

**Rotary District 1180**

**RYLA**

**Safeguarding  
Policy**

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## The Overall Aims of this Safeguarding Policy:

The overall aims of this safeguarding policy for District 1180 RYLA are to ensure as far as possible that all Volunteers (Rotarians and Honorary Rotarians) who support the annual District RYLA course:

- **The overriding aim of this policy is to ensure that we keep the children placed in our care (albeit temporarily in the case of RYLA) as safe from all forms of harm as possible.**
- **Understand clearly what is meant by the various forms of abuse**
- **Know what to do and perhaps more importantly what not to do if and when an incident occurs during a RYLA course.**
- **We also have a duty of care for our volunteers who work with the children in our care to ensure that they are as protected as possible from allegations of abuse by understanding how not to place themselves in a compromising position that may be mis-interpreted by another child or adult.**

In Section 60 of the 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006' a child is defined as 'a person who has not yet attained the age of 18'. Most students on RYLA are below the age of 18, but there are likely to be some delegates each year who are 18 years old. Our duty of care extends to these delegates and the overall aims of the policy are unchanged with regards to them. It is noted that there will be some procedural differences in dealing with any issues that arise.

### It is our duty to:

- Ensure that children should be protected while in our care
- Know what to do if children who come into our care (even if only temporarily) show signs of having been abused
- Care should be taken to avoid being alone with a child (be particularly aware of this in residential situations)
- **Every child has a right to:**
  - Be safe
  - Protect their bodies
  - Say no
  - Get help against bullies
  - Tell what frightens and confuses them
  - Be believed
  - Reveal 'secrets' if those are disturbing to the child
- **What are we protecting them from** (abuse of children is often mis-interpreted as being confined to sexual abuse).
- **Physical abuse:** When a person hurts, injures or bullies a child, gives inappropriate drugs or alcohol or fails to act to prevent harm. Possible signs:
  - Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent.
  - Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
  - Refusal to discuss injuries.
  - Fear of parents, relatives or carers being approached for an explanation
  - Untreated injuries, or delays in reporting them.
  - Excessive physical punishment to themselves.
  - Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather.
  - Avoidance of swimming, physical education etc.

- Fear of returning home.
  - Aggression towards others.
  - Running away.
- **Emotional abuse:** Persistent or severe emotional ill treatment that has or is likely to have a serious effect on a child's development. This includes negative discrimination such as bullying. Possible signs:
    - Low self-esteem.
    - Continual self-deprecation.
    - Sudden speech disorder.
    - Significant decline in concentration.
    - Immaturity.
    - 'Neurotic' behaviour e.g. rocking.
    - Self-mutilation.
    - Compulsive stealing.
    - Extremes of passivity or aggression.
    - Running away.
    - Indiscriminate friendliness.
- **Neglect:** The failure to provide adequate food, health care, clothing, care and education. Possible signs:
    - Inadequate food, hunger.
    - Constant tiredness.
    - Poor state of clothing or personal hygiene.
    - Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school.
    - Untreated medical problems, sores, ulcers.
    - Low self-esteem.
    - Poor peer relationships, difficult to stimulate socially.
- **Sexual abuse:** When someone exerts power, authority or position to gratify their own sexual needs. Possible signs:
    - Lack of trust in adults or over-familiarity with adults.
    - Fear of a particular adult.
    - Social isolation-withdrawn or introversion.
    - Sleep disturbance (nightmares, bed-wetting, fear of sleeping alone, needing a night light).
    - Running away from home.
    - Girls taking over age appropriate responsibility in household relationships.
    - Sudden school problems e.g. falling standards, truancy.
    - Reluctance or refusal to participate in physical activity or to change clothes for games.
    - Low self-esteem.
    - Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse.
    - Display of sexual knowledge inappropriate to the child's age.
    - Unusual interest in the genitals of adults, children, animals.
    - Fear of bathrooms, showers, closed doors.
    - Abnormal sexual drawings.
    - Fear of medical examinations.
    - Developmental regression.
    - Poor peer relationships.
    - Sexualised behaviour inappropriate to the child's age.
    - Compulsive masturbation.
    - Stealing.
    - Irrational fears.
    - Psychosomatic factors e.g. recurrent abdominal or headache pain.

- Eating disorders.
  - Bruises, scratches, bite marks to the thighs or genital areas.
  - Anxiety, depression.
  - Discomfort/difficulty in walking or sitting.
- **Financial abuse:** May become more apparent when working with adults but children may suffer the effects of adult's financial abuse where the person is deprived of the money that is rightfully theirs, it may be theft, fraud, forgery or embezzlement. Possible signs:
    - Lack of money for basic necessities such as food, heating, clothes despite an adequate income.
    - A sudden unexplained change in financial circumstances.
    - Inability to explain what has happened to income.
    - Reluctance by family, friends or the person controlling funds to pay for food, clothing or other things.
    - Disappearance of possessions, documents and bank statements.
    - Unexplained withdrawals from the person's bank account.
- **Safeguarding Procedures must:**
    - Endeavour to ensure that the possibility of abuse of any kind is **risk assessed out**.
    - That Rotarians know what to do if they suspect that abuse is taking place outside a Rotary activity but made evident by the children we work with.
    - There needs to be strong arrangements to deal with complaints, expressions of concern, allegations or 'whistle-blowing'.

### **Code of Behaviour:**

Rotarians on a RYLA course can reduce the likelihood of abuse and of accusations of abuse by making sure that everyone is aware of some practical matters when working with children:

- **Positive Outlook & Actions**
  - Always treat children with respect
  - Avoid showing favouritism towards an individual
  - Provide a model of good and appropriate behaviour
  - Respect a child's right to privacy
  - Be aware that behaviour can be mis-interpreted even when well-intentioned.
  - Challenge unacceptable behaviour
  - Operate within the agreed guidelines.
- **Situations to Avoid** If any of the following situations are unavoidable, it must be with the knowledge of the parent, carer, the person in charge of the activity or some other responsible person.
  - Working with children unless a minimum of other adult is present or at least in sight during activities.
  - Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children, away from others.
  - Taking children alone in a car on journeys however short.
  - Taking children to your home unsupervised.
  - Meeting children outside organised activities without the knowledge and consent of the parents and the person in charge of the activity.
- **Unacceptable behaviour**
  - Engaging in rough physical games or horseplay.
  - Engaging in or encouraging sexually provocative games or activities.
  - Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any kind.
  - Allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
  - Making any sexually suggestive comments, even in 'fun'.
  - Sharing a bedroom.

- Inviting a child to stay in a home unsupervised by a parent or carer.
  - Letting any allegations a child makes go unrecorded.
  - Relying on your 'good name' as safeguarding.
  - Doing things of a personal care nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- **Signs of Bullying:** Bullying of one child by another should always be checked. This would include:
    - Physical pushing, hitting or pinching etc.
    - Name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, ridiculing or ignoring.
    - Racial taunts, gestures, graffiti.
    - Sexual comments.
    - Any unwanted physical contact.
- **Occasions Needing Special Care**
    - Discussion of sensitive issues with groups or individuals young people
    - Relationships developing between Rotary Volunteers and young people (Genuine relationships do develop between people but no intimate relationship should begin whilst one person is in a position of trust over another. It would be '**an abuse of trust**' and in some circumstances could be a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act.

## Dealing with Complaints, Accusations and Whistle-blowing

### Reporting Suspicions or Allegations of Abuse:

- It is **not** the role of **Rotarians** to:
  - **Interview**
  - **Investigate**
  - **Make decisions when an accusation is made**
- In the case of alleged or suspected abuse the person receiving the information is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is the role of the professional child safeguarding agencies such as Police, Social Services. It is the role of the professional agencies to undertake interviews, investigations or any other actions they find appropriate.
- Taking into account the advice given by the appropriate agency, the parents/guardians of the child should be contacted as soon as possible by the person given the approval by the appropriate agency.

### Receiving the Information

When dealing with a complaint, accusation or whistle-blowing whether it is from a child or adult the approach is the same:-

- Stay calm and listen to what is being said.
- Avoid any demonstrations of anger or revulsion.
- Reassure the person that to tell is the right thing to do.
- Find an appropriate and early opportunity to explain that the information will be shared but only with the appropriate agencies. **Do not promise to keep secrets even if the person threatens to only tell if it is a secret.**
- Allow the person to dictate the pace.
- Ask questions only to seek clarification for the purposes of recording and passing on to the appropriate agency, **make sure that they are not leading questions.**
- Explain what will happen next, who will be told.

## **Recording**

Immediately record in writing what was said using the person's own words whenever possible. Include any dates, times, names, name of the person making the record and make sure it is dated and signed.

Record the names of any persons who were present and who have or may have witnessed the occurrence.

Also record the person or persons with whom the information will be shared.

**Ideally Use Form A included in this manual to record information as outlined above. Alternatively use all the headings on Form A to make your record.**

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Rotary International Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI)** **Protection of Children policy**

#### **Applicable to all Clubs and Districts in RIBI**

#### **Policy Statement:**

The clubs recognise that the services it provides are used by children.

The clubs believe that children have the right to be secure from abuse, and RIBI are committed to protecting all the children in their care from harm.

The Clubs will appoint a Rotarian as the Safeguarding Children/Child protection Officer. This Officer will have suitable experience, training and expertise, and will be responsible for liaising with appropriate outside agencies and RIBI in any child protection matter.

The Clubs have a duty to ensure the welfare of all children who may be at risk. This duty involves reporting the risk to an appropriate agency and RIBI and by promoting a safe environment within the Club.

The Clubs will take every possible action to prevent abuse and to deal with it as promptly and effectively as possible if it occurs.

#### **Aim of the Policy**

The central aim of RIBI's Safeguarding Policy is to inform all Rotarians of:

- RIBI's approach to the Safeguarding of children.
- Ways in which the Clubs do this.
- The steps taken to avoid abuse taking place.
- The actions that will be taken by the Clubs to deal with abuse if it occurs.

#### **Definition of Abuse**

Abuse of children may take any of the following forms:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse.
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

#### **Responsibility**

RIBI has a duty to ensure that all Clubs working with children adopt safe working practices.

The Clubs will undertake Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) on all new and existing Rotarians as appropriate and will undertake regular education of its members to minimise any risks to children posed by Rotarians or others who may be supporting Rotary activities involving children.

The Clubs have a duty to report serious concerns relating to abuse to appropriate agencies including the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the RIBI Compliance Officer.

**RIBI will:**

- Set out and inform Rotarians of the procedures for responding to suspicions of evidence of abuse.
- Incorporate material relevant to issues of abuse on the RIBI website.
- Maintain vigilance concerning the possibility of abuse of children from whatever source.
- Encourage a climate of openness which enables Rotarians to pass on concerns about behaviour that might be abusive.
- Produce and regularly revise policies and procedures to minimise the risk of abuse.
- Ensure that all Rotarians are aware of the main indicators of child abuse.
- Investigate any allegations of abuse quickly and thoroughly in conjunction with appropriate agencies.
- Implement improvements to procedures if an investigation reveals deficiencies in the way in which RIBI operates.
- Collaborates with other relevant agencies in combating abuse and improving the protection of children.

**Districts will:**

Appoint a Rotarian as the Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Officer. This Officer will have suitable experience, training and expertise.

Ensure that all Club Safeguarding Children/Child protection Officers within their District receive regular education to minimise any risks to children posed by Rotarians in their District.

**The Clubs expect members to:**

- Refrain from any abusive action in relation to children.
- Report to the Club anything they witness which is or might be abusive.
- Co-operate in any investigation into alleged abuse.

Rotarians should be aware of who they may turn to for advice if they become aware or suspect that abuse is occurring.

Failure by Rotarians to report incidents or suspicions of abuse may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action.

## Appendix 2

### Handling Disclosures of Abuse

- **Receive:**
  - Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
  - Accept what is being said without judgement.
  - Take it seriously.
- **Reassure:**
  - Reassure them, but only so far as is honest and reliable. Don't make promises that you can't keep, e.g. "I'll stay with you" or "Everything will be alright now".
  - Don't promise confidentiality, ever agree to keep secrets-be honest, you have a duty to report your concerns.
  - Tell them that you will need to tell some people, but only those whose job it is to safeguard.
  - Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk, do not re-assure them that he or she is right to tell.
- **React:**
  - Listen quietly, carefully and patiently, **do not investigate, interrogate or decide if they are telling the truth.**
  - Don't ask leading questions e.g. "What did she, he do next? "This assumes she/he did.
  - Do ask open questions like "Is there anything else you want to tell me?"
  - Do not criticise the alleged abuser.
  - Do not ask them to repeat what they have told you to another person; explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to.
- **Record:**
  - Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
  - Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the Safeguarding Officer or the statutory authorities.
  - Record the date, time, place, words used and how they appeared to you. Record the actual words used, including any swear words or slang expressions.
  - Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any marks or explain complex situations (such as family relationships) if this would be helpful.
  - Record statements and observable things, **not your interpretations or assumptions; do not assume anything-do not speculate or jump to conclusions.**

### **Appendix 3. Form A for Suspicions of Allegations of Abuse of a Child**

This form must be completed as soon as possible after receiving information that causes suspicion or an allegation of the abuse of a child. This must be discussed with the Club safeguarding Officer or District safeguarding officer and then with the appropriate agency as soon as possible after completion. Do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete the details.

Note: Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Information must only be shared on a need to know basis i.e. only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

Continue on a separate sheet of paper if required and attach securely to this form.

#### **Details of the person making this report:**

- **Name:**
  - **Position:**
  - **Contact telephone number:**
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#### **Details of Child:**

- **Name:**
  - **Date of Birth:**
  - **Address:**
- 

- **Contact telephone number:**
  - **Names and address of parents, guardians/carers**
- 

#### **Details of the person about whom there is concern:**

- **Name:**
  - **Position:**
  - **Date of Birth:**
  - **Address:**
- 

- **Relationship to child:**
- 

**If you are reporting this alleged incident on behalf of someone else please provide details of that person.**

- **Name:**
- **Position:**
- **Address:**

- **Contact telephone number:**
- **Date this person advised you of the alleged incident?**

- **Report here the information you were given by this person about the alleged incident:**

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**Details of alleged incident:**

- **Date of alleged incident:**
- **Time:**
- **Place:**
- **Name and address of witnesses**

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**Describe in detail what happened?** (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)

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**Describe in detail visible injuries/bruises or concerning behaviour of the child if any use diagrams if it helps to describe (Continue on separate sheet if necessary)**

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**Was the child asked what happened? YES/NO**

If **YES** record exactly what the child said in their own words and any questions asked if the situation needed clarification: (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

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**Details of actions taken:** Detail what actions, if any has been taken following receipt of this information ☹️ (Continue on separate sheet if necessary).

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**ONLY AFTER SEEKING ADVICE FROM THE POLICE/SOCIAL SERVICES were the child's parents/carers contacted?**

**Details of external agencies contacted:**

- **Police:**
    - **Police Station contacted:**
    - **Name & Contact Number:**
    - **Advice received:**
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- **Social Services:**
    - **Social Services Dept:**
    - **Name & Contact Number:**
    - **Advice received:**
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- **Other:**
    - **Name of Organisation:**
    - **Name & contact number:**
    - **Advice received:**
- 

**Signature:**

**Print Name:**

**Date:**

**Where a referral has been made to the police and/or Social Services Department a copy of this form must be sent to them as soon as possible.**

This document brings together the relevant aspects from:-

- **Rotary International Great Britain & Ireland (RIBI) 'Safeguarding Guidance 2015/16'** Issue 2 November 2015.
- **Rotary International Great Britain & Ireland (RIBI) 'Protection of Children Policy'**. Part of the suite of compliance documents that all Rotary Clubs and Districts sign up to annually as being fully compliant with these policies. (**Appendix 1 Above**)
- **Telford & Wrekin Council (T&WC) 'Outdoor Education Child Protection & Safeguarding Policies'** September 2018.
- **HM Government 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'** July 2018

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