



Helping to ensure **Child Safe Activities** A guide to the obligations of Rotary Clubs in District 9800.

The framework:

The Child Safe Standards from the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* applies to every organisation, unless the organisation does none of the following:

- provide any services specifically for children
- provide any facilities specifically for use by children who are under the entity's supervision
- engage a child as a contractor, employee or volunteer to assist the entity in providing services or facilities.

The *Working with Children Act 2005* implements a scheme to screen persons engaging or intending to engage in child related work. and a child is a person under the age of 18.

While we have focused for many years on the checks obtained in accordance with the *Working with Children*, it is now more logical to see these checks are part of the implementation of the standards, and not as sufficient on their own.

The Standards. Each organisation must

1. Develop strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
2. Create a child safe policy or statement of commitment child safety
3. Develop a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. Develop screening supervision training and other human resources practices that reduce the risks of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. Develop processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. Develop strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. Develop strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

And some underlying principles.

The response of an organisation to the Standards must consider promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and promoting the safety of children with a disability.

Meeting the Standards

The response of each organisation will be different. Appropriate matters of Clubs to consider might be listed on the following pages.

1. Develop strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

- a. Directly address child safety as part of any project planning or review exercise
- b. Appoint a child safe champion
- c. Develop a complaints and concerns process, including record keeping
- d. Seek guest speakers on child safety issues, including the identification of child abuse.

2. Create a child safe policy or statement of commitment child safety

The District Protection Policy last updated in August 2016 is such a policy. The key elements of the policy are:

All Rotarians in District 9800:

- Are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in ROPs;
- Accept the responsibility to safeguard to the best of their ability the welfare of all children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in ROPs;
- Will act to ensure that their spouses or partners and other volunteers engaged in ROPs understand the core principles and strategies of this policy and apply them in their dealings with children, vulnerable adults and other persons that participate in ROPs.
- Are committed to Aboriginal cultural safety, culturally and/or linguistically diverse cultural safety and the safety of children with a disability.

3. Develop a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

The Code of Conduct adopted earlier this year by District is:

Everyone involved in District activities that supply programs or services to children are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as set out in this code.

Positive Obligations:

Each of us are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.

treating everyone with respect.

listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they

are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.

promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination), in addition to the safety of children with a disability

ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.

reporting any allegations of child abuse to the District Protection Officer and ensure that any allegation is reported to the police.

reporting any child safety concerns to the District Protection Officer.

if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child is safe.

encouraging children to “have a say” and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Prohibitions:

Each of us must not

develop a relationship with children that could be interpreted as favouritism.

exhibit behaviour with children which may be construed as unnecessary physical contact.

put children at risk of abuse.

engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.

use inappropriate language in the presence of children.

express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.

discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.

ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Concerns

What to do when an allegation of child abuse is made

Any adult to whom a student reports an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment must follow the reporting guidelines at Appendix 1 of the Rotary District 9800 Youth Abuse and Harassment Prevention Policy (Sexual Abuse and Harassment Allegation Reporting Guidelines).

In addition to the above if the program you are involved with is a Youth Exchange program that you also agree to abide by the Youth Exchange Code of Conduct. You are required to read it, it is located at <http://bit.ly/2fT8F8Z> OR

<http://rotaryyouthexchangedistrict9800.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Volunteer-Form-inc.-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>

A hard copy can be provided on request.

4. Develop screening supervision training and other human resources practices that reduce the risks of child abuse by new and existing personnel

To date we have relied on the Working with Children checks, but all advice is that is not now sufficient. It is suggested that to adequately screen it will now be necessary to:

- a. Check Working with Children check status
- b. Establish identity and any claimed qualifications that might be relevant
- c. Investigate history of work/activities involving children
- d. Obtain references that address the applicant’s suitability for the activity and working with children.

District’s view is that this requires a positive vetting, and that a mere WWC is insufficient. A pro forma form is attached.

The expectation is that the form will be completed and maintained by the Club. With the consent of the volunteer it may be made available for other Clubs or District committees.

5. Develop processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

The District Protection Policy meets the requirements of this standard

6. Develop strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

The District Protection Policy meets the requirements of this standard

7. Develop strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

Organisations need to ensure children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. Organisations should have simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All personnel need to have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

The District Protection Policy will be revised to ensure that it meets the requirements of this standard

Working with Children

It is important to note that changes to the Working with Children legislation came into effect on 1 August 2017. They mean that in some instances checks will now be required when they were not previously.

Specifically:

Assume that your activity is **child related work** that involves direct contact with a child, unless there is only occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work (eg selling sausages at Bunnings. Selling sausages at a school fete does not involve only occasional direct contact)

Direct contact now means any contact between a person and a child that involves— (a) physical contact; or (b) face to face contact; or (c) contact by post or other written communication; or (d) contact by telephone or other oral communication; or (e) contact by email or other electronic communication.

August 2017

Rotary Youth Volunteer Information and Declaration Form (Mandatory Requirement)

Personal Details

Name: _____ Email: _____

Phone: Work: _____ Home: _____ Mobile: _____

Address: _____

Period at this Address (Years): _____ Are you a Rotarian: Yes / No

If Yes, Name of Club: _____ Date Joined: _____

In respect to each program you anticipate being involved, state:

The name of the program:

Your role in the program:

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Previous involvement with Youth: _____

Personal References (Only one referee may be a Rotarian and none may be family members)

1. Name: _____

Phone: Work: _____ Home: _____ Mobile: _____

2. Name: _____

Phone: Work: _____ Home: _____ Mobile: _____

3. Name: _____

Phone: Work: _____ Home: _____ Mobile: _____

Police Check: Working With Children Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____

I certify the following:

- All statements and information given on this form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I have never committed or been guilty or been accused of a crime against a child or young person of which I have not been cleared.
- I give my full permission for any of the people I have listed on this Form to be contacted by an authorised Rotary Officer to confirm my suitability as a Youth Exchange Volunteer.
- I certify that I have contacted my referees and all are happy for Rotary to contact them.
- I agree to abide unreservedly by the decision of the Rotary club reviewing my applications to my suitability as a Youth Volunteer.
- I have read the attached Code of Conduct and if involved in Youth Exchange, the Youth Exchange Code of Conduct and agree to adhere to its terms.

I have read and understood the above declaration and sign this form voluntarily.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Name Printed: _____

Rotary Witness: _____ Date: _____

Name printed: _____