



# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 5100 Youth Protection Policy ALLEGATIONS REPORTING PROCEDURES



Rotary District 5100 is committed to protecting the safety and well being of all Youth Service Program Students and shall not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously.

What should volunteers do and not do when a student reports an incident of abuse or sexual harassment? The following procedures give a volunteer the appropriate steps to take if a student reports an incident of abuse or sexual harassment. If you have any questions contact the District's Youth Protection Officer who is listed on the District Website or the District Directory.

## Allegation Reporting

1. Any adult to whom a Student reports an incident of Abuse or Sexual Harassment is responsible for following this Allegation Reporting Procedure.

a. When receiving the report from a Student:

- i. *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.
- ii. *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.
- iii. *Get the facts, but don't interrogate.* Ask the Student questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the Student that she/he did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions. Remember your responsibility is to report the Student's story to the proper authorities.
- iv. *Be non-judgmental and reassure the Student.* 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 Student. Assure the Student that the situation was not their fault and that they were brave and mature to come to you.
- v. *Make a written record of the meeting.* Keep a written report of the conversation with the Student as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the Student's words, and record only what has been told to you.

b. Protect the Student:

Ensure the safety and well-being of the Student. Remove the Student 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.

c. Do not Challenge the Alleged Offender:

The adult to whom the Student reports should not contact the alleged offender.

d. Report to Appropriate Law Enforcement Authorities:

Immediately report all cases of child abuse or harassment to the appropriate police department. In either Oregon or Washington you may contact the police or sheriff's office in the city or county where the alleged abuse occurred; or (i) in Oregon, you may contact the Oregon State Police at 1- 800-452-7888 or 503-375-3555 (in the Salem area); (ii) in Washington, you may contact the Washington State Child Protective Services at 1-800-866-ENDHARM.

e. Report to Appropriate District and Club Officials:

Immediately after reporting the child abuse or harassment to the police, notify the District 5100 Youth Protective Officer, and the local Club President.

2. The Youth Protection Officer shall immediately notify the District Governor and the chairperson of the committee having responsibility for the Student. The reporting Rotarian shall provide the responding police officer's name to the Youth Protection Officer. The chairperson may advise the Committee Counselor responsible for the youth. If the allegation involved any of these Rotarians, the notification to that person will not be made.

3. The District Governor shall notify Rotary International within 72 hours of the reported child abuse or harassment. In the absence of the District Governor, or if that officer is involved, the District Youth Protection Officer will notify Rotary International within the prescribed time.

## Confidentiality

Care shall be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation. Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by this policy and procedure.

## Investigation of Allegations

District 5100 shall investigate each allegation of abuse and harassment thoroughly and in a timely fashion. District 5100 shall cooperate with all law enforcement, child protective services, and legal investigation and shall only conduct its own independent investigation such that it does not interfere with other investigations.

1. The Youth Protection Officer ("YPO") shall ensure that the following steps are taken immediately following a child abuse or harassment report:

a. The adult to whom the Student reports the abuse should follow this allegation reporting procedure;

b. Confirm that the Student has been removed from the situation immediately and all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser;

c. Contact the law enforcement agency receiving the report to verify the report was made as required and determine what the District can do to assist;

d. If the law enforcement agency is not going to investigate, the YPO shall arrange for a qualified investigator to conduct an independent investigation into the allegations. Not all allegations of inappropriate behavior may be criminal. Nevertheless, the Student's safety shall always be our top priority;

e. If the YPO conducts an independent investigation in lieu of a police investigation, a complete written report will be forwarded to the attorney for District 5100. During the

investigation the YPO will be responsible to keep the attorney for District 5100 apprised of the status of the investigation. The attorney for District 5100 will be responsible for providing appropriate information and counsel to the District Governor and Club President ;

f. Ensure the Student receives support services;

g. Offer the Student an independent counselor to represent the interests of the Student. Such services may be available through the local school district, police department, or County's crime victim advocates;

h. The District Governor or his designee shall 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. If the Student wishes to return home the law enforcement organization investigating the accusation should be contacted and given an opportunity to obtain investigative information;

i. Remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with the specific Student and other youth while investigations are being conducted; and

j. Cooperate with the police or legal investigation.

### **Responding to the needs of the Student**

There will need to be a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting the Student after an allegation report. The Student is likely to feel embarrassed, confused, and may 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 in the program. If they do, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with the hosting/local Rotary club depending on the circumstances. In some cases, a Student who is away from home may wish to remain in country, but change to a different host club. Whenever possible, the District Committee Chair should attempt to accommodate the Student's wishes in this area. 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.

### **Communication within the Club concerning allegations**

Sharing information concerning the allegation with club members should only occur with those having a need to know. When addressing an allegation of child 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 District 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.