

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

(Adapted from 9520 Youth Exchange Policies)

All Rotary Clubs, Rotary Members & Families, Exchange Students & Parents, and Host families or other persons participating in any Rotary function are advised that sexual harassment is against Australian Law, and the breaking of this Law can lead to conviction penalized by fines or jail. Such laws may not exist, or may be different, in the many countries with which Rotary is involved through Youth Exchange programs and many other various Rotary International programs. Rotary members and associated person should realize Australian Law may not offer any protection outside of this country. Hosted students for example, must be aware that they are also responsible to it, and protected by it, while in Australia. Overseas students for example, will be briefed by the 9520 District Youth Exchange Committee members, at their first home briefing, with host parents.

Rotary District 9520 has a very firm policy supporting this Law. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and Rotary district 9520 will not hesitate to use the law to its full extent in any situation where sexual harassment of any Rotary member, associate or exchange student is suspected, and certainly if proved.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted or uninvited sexual behaviour, which is offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating to the person to whom it is directed. It may be an isolated incident or a series of incidents. What may be funny or insignificant to one person may be disturbing to another and therefore be considered harassment. It has nothing to do with mutual attraction and friendship..

EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- (1) Touching, patting or fondling
- (2) Staring or leering
- (3) Sexually suggestive comments, jokes and teasing
- (4) Display of pornographic pictures, cartoons, jokes etc.
- (5) Requests or demands for sexual favours.
- (6) Physical assault.

WHERE CAN SEXUAL HARASSMENT OCCUR.

Sexual harassment can occur in any place where two or more people gather or may be by telephone or other means of contact between two or more persons.

Youth Exchange students for example could find this occurring in

- (1) Their school
- (2) In their host family or by their friends and acquaintances.
- (3) In the host Rotary Club or at a Rotary associated Function.
- (4) From other exchange student or other social events.

COURSE OF ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY MEMBERS, STUDENTS ETC IF THEY ARE BEING HARASSED.

- (1) Do not ignore sexual harassment or think it will go away. Silence may give the impression that there is tacit approval of the behaviour.
- (2) Politely but firmly inform the person that you object to the behaviour and do not want it repeated. If they persist, make it clear that you will initiate action that will force them to stop.
- (3) If you feel you cant do this or you can not resolve the situation, inform an appropriate Officer of the Rotary Club. This could be, in the case of a student, their host parents or school counsellor, or it may be better to inform their club counsellor or Club President or District Counsellor.
- (4) Members and associates of Rotary Clubs should ensure that when they become aware of any form of sexual harassment, whether directed at themselves or some other person known to them through a Rotary connection, their immediate course of action should be to inform an Officer of the Rotary Club connection. Their course of action is to immediately seek advice and assistance from a District Officer as to the next course of action.

FOR ALL ROTARIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS.

While we have significant responsibility for our exchange students, we do not have legal guardianship. If any complaint of sexual harassment should come to attention of the authorities without our knowledge, the matter is taken entirely out of our hands. It is in the very best interests of your club, the student and Rotary generally that any suspicion of sexual harassment, however minor, should be investigated and dealt with promptly. If you club, or club counsellor does not feel confident about dealing with the situation prompt help from the district committee should be sought.

Sexual harassment often builds up from minor, almost innocent, behaviour. If it can be dealt with at a very early stage, major problems are unlikely to occur. The rule of quick and decisive action and communication is paramount.

FOR SPONSORED STUDENTS WHILE OVERSEAS.

The situation for sponsored students overseas is much more difficult. Laws on sexual harassment vary from country to country, and in many countries do not exist at all. Some actions that may be considered as harassment in Australia, may be considered normal behaviour in another country. Conversely simple actions showing affection in Australia, for example hugging and/or kissing between family members or close friends, may be considered offensive in other countries.

Regardless of the country in which they are living, no sponsored student should accept treatment that is offensive to them, and which would be considered sexual harassment in Australia. Their reaction should be the same as that advised above, but if they do not receive an adequate response from their host family, club or district counsellor overseas, or feel that they can not discuss the problem with them, they **MUST** contact their district 9520 country coordinator promptly.

They should be circumspect in their behaviour, and not act, dress or otherwise behave in a provocative manner, regardless of the behaviour or attitudes of those around them. They should be conscious of the fact that what may be acceptable in Australia may be provocative in or alternatively offensive in other countries or what is considered acceptable in their country may be considered offensive in Australia. They should be very sensitive not only to the established customs and practices of the country in which they are living, but also the representation they present of social attitudes and practices in Australia.

CONCLUSION

The integrity and high standards of Rotary through its many recognized programs and activities will be protected and not compromised in Rotary District 9520. Sexual harassment of any one engaged in or associated in any way with Rotary organized or supported activities will be investigated, and even if only the slightest evidence of sexual harassment is found, appropriate action will be taken up to and including the full application of the Laws of Australia.