary may have a duty of care, and specifically includes children.

6. “*Young person*” means participants in Group Study Exchange, the GRSP program, Ambassadorial Scholars, or other similar Rotary programs, activities or events and to whom Rotary may have a duty of care.
7. “*Vulnerable person*” means anyone who is elderly, physically or mentally disabled or infirm, or suffering from any sort of disability that might render him or her in need of protection or care, who is involved in a Rotary program, activity or event and to whom Rotary may have a duty of care.
8. “*Prohibited person*” means anyone who:
 - a. Has been convicted of an offense that resulted in harm to an individual, including assault, sexual assault, sexual interference with a minor or failure to provide the necessities of life;
 - b. Has been convicted of any offense which, in the opinion of the Club President or District Governor, suggests an unacceptable risk of harm to a person in the care of that individual; or
 - c. Is subject to a court order prohibiting that person from being in contact with any other individual.

Policy Statement

It is the responsibility of every Rotarian and every volunteer in Rotary programs to safeguard the welfare of every person with whom they come into contact during Rotary activities. Special attention is to be given to protected persons. This includes the prevention of abuse and harassment.

Rotarians and volunteers should always:

Treat protected persons with respect;
Provide a model of good and appropriate behavior;
Respect protected persons’ right to privacy;
Be aware that behavior can be misinterpreted even when well intentioned; and
Challenge unacceptable behavior.

District Commitments

In accordance with its moral, ethical and legal obligations, insofar as possible the District:

1. Shall ensure that protected persons who are involved in District programs, activities or events are protected from abuse, harassment, or sexual harassment;
2. Shall prevent contact between protected persons and individuals who are either prohibited by law from working with protected persons, or who are considered by the District to be inappropriate individuals to be working with protected persons;

3. Shall NOT permit a prohibited person to participate in any program related to protected persons;
4. Shall encourage and facilitate the timely reporting of incidents where protected persons are at risk of harm;
5. Shall ensure prompt notification of allegations of abuse or harassment made by protected persons where allegations involve Rotarians or persons involved with Rotary programs, activities or events; and
6. Shall report any allegations of abuse of protected persons in compliance with local law enforcement agencies.
7. Shall report any allegations of abuse of protected persons to Rotary International in compliance with the then-existing policies and procedures of Rotary International.