



Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise

Complaint Procedure

The Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise is involved in many events in which members come in contact with members of other organisations or the general public. This procedure is designed to provide guidance in case a complaint is made concerning the conduct of a Rotarian whilst involved in a Club activity. The Club recognises a particular responsibility in the case of activities involving young people. Accordingly, it has implemented a Youth Policy with a view to the development of young people in a safe and secure environment. That policy states that it is the duty of all Club members to safeguard the welfare of young people and to create and maintain an environment where young people can fully experience and benefit from youth activities supported by the Club.

This procedure applies in the case of a complaint being made either by a young person, or by an adult, whether or not they are a Rotarian.

Behaviour

The complaint or concern could be about any of the following types of behaviour:

1. Inappropriate behaviour: can include a range of activities such as unwelcome touching, repeatedly standing too close, making comments about a person's body or appearance, or about a person's sexual activity, sexual history or sexual preferences. May also include suggestive comments, racist, sexist or otherwise offensive jokes or gestures, phone or text messages, or email messages.
2. Harassment: is any unwanted physical or verbal conduct that offends or embarrasses.
3. Intimidation: aggressive behaviour, including threats such as unreasonable disciplinary action against a young person.
4. Assault: any touching or threat to touch a person, and can include aggressive or violent touching.
5. Sexual Abuse: includes any indecent assault or other actual touching with a sexual connotation, discussing sexually explicit matters with young people, and showing young people pornography.

6. Rape or other serious sexual assault.

Action

Where:

- (a) a complaint about a Rotarian's behaviour is made; or
- (b) a Rotarian forms the view that the behaviour of a Rotarian is a matter of concern;

deciding what action for the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise to take is a matter for the Board. The complaint or concern should be referred to the Board as soon as possible. It is important that the Board should be the sole coordinator of a coherent response. No action should be taken by any person with regard to the complaint without the Board's approval.

The Board, and any other member of the Club who becomes aware of the matter, should treat the matter as strictly confidential.

When the behaviour complained of is an assault, sexual abuse, rape or sexual assault, the matter should be referred to the Australian Federal Police as a matter of urgency. If, at the time that the Board becomes aware of the complaint, the matter has not yet been referred to the Australian Federal Police, the Board should take that action. The number for the Australian Federal Police is 6256 7777. In an emergency, the number to call is 000.

When the behaviour complained of is inappropriate behaviour, harassment or intimidation, the Board should consider, at the earliest opportunity, whether the matter should be referred to the Australian Federal Police.

In making this decision, the Board should consider the following matters:

1. Every touching, no matter how minor, is an assault, and a criminal offence;
2. The investigation of criminal offences is a matter for the police; and
3. It may be in the best interests of the Rotarian involved, as well as Rotary International, the Rotary Club of Canberra Sunrise and the District, to have the matter referred to the police in order to ensure transparency.

Where the matter has been referred to the police, the Club should take advice from the police about what action may or may not be appropriate. It may be that the police inform the Club that the matter is not to be discussed at all with the Rotarian or Rotarians involved until the matter has been investigated by the police. If that is the case, then the matter should not be discussed with the Rotarian/s until the Club has a clear indication from police that it is alright to do so.

In the event that either (1) the matter was referred to the police and the police have indicated that they will not be pursuing the matter as a criminal investigation, or (2)

the matter was not referred to the police, then the Board should consider what other action to take (if any) as soon as possible.

In deciding what action to take, the Board should, as far as possible, avoid making an assessment as to the truth or otherwise of the claim.

All meetings, discussions and decisions made by the Board should be properly documented to assure transparency.

The Board should take action (or make a decision not to take action) without delay.

If possible, the matter should not be discussed by e-mail in order to avoid misunderstandings, to protect the confidentiality of the matter and to ensure that discussions held by the Board cannot be taken out of context at a later time.

The Board should carefully balance the following matters:

- The interests of the complainant, particularly if he or she is a young person, are a primary consideration. It is important that the complainant be assured that the matter is being taken seriously, and that the complainant (and, where appropriate and relevant, his or her parents or guardians) be informed, as to what action is being taken, and the outcome of the matter.
- The interests of the Club. This is a complex matter and involves a recognition that the Club is a legal entity which is capable of being sued, and that the Board may need to take action to protect the Club. It further involves a consideration that the Club ought to consider its membership, including the Rotarian involved, as well as the Club's reputation and the reputation of the other members of the Club. It will be important from a Club perspective to document the action which was taken by the Club, in case of any further claim made in the future;
- The interests of the Rotarian (not only as a Club member, but also as an individual); It may be important to arm the Rotarian in question with a letter which outlines the exact nature of the claim and the action which was taken, in case of any further claim made in the future;
- The interests of people and, in particular any young person, who may come into contact with the Rotarian in future and the possibility of future incidents;
- The interests of Rotary International, generally and in terms of reputation.

The Board might consider the following possibilities for action:

- Writing a letter of apology to the complainant;
- Informing the District Governor of the matter, and possibly also seeking his or her advice about what action to take. The role of the District organisation is to provide support and advice where this is needed, but the full responsibility for dealing with the matter rests with the Board;

- Informing Rotary International about the matter;
- Writing a letter to the Rotarian involved. The letter could be in general terms, and need not make an allegation of any sort against the Rotarian.
- Informing the Club about the claim.
- Updating or amending the Club's Policy about these matters.

The Club has a responsibility that all the activities it runs, and particularly those for young people, are conducted in a safe and comfortable environment.