

HOST FAMILY ORIENTATION SUMMARY FOR CHECKLIST

Most of this information can also be found at the District Youth Exchange Website

www.ye5130.org

Rotary and Youth Exchange: Rotary Youth Exchange is a country-to-country exchange of high-school age young people for a cultural and educational experience for both the student and those serving as hosts. Rotary is an international service organization with clubs and members worldwide who are committed to world peace through service and understanding.

First night questions: Your student will have any number of questions about life in your household and family. Use this as a guide, and as a springboard for questions you may have of your student. Understanding of how the student does things in their own home may help you to be tolerant of some "weird" behaviors! <http://fnq.yeoresources.org/>

Rotary Club and Counselor's roles: The "counselor" is the one consistent adult in the student's exchange. They are there to be available for advice, problem solve, be a friend, etc. **The counselor is also a resource for the host family; never be shy about asking about anything or sharing concerns.** The counselor is only the first resource, backed up by the Club Youth Exchange Officer, District Committee, and ultimately, Rotary International. In other words, both student and host family have a huge pool of resources to support them.

Rotary Activities (district and club): The district has a number of events that the exchange student is required to attend. You will be provided with a list of those events. Generally the club is responsible for getting the students to these events and covering any costs involved. The student will also be encouraged to attend many Rotary club meetings and other special events. They will give a presentation to their sponsoring club.

How to Respond to a Problem/Rotary resource persons: We strongly urge you to seek our involvement before problems or annoyances become too large for simple solutions. Most problems can be taken care of if addressed early. Asking for support in no way reflects on your ability as a host parent.

Insurance: All inbound exchange students must have a medical/accidental injury policy that meets Rotary's requirements. More information about insurance and instructions for submitting a claim are included at: www.ye5130.org

Passport: At the fall orientation, the student will be asked to place their passport in their largest luggage bag.

Airline ticket: The students were required to purchase a complete round-trip ticket to the destination specified by D5130. Students must have an open return airline ticket, or equivalent. The students will be asked sometime in the Feb-March time frame to set the date for their return flight.

Money/Financial Obligations: The counselor will work with the student to establish a bank account so they may deposit their monthly stipend to be used for incidental personal expenses, entertainment, school supplies, etc. Through the Rotary-provided allowance and parental resources, exchange students are expected to be financially self-supporting in terms of personal expenses, clothing, entertainment, and travel when not part of a host family event. In addition, District 5130 requires that students

maintain a contingency fund of \$300 for emergency situations which will be held by the club counselor or treasurer. These may be used for such items as medical deductibles. Unused funds will be returned to the student's parents or legal guardians at the end of their exchange.

Employment: As defined by the Department of State rules, exchange students may not be employed on either a full or part-time basis but may accept sporadic or intermittent employment such as babysitting or yard work. The students may ask for advice on how to raise funds for their optional trips.

School: Students must be enrolled in a full course of study at the high school. We hope they will get involved in school activities. They must attend classes regularly and do their best. Be aware that insufficient language proficiency may stand in the way of their achieving high grades, or indeed, passing a class. Don't hesitate to discuss concerns with the Rotary counselor if your student is struggling terribly at school! The Rotary counselor also has a relationship with the school and school counselor.

Dress Code: Many schools have dress code requirements. Generally, if your student's clothes are clean, intact, and appropriate for the situation, all will be well. Don't be shy about "offering guidance" if you think your student is inappropriately dressed!

School lunches: You may provide a lunch for your student to take to school (or food for student to prepare own lunch), or the appropriate amount of money for the student to buy a school lunch.

Student's Place in the Family: Consider your student your son or daughter, not a guest! As such, they will have all the rights and responsibilities of your own children.

Religion: Your student may or may not be of your religion. Offer to share yours, and to learn/share in your student's. Some students stick to dietary rules of their religion while on exchange; we do our best to respect these.

Customs and mores of student's home country: Try to find out a bit about your student's country before your hosting period actually starts. This may allow for an easier period of adaptation all around.

Local transportation and District Travel Policy: Students may travel within the club's local travel area. Beyond the local travel area, the District Travel Policy must be strictly adhered to.

Visits from family and friends from home country: Visits from family members are allowed near the end (but not AT the end) of the exchange but are discouraged. Visits from friends are not allowed.

Drinking, Drugs, Driving, and Serious Dating: All absolutely not allowed! Drinking and Drugs are illegal anyway, No Driving (of any type of motorized vehicle) is for the safety of the student, and No Serious Dating is to allow the student to avoid closing themselves off from the myriad activities and experiences available during the exchange. Observance of the 4-D's will help the student to avoid Doing Dumb Things! Going counter to any of the 4 D's can get the student sent home immediately! See also the student's Promise Letter for a fuller understanding of what the student is agreeing to.

Body decorations: New tattoos and piercings not allowed.

Smoking, including electronic cigarettes : Strongly discouraged, unhealthy and illegal for those under 21 years of age. Any student who stated on the application that he/she did not smoke is absolutely not permitted to smoke while here on exchange.

"Downloading", Internet/computer policy, Phone/Text message policy: Same rules apply to your exchange child as to your own children. We discourage excessive use of electronics to stay connect with people in the home country as it interferes with full integration/immersion into American life and increases rather than decreases homesickness. It also removes the students from face to face interaction/involvement with people in their new country and interrupts their learning of a new language. Many clubs will provide a cell phone for communication with host family.

Notification of material changes: The host family needs to keep all Rotary contacts aware of any changes to their phone number, email, work or any other circumstance that may affect the exchange student.

Hosting "Best Practices": Please read through the following sections in the Host Parent Orientation. It has many useful suggestions.

Strategies for cross-cultural interaction: Can include some pre-hosting research, encouraging student to cook some favorite meals from home, comparing family customs while going through the "First Night Questions" and as holidays, birthdays, etc., arise.

Post hosting evaluation: You will be asked to fill out an evaluation of your hosting experience after the student has moved on. We value your input, as it helps us to make ours the best youth exchange program going!

Some Other Important Information to cover that is not on the Checklist

The Cycle of Emotions: All travelers experience this in some form. Knowing that this is "normal" is hugely helpful to the student in overcoming the "lows".

How to Cope with Culture Shock: This is incredibly valuable information for all involved in an exchange program; it will help the student cope with it, it will help the adults around them to help them cope with it! This will be major for the first family, very low during the 2nd period, and may resurface toward the end of the third period as the student faces returning home and the attendant "reverse culture-shock".

A Word about Language: Some useful insights on language acquisition, proficiency, and what we can all do to help the process along!

Sexual Abuse and Harassment: Rotary International is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of all youth program participants and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously. If the student allegedly encounters sexual abuse or harassment, immediately contact one of the club officers. Establish the precise geographic location of the alleged incident in order to involve the appropriate law enforcement agencies in an investigation.