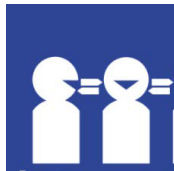


CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact your local Rotary Club.

Purpose

Rotary International District 9790's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our approach to implementing the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in all Rotary and Rotaract environments within our district.

It informs our community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and young people and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all Rotary and Rotaract members, volunteers and service providers whether or not they work in direct contact with children and young people.
- applies in all physical and online environments used by children during Rotary programs and those provided through third-party providers on behalf of the district
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related policies section below.

Statement of commitment to child safety

Rotary International District 9790(our/the district), and all clubs within the district (our clubs), are child safe organisations which welcome all children and young people, and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where children and young people are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and young people.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to children in our programs.

We promote positive relationships between children and young people, and adults and between children and young people, and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to children and young people in our programs. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal children and young people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international youth exchange students, students with disability, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and nonbinary, intersex, queer and questioning (LGBTIQ+), and other children and young people experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting children and young people based on these or other

characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our district and clubs has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from children and young people, families, Rotary and Rotaract members, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Roles and responsibilities

District protection officer

The district protection officer is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, as outlined in the [*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*](#) (Vic).

The district protection officer is the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents within district organised meetings, events and/or programs.

The district protection officer will:

- monitor compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy in district organised meetings, events and/or programs.
- The district protection officer is responsible for informing the district about this policy, and making it publicly available
- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of children and young people, families and Rotary and Rotaract members in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all children are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between children and adults, and between children taking part in our programs
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within Rotary including at district leadership team meetings, club board meetings and general club meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for Rotary and Rotaract members, and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

District Leadership Team

The District Leadership Team will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the district
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at youth program meetings
- participate in an annual briefing on child safety
- approve updates to child safety policies, and act in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Rotary and Rotaract members, and volunteers

All Rotary and Rotaract members, and volunteers, where appropriate to their roles, will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the district and/or Rotary International, and always follow child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Code of Conduct

- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- ensure children and young peoples' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of children and young people.

Child safety champions

Rotary clubs within the district have nominated a child safety champion, or possibly the club's youth services chair, to support the district protection officer to implement our child safety policies and practices, including Rotary member and volunteer training.

Child safety champions are the first points of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents within their club.

- The child safety champion is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy in their clubs.
- The district protection officer is responsible for informing the district about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Child safety champions work with their club's board, Rotary members, children and young people, volunteers and the district protection officer to create a child safe environment in their club by taking the following actions:

- Promote child safety culture
 - Promote child safety and wellbeing. For example, at club meetings and through newsletters.
 - Promote a culture of listening to children, young people and families and acting on their child safety concerns.
 - Rotary members and volunteers to focus on the child safety needs of vulnerable students.
- Provide support and guidance
 - Be a point of contact for child safety concerns for Rotary members, volunteers, and children and young people in the club.
 - Provide guidance to and children and young people, Rotary members and volunteers on child safety policies and procedures.
 - Work with the district protection officer to respond to child safety incidents.
- Monitor, review and report
 - Record child safety complaints and concerns, and analyse trends as needed.
 - Coordinate reviews following significant safety incidents and recommend improvements.
 - Maintain the any club specific child safety risk register for club-specific youth programs with the club's board.
 - Maintain detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.

Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours, including between adults, and children and young people. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that children and young people also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the district.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

We identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices.

Our district's Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our district governance and youth services committees will meet together, at least annually, to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register. They shall submit that risk register to the district leadership team for consultation and formal approval.

Where individual clubs organise their own program(s) for children and young people, they shall develop a club specific risk register for their program(s) and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the risk register at least annually. These risk registers shall be developed in consultation with and approved by their club board, and submitted to the district protection officer.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Rotary, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every child and young person can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal children and young people, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal children and young people, and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our planning, policies, and activities.

We have a zero tolerance approach to racism, discrimination and bullying in Rotary, including in our youth programs, as outlined in our Code of Conduct.

Empowerment of children and young people

To support child safety and wellbeing, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages children and young people, and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between children and young people are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in our programs to ensure a sense of belonging through the four way test, promoting our code of conduct, commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and Rotary's core values of fellowship, integrity, diversity, service, and leadership.

We inform children and young people of their rights and give them the confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other children and young people, and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure children and young people in our programs know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Children and young people, and families can also access information on how to report concerns in our Code of Conduct and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures

When the district or clubs are gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the child or young person and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Engagement with communities

The community has an important role in monitoring and promoting children and young peoples' safety and wellbeing and helping children and young people to raise any concerns.

To support engagement, we are committed to providing the community with accessible information about our child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for the community to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for Rotary and Rotaract members and our communities on the district's website
- seeking feedback from Interact members, youth exchange participants and youth program alumni
- the district newsletter will inform Rotary and Rotaract members, and clubs about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure safety of children and young people.
- child safety posters will be displayed in areas used by children and young people at our district's residential youth programs.

Diversity equity and inclusion

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our children and young people, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child and young person has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disability
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

The [diversity, equity an inclusion page](#) on the Rotary International website provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity, equity and inclusion in our organisation.

Suitable Rotary and Rotaract members, and volunteers

We apply robust child safe induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all Rotary and Rotaract members, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

When inducting a new member into clubs in our district, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for working with children.

The club's child safety champion submits this information to the district protection officer. Any clubs failing to submit this information will be considered non-compliant with the District's child safety policies and as so forbidden to undertake *any* activities with children and young people.

Induction

All people conducting child-connected work will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Code of Conduct

- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that district or club considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management

All people engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy, which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that Rotary and Rotaract members, where relevant to their role, understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, Rotary and Rotaract members will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks.

Clubs who fail to have a member, preferably their child safety champion, attend this annual training will be considered non-compliant with the District's child safety policies and as so forbidden to undertake *any* activities with children and young people.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

District committee training and education

To ensure our district leadership team, and governance and youth services committees are equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our environment, training is provided at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our environment
- child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Complaints and reporting processes

Anyone in our community should approach the club's child safety champion or the district protection officer if they have any concerns about compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Our district fosters a culture that encourages members, volunteers, children and young people, families, and the community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found on the district's website.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all Rotary and Rotaract members, and volunteers (including youth exchange host families) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or young person, Rotary member, volunteers, contractors, service providers or any other person while connected to a Rotary club or program.

Communication

Our district is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying child safety posters at Rotary residential programs that involve children and young people
- updates in our district newsletter
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at youth program meetings.

Privacy and information sharing

The district and clubs collect, use, and disclose information about children and their families in accordance with privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how we collect, use and disclose information refer to our [privacy policy](#).

Review of child safety practices

We have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with our clubs.

Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Child Safety Responding and Reporting policies and procedures
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- [Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)
- [Privacy policy](#)
- [Rotary International's governance documents](#), including Rotary Code of Policies, Manual of Procedure and Rotary's constitutional documents.

Policy status and review

The district protection officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from children and young people, families and the community.

Policy review and approval

Policy last reviewed	14 July 2022
Consultation	Monitor State and Commonwealth Standards: Commission for Children and Young People, Victoria & NSW, National Office for Child Safety and Rotary International Youth Protection Policies
Approved by	District Leadership Team 2022-23
Next scheduled review date	4 December 2024