

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND (RIBI)**

**PROTECTION OF CHILDREN POLICY**

**Applicable to all Clubs and Districts in RIBI**

**Policy Statement**

The Clubs recognise that the services it provides are used by children.

The Clubs believe that children have the right to be secure from abuse, and RIBI are committed to protecting all the children in their care from harm.

The Clubs will appoint a Rotarian as the Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Officer. This Officer will have suitable experience, training and expertise, and will be responsible for liaising with appropriate outside agencies and RIBI in any child protection matter.

The Clubs have a duty to ensure the welfare of all children who may be at risk. This duty involves reporting the risk to an appropriate agency and RIBI and by promoting a safe environment within the Club.

The Clubs will take every possible action to prevent abuse and to deal with it as promptly and effectively as possible if it occurs.

**Aim of the Policy**

The central aim of RIBI's Safeguarding Policy is to inform all Rotarians of:

- RIBI's approach to the Safeguarding of children
- ways in which the Clubs do this
- the steps taken to avoid abuse taking place
- the actions that will be taken by the Clubs to deal with abuse if it occurs

**Definition of Abuse**

Abuse of children may take any of the following forms:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect

**Responsibility**

RIBI has a duty to ensure that all Clubs working with children adopt safe practices.

The Clubs will undertake Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)\* checks on all new and existing Rotarians as appropriate and will undertake regular education of its members to minimise any risks to children posed by Rotarians or others who may be supporting Rotary activity involving children.

The Clubs have a duty to report serious concerns relating to abuse to appropriate agencies including the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)\* and the RIBI Compliance Officer.

**RIBI will:**

- Set out and inform Rotarians of the procedures for responding to suspicions or evidence of abuse
- Incorporate material relevant to issues of abuse on the RIBI website
- Maintain vigilance concerning the possibility of abuse of children from whatever source
- Encourage a climate of openness which enables Rotarians to pass on concerns about behaviour that might be abusive
- Produce and regularly revise policies and procedures to minimise the risk of abuse
- Ensure that all Rotarians are aware of the main indicators of child abuse
- Investigate any allegations of abuse quickly and thoroughly in conjunction with appropriate agencies
- Implement improvements to procedures if an investigation reveals deficiencies in the way in which RIBI operates
- Collaborate with other relevant agencies in combating abuse and improving the protection of children

**Districts will:**

Appoint a Rotarian as the Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Officer. This Officer will have suitable experience, training and expertise.

Ensure that all Club Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Officers within their District receive regular education to minimise any risks to children posed by Rotarians in their District

**The Clubs expect its members to:**

- Refrain from any abusive action in relation to children
- Report to the Club anything they witness which is or might be abusive
- Co-operate in any investigation into alleged abuse.

Rotarians should be aware of who they may turn to for advice if they become aware or suspect that abuse is occurring.

Failure by Rotarians to report incidents or suspicions of abuse may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action.

***\* or relevant state authority***