



**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
DISTRICT 9970 inc.**

**Rotary Youth Exchange
(RYE) Programme**

**Health & Well Being
Policy & Procedure Manual**

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RYE Programme Health & Well Being Policy & Procedure Manual

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- a. District Governor
- b. District Youth Protection Officer

Refer also to the following procedure documents in the District RYE Policy & Procedure Manual Index. These documents are associated with the overall Abuse & Harassment Policy and its implementation.

- **Police Vetting of RYE Volunteers**
([CVOL-001-9970-Consent Police Disclosure.pdf](#))
- **Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students**
([CVOL-005-9970-Pastoral Care School Agreement.pdf](#))
- **International Tensions**
([CCON-004-9970-International Tensions.pdf](#))
- **Travel Guidelines & Rules**
([CTRV-001-9970-Travel Guidelines.pdf](#))
- **Early Termination of an Exchange**
([CCON-001-9970-Early Termination of an exchange.pdf](#))
- **Youth Volunteer Declaration**
([CVOL-003-9970-Youth Volunteer Declaration.pdf](#))
- **Application to become a RYE host family**
([CIHF-004-9970-RYE Host Family Application.pdf](#))

Abbreviations Used

DG	District Governor
RCP	RI Code of Policies
RI	Rotary International
RYE	Rotary International Youth Exchange
YPO	Youth Protection Officer

1) Preamble

This section details District 9970's pro-active approach to reduce the risk of harm to students participating in the District 9970 Rotary International Youth Exchange (RYE) programme.

District 9970 Youth Exchange Committee reports to and is under the supervision and direction of the District 9970, District Governor.

The policies and guidelines issued by Rotary International as available at www.Rotary.org are to be regarded as the minimum standard to be applied when administering the District 9970 Rotary International Youth Exchange (RYE) programme. Those policies and guidelines will be amended for effective operation in the New Zealand environment and to take account of, and comply with, New Zealand legal and Governmental requirements

a) RYE Certification

Rotary International District 9970 inc. will ensure that it retains Rotary International (RI) certification of the RYE programme and will therefore undertake and implement all actions necessary for such certification. Rotary International District 9970 will only undertake student exchanges with Rotary Districts that also have RI certification as at the date of the outbound student's departure

b) Certification Requirements

Certification of District 9970 RYE programme requires, but is not limited to, the following.

1. Completion by the districts DG and Youth Exchange chair, of the RI application form
2. Submission to RI of the Districts Abuse and Harassment Prevention or Youth Protection Policies developed according to RCP 2.110 and 41.080
3. Submission to RI of documentation that the district Youth Exchange programme is incorporated or established as a similar formal legal entity
4. Submission of documentation that the districts RYE programme carries adequate general liability insurance with coverage and limits appropriate for its geographic location
5. Submission to RI of all material used in the districts RYE programme

The complete requirements for programme certification will be prescribed by RI from time to time.

c) Compliance

All Volunteers are to comply with the requirements of this procedure manual.

Any RYE programme participant who does not comply with the requirements of the Rotary International District 9970 Youth Exchange Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy will be removed from participation in the programme

Where an Exchange Student fails to comply with the requirements of the programme and is to return home early (i.e. before the scheduled completion date of their exchange) the procedures prescribed in this Procedure Manual must be followed.

d) RYE Scope

Neither Rotary International District 9970 nor any Club should provide an identification card, letter of introduction, request for assistance or other credential or document intended to identify or introduce a young person to a Rotary Club or Clubs in another country, unless mutual agreement has been reached in advance with respect to the hospitality or assistance to be provided by the host Club.

Neither Rotary International District 9970 nor any Club is obliged to provide hospitality or assistance to any young person from another country, despite any documented or claimed sponsorship of a Rotary Club, unless the receiving Club has specifically agreed in advance to provide such hospitality or assistance.

It is the prerogative of each Club to determine what assistance, if any, it will offer to young persons.

Notwithstanding this, such agreement will not fall within the RYE programme unless all procedures associated with the programme have been followed and complied with.

e) Youth Protection Officer

This manual anticipates the annual appointment of a District 9970 Youth Protection Officer. In the absence of an appointment to this position then the responsibilities of this role for the District 9970 RYE programme will be undertaken by the district RYE committee chair or their nominated alternate.

2) Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy

a) Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

District 9970 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 any 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.

b) Definitions

Volunteer. Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Exchange Activities who has direct interactions, either supervised or unsupervised, with students. Volunteers include: Club and District Youth Exchange officers and committee members; Rotarian counsellors; and host parents and other adult residents of the host home, including siblings and other family members.

Rotary Youth Exchange Activities: Activities or meetings organized by the RYE Committee or the Student's hosting Club, attended by Students and which are principally for Students or for the management and administration of the district RYE programme

Student / Exchange Student. Any individual who is participating in a Rotary Youth Exchange, regardless of whether they are of the New Zealand legal age of majority.

Emotional or verbal abuse. Incidents in which an adult uses fear, humiliation, or verbal assaults to control the behaviour of a young person in his or her care. Examples include rejecting the young person, preventing him or her from developing normal social relationships, and making derogatory statements about the youth's race, religion, or personal appearance.

Physical abuse. Mistreatment of a young person by use of i) physical contact intended to cause pain, injury, or other physical suffering or harm or ii) from physical contact as a result of reckless behaviour or gross negligence.

Neglect. Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care necessary for a youth's well-being.

Sexual abuse. Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite sex. This includes non-touching offences, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material.

Sexual harassment. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims.

Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, talking about one's sex life in the presence of a young person, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments

Incorporation of District Youth Exchange Programme and Liability Insurance

Rotary International District 9970 Rotary District Youth Exchange programme is conducted by Rotary District 9970 which is Incorporated, under the laws of New Zealand, and carries general liability insurance with coverage and limits appropriate for its geographic location.

c) Volunteer Selection and Screening

District will maintain for 60 years all records of criminal background checks, waivers, and screening for adults working with minors.

All Volunteers interested in participating in the District Youth Exchange programme must meet the following requirements:

- Complete the Youth Volunteer Affidavit form and authorize the District to conduct a criminal background check (subject to local laws and practices).
- Undergo personal interviews.
- Provide a list of references for the District to check.
- Meet RI and District eligibility requirements for working with students.

RI policy prohibits any Volunteer who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise been found to have engaged in physical or sexual abuse or harassment from working with youth in a Rotary context.

Notwithstanding the interviewing and screening process that are undertaken it is nevertheless entirely at the discretion of the RYE Committee to accept someone as a Volunteer, or not, at the Committee's unfettered discretion.

If an individual is accused of physical or sexual abuse or harassment and the investigation into the claim is inconclusive, additional safeguards must be put in place to ensure the protection of any youth with whom the individual may have future contact as well as for the protection of the accused.

A person later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated to participate in youth programmes. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former position.

The District Governor will ensure that a Club terminates the membership of any Rotarian who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise found to have engaged in physical or sexual abuse or harassment.

- Understand and comply with RI and District guidelines for the Youth Exchange programme.

Host families must meet the following selection and screening requirements:

- Host families must undergo a comprehensive in home interview that determines their suitability for hosting Exchange Students.
- Host families must complete a written application.
- Home visits must be conducted for each family, including repeat host families, and should include announced and unannounced visits, both before and during the placement.
- All adult residents of the host home must meet the selection and screening guidelines. This includes adult children 18 years or over of the host family and other members of the extended family who are permanent or part-time residents in the home.

Host families must demonstrate:

- Commitment to the safety and security of students
- Motivation for hosting a student consistent with Rotary ideals of international understanding and cultural exchange
- Financial ability to provide adequate accommodation (room and board) for the student
- Ability to provide appropriate supervision and parental responsibility that ensures the student's well-being

Rotarian Counsellors must meet the criteria for all Volunteers, as well as the following:

- Counsellors must not be a member of the student's host family.
- Counsellors must be trained in responding to any problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including instances of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or harassment.

District 9970 will try to avoid selecting counsellors who are close friends or relatives of other Volunteers involved with a particular student (e.g., school principal who is also a Club member, host family).

Reference Checks Simply requesting references in the application is not sufficient. Contact each reference by phone or in person, and ask a standard set of questions, such as:

- How long have you known this individual? In what capacity?
- Do you think this person is well qualified to work with youth?
- Would you have any reservations about recommending this person to serve as a?
- Can you verify the dates of employment for the following individual?
- Record the date of the interview and responses to each question, and keep this information with the Volunteer's application.

Refer to Interview forms per Document Register

d) Student Selection and Screening

All students interested in participating in the District Youth Exchange programme must meet these requirements

- Complete a written application and be interviewed to determine suitability for participation in the programme.
- Attend and participate in all District selection, orientation and training sessions.

All parents or legal guardians of outbound students interested in participating in the District Youth Exchange programme must be interviewed to determine the student's suitability for participation in the programme.

e) Training

District 9970 will provide abuse and harassment prevention training to all of the districts RYE Volunteers. The RYE Committee will conduct the training sessions.

Specifically, District 9970 will

- Adapt the *Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual and Leader's Guide* to incorporate specific District guidelines, information on local customs and cultural issues, and legal requirements
- Develop a training calendar that defines the participants, frequency of training required for each Volunteer position, and training methods to be used
- Conduct specialized training sessions for the following Youth Exchange programme participants:
 - District Governor

- District Youth Exchange committee members
- New appointees to Club Youth Exchange committees
- Rotarian counsellors
- Host families
- Students (outbound and inbound)
- Parents and legal guardians of outbound students
- Establish guidelines to ensure that all participants have received the requisite training
- Maintain records of participation to identify non-compliance for follow up and correction
- Have the District Youth Protection Officer peruse training material.

f) Allegation Reporting Guidelines

District 9970 is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Youth Exchange Students and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled in accordance with the Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines.

g) Follow-through and Review Guidelines

District 9970 will ensure that each allegation is investigated thoroughly. The District will co-operate with all law enforcement agencies, child protection services, and legal investigations and will not interfere with other investigations when conducting its own independent reviews.

After law enforcement has completed its investigation, the District Governor, District Youth Protection Officer/District Review Committee and RYE Committee Chair will review the situation to verify that all District policies were followed and recommend future actions that could correct any possible shortcomings

h) Other District 9970 Responsibilities

- Establish procedures for reporting, investigating, and handling non-criminal offences or historical cases that law enforcement chooses not to investigate.
- Recommend that all inbound RYE Students maintain insurance ~~at~~ that at least meets minimum RI guidelines
- Provide each Student with a list of local services in the District (rape and suicide crisis hot lines, alcohol and drug awareness programmes for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, etc.).
- Complete a Student data request form for all participating Youth Exchange Students and return it to RI one month before the exchange begins.
- Provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number to Youth Exchange Students.
- Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.
- Appoint an independent lawyer, therapist, or counsellor to represent any alleged victim in cases of sexual abuse and harassment.
- Report all criminal allegations to RI within 72 hours of becoming aware of the allegation.
- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, death) involving Youth Exchange Students to RI within 72 hours of becoming aware of the allegation-.
- Evaluate and review this policy and accompanying procedures bi-annually.

i) Club Compliance

District 9970 will monitor all participating Clubs within the District and ensure that they comply with RI guidelines for abuse and harassment prevention. All Clubs that wish to apply to the District for certification must provide the District with a copy of the following for review and approval:

- All materials produced in the Club to promote and support the Youth Exchange programme, including promotional materials and brochures, applications, policies, Web site links, etc.
- List of services in the area (rape and suicide crisis hotlines, alcohol and drug awareness programmes for teenagers, relevant law enforcement agencies, community services, private services, etc.)
- Club abuse and harassment prevention training programme materials Participating Clubs must agree to carry out the following:
 - Complete and return a signed compliance statement that the Club is operating its programme in accordance with District 9970 and RI policies. (Refer to Document Register)
 - If not co-ordinated by the District, conduct criminal background checks and reference checks for all Volunteers involved with the programme, including, but not limited to, adult residents of host home, counsellor, Club President, and all Rotarians and their spouses or partners with direct unsupervised contact with youth. All Volunteers must complete and sign the Youth Volunteer Affidavit.
 - Develop a comprehensive system for host family selection and screening that includes announced and unannounced home visits and interviews both before and during the placement.
 - Conduct follow-up evaluations of both students and host families.
 - Follow the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Reporting Guidelines.
 - Prohibit direct placement of students outside of the District 9970 Youth Exchange programme structure (so-called backdoor exchanges).
 - In conjunction with District, set procedures for removal of a Student from the host family, including establishing criteria for moving a Student and locating available back-up temporary housing in advance.
 - Develop contingency hosting plans that include pre-screened, available back-up families.
 - Ensure that all hosting is voluntary. Parents of outbound students and Club members must not be required to host students.
 - Ensure that long-term Exchange Students have multiple host families.
 - Provide each student with a comprehensive local services list, including information for dentists, doctors, places of worship, counsellors, suicide and rape crisis hotlines, etc.
 - Ensure that the host counsellor for each student is not a member of the student's host family.
 - Ensure that the host counsellor attends District RYE training regarding Abuse & Harassment.
 - In conjunction with District ensure attendance of host families, outbound Students, inbound Students, and their parents or legal guardians at RYE District training sessions.
 - Provide the names and contact information of at least three people — both males and females who are not related to each other and do not have close ties to the host families or Club counsellor — who can help the Students with any issues or problems.
 - Follow RI guidelines for Youth Exchange Web sites.

- Report all serious incidents (accidents, crimes, early returns, deaths) involving Youth Exchange Students to the District immediately.
- Conduct interviews of all Student applicants and applicants' parents or legal guardians.
- Avoid having Volunteers from being involved in Youth Exchange Activities or until a background check has been conducted and clearance for unsupervised contact with students has been advised by the RYE Committee

3) Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Rotary International is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth programme participants and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. **The safety and well-being of young people must always be the first priority.**

a) Definitions

Refer to definitions contained in the Districts Youth Exchange Abuse & Harassment Prevention Policy

b) Who should determine if it is abuse or harassment?

Upon hearing allegations, adults should not determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes physical or sexual abuse or sexual harassment. Instead, after ensuring the safety of the student, the adult should immediately report all allegations to appropriate child protection or law enforcement authorities.

c) Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Any adult to whom a Rotary youth programme participant reports an allegation of physical or sexual abuse or harassment must follow these reporting guidelines:

1. *Receive the report.*

a. Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse or harassment. Be encouraging; do not express shock, horror, or disbelief.

b. Assure privacy but not confidentiality. Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment in order to make it stop and ensure that it doesn't happen to others.

c. Get the facts, but don't interrogate. Ask questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Reassure the young person that he or she did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the young person's motives.

Remember that your responsibility is to present the story to the proper authorities.

d. Be nonjudgmental and reassure. Avoid criticizing anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It's especially important not to blame or criticize the young person. Emphasize that the situation was not his or her fault and that it was brave and mature to come to you.

e. Document the allegation. Make a written record of the conversation, including the date and time, as soon after the report as you can. Try to use the young person's words and record only what he or she told you.

2. *Protect the young person.*

Ensure the safety and well-being of the youth programme participant by removing him or her from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Reassure the youth that this is being done for his or her safety and is not a punishment.

If there is an allegation of abuse or harassment by an adult involved in the RYE programme, the adult must be removed from contact with youth through Rotary until the matter is resolved. The prohibition of contact with youth extends beyond the particular young person involved in the incident to include all youth participants in Rotary Club and District activities.

RI policy does not require Districts or Clubs to monitor the adult's personal conduct to prevent contact with youth outside the District's or Club's authority

3. Report the allegations to appropriate authorities — child protection or law enforcement.

Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment — first to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation and then to the Club and District leadership for follow-through. In District 9970, the appropriate law enforcement officer is the police.

In most situations, the first Rotary contact is the person who is responsible for seeking the advice of appropriate agencies and interacting with them. In District 9970 the first Rotary contact is the RYE Committee Chair. If the allegation involves the conduct of this Rotarian, the District Governor or Immediate Past District Governor or District Youth Protection Officer (as listed in the districts directory) should be the first Rotary contact. The first Rotary contact must immediately consult District 9970's legal advisor to determine appropriate action when there is an allegation against a Volunteer.

A record of proceedings initiated shall be recorded in the minutes of the districts RYE committee at the earliest opportunity (and with due regard to necessary confidentiality requirements)

Contact the RYE Committee Chairman so that the Student's parents can be advised

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.

District maintains the privacy (as distinct from confidentiality) of any accused person by ensuring written information is filed securely with the RYE Chairman, and/or, the DG., and/or the YPO. Information will only be copied and sent to parties directly involved in the investigation. Verbal communication will be restricted to those parties directly involved in investigating the matter.

5. Do not challenge the alleged offender.

Don't contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment, the District Governor is responsible for follow-through 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 a District Youth Protection Officer or RYE Committee Chair.

d) Follow-through Procedures

Either the RYE Committee chair or District Youth Protection Officer must ensure that the following steps are taken immediately after an abuse allegation is reported.

1. Confirm that the youth programme participant has been removed from the situation immediately and has no contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.
2. If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the District Youth Protection Officer should coordinate an independent review of the allegations.
3. Ensure that the student receives immediate support services.
4. Offer the young person an independent, non-Rotarian counsellor to represent his or her interests. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not a Rotarian or in any way involved with the youth programme.
5. Contact the student's parents or legal guardian. If the student is away from home, the student and his or her parents should decide whether to stay in country or return home. If the student stays in country, written authorization from the student's parents or legal

guardian is required. If the student and the student's parents choose for the student to return home, consult with police before making travel arrangements. If an investigation is pending, the police may not approve of the student leaving the country.

6. Remove alleged abuser or harasser from all contact with any other young participants in Rotary programmes and activities while investigations are conducted.
7. Be co-operative and honest with the police at all times during a police investigation.
8. Inform the District Governor of the allegation. Either the District Governor, District Youth Protection Officer, or other District youth programme chair must inform RI of the allegation within 72 hours and provide follow-up reports of steps taken and the status of investigations.
9. After the authorities have completed their investigation, the District must follow through to make sure the situation is being addressed. Specifically, District will conduct an independent and thorough review of any allegations of sexual abuse or harassment.

e) Post Allegation Report Considerations

Responding to the needs of the youth programme participant

District will adopt a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting a young person after an allegation report. The youth programme participant is likely to feel embarrassed or confused and may become withdrawn. After a report of harassment or abuse, students may have mixed feelings about remaining on their exchange. If they do choose to stay, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary Club. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country but change to a different host Club. Although Club members and host families may have trouble understanding how the student is feeling, the student would find it helpful to know that the Club continues to be reassuring and supportive. Club members and host families may feel ambivalent about their roles and unclear about their boundaries. However, they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

Addressing issues within the Club

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, 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 their own 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 defamation claim filed against Rotarians or Clubs by the alleged abuser.

f) When Law Enforcement Is Not Involved

At times, a student may report being uncomfortable with conduct that doesn't constitute reportable harassment under local law or the authorities may advise that a student's complaint does not warrant further investigation or action.

- Matters that are clearly not reportable as Abuse must be reported to the Student's Counsellor and the RYE Committee Chair (or the Youth Protection Officer)
- These people will then assess the matter reported and bring it to the attention of the parties involved and discuss it with the student
- These people will seek to correct or put a stop to the reported matter and take steps to prevent it from occurring in the future.
- In addition these people must document all accusations (*what, when, who*), the steps taken to resolve them so that behaviour patterns can be tracked, and the perspectives of all parties involved in the incident.

- Based on this information the RYE Committee should develop policies for addressing patterns of problematic behaviour that may emerge.
- The district through the DG will seek to consult a local legal professional about obligations and procedures for handling *all* allegations of abuse and harassment.

If an investigation into a claim of sexual abuse or harassment is inconclusive, additional safeguards still must be put in place to protect both the person named in the allegation and any youth with whom that individual may have future contact. Subsequent claims of sexual abuse or harassment will prohibit the adult from working with youth in a Rotary context. A person later cleared of charges may apply to be reinstated to participate in Rotary youth programmes. Reinstatement is not a right, however, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his or her former position.

The DG will ensure that a Club terminates the membership of any Rotarian who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise found to have engaged in, physical or sexual abuse or harassment. Non-Rotarians who fall into this category must be prohibited from working with youth in a Rotary context.

If Volunteers notice a change in the behaviour or attitude of a student they should always consider the possibility of abuse or harassment being an underlying cause. Volunteers should report these changes in the student to the RYE committee and, if appropriate, to a third party that may be able to discuss it with the student e.g. school counsellors etc

g) Historical Incidents

If a former youth programme participant contacts your District to make an allegation of a past incident of abuse or harassment, contact the DG and District legal advisors. The DG must advise RI for additional information and recommendations on how best to proceed. Such allegations must be reported to RI by the DG within 72 hours of the District being made aware of the allegation.

4) Awareness and Prevention Training Information

From RI Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual

An abuse prevention programme with specific plans and procedures will help to ensure that Rotarians and other Volunteers exemplify this conduct. In addition, such a proactive approach will further demonstrate Rotary International's commitment to youth, help to prevent specific incidents of abuse or mitigate their negative effects, protect the long-term viability of youth programmes, and strengthen the trust of participants and their parents.

Too many instances of abuse and harassment of young people are ignored because adults fail to recognize or admit that it is occurring. An effective youth protection policy depends on the adults involved being both aware of the possibility of abuse and vigilant in guarding against it.

Keep these points in mind:

- Young people often fail to report sexual abuse because they fear that disclosure will bring consequences even worse than being victimized again.
- Child abuse is generally underreported because offenders are able to convince their victims that it is their own fault.
- In many cases, victims of child sexual abuse do not report the abuse until they are adults.
- Only about 1 percent to 4 percent of sexual abuse allegations prove to be false.*
- Children tend to minimize and deny abuse, not exaggerate nor over report such incidents.
- Child sex offenders seek opportunities for access to children and teenagers through youth organizations that lack strong screening and protection practices.

* USA National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, www.ncptsd.org

a) Definitions of Abuse and Harassment

To heighten their awareness of the problem, all Rotarians working with young people should fully understand what constitutes abuse and harassment.

- **Emotional or verbal abuse.** Incidents in which an adult uses fear, humiliation, or verbal assaults to control the behaviour of a young person in his or her care. Examples include rejecting the young person, preventing him or her from developing normal social relationships, and making derogatory statements about the youth's race, religion, or personal appearance.
- **Physical abuse.** Mistreatment of a young person by use of physical contact intended to cause pain, injury, or other physical suffering or harm.
- **Neglect.** Failure to provide (for no apparent financial reason) adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care necessary for a youth's well-being.
- **Sexual abuse.** Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a young person or forcing or encouraging a young person to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age of the same or opposite sex. Among the examples of sexual abuse are non touching offences, such as indecent exposure or showing a young person sexual or pornographic material. This definition applies to any participant in Rotary International youth programmes.
- **Sexual harassment.** Sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims. Some examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or spoken references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing against or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments

Introduction:

The following *misconceptions* present obstacles to creating an effective abuse and harassment prevention programme:

- *Sexual abuse is about sexuality.* In fact, most sexual abuse and harassment is about power and control.
- *Only girls are at risk.* Although the majority of victims are girls, boys are also at risk. Some studies have shown that as many as one in six boys under age 16 has experienced unwanted direct sexual contact with an older person.
- *Only men are abusers.*
- *Girls are only at risk from men, and boys are only at risk from women.*
- *Sexual abuse is always overt.*
- *Most abusers are unknown to their victims.* Most abusers are known and trusted by their victims.

b) Signs of Abuse and Harassment

Rotarians, their families, non-Rotarian Volunteers, and parents of young people participating in Rotary youth programmes should be aware of the following physical and behavioural changes that *may* be warning signs of abuse:*

- Any physical signs of abuse, such as a repeated pattern of injury or an accident for which the explanation doesn't fit the injury
- Changes of behaviour, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, fearfulness, or excessive crying
- Fear of certain places, people, or activities; reluctance to be left alone with a particular person
- High levels of anxiety
- Distorted body image, including or resulting in eating disorders, self-mutilation, or other related behaviours
- Diminished self-esteem
- Overly aggressive behaviour
- Unwillingness to participate in extracurricular activities; difficulties at school
- Repression
- Poor peer relationships; isolation
- Nightmares or night terrors
- Graphic or age-inappropriate knowledge of sex or sexual behaviour
- Suicide attempts or gestures
- Obsessive behaviours
- Self-medicating through drug or alcohol abuse
- Problems with authority or rules

These behaviours should be seen as indicators that abuse or harassment may have taken place, and adult Volunteers should spend time with the young person to find out what is really going on. Active involvement with youth in your care will enable you to observe changes in behaviour, which can be a more accurate indicator of abuse than those on the list above, many of which

could also be considered “typical teen behaviour.” A normally outgoing and confident young person who becomes withdrawn and quiet *may* have been abused, and the adults involved with the young person should find out why the behaviour has changed. Consider arranging a conversation between the young person and a mental health professional who specializes in working with adolescents.

It is important that Volunteers consider all possible causes of behavioural issues etc. For example, Students who are making cultural adjustments to the host country or experiencing homesickness may exhibit some of the behaviours listed above. Many of the behaviours commonly exhibited by victims of abuse are the same as those that cause problems with a student exchange and result in a student returning home early.

A student who has been labelled as “difficult” or “unable to get along with the host family” may have been abused, either by an adult in the host family, a peer, or someone in their home country before their arrival.

5) Positions of Responsibility

Club and District Youth Exchange officers are also responsible for youth protection within the Youth Exchange programme.

While youth protection is the responsibility of all adults involved in youth programmes, compliance with Rotary International and District abuse and harassment prevention policy depends on the vigilance of the District Governor, and District Youth Protection Officer.

a) District Governor

The District Governor raises awareness of abuse and harassment prevention and creates effective prevention in the District's youth programmes and reporting policies in the District.

Responsibilities

- Ensure that all allegations are reported to the proper authorities and to RI.
- Confirm that abuse reporting follows the District policies and procedures.
- Ensure that Rotary Clubs comply with District policy.
- Ensure that all youth programme activities are conducted responsibly, even if some responsibilities have been delegated to other District officers.
- Intervene in the administration of youth programme activities when necessary.
- Establish risk management procedures, including policies and procedures for abuse prevention.

The District Governor should involve as many members of the District leadership team as possible in youth protection. This includes assistant governors, who can play a role in youth protection by being familiar with District policies related to awareness, prevention, and reporting of abuse and harassment. The District trainer can serve as a resource during youth protection training sessions.

b) District Youth Protection Officer

The District Youth Protection Officer raises awareness of risk management issues for youth programmes and ensures that the District, Clubs, and all programme Volunteers comply with RI and District abuse and harassment policies. This officer may train other District and Club officers on procedures and guidelines related to abuse and harassment and other risk management issues.

Responsibilities

- Ensure District Youth Activities maintain records of all allegations made.
- Ensure proper handling of allegations, according to local laws and District policy, and protection of the interests of all involved.
- Work with Clubs to inform all Rotarians of their obligations under both District policy and local laws.
- Ensure District Youth Activities review and maintain an archive of all screened Volunteers, including applications and the results of criminal background checks and reference checks. Alternatively, serve as a liaison to an external firm contracted for this purpose.
- Ensure District Youth Activities collect and submit all forms required by the police or relevant state/local authorities to conduct background checks on programme Volunteers who will have unsupervised access to youth.
- Ensure that appropriate training is made available to Rotarians, programme Volunteers such as host families or RYLA counsellors, and youth participants and their parents.
- Advise the District youth programme committees about developments in educational and training programmes qualifications
- Professional experience in handling abuse and harassment issues

- Youth counselling experience
- Knowledge of both RI policies and relevant national and local laws Additional Considerations
- Willingness to serve in position for at least three years
- Professional experience in the fields of health, mental health, or education, particularly working with teenagers as a social worker, therapist, educational administrator, or youth protection professional