



## Guidelines for Allegations of Abuse or Harassment

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Lions Clubs International is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all YCE program participants and will not tolerate abuse or harassment. All allegations will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. The safety and well-being of program participants must always be a top priority.

Lions Clubs International charters Lions clubs throughout the world, and each jurisdiction has its own unique laws and regulations. Each chartered Lions club is autonomous, meaning each Lions club is an independent entity which is responsible for its own day-to-day management, including compliance with applicable laws in its own jurisdiction.

Lions Clubs International strongly encourages each Lions club working with youth to familiarize itself with laws and regulations required in order to interact with youth, and to comply with all applicable laws in that regard. All Lions clubs are encouraged to consult a legal professional about the club's legal obligations and procedures for responding to allegations of abuse and harassment.

Ensuring compliance with local laws and regulations is an obligation of all chartered Lions clubs. Noncompliance can have serious consequences, including but not limited to accountability under the local laws, termination of a club's charter and/or suspension of program activities.

The following steps must be taken immediately after abuse or harassment is reported:

### **a) Protect the youth.**

Take immediate action to ensure the young person's health and well-being, and get him or her medical or psychological care, if necessary. For safety reasons, the young person must not contact or be in the presence of the alleged perpetrator.

### **b) Promptly report the allegations to appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

A good faith belief that applicable law(s) have been violated must be reported immediately to the appropriate law enforcement authority (child protection, social services, and/or local police). In some countries and local jurisdictions, reporting is required by law. Interrogations related to allegations of violations of applicable laws, including but not limited to abuse or harassment, must be left entirely to law enforcement agencies. Each Lions club member must cooperate with law enforcement agencies before, during, and after investigations.

### **c) Alleged perpetrator must be prohibited from contacting young individuals.**

The alleged offender must be removed from all contact with YCE participants until the matter is resolved.

**d) Maintain confidentiality and impartiality to the extent possible.**

Although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the identities and details of those involved should be protected during an investigation if practicable under the circumstances.

**e) Keep LCI informed.**

If a law enforcement agency files a charge against a Lions club member, please promptly notify [youthexchange@lionsclubs.org](mailto:youthexchange@lionsclubs.org) and [legal@lionsclubs.org](mailto:legal@lionsclubs.org).