



# Student action in case of abuse or harassment

- **What you should do if you feel you are subject to abuse or harassment from a Rotarian (or their spouse), adult family member or other volunteer or person while involved in a Rotary Program for New Generations in District 9630.**
- The Full definition of Abuse or Harassment, is found in Section 2.5 of the Rotary District 9630 Youth Protection Policy – Rotary Programs for New Generations.
- It can be summarised in the following statement—
- “Abuse or Harassment is any unwanted physical written or verbal conduct of a nature which the perpetrator knew or should have known was offensive to the victim. It includes sexual, emotional or physical acts against the victim.
- Harassment includes bullying, unwanted physical contact, physical or verbal abuse, sexual harassment, or neglect, but can take the form of repeated comments or gestures about a student’s social background, home country, language, culture, personal appearance or other characteristics”.
- Counselling, warnings, restrictions, etc, resulting from inappropriate action by the student is not normally considered “harassment” unless done in a way that unnecessarily embarrasses or belittles a student.
- Be sensitive to the fact that there is much scope for misunderstanding in cross-cultural situations, What might be acceptable conduct in one country or social situation for one individual may be offensive to another. Customs, gestures and etiquette may differ greatly among different cultures.
- However whether intended or accidental, harassment is not something you should tolerate. Remember, “if it feels wrong, it is wrong!”
- **If you feel that you have been subject to harassment, please follow this procedure:**
- **Step 1:** If you can, make the person abusing or harassing you aware that the behaviour is unwelcome to you. Make it clear that the behaviour is to stop. The word “No” is a powerful word when used clearly and firmly. In most cases, harassment can be resolved at this early stage.
- However if the person does not stop the objectionable behaviour, or you need someone to intervene on your behalf, speak first with the Rotarian(s) immediately responsible for you or the conduct of the Rotary program (this may be a Club Rotarian, your Club Counsellor, the Club President, Program Co-ordinator), your school teacher or liaison officer, or for a YEP student your host parent. Explain to them the facts and your feelings as clearly as you can.
- **Step 2:** If this does not resolve the matter, or if any of the above are involved and/or you do not feel able or comfortable to discuss this with any person listed in Step 1, contact your District Committee Counsellor or support person, or the District Chair of the Rotary Program for New Generations with which you are involved. Irrespective of who may be involved in the harassment, your concerns will, be taken seriously.
- *YEP students: If you feel unable to discuss your concerns with your host Club or District Committee, you should immediately contact your sponsor Club and/or District Committee*
- **Step 3:** If the matter is still not resolved satisfactorily or you have difficulty in contacting the appropriate District Officers express your concerns directly to the District Governor.
- **Step 4:** Nothing limits your right to express your complaint to whomever you wish. However the steps described above are matched to the process your Rotary Club and District Committee use to deal with any harassment complaint. Every effort will be made to resolve your complaint in a confidential and sensitive manner.