

# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 7810

## CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

For All Rotarians

### Introduction

Rotary Clubs place great emphasis on their work in communities near and far. In all of our dealings with others, we should act with professionalism, respect, kindness and integrity.

Often, our work brings us in close contact with young people, the elderly and people with disabilities. Our volunteer efforts are vital to the quality of life in our communities and to the good reputation of Rotary and Rotarians. For this good work to continue it is important that our Rotary clubs protect the interests of everyone involved.

These guidelines have been produced to help Rotarians plan club programs, events and activities. It must be understood, however, that these are only guidelines. Clubs and Rotarians will have to decide for themselves how much is relevant to their service function. Rotarians should also be trained on the issues and encouraged to be alert to potential issues of abuse in their service to the community.

The guidelines are not exhaustive; they are suggestions for the management of relationships, with children and others, that should be adapted to suit the particular circumstances. A sense of perspective should be maintained and common sense applied to each situation.

The recommendations are directed primarily at the supervision of children, and where appropriate they can be adapted for our work with elderly and disabled persons, But it is important to remember that the underlying principles apply to our dealings with all people.

The needs and rights of the child, disabled or elderly person must take priority in all circumstances.

The following recommendations refer to the role of “supervisors”. For Rotary events and programs a supervisor may be the overall chairperson of an event, a chairperson or convenor for one part of an event, or a committee chair for a club-sponsored program. A club chair for Youth Exchange would be one example of the latter.

Some clubs may choose to implement some or all of these recommendations for the club as a whole, rather than on an event or program basis. For example, a club policy requiring Rotarians and volunteers to serve with at least one other adult in all circumstances might address many potential liability concerns.

## District 7810 Policy Statement

It is the responsibility of every Rotarian to safeguard the welfare of every person with whom they come into contact during their activities as a Rotarian. Special attention is to be given to children, the elderly, and disabled and other vulnerable persons. This includes the prevention of physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Rotary District 7810 will in so far as possible:

1. In accordance with its legal obligations, ensure that children who are involved in Rotary District 7810 programs, activities and events are protected from abuse, harassment and neglect.
2. Ensure that Rotary District 7810 Programs are provided to young people in a safe and caring environment.
3. Prevent contact with persons who are either prohibited by law from working with children and young people or who are considered by Rotary District 7810 to be inappropriate persons to be working with children and young people.
4. Encourage and facilitate the timely reporting of incidents where children and young people are at risk of harm.
5. Ensure the prompt notification of allegations of abuse, harassment or neglect by children and young persons where allegations involve Rotarians or persons involved with Rotary programs.
6. Report any allegations of child abuse in compliance with provincial and territorial legislation.

Rotary District 7810 will not:

1. Permit a prohibited person to participate in any child-related program.
2. Permit any person to host a youth exchange student, whether as a home stay parent or as an adult living in the same home as the youth exchange student will live, without first determining the suitability of the person through the District's screening process.

### PROHIBITED PERSON

For the purposes of this policy a *prohibited person* is anyone who:

- Has been convicted of an offence which resulted in harm to a minor, including assault, sexual assault, sexual interference with a minor or failure to provide the necessities of life;
- Has been convicted of an offence not involving a minor which, in the opinion of the District Youth Safety Coordinator, suggests an unacceptable risk of harm to a minor in the care of that person; or
- Is subject to a Court Order or decree prohibiting the person from being in contact with a minor.

## SCOPE

These Policies and Procedures apply to all Rotary District 7810 Rotarians and Volunteers who wish to become counsellors and/or a host family to young people participating in Rotary sponsored program. These policies also apply to all adults over the age of 18 years who reside in the home of a host family.

## SCREENING

All counsellors and host families must complete the District 7810 Volunteer Assessment form. This form must be returned to the Club counsellor for review.

All prospective counsellors and/or adults over the age of 18 who would be residing in the home of a host family must agree to provide documentation as required to permit the club to obtain a Police Record Check duly processed by the police.

No Rotarian or other volunteer shall act as a counsellor or host family to a Rotary Youth Exchange student until the District Volunteer Assessment Form and Police Record Check Form have been completed and accepted by the Counsellor and the District Youth Safety Coordinator.

## VOLUNTEER ASSESSMENT FORM

The Volunteer Assessment Form attached to this Policy will be used by Club Counsellors for all people requiring screening in accordance with the screening criteria above.

## DISTRICT AND CLUB ROLES

### District Youth Safety Coordinator

1. The District Youth Exchange Committee shall appoint a District Youth Safety Coordinator (DYSC) who is not a member of the Committee but who is responsible to the Committee for the implementation and enforcement of this policy. The DYSC shall have experience working with children either in their professional capacity or as an experienced Rotary volunteer.
2. The appointment of the DYSC will be made annually. It is expected that the DYSC will hold the office for 2 to 3 years.
3. The DYSC must be familiar with both the Rotary International Child Protection System as well as relevant Provincial and Territorial legislation.
4. The DYSC will review and maintain an archive of Police Record Check forms and District screening forms submitted in accordance with the requirements of this policy.
5. The DYSC will maintain strict confidentiality of such forms in compliance with Provincial, Territorial and Federal legislation and this policy.
6. In the event the DYSC determines that an individual is not acceptable as a Counsellor or host family due the results of the Police Record Check, he or

she shall advise the applicant that she/he is not acceptable but shall not disclose any details of the reason behind the decision in order to ensure the privacy of the applicant.

7. The DYSC shall be the first point of contact should any Club Counsellor or other Rotarian receive a complaint of abuse or harassment, and is responsible for ensuring that such complaints are dealt with according to applicable law and that the interests of the affected young person are protected to the extent possible.
8. The DYSC will work with Clubs to inform all Rotarians of their obligations under the Rotary Child Protection Policy and relevant legislation and to ensure that appropriate training is made available.

### **Club Counsellors**

1. Club Counsellors are intended to be the primary liaison for every young person involved in Rotary programs. Counsellors are encouraged to develop relationships of trust with the young people for whom they are responsible.
2. A Counsellor's primary responsibility is the safety and well being of the young person for whom they are responsible.
3. Counsellors shall ensure that all host family members over the age of 18 have submitted the appropriate Volunteer Assessment Form and Police Record Check Form and have been approved by the District Youth Safety Coordinator before fulfilling the role of host family.
4. Counsellors shall ensure that the person they counsel is provided with a contact of the same gender as the young person to receive complaints which the young person prefers to discuss with a member of the same gender, and will ensure that this contact will handle such complaints in the same manner as the Counsellor.
5. Counsellors should assure the young person for whom they are responsible that they will act independently and objectively from any host family, Club President, activity leader or volunteer on any complaint made in order that the young person feels enabled at all times to speak candidly with the Counsellor without fear of disbelief or adverse ramifications.
6. Counsellors must actively develop a relationship with the young people they counsel so that should any situation of harassment or abuse arise, the young person will feel entirely comfortable going to the Counsellor for assistance.
7. Counsellors must be aware of and at all times comply with the reporting procedures in cases of harassment and abuse.
8. In cases where the allegation is of abuse, the Counsellor must immediately report the allegation to the DYSC, provide on-going support for the young person and ensure that the young person has no further contact with the alleged abuser while the allegations are being investigated.
9. In cases where the allegation is of harassment, the Counsellor must be available to provide a process of resolution, such as mediation, or seek advice from the DYSC about these processes.

## **PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Rotary Clubs and District 7810 recognize the value and obligations of the applicable privacy legislation and will comply with that legislation by:

1. Advising Club members of the nature of personal information required to be provided by Club members or other volunteers to participate as a host family member in the Youth Exchange Program;
2. Appointing a DYSC to ensure that personal information is obtained only with the consent of the member affected and is stored and used only as permitted by this Policy;
3. Obtaining the consent of Club members and others affected by the Policy to the collection of such personal information as is reasonable and necessary to adequately protect the interests of young people and children with whom the Club has contact;
4. Maintaining the confidentiality of personal information to ensure that the privacy of Club members is protected. This means that personal information is stored securely and given only to individuals who must have that information to ensure that the interests of young people and children are protected in the manner contemplated by this Policy.

## **LIABILITY INSURANCE COVERAGE**

It is the responsibility of all individuals who are involved in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program to ensure that they have adequate personal insurance. It is each person's/family's responsibility to determine what is "adequate" for them. Rotary International, Rotary District 7810 and individual Rotary Clubs do not provide insurance coverage for members/volunteers who participate in the Youth Exchange Program.

## **DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Our increasing knowledge about the needs of children and the effects of their social environment on their growth and development is changing what we view as child abuse. Some practices that were once considered acceptable are now generally believed to be abusive. Legislation describes what behaviour or conditions might be so harmful that it is necessary to stop or prevent them. The following are the main kinds of abuse:

**Physical Abuse** - the intentional use of force on any part of a child's body which results in serious injury. It may be a single incident, a series or pattern of incidents. The Criminal Code states that physical force cannot be used on children unless the force used is "reasonable" and has been used for "corrective purposes" by a parent or someone acting in the role of parent.

**Emotional Abuse** -- may take the form of chronic exposure to alcohol or drug abuse, verbal attacks on a child's sense of self, repeated humiliation or rejection. Exposure to violence or severe conflict in the home, forced isolation, restraint or causing a child to be afraid much of the time may also cause

emotional harm. Emotional abuse rarely happens only once and it is usually part of particular way of relating to children.

**Sexual Abuse** - the improper exposure of a child to sexual contact, activity or behaviour. It includes any sexual touching, intercourse, exploitation or exposure and can be perpetuated by anyone, including a parent, relative, friend, or stranger. Sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offence.

**Neglect** - is any lack of care that causes serious harm to a child's development or endangers the child in any way. Physical neglect is the failure to meet the child's physical needs. This includes failing to provide adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, health care and protection from harm. Emotional neglect is the failure to meet the child's emotional needs for affection and a sense of belonging.

## **DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT**

**Sexual Harassment** is any unwanted, unreciprocated and unsolicited sexual advance or conduct 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, the display of offensive material or other behaviour which creates a sexually or emotionally hostile environment.

## **Recommendations for Rotary Clubs in District 7810**

### **1. Adopt a Policy Statement on safeguarding the welfare of people at risk.**

Clubs should adopt a policy consistent with the District policy. This policy statement should be brought to the attention of all Rotarians involved with an activity or project that includes children, elderly, disabled or vulnerable persons. Clubs should delegate specific responsibility for safeguarding designated people at risk to a member of the club, perhaps a Personal Security Officer.

### **2. Plan activities so as to minimize situations where abuse may occur.**

- Access to and from venues should be planned so that people at risk are not required to use a route to and from an event or venue that is unsupervised, lonely, dark or otherwise potentially open to danger.
- Avoid situations where one child is supervised by one adult. For example, Rotarians providing transportation to one child should be accompanied by another adult.

- Arrangements to meet children away from the event location should not be permitted unless a parent or other adult will be present at all times.
- Where it is possible for one child to be with one adult in an unsupervised setting, the procedures outlined below should be enacted to ensure the volunteer is suitable.

3. Introduce a process where children can talk in confidence and safely with an independent person.

It is known that adults who abuse may exploit their role or situation to gain the submission and or silence of the child. This is particularly true in residential situations, such as hosting an exchange student. Clubs should identify someone suitable who has demonstrated trustworthiness to be available for children wanting to report abuse. This person should be given clear written guidelines explaining what action must be taken when abuse is disclosed.

In non-residential situations it may be more appropriate to ensure that children are aware they have the right to talk privately to someone responsible for their overall safety and welfare. It is important that children know who this person is and how to contact the individual.

4. Develop procedures for protecting children and apply these to all Rotarians and volunteers.

Club procedures will apply to everyone involved in the event or activity. This will include, for example, all Rotarians, any Rotarian's partner, all Rotaractors and Interactors, all volunteers and all paid staff.

5. Ensure all Rotarians and other volunteers have clear roles.

Depending on the nature of the event and the extent of involvement, Clubs should consider giving everyone involved a written description of their role and the tasks involved. While this may only be a simple document, preparing it will help to make clear the priorities, the risks and how they might be minimized, and the skills required. A copy of the policy statement to prevent abuse and instructions on what to do if abuse is discovered or suspected should be provided to each Rotarian and volunteer at each event.

6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children.

Rotary event supervisors are responsible for protecting children and others from abuse, and should receive and be expected to understand the material contained in this document. Supervisors should remain alert to monitor and

assess a volunteer's relationships with children, looking for signs that a particular child is receiving exceptionally harsh or favourable treatment. Supervisors suspecting that abuse may be occurring are expected to intervene as required and report their concern to that individual responsible for the overall conduct of the club and its members and volunteers.

7. Prepare Rotarians and volunteers to work effectively and safely with children and vulnerable adults.

Clubs should take care to evaluate the effectiveness of a "Records Check" obtained from the local Police Service. For example, these checks generally report convictions for criminal offences. They do not include charges that did not result in a conviction, nor do they disclose personal behaviours that may put children and others at risk.

Instead, clear club policies, effective procedures for various events and programs, and regular proactive education programs for all Rotarians and volunteers - all supported with written materials and wallet cards - will likely provide a healthier, prevention-oriented approach for this serious responsibility.

8. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.

The following suggestions may help clubs develop suitable procedures:

- Clubs should identify one member responsible for dealing with allegations or disclosure. Members and volunteers should know how to contact this individual quickly, including a named alternate. This person and his or her team is responsible for raising awareness and training all members of the club for the procedures they should follow when concerned with the personal security of children or others.
- Rotarians and volunteers should know they have a responsibility to report anything that concerns them about the personal security of others.
- Rotarians should be trained to be sensitive to changes in behaviour or signs of physical injury that might indicate something is wrong.
- Clubs should promote an attitude that reporting suspicions and or taking action is the right thing to do. It should be clear that anyone doing so will not be discriminated against in the future.
- Incidents should be reported, recorded and action taken. Documentation should include details of what happened, when and where it took place, who was involved, who has been informed and the actions taken. Documentation should be clear and factual, remembering



that it might be used by the Police or Social Services, and stored in a confidential, secure manner.

- Rotarians should not attempt to deal with a problem alone. All complaints, allegations or suspicions should be reported to the club's designated person who will be responsible for deciding at what stage and in what circumstances the authorities will be informed.
- Debriefing sessions following a reported incident are excellent for improving procedures and identifying new training requirements.
- Rotarians and volunteers often are required to drive their personal vehicle in the delivery of service. The club's personal security officer should establish a procedure to ensure driver's licenses are valid and insurance adequate for the proposed activity.
- Rotary clubs may find it useful to provide each Rotarian and volunteer with a wallet card outlining the club's policy regarding the protection of children, the elderly, the disabled and other persons at risk. This card could also contain a check list detailing what to do if abuse is discovered or suspected.

## **DISTRICT 7810 ABUSE PROTOCOL**

### **Policy**

It is the responsibility of every Rotarian to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of every person with whom they come into contact during their activities as a Rotarian. Special attention is to be given to children, the elderly, disabled and other vulnerable persons. This includes the prevention of physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

### **Rotarians and volunteers encountering a possible case of abuse**

#### **SHOULD:**

- Treat all allegations seriously and take action.
- Let the person know they have done the right thing in telling you and that it has taken courage to do so.
- Reassure the person that it is not their fault.
- Be honest about what you are going to do, who you are going to tell, and why.
- Keep the person fully informed of what is happening and give them information about possible other sources of help.
- Make sure the person understands that any expression of anger is directed towards the abuser and not them.

## **SHOULD NOT:**

- Make promises that cannot be kept.
- Interrogate the person - leave that to the experts such as Social Services or the Police.
- Cast doubt on what is being said to you.
- Make the person feel that they are responsible for the abuse in any way.
- Panic! Reacting too quickly may cause more problems.
- Deal with the problem alone. Report it to your contact person and ensure it is taken seriously.

**The contact person is:** name and telephone number

**Alternative contact is:** name and telephone number

## **DISTRICT 7810 INSURANCE PROTOCOL**

\*\*\*To Be Completed...

The General Liability section of the District 7810 Insurance policy will cover the legal liability of District 7180 arising from the negligence of the District, a Rotary club, an individual member or a volunteer for a claim made against them in respect of death or bodily injury to a person, subject to the terms, exclusions and conditions of the Policy. The coverage does not exclude abuse, but the policy does exclude criminal actions relative to the perpetrator of a crime.

In the event of an incident that may lead to a possible claim it is important that all Rotary clubs comply with the following policy conditions:

- Report the incident, in writing, to the District 7810 Insurance Broker
- Do not admit liability
- Forward any communication you receive to the District 7810 Insurance Broker, unanswered, as soon as possible.

### **Our Legal and Moral Obligations**

All Rotary Clubs, individual Rotarians, and volunteers are responsible for protecting the safety and security of everyone we encounter in the provision of service to our community.

We have a special obligation to those individuals with greater vulnerability due to age, physical, or mental limitations.

Rotarians are obliged to avoid doing anything that is likely to result in harm to others. We are also obliged to take all reasonable precautions to avoid placing others in a position where some harm could be done. This includes physical and emotional harm.

Rotarians have an obligation to intervene if they are aware of information, or if they are in a position where they could reasonably be expected to be aware of information about the abuse of a child through that child's involvement with a Rotary club activity.

Obvious examples of acts which are likely to cause harm include driving a motor vehicle containing a child at excessive speed or carelessly, or failing to ensure a child uses proper safety equipment while on an outing.

A less obvious example would be permitting a child to be bullied by other children, or even tolerating "humour" among adults targeted at age, race, colour, national origin, religion, occupation, or physical or emotional condition.