

Appendix D: Involving parents, carers, children and vulnerable adults as partners

Involving parents and carers

Parents and carers have a responsibility for the safeguarding of the children and vulnerable adults with whom Rotary works. In Rotary activities it is possible to acknowledge this and to involve parents and carers as partners. The majority of Rotary activities with children and vulnerable adults are less regular but in all cases attempts should be made to include parents and carers as:

- Members of the organising committee.
- Assistants and volunteers to assist with the activity.
- Evaluators of the success of the event or activity through discussion or the completion of a questionnaire.

It is essential that parents and carers:

- Have given permission that is appropriate to the activity and the child or vulnerable adult taking part.
- Know the name and contact details of the person who is in charge.
- Can identify the Rotarians and other persons who are involved in the organisation and delivery.
- Know how to make a complaint or share concerns.
- Have access to the Safeguarding Policy.

The person in charge and the team should:

- Know the parents and carers and have contact details appropriate to the activity.
- Be aware of cultural and language differences.
- Be aware of special needs and learning difficulties: some parents may not be proficient readers for example.

Sharing concerns with parents, guardians or carers

If there are concerns about a child or vulnerable adult there should always be a commitment to work in partnership with parents and carers. In most situations not involving the possibility of the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, it is important that someone from the organisation talks to parents or carers to clarify any initial concerns. For example, a child who seems withdrawn may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement. Common sense is advised in these situations and advice should be sought from the Club Safeguarding Officer if there is any uncertainty about the appropriate course of action.

There are circumstances in which a child or vulnerable adult might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared: the parent may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately. In all cases of suspected or alleged abuse, advice and guidance must first be sought from the appropriate agencies as to who contacts the parents.

Involving children and vulnerable adults

In some Rotary activities it is also possible to involve children or vulnerable adults themselves as partners rather than as passive recipients of the service provided. Examples are in Interact Clubs, Youth Exchange, Summer camps and in RYLA.

The young members should be involved in:

- Planning the programme.
- Taking part in the delivery of the programme.
- Carrying out chores alongside the organisers and providers.
- Making the rules of behaviour that apply to adults and children.
- Agreeing sanctions.
- Reviewing the success of the organisation.

It is important that the adults:

- Listen to and take notice of the young members.
- Treat the young people in a manner appropriate to their age, experience and ability.
- Know who to go to with matters of concern.
- Ensure that the organisation is fair to all.

These same principles should be applied to work with vulnerable adults in a manner that takes into account appropriate to their age, experience, ability and special needs.