

## **Ethics and Safety Committee of Rosa Veritas**



### **Summary information for the Australian community**

This document is a summary of the most important elements of the approach of Rosa Veritas to the issue of child safety. It outlines our responsibilities as members of Rosa Veritas, details the arrangements in place in Australia and provides information on what to do if you are in the situation of needing to make a report. We hope you are familiar with all the documents relating to ethics and ethical conduct in Rosa Veritas, but this is a concise summary of the information you need to know.

- The Rules of Rosa Veritas Inc apply to all members of Rosa Veritas, wherever the member lives. These Rules are available on the Rosa Veritas website.
- All members of Rosa Veritas are required to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct.
- Priests and Deacons of Rosa Veritas are obliged to report sexual abuse of children to the Meritus, through the Ethics and Safety Committee, as soon as they become aware of such abuse or the risk of such abuse.
- All members of the Australian community may contact the Ethics and Safety Committee directly by emailing [ethics@rosaveritas.org](mailto:ethics@rosaveritas.org) to seek information or support regarding a report or potential report of abuse.
- If a member of Rosa Veritas becomes aware of any person being in immediate danger of abuse or violence, that member should call the police on 000.
- In Australia, child protection is a state responsibility and so each state has systems and processes in place. Refer to the contact sheet which provides details of each state where Rosa Veritas members reside.

### **Responding to abuse of children, young people or elders**

Only a minority of children and young people actively disclose abuse. Most child abuse is disclosed through observation by an adult of a child or young person's behaviour, words and physical appearance.

When a child or young person discloses abuse, this needs to be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately, both for the wellbeing of the child or young person, and also to ensure your actions do not jeopardise any legal action against the abuser.

## **Handling Disclosures of Abuse**

There are a number of basic guidelines that should be followed to ensure the safe handling of any disclosures of abuse from a child or young person:

- Remain calm;
- Remember that the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person comes before the interests of any other person;
- Listen to the child or young person and accept what they say;
- Look at them directly, if this is not uncomfortable for them, and do your best not to appear shocked;
- Reassure them that they did the right thing by telling someone;
- Assure them that it is not their fault and you will do your best to help;
- Let them know you need to tell someone else and explain why this is necessary;
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens;
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened with harm;
- Write down what they say in their own words – record what you have seen and heard;
- Make certain you distinguish between what the child or young person has actually said and any inferences you may have made. Accuracy is important;
- Speak with your community leader (if they are not the subject of the notification) and then make contact with the Ethics and Safety Committee if the subject of the notification is a member of Rosa Veritas.

### **Important notes:**

- The same action should be taken if the allegation is about abuse that has taken place in the past, as it will be important to find out if the alleged perpetrator is still working with or has access to the person.
- Dealing with an allegation of abuse of a child, young person is difficult but must be taken seriously and dealt with carefully and fairly.

### **Do Not**

- Attempt to deal with the situation yourself;
- Formally interview the child or young person;
  - Never ask leading questions;
  - Never push for information or make assumptions.
  - Only necessary relevant facts should be obtained;
- Make assumptions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents;
- Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality;

- Take any action that might undermine future investigation or disciplinary procedure, such as interviewing the alleged victim or potential witnesses, or informing the alleged perpetrator or parents/carers;
- Permit personal doubt to prevent you from reporting the allegation.

**Handling Disclosures of Abuse of children or young people when the child, young person or accused person IS NOT associated with Rosa Veritas inc.**

- Follow the above guidelines and
- Tell the relevant authorities as soon as possible; and
- Call the Police on 131 444 for non-emergencies and 000 for emergencies.
- Report suspected child abuse to the relevant child protection service (see the attached sheet for the contact details in your State).

**Handling Disclosures of Abuse of children or young people when any one of the child, young person or accused person IS associated with Rosa Veritas inc.**

- If you are aware of abuse or risk of abuse, of any kind, by a member of Rosa Veritas towards any person, in any country, you are required to report that to the Ethics and Safety Committee of Rosa Veritas as soon as possible.
- Where there is immediate risk to the safety of a child or young person in Australia contact the Police on 000.
- Follow the other guidelines above, in consultation with the Ethics and Safety Committee of Rosa Veritas.
- See also the attached information sheet on more specific contact details in all of the States of Australia.

**Handling disclosures or observations of Elder Abuse**

The Elder Abuse phone line is a free service that automatically redirects callers seeking information and advice on elder abuse with the phone service in their State or Territory.

1800ELDERHelp or 1800 353 374.

**If you or another person is in immediate danger, call 000 and ask for the Police.**

What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse can involve many different types of behaviour – it's not just violence or assault. It could also be:

- being threatened, humiliated or harassed
- someone misusing or stealing your money
- someone trying to pressure you to sign legal documents
- any non-consensual sexual activity.

If you feel scared, frightened or at risk, the Elder Abuse phone service can help.

For assistance with other aged care issues, visit MyAgedCare or call 1800 200 422.

To raise concerns about your aged care support, visit the Aged Care and Quality and Safety Commission website

If you, another person or the accused person in this situation, is a member of Rosa Veritas, **you must report your concern to the Ethics and Safety Committee of Rosa Veritas**  
Email [ethics@rosaveritas.org](mailto:ethics@rosaveritas.org)

Prepared by the Ethics Committee  
October 2023.