



Code of Conduct — Plain Language Guide

Authorisation

Authorisation: District Governor Name:	[Insert Name]
District Governor Signature	
Date	[Insert Date]
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Read this first

This guide is the friendly version of how we expect everyone in Rotary District 9815 to behave when we're together — with each other, and with the children and young people who take part in our programs.

A note on what this guide is. The formal document is the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct*. If anything here and the Code disagree, the Code wins — but we've done our best to keep them in step.

One important exception. If you witness, are told about, or suspect a child or young person being hurt or at risk — abuse, grooming, neglect, or anything like that — stop reading this guide and go to the *Responding and Reporting Plain Language Guide*. That's a different process and quicker. If anyone is in immediate danger, call Victoria Police on 000.

Who this applies to

This guide and the Code apply to everyone connected to Rotary District 9815 or its clubs:

- Rotary and Rotaract members and volunteers in any role;
- contractors, service providers, and visitors during their engagement with us;
- anyone involved in a Rotary activity, whether or not they're in direct contact with children and young people; and
- all of us in physical and online settings — club meetings, District events, training, social media, and anywhere we're representing Rotary.

The big idea

Treat people the way you would want yourself, your family, and the people you care about to be treated.

That means respecting one another's differences and dignity, looking out for the young people in our programs, and acting in ways that uphold the trust families place in us when they let their kids come along to a Rotary activity. It also means stepping in when something doesn't look right.

Our core values — fellowship, integrity, diversity, service, and leadership — are the test. If something would sit badly under those, it sits badly under this Code.

In any Rotary setting

Respectful language and inclusion

- introduce yourself and share how you'd like to be addressed, including pronouns; use other people's preferred names and pronouns;
- speak plainly — avoid jargon, acronyms, and idioms that don't travel across cultures or generations;
- use gender-neutral language when addressing groups;
- ask about cultural background, faith, or other personal characteristics only if it's relevant to the conversation, and only if the person is open to sharing; and
- don't describe anyone by their age — conversation works across generations.

Look out for each other

- be ready to step in when you see a need — someone struggling, left out, or treated badly;
- if you see or hear something inappropriate, name it in a way that supports the people affected; and

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- uphold the Code in your club, and address issues as they come up rather than letting them sit.

Make activities accessible and welcoming

- when you organise a meeting, event, or activity, ask people what they need to take part — accessible venues, interpretation, captioning, dietary requirements, religious or cultural considerations;
- review club traditions that might be offensive or alienating, and change them;
- include everyone in conversations, projects, and roles; and
- schedule events with awareness of significant religious and cultural dates.

Celebrate diversity

- grow your club's awareness and acceptance of people with disability;
- celebrate a range of cultures and faiths in your service and events;
- mark significant dates relevant to diversity; and
- avoid stereotyping or mocking any group.

Around children and young people

This is the most important part of this guide. If you take part in any Rotary or Rotaract activity that involves contact with people under 18 — RYPEN, RYLA, a club youth project, a visit to a school, anything — these are the things to do, and the things never to do.

What we always do

- treat children, young people, and their families with respect — in Rotary settings and outside;
- listen carefully if a young person tells you about something that worries them, including about how they've been treated;
- be inclusive of every young person who joins our programs — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse, with disability, international students, those unable to live at home, and those who identify as LGBTIQ+;
- keep one-to-one situations in line of sight of another adult — an open space, a doorway propped open, another adult nearby; and
- act quickly if you suspect a child has been or could be harmed — first make sure they are safe, then go to the Responding and Reporting Plain Language Guide.

What is never OK

- ignoring or playing down a concern, suspicion, or disclosure of harm to a child;
- treating one young person as a favourite — special gifts, special attention, special access — the line between favouritism and grooming is thinner than people think;
- overlooking another adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour with a young person — if it looks off to you, raise it;
- discussing intimate topics, or using sexualised language, around young people (except where it's a clear part of curriculum or professional guidance);
- treating any young person less favourably because of who they are — their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, or ethnicity; and
- drinking heavily or using illicit drugs at any Rotary event where young people are present.

Four rules to remember

Of everything above, four things really matter. If nothing else from this guide sticks, let these four:

1. Don't be alone with a young person

As far as is practical, don't put yourself in a one-to-one situation with a young person at a Rotary activity. If it can't be avoided — you're the only mentor in the room, the only driver, the only adult available — keep it in an open space, in line of sight of another adult, with the door open. This protects the young person, and it protects you.

2. No private contact channels

Don't direct-message, text, email, or otherwise privately contact a young person in our programs from a personal account. All communication goes through approved Rotary channels and (where appropriate) with a parent or carer copied. The only exceptions are reasonable, Rotary-related communication, or where there's a safety concern or other urgent matter. The detail is in the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedure: Online Interactions with Young People*.

3. No photos or video without consent

Don't take photos or video of a young person in a Rotary setting unless you're doing it in an official Rotary capacity or for a duty-of-care reason, and only with appropriate consent on file. If in doubt, ask the program organiser or the Club Youth Protection Officer (CYPO) before you take the shot — not after.

4. No contact outside program hours

Don't make contact with a young person in our programs outside the times the program is running. The exceptions are narrow — something that's genuinely needed to deliver the program, or professional guidance — and only with parental permission.

If you see something, hear something, or aren't sure

Trust your instinct. If something doesn't look right, doesn't feel right, or you can't put your finger on why it's bothering you — raise it. Better to raise something and have it stand down than to wait.

- **If a child or young person could be at risk** — use the *Responding and Reporting Plain Language Guide*. That walks you through the steps and the people to tell.
- **For any other Code matter** — adult-to-adult conduct, harassment, a club-level concern, or something you're not sure how to classify — use the *Complaints Plain Language Guide* or speak to your Club President or the District Governance Chair.
- **If you're unsure which applies** — the safe default is to speak to the Club Youth Protection Officer (CYPO) or the District Youth Protection Officer (DYPO) at child.protection@rotary9815.org.au. They will help you work out which path applies.

Mandatory reporting. If you belong to a profession that's a mandatory reporter under Victorian law (doctors, registered nurses, registered teachers, school principals, school counsellors, Victoria Police members, registered psychologists, and others), your reporting obligation under the law applies regardless of any Rotary process. See the *Responding and Reporting Plain Language Guide* for more.

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Quick contacts

What	Who / how
Immediate danger	Victoria Police on 000.
A child or young person at risk	Use the Responding and Reporting Plain Language Guide. Or speak to your Club Youth Protection Officer (CYPO), or the District Youth Protection Officer (DYPO) at child.protection@rotary9815.org.au .
Adult-to-adult Code concern, harassment, or general complaint	Use the Complaints Plain Language Guide. Or speak to your Club President (for club matters) or the District Governance Chair at governance@rotary9815.org.au (for District matters).
Unsure which path applies	Speak to your CYPO, or the DYPO at child.protection@rotary9815.org.au . They will help you work out which path applies.
A question about the Code itself	Your CYPO, the DYPO, or the District Governance Chair.
Help in a language other than English	Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450.

Thank you for taking this seriously. Rotary works because people who turn up bring their best selves. The Code isn't a rulebook for its own sake — it's the bare description of what "best self" looks like in the company of other members, in our service work, and around the young people we have the privilege of working with. We're glad you're part of it.

Appendix A — Version History

The table below records the version history of this Plain Language Guide. This Guide is a derivative of its parent Procedure; the parent Procedure's own version history table is the substantive audit record. The current authorisation block is at the front of this Guide.

Version	Date	Changes	Authorised
1.3	15 May 2026	Authorisation block added at the front and Version History appendix added at the back, matching the suite convention applied to the substantive documents. Previous PLG versions are not retroactively captured here; the parent Procedure's version history records the substantive evolution of the suite.	B.Rogers
1.4	15 May 2026	Cross-reference update: hyperlink to the Online Interactions Procedure re-pointed from v1.5 to v1.7 (the live version after the suite-alignment rebuild of 15 May 2026). Filename version stamp bumped to v1.4. No substantive content change.	B.Rogers
1.5	15 May 2026	Suite-wide cross-reference rule change. All hyperlinks pointing at sibling suite documents removed; each cross-reference now appears as the document title only, plain text with a light-grey placeholder highlight, indicating where a working link will be inserted once the District website hosts the suite. Working external URLs (legislation, Service Victoria, Rotary International learning, rotary.org/dei , rotary9815.org.au/privacy) are unchanged. The body-text parenthetical filename references that previously sat beside each cross-reference have been removed; the Registry of CSW Documents (in preparation) is the canonical record of filenames and versions across the suite.	B.Rogers