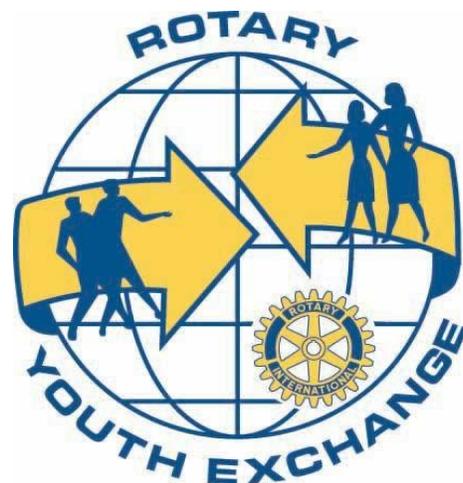


# HOSTING ROTARY



# YOUTH EXCHANGE

# STUDENTS

# A HANDBOOK FOR... HOST FAMILIES

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## **District 5080**

**Dear Host Family,**

**Thank you for sharing your home and your life for a brief time with a Rotary Youth Exchange Student from another country and culture. The time spent with you will be a treasured experience for your student. Not only will he or she learn about the American way of life through you, but at the same time he/she will be growing, maturing – developing in many ways – and in particular, developing his/her own philosophy of life, his/her own way of seeing the world and its people. The time as a member of your family will be a vital part of this learning experience.**

**The association with your student will also be a growing experience for you as well. Not only will you be adopting a new member for your family and learning about him/her personally, you will also be learning about the country and culture represented by your student. Not only will the experience open your student’s eyes to other cultures and other ways of life, but you, too, are also almost certain to see the world a bit differently, and in a better way.**

**We are all on a rather small planet together. Participating in this program as a student or as a host family helps us to understand this better than almost any other experience can. And in particular, we begin to see the way of life of other people of the world as, not better, not worse – just different – and almost without knowing it, we begin to develop a better understanding and respect for others.**

**For many participants – both students and host families – the “exchange adventure” has been a fascinating growing experience – and close friendships have developed that have lasted a lifetime. We hope that you will be similarly rewarded.**

**If you have any questions or concerns about this program or your relationship with your student, please contact me or any Rotarian on the contact list included in this handbook. We stand ready to answer questions and help at any time, day or night.**

**Thank you again for your thoughtfulness in sharing your home with someone from another land.**

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# **The Rotary Youth Exchange Program**

## **How It Works**

Rotary Youth Exchanges are arranged and managed by Rotary District Committees, but always in cooperation with Rotary Clubs and host families. Rotary Clubs recommend local students for exchanges in other countries and serve as hosts for students inbound to their community from Rotary Districts in other countries. Host Clubs select and orient at least two, usually three, host families for each inbound student. For each inbound student, the host club also chooses a Rotarian from its club to serve as the student's Counselor throughout the student's exchange year. The counselor also serves as advocate for host families as well as the student.

The District Committee is responsible for the final selection and orienting both inbound and outbound students for training host club members who work in the program. Due to their close relationship with inbound students, host families and Rotary Counselors are key to a good exchange for an inbound student. This handbook should help host families understand their role and that of others who work in the program.

## **FAQ from Prospective Host Families**

### **1. Who are these students?**

High school age students (15-18 1/2) from a variety of countries around the world, both boys and girls.

### **2. Do they speak English?**

Yes, although they may need a little time to adjust to our particular accent and "special terms".

### **3. From what kind of families do they come?**

All kinds, although most parents will be business and/or professional people. Often one of their parents is a Rotarian.

### **4. How long would a student stay with us?**

Usually 3 – 3 1/2 months, although the period may be shorter or longer if you and the Host Rotary Club agree on it. Students usually come in August just before school starts, change host families in December, and change again about the beginning of March. They normally go home in June/July.

### **5. Do they ever stay over to the next school year?**

No. Their visa is good for one year only and they must return to their home country before they can come back to the United States or Canada.

### **6. Why do students change host families in this program?**

There are several good reasons. First, it exposes them to a variety of ways of family life in our country so that they get to know our culture better, and with as little bias as possible. A second reason is that if you and your student don't happen to match personalities too well, then 3 – 3 1/2 months of "tiptoeing around each other" is about all anyone can stand. This rarely happens, but it can; and it isn't necessarily the case that the host family or the student is a "bad guy". On the other hand, if the match between you and your student is really good, then more than 3 – 3 1/2 months produces a bond that hurts too much to break. Students expect to change host families; they've been told. Sometimes host families want to keep them longer than the assigned period. But a good deal of experience has shown that all things considered, it's usually best to change.

### **7. Who meets our student when he/she arrives at the airport?**

As many of the first host family as is reasonable, and the Counselor or some other representative of the Host Rotary Club should be there. The first host family should also write to the student before they arrive and welcome them to the USA/Canada, and to their home. A small welcoming gift at the airport helps to make the student feel welcome, but it is not required. If done, a token is enough – maybe a pin for their blazer, a State/Province T-shirt or a cap.

Photos should be made of the student with the greeting party when he/she arrives at the airport and a copy should be sent to the student's family back home. The student should also be encouraged to phone home as soon as possible to inform the home family of a safe arrival. Incidentally, the student is expected to pay for his/her own long distance charges, although it is traditional for the host family or the club to pay for this first call. These days students usually have their own cell phones and can use an app to call home free of charge, but some may not.

### **8. By the way, what is a "Host Rotary Club"?**

The Rotary Club in your community serves as host club for your "inbound" student. Among other responsibilities, they provide an allowance for your student (\$75-100 per month) and one of them with knowledge about the program will serve as Counselor for your student. The counselor will meet the student either on arrival or very soon thereafter and assist him/her in getting enrolled in school. He/she will also maintain contact with your student and make sure he/she gets the allowance, usually monthly.

### **9. What else does the Counselor do?**

Although the Club Counselor is an advocate for your student, he/she also serves as a resource for you in case some situation develops which either you are unable to handle or which is a bit too tedious for comfortable direct confrontation. In other words, the Counselor serves as a "go between" for you and your student on matters which might be awkward for you and/or your student. The Counselor "takes the heat" either direction! It makes things a lot more peaceful around your house! Wouldn't it be nice if you had one for your own children?

**10. And what if we don't have children, or they are still small, or they are already gone?** Strangely, it doesn't seem to matter very much. Like everybody else, exchange students come with preconceived notions about the characteristics of the best host family, children, no children, small children, children

of the same age, etc. But at the end of the year, they usually think the host families they had were the right ones. Host families come in all shapes and sizes....single parent, retired, children, no children.

**11. If we have children in our family, who "looks after" our exchange student?**

Nobody! And everybody! Your exchange student lives as a member of your family, has the same care from and responsibilities to others as any other family member. This includes chores, rules of the house, curfew, selection of friends – same as any other child in the family.

No child in the host family should be expected to "look after" the social life of your student, take him/her along every time they leave home to see a friend, etc. They should treat their exchange brother/sister like other brothers and sisters.

**12. What about transportation to school, and other places? Will our student expect to drive our new BMW?**

Absolutely not! ! ! In fact, Rotary Exchange Students are not permitted to operate any motor powered vehicle – automobile, motorboat, tractor, motorcycle, whatever. Rotary is absolutely emphatic about this rule. Violations are grounds for getting sent home early.

**13. So how will our student get to and from school?**

Any of the usual means is fine. They can walk, ride the school bus, ride with your son or daughter or another school friend, if you approve. Please refer to our Drinking and Driving Policy as the laws are different between the USA & Canada. Some host parents drive their exchange students to and from school as they may do or may have done with their own. Whatever is reasonable, safe and works for you is good.

**14. What about other places our student needs or wants to go? Can't this transportation thing get to be a headache?**

If it does, it doesn't usually hurt as much as you might think. If your student needs to go to a special school event, just about always someone is going who would take them; if they need to go to a store to buy something, they can usually go with one of the host parents at a time when they happen to be going anyway. Keep in mind that a teenager's needs for transportation are not usually urgent; they can usually be worked into the family schedule. And besides, family togetherness is the essence of this experience. Two often overlooked solutions to transportation problems are legs and bicycles; and most of our exchange students are much more familiar with these modes of transportation than our youth. Also, walking and riding a bike are not against Rotary rules. Your Rotary club members may also be available to assist with transportation, just ask the counsellor.

**15. Speaking of transportation, what about family trips, etc?**

Take your student any place you would take your children, especially family trips to see the relatives, on family outings, vacations, etc. If you must make a trip considered inappropriate for your student, "board him/her out". Call the Rotary Counselor; he/she will just about always know some responsible family who would be delighted to keep your student for a few days while you are gone. (Often one of your student's other host families is glad to do it.)

**16. Are there rules about trips our student takes?**

You bet! Either they must be with you or else approved by you and the Rotary Club Counselor. Often Rotary families will volunteer to take some student along on trips to see something special or some special place they might otherwise not see. If you and the Counselor approve, that's fine. In any case, if your student makes a trip anywhere, you should know all about it and approve; if he/she makes a trip overnight or out of town, the Rotary Counselor should also know, and unless it's with you, approve.

The Counselor should always know how to reach your student. Think of what you would want for your child if they were living in another country for a year.

**17. Will our student have any sort of obligation to the Rotary organization while they are here?**

Yes. Several activities will be scheduled during the year for your student along with other Rotary Youth Exchange Students. Most of these are on weekends, but your student may miss some school for such activities. Rotary Exchange Students are obligated to attend some events which require them to be gone for two or three days. For example, there is a weekend Orientation for them in September, a weekend "Fall Outing", in October or November, a ski weekend in January or February, a district tour April-May, and wind up camp in May. Please refer to the Student calendar of Events in your Host Family Binder.

Students are expected to attend their club Rotary meetings periodically, as well as, special functions such as Club picnics, work parties, fundraising events, etc.

**18. Won't all these activities interfere with school?**

Not much. Exchange students have been selected and are usually very good students academically, often a little ahead of their age group here. And besides, except for exceptional improvement in language for those who haven't spoken much English, their chief gain will be an understanding of the "American/Canadian Culture" rather than academic advancement.

**19. Well, just what is the purpose of this program, anyway; why are we doing this?** The overall objective of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program is to promote goodwill and better understanding among the people of the world, and thereby make our whole world a better place in which to live. For the student, it is a life changing experience; it broadens their perspective in a way that nothing else can, and it develops self confidence that will enable them to feel at home and comfortable in almost any environment.

For host families, it is a milestone in the family experience, and often the acquisition of a new family member. It removes anxiety and fear of the word foreign, and indeed, usually relegates the use of the word to "things" rather than "people". Everyone involved begins to feel that they are a part of a community much larger, more comprehensive than what they perceived before.

**20. Well, these are very noble ideals, but someone has to ask – How much is this going to cost me?** If you happen to have a son or daughter who goes to another country as a Rotary Youth Exchange Student, it comes out even. In fact, you probably will get ahead, because chances are your son or daughter drives a car, which they can't do as an exchange student, and the associated savings on auto insurance, etc. help to offset the cost of the exchange. Room, food and such are what you will be expected to provide – and most families throw away more food than even a hungry teenager will eat.

As already noted, the Rotary Club will give your student an allowance and your student's own family (overseas) is expected to pay for clothing and such. To put it in usual terms, you will be expected to furnish room and board – that is, a bed in your house and meals with the family. This includes a school lunch, either sent to school or bought in the school lunchroom. However, if providing a school lunch is a hardship, the host Rotary club will usually help.

If the family goes out to eat, to a movie, or whatever, then your student is treated as a member of the family – same rules about what to order and what not, and with his/her cost as a part of the family bill. But if your student goes to the movie or out to eat with his/her school friends, they pay with their own money from the Rotary Club allowance or from home. The same is true for personal supplies, etc. Around the house, your

student would surely use the family soap, and maybe toothpaste, but buy their own toothbrush, lipstick and hair gel etc. If they want a different personal product (like an expensive shampoo) than what your family uses then they can purchase that for themselves. You can generalize from these examples. But if in doubt, ask the Counselor.

**21. Now that cost has come up, what about medical expenses, the flu, accidents, etc.?**

Your student has insurance for medical expenses – and liability, too. It's required, and he/she will have proof. Any expenses not paid by insurance are paid by his/her parents back home. An emergency fund will be maintained for your student in a local bank. The Rotary Counselor will set up and manage the account. In case of an emergency, he/she will have access to these funds. Of course your student will have his/her own account at a bank and will have the opportunity to manage his/her own money; it's part of the experience.

**22. Is there anything else we need to know about money?**

Well, in the USA you can get a \$50 per month reduction on your Federal Income Tax Return for hosting a Rotary Youth Exchange Student!

**23. And how do we deal with the 50 million things we forgot to ask about?**

Just use the same common sense you would use with children of your own. But don't forget; the Rotary Counselor works for you, too. When in doubt, ask!

**24. A cold chill just came over me; what if our student turns out to be that one in a million who "takes drugs" or is alcoholic, bulimic or something?**

Call the Rotary Counselor at once when you suspect a problem. He/she will know how to handle it. You will also be provided with a long list of people to contact in case your student's counselor is not available when they are needed. In the unlikely event that your student is "on drugs" or something this serious, he/she will be sent home immediately, period.

**25. Now that it's come up, are there any other reasons why our student might be sent home?** Yes. Of course there could be a serious accident or illness, and flagrant violations of such Rotary rules as operating a motor vehicle can do it. A serious love affair that is getting out of hand can do it. But it's pretty unusual for anything so serious to occur. Rotary Youth Exchange Students are selected and given careful orientation and counseling before they leave home – and they receive more orientation when they arrive here (about our culture, etc.). They and their parents know "the rules" and they sign agreements to follow them. (They also sign a release for medical treatment, etc.) With very rare exception, Rotary Youth Exchange Students are honorable young people that you would be glad to adopt as your own.

# Relationship between Student and Host Parents

## What to Expect

### What the host parents should expect of the student

- Respect
- Abide by the rules of your house
- Adjust to your lifestyle
- Trust your judgment about friends, school, activities and curfews
- Be considerate, thoughtful and cooperative – for example, about food and the use of household items such as telephone, TV, music systems, computers, internet, etc.
- Keep their room neat and orderly and honor your wishes about the rest of the home
- Keep themselves clean and well-groomed
- Dress in a manner acceptable to you
- In general, behave like a member of your family

### What the student should expect of the host parents

- **Relationship with your student:** Treat your student as you would your own children – with care and consideration, but also providing guidance regarding behavior, dress, responsibilities, choice of friends, etc.
- **Accommodations for your student:** Provide a comfortable home environment. Your student must have his/her own bed, but may share a bedroom with a host sibling of the same gender and similar age.
- **Transportation:** Your student must not drive, but will need essential transportation such as to and from school. (School bus is OK and so are legs if not too far away.) However, transportation for Rotary activities will be arranged by the host Rotary Club and/or Rotary District RYE Committee.
- **Household rules and social mores:** Students must adapt to your way of life and the local culture – not the other way – but they may need guidance from you as well as from their Rotary Counselor. (See the section on “First Night Questions” in this handbook for assistance in dealing with household rules)

- **Language:** Your student should be able to communicate in English, but probably not be completely fluent. Your understanding and thoughtful assistance as needed may be helpful.
- **School:** Your student may need the same kind of encouragement and guidance regarding school as would one of your own children.
- **Choosing friends:** Although they usually do not realize it, most inbound students are vulnerable to overtures of friendship from other young people who abuse rules and sometimes laws. Your guidance in choosing friends is important.
- **Managing money:** Advice on managing resources may be needed, but you should **not** give nor loan money to your student. Ask your student's Rotary Counselor for assistance if needed.
- **Homesickness:** From time to time your student may be homesick – especially at the beginning of their exchange and during certain holidays. Your understanding will be helpful, but consult your student's Rotary Counselor if this problem appears severe. They are trained to assist with this problem.
- **Sharing of family activities** and exposure to other activities that will assist your student in learning and adapting to the culture of their host country

## **Some Suggestions for Host Families**

### **Suggestions for All Host Families**

- If possible try to establish a relationship with the student prior to their arrival via emails or video conferencing. It is good to include photos of family members, your home, etc. At least some of your student's anxiety will be relieved by the impression that he or she is welcome.
- Don't have expectations as to what the student will be like.
- Go through the first night questions with your student the first or second night that he or she is with you.
- Students want to be part of the family, and would prefer to be asked to help out around the house rather than be treated as "special guests" **(this cannot be over emphasized)**
- Spend time with your student, and get to know him or her.
- Don't compare the student to your own children or to previous exchange students – they are all individuals, and are NOT the same.

### **By What Names Should Students Address Host Parents**

Host parents stand in for the real parents of their student, and the student should come to feel that he/she is a part of the family. Often the student will come to call their host parents "Mom", "Dad", etc. Some host parents prefer to be called by their first names – whatever is comfortable for parents and students. It is suggested, however, that formal titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr, etc.) usually make it more difficult for the student to feel a part of the family.

### **The First Few Weeks – The First Host Family**

The first host family's job is to make the student feel welcome, establish firm guidelines for behavior, and make sure the student meets the community and gets off to a good start. The student's Rotary counsellor will help you with this process

It is important that some responsible person be available most of the time during the student's first few weeks after arrival in the country. Being left alone at home in the beginning compounds the natural anxiety in adjusting to a new environment (new culture, new family, new home, new friends).

The first host family is encouraged to invite the other host families, the student's Rotary counsellor, and the Club's Youth Exchange officer over to visit with the student after supper one evening in the first week or 10 days after arrival. In some cases the student's Rotary counsellor will do this.

### **The Second and Third Host Families**

Try to get to know the student before he or she joins your family. Talk to the student's Rotary counsellor and previous host family and find out if there were any problems that had to be dealt with.

Remember that previous families may have become much attached to the student, and vice versa. Encourage some continuing contact between the student and those families.

### **The Last Host Family**

When the student comes to the last host family, he or she will speak English fairly fluently, be established in the community and hopefully be doing all the right things.

In the last month or so the student will receive many invitations from previous host families and friends. The last host family must be understanding, but should counsel the student not to run himself or herself ragged trying to accept all invitations.

Encourage the student to send some belongings home by mail (surface is much cheaper than by air, but takes longer. Compare mailing vs cost of taking a second suitcase on flight home. You may have to assist the student on what to send home, what to donate to the thrift store, and what they can take in their suitcase.

The last host family usually holds an open house or similar gathering of all the host families, counsellor, and Club Youth Exchange officer just prior to the student's departure. An elaborate party is not necessary – talk to your student's Rotary counsellor about your plans.

### **Household Rules**

It is best to explain them at the outset. See “**First Night Questions**” at the bottom of this page for topics that need attention. These questions need to be reviewed with each host family, not just the first one. They are available at <http://sdq.yeoresources.org/Pages/FirstNightQuestions.html> in several languages and your student will probably already have a copy in his/her language and as well as English.

### **Communication – Language**

Most students inbound to Canada/USA will have had a good deal of experience with the English language. However, in the beginning, even if your student answers you and seems to understand, you cannot be sure that they do. Sometimes they are just trying to avoid embarrassment by not asking for repetition and/or explanation. (Haven't we all done this – even with people who speak the same language that we speak?) In time, if not at first, communication will be easy. Make an effort to help your student become familiar with interpretations of words and/or phrases that may not be literal. For example, to say that someone is “sick” does not necessarily mean that they are ill.

### **Relations with Schools and Friends**

Host parents, especially the first family, will want to be aware of their student's school activities. For example, course changes may be necessary after the student has met classes a few times. The Rotary Counselor should normally take care of such matters, but the host family is often the first to become aware of a potential problem. Also, host parents are in the best position to make sure that their student does not become involved with students of questionable reputation (such as those who break the law with drugs and/or alcohol). Usually this is easiest to accomplish by encouraging friendships with students known by the host family to be of “good character”.

### **Student Expenses**

The student pays for their clothes, cell phone charges, long distance phone calls, and personal items. One host family paying for any of these items could embarrass other families that follow the guidelines. Students usually expect to pay their own way to shows and similar events (refer to the Host Family Questionnaire)

Host Rotary Club gives exchange students a monthly allowance. Host families should not provide any additional allowance. The allowance is paid at the beginning of each month. You should make sure that your student is receiving it regularly and on time. If not, you or the student should advise the Rotary counsellor.

The Rotary Club pays for the student's meals at rotary meetings.

If students are invited by host families to go on trips, vacation, etc, sharing of costs should be discussed with the student **before** the trip begins. The host family may choose to pay all costs especially if that is the practice for other family members.

### **Conflicting Invitations**

Some Rotary functions take priority over all other functions. Please contact the counsellor if there is any question as to which function the student should attend in a particular case. The student's next priority is to the current host family, over other host families or friends.

The Counsellor will decide which invitation the student should accept only if the student and the “inviters” can't resolve the situation, normally with some guidance from the current host family.

### **Travel**

Travel on organized school trips is authorized, but the Rotary counsellor must be advised.

Travel with host parents or Rotarians is also authorized but the Rotary counsellor must be consulted **before arrangements have been confirmed.**

Other travel may require special permission from the natural parents and from the Rotary District Youth Exchange Committee. Check with your student's Rotary counsellor!

We have an obligation to the student's family and home Rotary club to know where our exchange students are at all times. If there is a family emergency the counsellor must be able to contact the student; therefore, the **counsellor**, or in his absence the Club youth exchange officer, **must be advised of all travel plans in advance.**

### **Local Travel**

Normally students should be driven by an adult; however, local travel (within about 30 miles or 50 km of the host community) may be with a teenage driver, on occasion, provided the host family knows the driver and would normally allow their own child to ride with that person. Please refer to our Drinking and Driving policy which addresses local laws.

### **Key People in a Successful Exchange**

Without question, the Host Family and the Rotary Counselor are the key people in a successful exchange. Each makes an essential, independent contribution, but they will also need to support each other.

### **If Things Go Wrong**

It is not common, but occasionally some student placements do not work out, and the student must be moved ahead of schedule – even the normal stay of about 3.5 months with a host family may sometimes be too much. When this occurs, it is usually a question of compatibility, and should not be judged as a fault of the host family nor the student. No one should feel embarrassed. If things are becoming a little uncomfortable, contact the Rotary Counselor.

If it is a student behavior problem, then the counselor can often intercede and resolve the problem. If a problem can't be resolved, then he/she can initiate a change in families, or in case of serious misbehavior, initiate proceedings for the student's early return home.

If something does not seem to be right, contact the Rotary Counselor immediately. Unattended issues sometimes escalate quickly, but prompt intervention often resolves a problem with no significant consequence.

## First Night Questions

To assist adjustment into the new home environment, a collection of questions has been assembled that a student might ask their host family at the beginning of their stay. As a practical matter, the questions are not usually formally asked the family by the student; rather they are usually reviewed and discussed one at a time. They are called “first night questions”, because their answers provide information about living with a new family that the student would want to know almost immediately. The questions may be found on the website <http://sdq.yeoresources.org/Pages/FirstNightQuestions.html> and are available in parallel form in several languages including English. Thus a host family can read a question in English while the student reads the same question in his/her own native language. A copy of the English version is included as an appendix to this handbook.

## Your Student and School

**Regular school attendance in not optional – it is required.** Our District has very good relationships with the high schools in our host communities, and must maintain them. You will be provided with a copies of **an excuse note, which must be completed for all absences.** If you run short of these forms let the Rotary counsellor know and more will be provided.

### Who handles school issues for your student

Your student’s Rotary Counselor is responsible for enrolling your student in school and for managing issues that arise. However, host parents are often the first to learn of a matter that needs attention. Consequently, the student’s counselor and host parents often need to work together to resolve a school issue. For example, host parents may become aware that their student is not prepared to succeed in a particular course in which their student is enrolled.

### Some ways to Help

- Make sure that your student attends school regularly and encourage them to participate.

- Help your student avoid associating with students that cause trouble.
- Encourage participation in extracurricular activities.
- Be aware that most schools do not graduate exchange students. (Most schools classify exchange students as juniors regardless of their academic standing at home and regardless of their curriculum here.)
- Everyone needs to know that inbounds will be absent occasionally for Rotary events and activities.

### **Courses for Inbounds**

Some school counselors may be unfamiliar with the ambassadorial role of our exchange students and may not be able to recommend appropriate choices. If you observe potential problems, please alert your student's Rotary counselor as soon as possible.

Most inbound Rotary exchange students are well prepared academically and it is usually best to place them with their academic peers. (In spite of language difficulty, it is better to place students with other serious students rather than classes populated mainly by students that are not serious about school.) That said, care should be taken not to overload students academically – especially in the beginning when they are learning a new language and culture. Also, courses that provide an opportunity to make friends and speak the new language (like drama, art, sports) should be included.

### **Some courses appropriate for students:**

- English and/or other language courses (However, usually best to avoid ESL and low level classes in the student's native language – On the other hand, sometimes they can assist teachers with higher levels of classes in their language and make some friends, too)
- Core courses like American/Canadian history, geography, mathematics, sciences (Consider student's interest)
- Perhaps certain skills courses such as some of those associated with technology
- Drama, art, music, speech and athletics provide good opportunities to make friends, learn the language, and adapt to the new culture. Many of our students do not have the opportunity to take these types of courses in their own countries so it can be a "treat" for them.

## Host Club Responsibilities

- Official host for the inbound youth exchange student. Provides a Rotary Counselor to serve as a resource for both the student and host families throughout the student's exchange year. The Rotary Counselor also serves as liaison between the student and the host club, and usually between the student and the district RYE Committee as well.
- Select appropriate host families. (Normally, each student has three host families.)
- Secure completed V-1 and HF-1 forms (application forms) from each host family.
- Visit, interview, and orient each host family.
- Cooperate with the District Youth Exchange Committee to manage the student program.
- Cooperate with host family to help student develop a feeling of belonging.
- Provide Inbound with appropriate local contacts (addresses and telephone numbers) so they can get in touch with some responsible person in the event of real (or imagined) emergency. The district committee will provide each student with a card containing all contact information.
- Insure that the student receives his/her allowance at first of each month. Rotary Counselor usually does this personally – providing an opportunity for the Counselor to visit with the student, evaluate cultural assimilation progress and resolve any issues that need attention.
- At appropriate times, remind student and host families of student's Rotary commitments. The district committee will provide students, counselors and host families with a calendar of district events and activities. Host Clubs are responsible for local Rotary activities and student transportation to district activities.
- Respond promptly to questions and/or problems that are reported by the host family and/or the school. In particular, the club is responsible for moving the student if a serious conflict develops between the student and the host family. However, in all cases, host families must be fully vetted before a student is permitted to move in. (The district committee must be informed of all changes in host family whether the change is routine and planned or necessary due to an emergency.)

# Role of the Rotary Counselor

## Who Are They?

- A carefully selected Rotarian from the Host Club who is dedicated to the RYE program and who has been carefully trained for his/her job.
- Must not be the student's current host parent.
- Counselors don't change every year; good counselors usually stay on the job for at least three years.

## First Jobs for the Counselor

- Attend workshop for Counselors organized by the District RYE Committee.
- Assist in the selection and orientation of 3 or 4 host families.
- Before the student arrives, send to them a welcome letter, with some information about the "new hometown".
- Respond to questions from inbound student.
- If possible, meet student at airport with representative members of the first host family. Arrange for student to phone home to assure parents that everything is OK. Also, arrange for a photograph of the student with welcoming party at the arrival airport.
- Establish rapport with inbound.
- The Rotary counselor is responsible for managing the student's insurance and assisting with student medical care. The counselor will arrange for a doctor's care as required.
- Make two copies of the student's passport – one for the student to keep and one for the counselor's files. **Advise the student to keep their original passport, a copy of their medical insurance card and information, and original airline ticket in a safe place.**
- Obtain a copy of the student's airline ticket (flight and confirmation number) for the club file on the student. Check to be sure that provision has been made for the return flight at the end of the exchange. However, note that the return date may need to be changed near the end of the exchange.

- Collect emergency money from student and deposit in bank with access by the Rotary Counselor and the club president or another appropriate Rotary volunteer. (The student should **not** have access to this fund. Although it is to be used for emergency needs of the student, it is to be managed by the student's Rotary counselor or other designated host club official. Funds remaining in this fund at the end of the student's exchange year must be returned to the student.)
- Open a bank account for normal use by the student (including deposit of club allowances). Although this account will normally be used by the student, the Rotary counselor must also have access – and the bank statements should go first to the counselor for review before turning them over to the student. (Students often need financial counseling.) Be sure to arrange for an ATM card for the student – and **don't forget to explain "the fee system" to the student. It will usually cost more to withdraw funds using an ATM operated by a nonaffiliated bank.**
- Enroll the student in school; monitor course selection. Although some first host families may be well qualified to do this and may wish to do it, the counselor should monitor the selection of courses to be sure that it meets with district recommendations.
- Review RYE rules with student, answer questions and explain, as needed.
- Supervise student moves to new host families.

### On a Continuing Basis

- Keep in contact with the student and host families – meet at least once per month with the student and contact the host family at least once per month. (E-mail contact with the student is not sufficient.) Record contacts with student and host families in the YEAH Database. **These reports are reviewed regularly, and a complete record is required at the end of the student's exchange year.** It is not necessary to report every contact – just need to be sure that contact is made at least once per month.
- Arrange activities and introductions for the student that will help them to become acquainted with the community. Encourage Rotarians to host student for a dinner at their home or include them in special events.
- Obtain allowance check from club treasurer and give to student on first of month to keep in touch. Assist with depositing or cashing check as needed.
- Remember student's birthday, Christmas, etc.
- Supervise travel – Must approve trips, enforce rules. Must know student's whereabouts at all times.
- Arrange attendance at club and district functions.
- Arrange orientation for new host families.
- Serve as advocate for the Inbound, but also as a resource for host families.

- Assist the District RYE Committee in arranging group meetings for inbound students in district. **The host club is responsible for arranging transportation to Rotary functions – not the host family.**

## Program Rules and Conditions

### Rotary International Rules and Conditions for Youth Exchange Students

Rotary International Rules apply to all students participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. In addition to these rules, each Rotary district will usually have rules that apply in that particular district. Most of the rules that apply in District 5910, your host district, are similar to the international rules. However, some are a bit more specific. Following is a list of the rules that apply in your host district.

#### Statement of Conduct for Working with Youth

**Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. Rotarians, spouses, partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse. (Adopted by the Rotary International Board of Directors, November 2006)**

### Rules and Conditions for Students Inbound to District 5080

Rotary Youth Exchange students and their parents should clearly understand the conditions of the exchange. Students who do not follow Rotary guidelines and any special agreements of participating Rotary districts will be returned home at their own expense.

1. **Age: Unless agreed in advance for a particular student,** students must be 15 to 18 years old upon arrival.
2. **Arrival Itinerary and Return Confirmation:** Before departure from the home country, students must send to the Host District Youth Exchange Officer a copy of the arrival travel itinerary and the confirmation number for the return flight at the end of the exchange.
3. **Return Itinerary:** The itinerary for the return home (including departure date and route) must be approved by the Host District Youth Exchange Officer. Students are expected to return home within 7 days after the end of the school year or within 7 days after the end of a Rotary approved summer tour. Normal return airline confirmations and travel plans must be made well in advance with full knowledge and approval of the student's Rotary Counselor and the host District Youth Exchange Officer. Any exception to this rule must be approved in advance in writing by the student's Rotary Counselor and the Host District Youth Exchange Officer.
4. **Language Proficiency:** The US Department of State requires proof of adequate knowledge of the English language to succeed as an exchange student in the US. Although there are other ways to meet this requirement, for most, the easiest way is to arrange certification of adequacy by a teacher or other official in a school where English was studied. A form to use for this purpose is included with the welcome letter to inbound students. If this is not possible, then another way to certify English language proficiency must be used. For example, successful direct communication in English by Skype with the host District Chairman is adequate.

5. **Insurance:** All students must purchase a health, accident and liability insurance policy of an amount meeting standards in both the host country and the sending country.
6. **Emergency Fund:** The student must supply the requested emergency fund amount to establish a contingency fund in the host community for emergencies. This fund is not intended to cover day-to-day expenses and must be replenished by natural parents as it is depleted. Funds will be deposited at a local bank and the host club counselor must have access to this account in case there is a need to act in the student's behalf – for example, if the student is incapacitated. Funds remaining at the end of the exchange shall be returned to the student.
7. **Rotary Activities:** Participation in some Rotary events is required. Scheduled Rotary activities take priority over all others.
8. **Parent Visits:** Parents of inbound students are welcome to visit their student and the host community but only between March and June. However, visits during the school year are never permitted before March of the exchange year, not during major holidays normally celebrated by the host country and/or community, and not during the couple of weeks of the student's exchange year. Students are not permitted to miss school nor scheduled Rotary activities in order to be with a visiting parent. Parents who wish to visit their student should be aware that their student will normally have a spring break when not in school, and this school break is almost never at Easter. In all cases, itineraries of parent visits in the host community must be approved in writing by the student's Rotary Counselor and the host District Youth Exchange Officer BEFORE making travel arrangements. (A form is available for this purpose.) Violations of this rule are cause for early return of the student.
9. **Other Visitors:** Visits by persons other than parents are never permitted without express prior approval by the Rotary Counselor and the host District Youth Exchange Officer.
10. **Travel:** Subject to the following regulations, in-country travel is permitted with host parents or with authorized Rotary representatives who provide proper supervision.
  - a. Students are never permitted to travel alone or accompanied only by other students. In particular, students are not permitted to visit another exchange student in another community unless it has been approved by both host families both Rotary counselors and by the District Youth Exchange Officer.
  - b. Overnight travel must be reported in advance and approved by the host parents and Rotary Counselor. More extensive travel must be approved in advance by the host family, the Rotary Counselor and the Host District Youth Exchange Officer.
  - c. Except for travel with the host family, students are not permitted to travel during major holidays without permission of the host family, the Host Club Rotary Counselor and the Host District Youth Exchange Officer.
  - d. In all cases, travel outside the state or country must be approved in advance by the Host District Youth Exchange Officer.
  - e. In some instances, the Host District Youth Exchange Officer may also require written approval by the student's natural parents exempting Rotary of responsibility and liability.
11. **Health:** The student certifies that he/she has no dietary or physical restrictions (such as allergies, vegetarianism, religious requirements) other than those described in the application.
  - a. Health conditions not reported on the application which are not easily accommodated by the host family and host club are cause for an early return home.
  - b. The student must provide proof of immunizations required in the host country. Immunization costs, whether in the home or host country, are the responsibility of the student's natural parents.
12. **School:**
  - a. Students must attend secondary school during the year of the exchange. However, academic credit for study in this district cannot be assured.

- b. High school graduation for exchange students is not usually possible.
  - c. Participation in school athletic clubs is not guaranteed nor implied by acceptance in this program.
  - d. Students must take school seriously; conform to the same school rules as domestic students regarding attendance and study.
- 13. *Host Family Relationship:*** The student is to become an integral member of the host family, assuming family duties and responsibilities normal for a student of his/her age.
- 14. *Host Family Problems:*** Hosting of the student is the responsibility of the host club. If a problem arises in the host family, the student should consult the Host Club Counselor, the Host District Youth Exchange Officer or other designated contact for assistance.
- 15. *Assistance for Students:*** Students inbound to this district shall be provided contact information for a list of authorities who may be consulted for assistance.
- 16. *Choosing Friends:*** The student should choose friends slowly and wisely. The advice and counsel of host clubs and host families should be trusted in developing an appropriate circle of friends.
- 17. *Host Country Laws:*** Students must obey the laws of the host country. Those who violate any law can expect no assistance from Rotary or the government of the native country.
- 18. *Illegal Drugs:*** Students are not permitted to use drugs (control substances), unless prescribed by a physician to treat an illness.
- 19. *Alcoholic Beverages:*** The drinking of alcoholic beverages is not permitted.
- 20. *Tobacco Use:*** The use of tobacco products in any form is prohibited for all inbound students. In particular, **smoking and vaping are prohibited.**
- 21. *Motor Vehicles:*** Students are not permitted to operate a motor vehicle of any kind. (Includes automobiles, motorcycles, boats, tractors, mopeds, go-carts, ATVs, snowmobiles and jet skis.)
- 22. *Tattoos and Body Piercing:*** Students must not obtain tattoos nor body piercings while in the host country. Obtaining a new tattoo or piercing in the host country is cause for an early return home.
- 23. *Communication Media:*** Use of the host family telephone and computer is a privilege and should not be abused. Students must observe the following guidelines.
- a. Costs incurred by a student for telephone or computer use is the responsibility of the student.
  - b. Students should obtain permission before using the family computer.
  - c. Internet and telephone use must be limited.
  - d. It should not be presumed that the internet will be available in all host families.
  - e. No downloading on a family computer of any materials is permitted without explicit permission of the host parents.
  - f. Downloading of pornographic materials on any computer is cause for an early return.
  - g. Excessive use of the internet and telephones (including cell phones brought from home) often hinders integration into the new culture. If the student is not integrating into the American culture, they may be required to cease communication for a period of time.
- 24. *Personal Relationships:*** Students must avoid romantic attachments and abstain from sexual activity and promiscuity.

- 25. Authority and Responsibility:** The student will be under the authority of the host Rotary District and supervised by the host Rotary Club while in the host country. Consequently:
- a. Natural parents must not attempt to authorize the student to participate in activities not approved by the host Rotary District, and they must not attempt to assign authority to another person living in the host country (such as a relative).
  - b. The host club and host families are responsible for the student, both socially and physically. Students are expected to follow their directions.
  - c. Since one society may be more, or less, formal than another, guidance from hosts is necessary, and students must adapt to the new culture, not the other way.

## **On Hosting a Rotary Exchange Student...**

As one mother observed, **“Open your heart – and the rest will follow!”**

***Good luck and thank you for being a Rotary Exchange Student Family!***

# Appendices

## First Night Questions

These questions are suggestions only. You and your host family should discuss anything that you think is important. We suggest you discuss the items most important to you as soon as possible. When you are in a new place with not much language skill, it is best not to assume anything, but rather, to ask. The simplest questions may be the most important, such as “where is the bathroom”? You can come back to other questions as they seem necessary. Questions are available in several languages at <http://sdq.yeoresources.org/Pages/FirstNightQuestions.html>

1. What would you like me to call you? Should I call you “Mom”, “Dad”, or given (first) name, or something else?
2. What are my daily responsibilities while living in your home: a. Make my bed? b. Keep my room neat and clean? c. Clean the bathroom after I use it? d. Other?
3. What is the procedure for laundering clothes? Where do I keep dirty clothes until they are to be washed?
4. What is the procedure if I need to iron my clothes?
5. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine, etc.?
6. Where can I keep my bathroom accessories?
7. When is the most convenient time for me to use the bathroom on weekday mornings (in order to get ready for school)?
8. When is the best time for me to shower or bathe?
9. Is there anything special about using the bathroom I should know?
10. May I use the family’s shampoo and tooth paste or should I buy my own?
11. When are mealtimes?
12. Do I have any responsibilities at meal times, such as to set or clear the table, wash or dry the dishes, dispose of the garbage?
13. May I help myself to food and drinks (non-alcoholic) at any time or must I ask first?
14. May I use kitchen appliances such as the microwave, dishwasher or stove?
15. What areas of the house are strictly private, for example, your study, bedroom, pantry, etc.?

16. What are your rules about my drinking alcohol?
17. What time must I get up weekday mornings?
18. May I rearrange the furniture in my bedroom?
19. May I put posters or pictures on the walls of my room? If yes, how do you want things attached to the walls?
20. Where can I store my suitcases?
21. May I use the stereo, computer or TV?
22. What time should I get up weekends and holidays?
  
23. What time must I go to bed weekdays? Weekends?
24. What time must I be at home on school nights if I go out?
25. What time must I be in on weekends if I go out?
26. What dates are the birthdays of family members?
27. May I have friends stay overnight?
28. What is your rule on entertaining friends in my room?
29. Can I invite friends over during the day? After school? When no one else is home?
30. What is the telephone number here? How do I contact you in an emergency when I am not here?
31. How do I make telephone calls? What are the rules about telephone calls? Local, Long Distance, International? How and when may I pay for calls I make? How do you want me to keep track of my expenses for telephone calls?
32. What are the rules about access to the Internet and e-mail if there is a computer in the house? Are there time limits or time periods that use is permitted or prohibited? If you are not connected to the Internet, where can I find an Internet service to contact my family and friends?
33. May I receive telephone calls from my friends? Are there times of the day when calls are not acceptable?
34. What is the procedure about sending and receiving mail?
35. Do any of you have any special dislikes? For example, chewing gum, types of music, being late, wearing a hat at the table, being interrupted while reading, etc.
36. What transportation is available to me? (Walking, bus, bicycle, being driven, riding with friends, etc) Are there times or places it is unsafe for me to walk unescorted? Are there rules about traveling with friends?
37. What transportation is available for shopping or going to movies?
38. What are your expectations for me about going to church or other religious institution?

39. May I smoke? Where? (Rotary discourages smoking in general and forbids smoking in bedrooms)
40. If I have a problem with the family or a family member that is bothering me, how do you want me to handle it? a. Write a note to you explaining it  
b. Ask for a face-to-face discussion with you  
c. Tell my Rotary counselor  
d. Keep it to myself and live with it
41. How do I enroll in school?
42. What do I do about school lunch? If there is an expense, who pays- me, you, Rotary?
43. How can I arrange to go shopping for personal items?
44. Is there anything else I can do around the house to be of help?
45. Am I expected to attend Rotary meetings? How often? Who will arrange for this?
46. Is there anything else we should discuss?
47. Remember, ask about those things you feel are most important the first night, and then others as appropriate. Try to always keep an open and honest communication with your Host Family and Rotary.

