



CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING PLAIN LANGUAGE GUIDE: RESPONDING AND REPORTING APPENDIX C

Authorisation

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Why this guide exists

You are at a Rotary youth program — RYPEN, MUNA, or similar. Something has happened, or someone has told you something, and the District is not down the corridor. You need to know what to do next, and you need to know now.

This guide is for that moment. It is the plain-language companion to Appendix C of the Responding and Reporting Procedure (Responding onsite at a youth program). It covers residential or overnight programs (like RYPEN) and day programs at a single venue (like MUNA). Most of this guide applies to both. The section on sleeping arrangements applies only to residential programs.

This guide is not the authoritative document. The Procedure is. If anything here is unclear, phone the DYPO.

Two terms used throughout

The onsite Rotarian YPO is the Rotarian designated as the Youth Protection Officer for this program.

The other onsite Rotarian is the second Rotarian present — for example, the Chair of the YLA Committee at a RYPEN camp, or an equivalent senior Rotarian on another program.

Step 1 — Make the first decision: which track?

Before anything else, the on-site leadership decides which track applies.

Ask one question:

Is the alleged perpetrator on the program?

If yes → Track 1. The alleged conduct may be happening now, may have just happened, or may have happened in the past somewhere else — but the person is here, at the program, today.

If no → Track 2. The alleged conduct happened earlier, somewhere else, and the alleged perpetrator is not at the program.

If the answer is genuinely unclear, treat it as Track 1.

Step 2 — Track 1: alleged perpetrator on-site

1. Separate them. Before any phone call, separate the alleged perpetrator from the young person and from other young people. They do not return to shared accommodation, meals, or program activities. If they are a visitor, parent, or non-program adult, they leave the program.

2. Make the first phone call. The onsite Rotarian YPO makes the call. Which number depends on the situation:

If a crime is occurring now, or has just occurred at the program — call Victoria Police on 000 first.

If the alleged perpetrator is on-site for past, off-site conduct (for example, a young person recognises a past perpetrator who has turned up as a visitor) — call the DYPO (District program) or the CYPO (club program) first. They will advise whether police are also called, and when.

If unclear — call 000 first. The police line will help triage.

Rotary District 9815 Child Safety and Wellbeing: Responding and Reporting

Appendix C Plain Language Guide

3. Preserve what happened. No cleaning, no moving things, no asking the young person to repeat their account to others “for clarity.” Their first account is the one that matters. This applies to past-perpetrator encounters as much as to current crime scenes — the encounter itself, the young person’s reaction, and the alleged perpetrator’s behaviour at the moment of recognition are all part of the record.

4. Do not investigate. No questioning the alleged perpetrator. No asking other young people what they saw. No asking other adults whether they “noticed anything.” Investigation damages the eventual response and may expose the District legally.

5. Triage with the three on-site roles. See Step 4 of this guide.

6. The District takes over from Step 3 of the main Procedure — the Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report (Form F11) to all four officers, and the external notifications. The on-site team’s job is everything up to and including the first phone call and the immediate physical-safety response.

Step 3 — Track 2: historical or off-site disclosure

1. Phone the right officer. The onsite Rotarian YPO phones the DYPO (District program) or the CYPO (club program). Phone first; the F11 follows from Step 3 of the main Procedure.

2. Triage with the three on-site roles. See Step 4 of this guide.

3. If the disclosure is of an offence happening elsewhere right now — call 000. For example, if a young person discloses that a sibling is being hurt at home right now. Call police as well as the District.

4. Do not investigate. Same rule as Track 1. The investigation belongs to the authorities the CYPO or DYPO engages.

Step 4 — The three on-site roles

When something is disclosed on-site, three roles are activated. These are role assignments, not job titles. The same person does not do all three.

Disclosure-receiver — stays with the young person

The disclosure-receiver is whoever the young person came to. Could be a Facilitator, the Chair of the YLA Committee or equivalent, an onsite Rotarian, or any other adult on the program. Young people choose who they tell.

Their job:

Stay with the young person. Do not leave them alone.

Run the disclosure conversation using the five-box guide (see the Appendix B Plain Language Guide — Listen, Reassure, Close, Record, Follow up).

Do not return to any program duty they were doing. Someone else picks that duty up.

In Track 1: make sure the young person does not see, hear, or come into contact with the alleged perpetrator.

Note-taker — the other onsite Rotarian

The note-taker is the other onsite Rotarian (the one not holding the YPO role for this program).

Their job:

Rotary District 9815 Child Safety and Wellbeing: Responding and Reporting

Appendix C Plain Language Guide

Record what is said and observed, contemporaneously, in the young person's own words wherever possible.

Sit in on the disclosure conversation where the young person is comfortable with that — or work from the disclosure-receiver's recollection immediately afterwards.

Note the date, time, location, who was present, and exactly what was said and observed.

Do not interpret, paraphrase, or add what they think the young person meant.

The notes feed:

the Rotary Youth Protection Incident Report (Form F11) at Step 3 of the main Procedure;

the police on arrival, in Track 1;

the CYPO or DYPO when they call back.

Escalator — the onsite Rotarian YPO

The escalator is the onsite Rotarian YPO.

Their job — two parts:

First, make the first phone call (per Step 2 or Step 3 of this guide).

Then, manage the program through the response. This means:

Brief the other onsite Rotarian on what is being done and what is being held back.

Coordinate with any other Rotarians present (for example, the Chair of the YLA Committee or equivalent) so the program continues for the other young people.

Decide, on advice from the CYPO/DYPO or police, what is communicated to the other young people, to other on-site adults, and to parents and carers (see Step 6 of this guide).

Coordinate with police on their arrival, in Track 1.

Role swap if needed. If the onsite Rotarian YPO is the disclosure-receiver (because the young person came to them), the other onsite Rotarian becomes the escalator, and the note-taker role passes to a Facilitator or other senior adult on the program.

Step 5 — Sleeping arrangements and the rest of the night

This step applies to residential or overnight programs only. Day programs skip to Step 6.

A disclosure may happen at any time, including late at night. Before anyone sleeps, the on-site leadership decides whether the young person stays at the program or goes home.

The decision — stay or go home

The decision is not the on-site leadership's alone. It sits with the parents or carers (where they are part of the decision), the CYPO or DYPO, and police or DFFH if engaged. But you have to make a recommendation and act on it tonight — the answer cannot wait until morning.

Things that bear on the decision:

the young person's stated preference;

Rotary District 9815 Child Safety and Wellbeing: Responding and Reporting

Appendix C Plain Language Guide

whether the parent or carer can be told (sometimes they cannot — for example, where a parent is the alleged perpetrator, or police have asked that contact be paused);

the travel time and practicality of going home;

the young person's safety at home (which may be a reason to keep them at the program);

whether the alleged perpetrator is at the program and the practicality of separating them.

If the young person goes home

Parents or carers are contacted — subject to advice from police (Track 1) or the CYPO/DYPO (Track 2). In some cases parental contact is paused. Do not pre-empt the call.

Transport is arranged. A screened adult goes with the young person unless parents or carers are collecting them in person.

If the young person stays at the program

They sleep where they are safe and supported. Sleeping arrangements are reviewed — they do not share accommodation with anyone the disclosure concerns or with anyone close to the alleged conduct. A trusted adult is in proximity overnight, usually the disclosure-receiver or another adult the young person trusts.

In Track 1, the alleged perpetrator is removed from shared accommodation. They do not return to the program until police, the CYPO/DYPO, and the program's leadership have agreed it is appropriate.

Step 6 — The rest of the program

The program continues. For a residential program, that means the rest of today, the evening, and the days that follow. For a day program, that means the rest of the day's session through to dismissal.

Stopping the program causes more disruption than it solves and signals to the other young people that something serious has happened (which they need to find out about properly, not by inference).

Three sub-decisions sit with the escalator, on advice:

Does the program continue?

Almost always, yes. Where a session genuinely cannot continue — for example, the session leader was the disclosure-receiver and no immediate substitute is available — pause, reorganise quietly, and resume. The on-site leadership figures out the cover.

What are the other young people told?

On advice from the CYPO or DYPO (Track 2) or police (Track 1). The default is say as little as necessary, and never speculate, name anyone, or confirm or deny rumours. A typical line:

"[Young person's name] has had to leave the program early. They are safe and being supported. We are not going to discuss the details, and we ask you not to either. If you have concerns or want to talk, [name of trusted adult] is available."

Where the young person is staying at the program, the line is simpler:

"We are all here to support each other. If you have concerns or want to talk, [name of trusted adult] is available."

Rotary District 9815 Child Safety and Wellbeing: Responding and Reporting

Appendix C Plain Language Guide

What are the other on-site adults told?

Need-to-know basis. The other onsite Rotarian, the Chair of the YLA Committee or equivalent, and any Facilitator whose duties are directly affected (for example, sharing accommodation with the young person on a residential program) are told what they need to do their job. Other adults — kitchen volunteers, drivers, casual helpers — are not told the substance of the disclosure. If they ask, the standard line is:

“There has been a matter that the program leadership is handling. We are not going to discuss the details.”

What not to do on-site

Do not investigate. No interviewing the alleged perpetrator. No asking other young people for corroboration. No asking other adults if they noticed anything.

Do not delay the first call. In Track 1, the first call is made immediately after separating the alleged perpetrator from the young person. In Track 2, the phone call to the CYPO or DYPO is made within minutes, not hours.

Do not discuss the matter at meals, around fires, or in passing. The risk of being overheard is high.

Do not post anything on social media or any program channel. Not a hint, not a reassurance, not a “thinking of you all” message. Nothing.

Do not phone parents or carers without checking first with the CYPO/DYPO or police. Sometimes parental contact has to be paused; you cannot know which cases without asking.

Do not let the alleged perpetrator return in Track 1 until the CYPO/DYPO and police have agreed it is appropriate.

Do not promise specific outcomes to the young person. Promise to listen, to take it seriously, to make sure the right people know. Do not promise punishment, belief by everyone, or that life will go back to normal quickly.

What this guide is not

This is a plain-language guide. The authoritative document is Appendix C of the Responding and Reporting Procedure. If anything here is unclear, or if you face a situation it does not cover, phone the DYPO.