

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL



Long-Term Exchange Program Student & Family Guide

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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. To the best of their ability, Rotary members, their partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people with whom they come into contact and protect them from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Rotary International takes all reports of misconduct seriously, and it is the responsibility of all Rotary members and non-member volunteers to ensure that any serious incidents that involve youth and program participants — including all allegations of abuse or harassment — are promptly reported to local authorities and to Rotary International. Doing so not only is required but also is a way to prevent further abuse or harm.

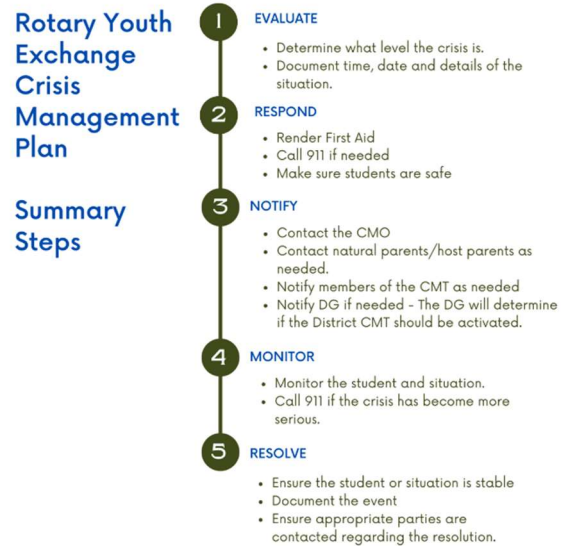
For more information Click here to go to the Rotary International Site on [Youth Protection](#).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We believe that exemplifying and embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) should be a part of everything we do at Rotary, including our Youth Exchange Program.

To ensure we live up to that ideal, the Board of Directors and our [DEI Taskforce](#) acted to strengthen the DEI statement originally adopted in 2019. The result is a new commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion: Here is a link to the [DEI for Youth Exchange](#).

Guidelines for Youth Exchange Emergencies



REMEMBER:
REFRAIN FROM SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA OR POSTING
ANYTHING REGARDING THE SITUATION ONLINE.

District 5100 General Overview

Decades of Participation:

District 5100 has been participating in youth exchange since 1970. Our first exchange was with the Philippines. To date, our district has sponsored and hosted over 2500 students. We have learned valuable lessons about the exchange student training process and strive to both prepare and support our students and their families to the best of our ability.

Strong Relationships:

Our District makes a practice of maintaining individual relationships with the Rotary Districts abroad that we exchange with. During the course of years, members of the District Youth Exchange Committee (DYEC) correspond with, and meet, the Rotarians responsible for exchanges abroad (their Country Officer “counterparts”). Local clubs in our District are supported in student recruitment and training by the DYEC.

Our Breadth of Experience:

We are fortunate to have many Rotarians who have participated in all phases of RYE in our District. This includes Rebound students and Rotex (previous Rotary Exchange Students) who help with club recruitment and student training; past and present host families who interview and train prospective host families; and past and present families of Outbound students who help new families find answers to their questions as they prepare themselves for their student’s participation in the program.

Although the exchange lasts just one school year, participants should think about the exchange as a 3-year program.

- The first year (the **Outbound Candidate** year) is all about preparing for exchange.
- The second year (the **Outbound** year) is spent abroad.
- The third year (the **Rebound** year) is a chance to reflect on the lessons of exchange and start integrating them into life back at home.
- After these three years, participants are **lifelong Rotex** (all former Rotary exchange students), which provides opportunities to network with each other and train future students if desired.

Each participating student is sponsored by a Rotary Club and District near their home. They are then hosted by a Rotary Club and District near their exchange host family and school.

Your sponsoring Rotary District is **5100**.

Your sponsoring Club is _____.

District Roles

- **Rotary District** – Districts are numbered for identification and are governed by a District Governor. District 5100 is comprised of 70 clubs in Northern Oregon and Southwestern Washington, USA. District 5100 serves as the Sponsor District for Outbound Students and the Hosting District for Inbound Students.
- **The Hosting District** is responsible for the orientation and care of inbound exchange students and may terminate the exchange, returning the student home, for failure to comply with the host district rules or having unacceptable conduct.
- **The Sponsoring District** is responsible for the orientation and training of Outbound students.
- **District Governor (DG)** – The Rotarian responsible to Rotary International for the conduct of all programs within a Rotary district. Therefore, the youth exchange program is the responsibility of the DG.
- **District Youth Exchange Committee (DYEC)** – On the district level, this committee trains students, maintains contact with counterpart Rotarians in other districts, and handles most of the administrative details of the exchange.
- **District Youth Exchange Chairperson** – The DYEC Chairperson is appointed by the District Governor and serves for three years. The Chairman has the responsibility to coordinate the exchange between the Sponsoring District and the Hosting District. To facilitate this, the Chairman may appoint an Inbound Coordinator, Outbound Coordinator, and Short-Term Coordinator who may also have assistants.
- **Inbound Coordinator**
 - Work with Clubs to get IB students matched to a Club, Assigned to a Host Parent and a School.
 - Collaborate with the DYEC on Parent, Counselor and Inbound Training to meet program timelines.
 - Maintain an up-to-date list of all Inbound students, Counselors and Host Parents and distribute to the Committee.
- **Outbound Coordinator – (for LTEP students)**
 - Once a student has been accepted by a club as an Outbound Candidate, the Outbound Coordinator will work with the students to handle all application paperwork.
 - Collaborate with the Training Coordinator to complete Outbound Training sessions.
 - Work with CISI and travel company to complete Insurance/VISA/travel details.
 - Maintain an up-to-date list of all Outbound students, Clubs, Parents and distribute to the Committee.
- **Short-Term Exchange (STEP) Coordinator** – Work with the rest of the committee to recruit/register Short-Term Students. Make sure students/parents get their Insurance and Background Checks completed in time.
- **Country Officer (CO)** – A Rotarian who is a member of the District 5100 Youth Exchange Committee responsible for all aspects of the exchange with a particular country.
- **Youth Protection Officer (YPO)** – The Rotarian designated by the District Governor as the contact person for all youth-related issues that affect the health and safety of participants in the RI Youth Exchange program. This is the person to be notified immediately if and when one of these issues arise.
- **Rotex Student** – Short for **Rotary Exchange Student**.
 - Sometimes used to describe all students in the youth exchange program. Most commonly used to describe Rebound Students who have been home for a couple of years. They are responsible for staying in contact with returning Outbounds, and ROTEX that come into the District Committee to build a pool of talent that can be used to participate in Inbound/Outbound Training for Students and Parents.

- Provide training for Inbound Students at Inbound Orientation
- Host Rebound Training and welcome returning Outbounds to participate in the next stage of YEP and ‘pay-it-forward’.

Club Roles

- **Rotary Club** – Rotary International is organized into local clubs and districts. These clubs are often made up of members who represent local businesses, professions, and governments. A club may hold its weekly meetings for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Clubs range in size from 15 to 400 active members and are governed by a President and Board of Directors.
- **Sponsor Club** – This is the Rotary Club that selected an outbound student for sponsorship in the program. A club that chooses to sponsor a student is actually providing a one year scholarship for study abroad. In our District, the Sponsoring Club is required to Host an Inbound Student.
- **Host Club** – This is the Rotary Club that is providing host families and a monthly allowance to the Inbound Student. They will also appoint a Club Counselor to assist inbound exchange students with day-to-day matters and invite inbound exchange students to participate in Rotary Club meetings and activities.
- **Club President** – The Rotarian elected to preside over the weekly meetings of the local Rotary Club. The Club President serves for one year.
- **Host Club Counselors** – Each Hosting Rotary club is responsible to provide a Rotarian counselor to help support the IB student while on exchange.
 - Should meet with the student regularly.
 - Will help the student and/or the students host family with school registration.
 - Should be advised if you have problems with school, family, finances or other matters.
 - Should have received the students emergency fund (\$500 USD or whatever is required by the students’ host country). The balance of the student emergency fund will be returned to the student at the conclusion of the student’s exchange year.
 - May provide a safe place to keep the student passport and return airline paper or e-ticket information.
 - Should be considered the student’s Advocate — someone the student can look to for support and friendship, as well as for help solving problems.
 - Is the Rotarian who must know where the students are when traveling.
 - Many Sponsoring Rotary clubs also provide counselors to assist with the OBC student and family progress prior to the exchange.
- **Host Family** – These are families who provide room, board and nurturing to Inbound Exchange students hosted by their local Rotary Club. In some districts, host families are those whose sons/daughters are also participants in the RI Youth Exchange program. RI recommends that all students have up to three host families to give them a better overview of the culture and language of their exchange country.
- **Club Youth Exchange Officer (YEO)** – The chairperson of the Club Youth Exchange Committee and the main contact for youth exchange.
- **Club Youth Exchange Committee (YEC)** – On the club level, this committee nominates students for participation in the program and sponsorship by their club. The local club YEC also provides host families and club counselors for students.

Hosting a Student

A host family is a vital part of the cultural exchange, immersing the student in a variety of activities while in the host country. The host family plays a large role in offering the student a view of another country and gains the opportunity to learn about a new culture from a young leader. Hosting is a tremendous experience in which you can share in a young person's hopes and dreams and develop a lifelong connection with a student and family from another country. It can be challenging to help a young person transition to a new culture and ease into the surroundings, but the rewards are immeasurable. Host families in the Youth Exchange program come in all shapes and sizes. They can be Rotarians or non-Rotarians, and may include young children, older children, or no children at all. Have you ever hosted or been an exchange student?

Benefits

Being a host family is not required for students going on exchange from our District, but is strongly recommended. It is important to note that many other countries require families that send a student on exchange to also host a student. The experience will possibly help you understand:

- How the host family of Rotary Exchange student might feel:
It gives you as parents an opportunity to see and experience the challenges that all families experience when they include a 'foreigner' in their family. You will get a taste of what some families will experience when they host one of our (or perhaps even your) students.
- What your student might experience:
It will give you as parents an opportunity to counsel your student on the things that challenge and frustrate you by having an exchange student. Perhaps these experiences will help your own student avoid those challenges when they become a part of another family.
- For your student to experience an exchange student:
It will give the student an opportunity to see the challenges that a student faces being placed in a family whose way of doing things is different from what they have experienced all of their life. It will give your student an opportunity to see both sides (from the parents' point of view and the student's point of view) those things which can be discouraging or frustrating by having an 'intruder' or 'guest' and may very well alert the student to the challenges which can arise from jealousy, one of the most difficult situations our students are regularly called upon to deal with.
- Adjustment to a different culture:
If it is possible for you to host a student sometime during the next six months, it may be the most valuable training your own student can have prior to leaving for her/his own exchange. If you have hosted in the past, for any youth exchange program, please consider hosting again before your student's exchange begins. We cannot stress enough the value of this experience to the future success of your student's exchange.
- Time Commitment
Most long-term exchange students live with two or three host families during their exchange. This means the student may live with you for anywhere between three and six months. Host Parents must also have a background check for everyone 18 and over living in their home and attend all required Host Family Training. Youth Protection Training is also required.

Long-Term Outbound Candidate Training and Preparation

District 5100 provides comprehensive pre-exchange training. Rotary volunteers spend a minimum of 12 days with each student prior to their departure. During the events held on these days, YEOs are observing your student's reactions to a variety of situations and events planned to help them learn what to expect in their exchanges. When appropriate, suggestions designed to improve their chances of success are made to the students. Some YEOs hold additional training for students going to countries they are responsible for at times not listed on the District Schedules. These sessions are also very important to the success of the exchange. Because of the opportunities for enrichment provided to the students by this program, we, the members of the District Committee, have allowed our own students to participate. As experienced youth exchange parents, we can help answer many of your questions prior to, during, and following the exchange.

Most of the members of the District Committee have often served as host parents to a large number of students from around the world. We ask that Rebound Students attend a two-day debriefing retreat following their exchange. This event is used to highlight ways to improve the programs and aid in the 'second exchange' the students are then experiencing.

Outbound Candidate Required Training Events

Attendance at the October Application Seminar (3 hours) (*LTEP, STEP, and LTEP ALTERNATES*) is **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED**, but not required.

The following training events are REQUIRED for Outbound Candidates from District 5100.

- November/December In-Home Training (2-4 hrs) (*LTEP and LTEP ALTERNATES and Parents/Guardians*)
- January Outbound Orientation (2 ½ days) (*LTEP, STEP, and LTEP ALTERNATES*)
- January Outbound Parent Orientation (1 day) (*LTEP, STEP, and LTEP ALTERNATES Parents/Guardians*)
- Eastern Oregon Trip & Outbound Orientation (5 days) (*LTEP Students and Inbound Students*)
- Final Outbound Parent Orientation (1 day) (*LTEP Students and Parents/Guardians*)
- District Conference (4 days) (*LTEP Students and Inbound Students*)
- Rebound Event (1 day) (*LTEP Students*)

Following is a brief explanation of the information covered at our Training Events:

- **November/December In-Home Visits**
 - Program Description and Rules of Exchange
 - District 5100 Program Structure
 - Student Preparation Process
 - Program Costs and Travel Arrangements
 - Student preliminary identification of regions of interest, Asia, Latin America, Europe)
 - Identification of Exchange Country parent restrictions (if any)

- **January Outbound Student Orientation**
 - Meet District Committee
 - Small Group Sessions on various topics
 - Discover program characteristics and learn teamwork
 - Learn about available exchanges at Country Fair
 - Rebound Student Panel sharing their experiences.
 - Identification of current Exchange Country choices
- **January Outbound Parent Orientation**
 - Meet District Committee Members
 - Country Fair for parents to learn more about available exchanges.
 - Rebound Parent Panel
 - Small Group Sessions on a variety of topics
 - Time ask questions of District Committee Members
- **Eastern Oregon Trip – Outbound Orientation**
 - Meet Inbound Students
 - Spend a day skiing, snowboarding, or snowshoeing
 - Visit Eastern Oregon venues
 - Final chance to identify Exchange Country choices
 - Students notified of Host Country assignment
 - Training session with a country officer and inbounds after country selection
 - Begin learning host country's language and customs with the Inbound Students
- **Final Outbound Parent Orientation**
 - Combined with Rebound Parent Orientation
 - Meet experienced exchange parents
 - Discuss possible issues facing returning students and families
 - Meet with the assigned Country Officer
- **District Conference**
 - Speech Contest – Required five-minute presentation – From the LTEP group, 2 to 4 students will be selected to present at the District Conference.
 - Talent Show – Optional – presented as part of the District Conference on Friday night.
 - Service Project
 - Country group activities
 - Flag Ceremony at District Conference
 - Students introduce themselves at the District Conference in English and the Language of their Host Country.
 - Meet Rotarians who make this program possible
- **Rebound Event (REQUIRED)**
 Rebound training occurs in August of the year of return. Additional optional events may be held by Rotex throughout the year.

D5100 YEC recognizes that the families and students participating in the LTEP program lead very busy lives. Owing to the nature of youth exchange, we insist that all OBC and their Parents commit to attending the events listed above. Each one is different and provides a progressive training/learning experience designed to improve the student's chances of success in a very challenging adventure. As volunteers, we commit a large portion of our lives to this program and feel that none of the time students spend at our events is wasted, even if the students do not immediately understand the purpose of the event.

Financial Considerations

Rotary Clubs sponsor the Long-Term program as a reasonably affordable way for students to experience an exchange year abroad. Each Host Rotary Club is expected to provide host families as well as a monthly allowance. Some Sponsor Rotary Clubs also provide financial assistance to Outbound Candidates and students. Each Outbound Candidate should ask their sponsoring Rotary Club if any financial assistance is available for their exchange.

- **Outbound Candidate LTEP** – \$1850 (Usually paid for partially or in total by the Sponsor Club)

The fee covers:

- In-Home Orientation (2-4 hours)
 - January Outbound Orientation (2.5 days)
 - Eastern Oregon Trip (4-5 days)
 - District Conference (Final Orientation) (4 days)
 - Country-specific training (with YEO)
 - Two Parent Orientations (1 day each)
 - Document processing
 - Youth Exchange Blazer and Name Tag
 - Business Cards
 - Rebound Event (1 day)
- **Student/Natural Parents - In general when it comes to financial matters:**
 - **Cost of open-ended, round-trip airfare** \$1500 to \$3500. (Students may not use free or reduced fare tickets).
 - **Insurance** – Exchange student insurance is required for safety in the case of unforeseen events. D5100 has a policy available, however, the country you go to may require you to purchase their insurance. This will be determined after you have been assigned to a country. Cost can range from \$700 to \$1000 for the year. **DO NOT PURCHASE INSURANCE UNTIL DIRECTED BY YOUR ASSIGNED COUNTRY OFFICER.**
 - **School Uniform** – School uniforms are sometimes required. They can cost from \$150 to \$700. Check with the student's host family and Rotary Club abroad as a uniform may be available to borrow.
 - **Travel documents**
 - Passport (must be valid for a minimum of the exchange period plus six months) \$135 for students under 16 years of age and \$165 for adults. Cost may increase – You can check the price of current fees at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply/fees.html> .
 - Visa and other documents required by the hosting country can cost from \$100 to \$500. (Some countries require a personal visit to their nearest Embassy or Consulate prior to issuance of the travel documents. These requirements change frequently and are the reason we use our contract travel agent to handle the details)
 - If required, the cost of a trip to an Embassy or Consulate
 - Some students decide to purchase school memorabilia which cost extra. There are also school dances or school trips that may be offered. The student is responsible for those costs.
 - Spending money and any additional travel or tours.
 - **Host District Trips (LTEP):** Several of our foreign partner districts offer optional Rotary-sponsored trips the student may want to go on. The Host Rotary District will inform you of their optional trip

costs. Costs vary from several hundred dollars to over \$4,000. The student is expected to pay for these trips if they choose to go on them. They are usually optional.

- Clothing that you buy after you arrive (Clothing. Please do not buy excessive amounts of clothing prior to departure. Most students find that their American clothing does not blend in. While on exchange students like to wear clothing that does not differentiate them from their classmates.)
- Consider the costs of movies, transportation, trains, buses, shopping, parties, going out to eat, buying postage, purchasing gifts, etc.
- Your personal care products (shampoo, body lotion, toothpaste, contact lens solution)
- The cost of after-school activities like sports or drama. These activities are usually not part of school, like they are here in the United States.
- The cost of gifts for your host family, counselor, etc.
- The cost of any changes made to your return airplane ticket
- The cost of taking extra baggage home with you
- Document translation fees are sometimes charged for travel and school documents
- Emergency Fund. You may be required to maintain a fund, often around \$500 for emergency expenditures. This must be taken in cash, for deposit in the Host Club's accounts. If not used, it will be refunded at the end of the exchange.
- **The overall value of your exchange is estimated at \$23,000 +, which your Sponsoring and Host Clubs are providing. As a condition of this "scholarship", the student is expected to maintain communication with the Sponsoring Club and Country Officer on a monthly basis (at a minimum). This can be through email, cards, social media, etc.**

Your Host Club is responsible for:

- The cost of the Inbound Orientation (in some countries).
- Language Camp/Classes are provided by some Districts. There is always a charge for these and when provided, they are a required part of the IB Orientation
- The cost of the District Conference in the spring
- Monthly stipend (allowance) The amount will vary from Club to Club and country to country. Generally, it will be somewhere between \$50 and \$175 US dollars. The allowance is only intended to cover necessary day-to-day costs, toiletries, bus fare, school lunches, etc. The cost of living may be different from one country to another, city or region, do not compare your allowance to those of other students.
- The cost of any functions that you attend that are held by your club: weekly meetings, special social events like club fundraisers
- Any other financial support is the club's choice. They have no other obligations.

Your Host Family is responsible for:

- Your housing
- Your food while in their home. Usually, if your family is doing something all together and you go with them, they will pay for you like they do with their other children. This is something that you want to talk with them about. Do not make assumptions. Ask ahead of time if you are expected to pay when they ask you to go somewhere with them.
- **Host Family Trips** – Host families may offer the student the opportunity to go on vacation with them. If the planned vacation is a trip that is expensive, such as a ski trip in the Swiss Alps, the student and the family should discuss any possible financial contribution. This may or may not occur, but the student and their parents should be aware of such a possibility.

Bank and Credit Cards Suggestions:

Check with your bank about setting up an international credit card or ATM debit card, which will provide the student with an easy and inexpensive way to deposit funds here and withdraw funds in their host country without incurring interest charges or high transfer fees. Having this card will mean the student will not need to travel with a large amount of cash. You will also want to look for a card that does not charge foreign transaction fees.

We recommend that the student have BOTH a debit card for ATM use AND a credit card for emergencies. When talking to the bank, BE SURE TO ASK if the card is readily accepted in the student's host country. If not, try a different card provider. Take extra precautions to protect credit cards and cash from theft, especially when traveling, and make sure the student and their parents know what to do in the event the cards are stolen or lost.

The student should become familiar with the currency of their host country and understand the "exchange rate" for conversion to their home currency. The buying power of the dollar will vary, and costs for needed items may be significantly different than what are considered 'the norm'. Before departure, the student and parents should establish a budget for spending money. The student should follow that budget carefully so that they don't run out of money before the end of the exchange year. Sign up for online banking so the student and their parents can monitor the accounts. Working to earn income is prohibited while overseas.

Cell Phone Suggestions:

Most US cell phones do not work abroad. The student should contact their cell phone company to learn what they might be able to do to allow their cell phone to work in the host country. Ask if the phone can be "unlocked". This way the student can attach to a new mobile plan while abroad. In some cases, it might be better to purchase a new phone after arriving in the host country. Make sure there is a way to communicate with the student's USA family as well as the host family during all travels.

Many Outbound students purchase cell phone service in the country they go to. They also get a SIM card. Be sure to understand the limits, the service and costs that are purchased. Sometimes a host family or Rotary Club may add a phone to their personal service during your exchange year for a student's use. The student is expected to develop a plan to reimburse them for this service.

Fundraising Suggestions:

If you need to raise money for your exchange, consider some of the following ideas – these can be done in your sponsor or host country:

- Babysitting
- Yard work
- Make a dessert that your country or family is known for. Sell them at Rotary meetings.
- Take extra pins and sell them to Rotarians
- Can and Bottle Drives (here in the US)

Medical and Mental Health Considerations

Vaccinations/Immunizations:

Most countries require you to carry proof of your vaccination record with your essential papers. Advice on which vaccines you should have can be obtained from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Travel Pages on the internet. There are different sections that address particular regions and countries around the world. Each travel page summary suggests which vaccinations to boost, which new vaccinations to have, and which medications to carry. Some vaccines must be taken several weeks before departure. Consult with your physician SOON. www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm The CDC is responsible for pointing out ALL the potential risks, however remote, and they also offer sound advice for avoiding risks. The most frequently reported illness is 'traveler's diarrhea and there is a special section on 'Food and Water' that discusses this.

Medications:

You should ask your physician for a new prescription for the medications you must take. They may or may not be able to be filled in your host country. Some students make certain they have adequate supplies of needed medications for the duration of their exchange. Make sure to check on the availability of any prescriptions before your departure.

Braces:

If you currently have braces and are in the middle of treatment, we suggest you speak with your orthodontist regarding your options. In most cases, it is difficult to continue your treatment while in a foreign country. Students have opted to take off their braces and have them put back on when they return. Others are able to speed up their treatment. This should be a discussion you have with the orthodontist once you have been selected as the Outbound student.

Glasses:

If you wear glasses, a copy of your lens prescription, or even better, a spare set of glasses, can help avoid a big problem in the event your glasses are lost or broken. If you will turn 18 during your exchange year be sure to sign a medical release at your doctor's office prior to your departure.

Allergies:

Make sure your hosting club and host family are aware of any allergies you may have, especially if you carry an epi-pen. Please also advise if there are any needed medications if you are to have an allergic reaction or attack.

Mental Health:

If you have mental health issues that require medication or treatment while on exchange, make certain that you stay on the medication unless you have been released by your physician. Any mental health issue must be disclosed to us, your host family, and host district. Some mental health issues get worse or return while on exchange and are under the stress of adjusting to a totally new environment. So, it is necessary that we are aware so we can respond and support you in a positive manner.

Communication Guidelines

STUDENTS – CHECK EMAIL DAILY!

- **EMAIL IS THE PRIMARY WAY THAT ROTARY WILL COMMUNICATE WITH YOU.** We realize students today prefer Snapchat and Instagram, but Rotarians use Email. Our expectation is you will check your email at least once every 24 hours, or more.
- While on exchange, communicate by email with your parents up to once weekly, your sponsoring Rotary Club, and District 5100 Youth Exchange Officer once a month.

Initial 90 Days on exchange:

District 5100 has a long-standing guideline on communications that there be only one phone call on arrival and no other voice or video communications during the first 90 days of the exchange with parents or friends back home. The thought behind the guideline is to allow the students time to adjust to their new cultures, and bond with their host families. They need to become more dependent on themselves, their new families, Rotarians and less dependent on natural parents and friends back home. The student should call their parents to let them know they arrived safely and are with their host family. After that, email communication is OK, but should be kept to a minimum.

Family Emergencies:

Rotary encourages the student and family to discuss family wishes in the event that there is an emergency during the year abroad – such as illness or death in the family. Please try to anticipate the student's wishes and those of your family if you are confronted with a situation in which your early return home is a consideration.

We ask families not to send bad news to students by e-mail, voice-mail or on the telephone without first notifying Rotary. We can help make certain you are not alone when receiving bad news. We have had occasions where students have actually panicked and left the country to return home following their receipt of bad news without notifying ANYONE of their whereabouts or intentions.

Most often, when a student is called home for a family emergency, it is not an option to return to your host country. **Any emergency that causes you to leave should be very serious. If it becomes necessary to bring the student home due to a medical condition, or some pandemic, Rotary will have developed a set of emergency procedures and protocols to follow. Rotary may make recommendations, but the final decision to bring a student home rests with the parents.**

Video Chatting

With the smartphones and social media available in today's communication video chatting with someone on the other side of the world is like talking to someone in the next room. We cannot enforce the communication guideline but know that excess communication back home, rather initiated by the student, the parents or friends, can result in extended homesickness, slow the needed adjustment to a new culture, and result in early returns.

THIS IS THE NUMBER ONE REASON EXCHANGES FAIL.

Social Media

The use of social media to communicate back home should be minimized through the exchange. Following along with what the student's friends are doing back at home only fosters homesickness and a fear of missing out. Additionally, social media should be used responsibly, and postings that could needlessly offend are forbidden. **No matter how private you think these communications are, they aren't.**

With Host Family

- **The Student** is responsible to communicate with their host family prior to the exchange.
- **Parents** are asked to encourage students to seek advice from Host Parents. The Host parent knows their own home, town and country. Without host parents there would be no exchange.
- **Parents** are also asked to refrain from interfering in Host Family issues. If you interfere with the workings of your host home, it is likely that your student will be returned home. Remember, if you make the exchange too much trouble for or work for the hosts, they will probably wish they had not gotten involved. Give your student the best possible chance for success by allowing the host family to do their job.

Monthly Reports

District 5100, particularly your Country Officer, wants to hear from you regularly about your exchange. This is so they can support you through any challenges you may be facing, stay up to date with your activities, and live a little bit vicariously through you! Additionally, District 5100 is required to keep a record of your exchange activities during the year. We must have a monthly report from you in order to accomplish this. Therefore, you will be asked to submit a monthly report to your Country Officer. Your reports are **due on the last day of every month**. They will vary in format based on the month and on your Country Officer's style– via email, or sometimes via a link sent to you. Sometimes your Country Officer will send a request with particular questions, or the format may be the same each time. Please send updates to your sponsor club in the form of postcards, letters, or emails about your experiences. Those are always fun to get and share with other Rotarians.

Report Guide Here is an example of the information that should be included in each monthly report:

“This report covers the month of: ***”

- Your Name
- Name of Host Rotary Club and Number
- Club YEO's Name and Phone Number
- Host Family's Name/ Phone # / Address
- **Change of Host Family** – Keep us updated on where you are living. We need this information in case of an emergency.

These are some ideas of the things we want to hear about:

- What you are doing in school: new/favorite/least favorite subjects, clubs, sports, friends
- Social activities: getting connected in your school, through extracurriculars, or in your community. What social events, parties, dances, etc. have you gone to this month?

- Language learning: steps you are taking, how you feel you have improved this month, major milestones (first conversation with no English, able to get your point across, complimented on your accent, dreaming in host language, etc.).
- Your Rotary activities: meetings attended, speaking, travel to other clubs, Rotarians you've met
- My relationship with my counselor, (are you getting regular contact with him/her?)
- Is your host club taking the time to get to know you?
- Your personal experiences: Have you had any illnesses, problems with host families, problems in school. What solutions have you found?
- Travels?
- Visits with other exchange students?

- What are you learning? What do you like here? What don't you like here?
- **Near the end of the year, please be certain that you communicate your return travel plans including the date you are departing and your full travel itinerary.**

After Sending Your Report

If you share a concern in your monthly report or your Country Officer has a concern after reading it, they may offer some advice if you are facing a challenge or are discouraged or feeling homesick. They may connect you to a Rotex who can relate more directly to your experience or offer the services of one of our counselors if appropriate. They may suggest that you seek out help from your host family or host Rotary Club if you have not already done so — remember, these people are there with you and are often a better support system than people back home.

If you have a concern but do not share it, we can't help you. Remember, we are all here to help you succeed on your exchange, but we can only do that if you are honest and open with us. Everyone faces challenges on exchange, and it's nothing to be ashamed of.

Visitors from Home during Exchange Year

We encourage parents to visit the country their student went to sometime **AFTER** the student has returned. Your student is going to want to return to the host country and share their culture with you. In many instances, it is the natural parents who wish to make a visit and not necessarily their student who wishes to receive them. Parents are advised to consider making a return trip a couple of years later with their student as tour guides with no Rotary program rules or stress. Parents, it is up to your student as to whether or not they want any visitors during their exchange year.

If your student would like you to visit them during the exchange we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- Such visits are not encouraged by Rotary.
- The best time to visit is usually during the US spring vacation, but you must abide by the hosting district's parental visit policies.
- Any planned visit from home must be discussed with, and acceptable to, the affected host family, the host Rotary Club Counselor and both your host and sponsor District Youth Exchange Chairs; surprise visits are not acceptable.
- The visit should not last more than 7 – 10 days. Do not wear out your welcome.
- Family visits must not conclude with the student's scheduled return home. Keep it separate.
- Family visits must not be planned for the Christmas Holiday period; no exceptions.
- Family visits should not be planned that will involve lengthy absences from school for the student, or that will impose a burden on host families.
- Remember that the student and host parents are your hosts, and you should defer to their wishes. You are their guest.
- Visits by friends or distant relatives that involve more than an incidental involvement by you are strongly discouraged. Permission for travel as part of such visits will be denied under most circumstances.

Independent Travel

Your exchange year is not a vacation.

There is NO traveling alone or with other exchange students/friends without an approved adult chaperone.

Your priority is to get to know your host family, your host community and the Rotary District.

Properly Chaperoned Travel

Properly chaperoned school, family, and Rotary trips are allowed. Some students will have the opportunity to travel with their host families. Some students will have the opportunity to travel with a school activity or class. Some countries organize travel for the exchange students, such as a European Tour, which would be at an additional cost to the student.

We always need to know where you are in case of an emergency. Please notify your YEO in District 5100 whenever you will be away from your Host home for more than 3 days. Please consult with your Host District regarding permission to travel guidelines and forms that are needed for host family or school trips. If you break the travel rules you can be sent home. We take these rules very seriously.

In general, for any approved overnight travel you need:

- A full travel itinerary with the names and phone numbers of the people you will be staying with.
- Permission from your host parents

Depending on the destination and length of stay you may be required to obtain one or more of the following:

- Permission from:
 - Natural Parents
 - Host Parents
 - Host Club
 - Sponsoring Club
 - District Chair
 - Family, a person where the student is traveling to.
 - Country Officer

Academic Credit for Your Year of Study Abroad

As soon as you have been selected for exchange, talk to your high school academic counselor. Although you will be studying in a high school overseas, Rotary has no control or involvement with your graduation requirements. You might consider taking required courses in advance of your departure or make special arrangements for summer school after your return. You should ask about the possibility of at least earning foreign language credits during your time away, perhaps with a test upon your return to document your level of foreign language skills.

Even though most schools will not guarantee credits ahead of time, you should ask for any agreement they do make with you **IN WRITING**. You should plan to bring back a copy of your high school transcripts from the time you were out of the country. If available, obtain a copy of your student handbook or ask your school in your host country for course descriptions. The more information you bring home with you, the better your chances are of being granted school credits for your studies. It is important to note that acceptable passing grades are going to be necessary for you to make a good case. Your high school at home is the **FINAL** authority on this decision.

Transcripts – take yours with you and be sure to obtain one from your host country school before returning.

Education During Exchange

The purpose of this exchange program is to allow students to become familiar with life in their host country. Attending school is a very important part of life for participants. The responsibility for attending class during this period rests with the exchange student.

Education systems differ around the world and students and parents need to show flexibility when becoming familiar with the system in the Host country. The exchange period is approximately 30 months, 6 months prior to departure, 12 months during the exchange year, 12 months during Rebound year.

Some differences in school systems students have told us about (not all apply to each country):

- Attendance may or may not be taken. This is because the funding of education differs from that in Oregon and Washington.
- Extracurricular activities can be limited or non-existent. Sports, music, dance, etc. are often learned by enrolling in private lessons or belonging to special clubs.
- Class sizes are often smaller at the “grade” level and school where the students are placed, due to their mandatory education involving separate tracks; vocational, university preparation, etc.
- Education at this level is considered a privilege, not a right, and students are expected to apply themselves or suffer the consequences of failing the university entrance exams.
- The class may retain the same students and meet in the same room over several years.
- Teachers may change classrooms to cover their assigned subjects while the students remain in the same room.
- Most participants in this program attend University preparation level classes and are expected to study and learn the assigned material.
- Teachers assign homework as an adjunct to the syllabus expecting the students to use the assignments to further their understanding of the course material.
- Each day’s schedule may more closely resemble that of an American college student rather than a high school one.

- Students have reported class loads of up to 12 different subjects per week with some classes only meeting once during that time.
- Grading is generally done using a number system. Various systems are used.
- Occasionally students have been placed in a grade level with much younger students because they lack language skills adequate to allow effective study at their own grade level.
- Teachers are often aware that exchange students are not fluent in the country's language and should make accommodations accordingly.

Rotary does not promise that participants in this program will receive any school credit for the time students have spent away from their home school. Each student should meet with their school counselor to find out what credit if any, the school might allow the student for participating in this program. Many of our local schools do allow quite a bit of credit to be earned by participants, enough that if they complete all graduation requirements, they are able to finish school with their class.

The exchange student is responsible for contacting their US school to discuss the following, and obtain it in writing, prior to the exchange:

- What credit will the school permit for the exchange experience?
- What records and reports should the student plan to present to the school following the exchange?
- Is a student diary and report following the exchange required?
- What about the class syllabus and or test results?
- What credit can be earned during the training period prior to the exchange for speeches, language training, etc?
- What classes should the student take before and after the exchange to allow them to complete graduation requirements at the same time as the rest of their class?

When the student returns to school in the US without adequate records from their exchange school, the US school is under no obligation to allow credit for the educational opportunities that were skipped no matter what agreement was reached prior to departure. A student in this category will most likely be required to repeat the missing year in order to make up the required credits for graduation.

Remember that attendance at school during the exchange is the responsibility of the student, no one else. Rotary sponsors of the student have no responsibility to assist in paying for missed classes or insist the US school allow credit for any classes missed. If a student does not attend school regularly and the Host government becomes aware of this, his or her student Visa can be revoked. In this case, the student would be required to return home.

Insurance While on Exchange

Many insurance plans are not designed to cover students during a period of study in a foreign country. Rotary International has specific minimum requirements for their participants' insurance coverage. Therefore, we use **Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)**. CISI is a provider of study abroad and international student insurance coverage. Since 1992, they have insured over 1 million international students and cultural exchange participants worldwide. CISI provides a choice of comprehensive plans that meet and exceed the Rotary International regulations.

Students are **REQUIRED** to either purchase insurance specified by their host country, or District 5100 requires **CISI-Bolduc Insurance (CISI)**. Students must purchase CISI's Plan B+. **DO NOT PURCHASE ANY INSURANCE UNTIL INSTRUCTED BY YOUR COUNTRY OFFICER.** Plan B provides 100% coverage with no deductible, and is primary coverage. Students with CISI insurance will receive an insurance card (which they should keep on them at all times on exchange) and a consulate letter

- **Website** – www.culturalinsurance.com/rotary/rotary_aboutus.asp - or click here [CISI WEBSITE:](#)
- **EMAIL** – cisiwebadmin@culturalinsurance.com
- The current brochure with pricing can be found at www.culturalinsurance.com/rotary/pdf/CISI-Rotary-Worldwide-2021-in-English.pdf - or click here **CISI BROCHURE**

General Questions:

- Toll-free in the U.S.A.: 800-303-8120×5130
- Outside the U.S.A. (Call Collect): 203-399-5130
- tcenatiempo@culturalinsurance.com

Rules for Participating in Rotary Youth Exchange

You may have heard from previous and current exchange students about the D's. Don't do this don't do that. We take these rules/guidelines seriously, not because we are trying to spoil your fun but because we want you to have the best experience possible. There is a reason behind each of the D's, and if not now sometime during or after your exchange experience you will learn to appreciate why we worked so hard at constantly calling them to your attention. Here are the D's followed by some equally important rules/guidelines – They will also be reviewed at all of our training sessions to ensure students know the rules and risks:

No DRUGS – Reason: Because they are illegal and can harm you. Common Sense.

Prescription Drugs that are prescribed for you are Ok, but be sure to let your host family and counselor know. The medication should be taken on your exchange in the original sealed bottles. Take enough Advil, cough medication etc, for the first few months. Names and compounding of medications may be different abroad.

Illegal Drugs are absolutely forbidden and will bring your exchange to an abrupt halt! Other countries deal much more harshly with illegal drug violations. If caught you will go to jail and Rotary will not be able to help you. Marijuana, Cocaine, Heroin, Meth, Glue, MDMA (Molly/Ecstasy) inhalants, spice, K2, hallucinogens, Salvia, and DXM (cough syrup abuse) are expressly forbidden. Additionally, abuse of stimulants, painkillers, and prescription drugs, such as Adderall is prohibited.

No DRINKING (ALCOHOL) - Reason: Because alcohol, especially in large amounts, impairs your judgment and puts you at risk. Common Sense.

- Host Parents may serve alcohol at home, such as wine with dinner.
- You may take communion wine at church.
- NEVER ride in a car with someone who has been drinking
- It's NEVER bad manners to refuse alcohol
- If you are found to be in violation, you may be given one warning, or you may be sent home immediately.

No Single DATING – (No sexual contact) Reason: Your exchange year is about YOU.

When you are in a relationship with another person, your exchange quickly becomes about someone else and you miss the opportunity to engage in the culture and people of your host country. And of course, pregnancy and social diseases are too great a risk. Do not take the chance.

No DRIVING (No operating Motorized Vehicles) Reason: Liability&. Common Sense

That includes snowmobiles, ATV's, boats, trains, planes, motorcycles, scooters, Jet Skis, etc. Basically, anything with a motor you should not drive). Even if you have a Driver's License at home, you will not be familiar with the rules in a foreign country. Find another form of public transportation to use. Avoid the potential liability and risk to your safety if you have an accident.

No DISFIGUREMENT (Decorating body, hair, etc.)

Reason: In the US, you must be 18 to make these decisions regarding piercings, tattoos, etc. While on an exchange, even if you are 18, Rotary does not want you to come home with new adornments that would not have been allowed in the US.

No decorating your body with tattoos or body piercings. You may be of age but this activity is prohibited without the written permission of your natural parents.

No DISRESPECT - Reason: This is common sense.

Rotary Youth Exchange is an entirely Volunteer Organization. Everything is being done to ensure that you have a productive successful exchange. Please show your respect and appreciation to Rotarians, your Host Families, and Teachers. Learn and abide by the customs of the country you are in, not them to you. If you make it a great experience for them it will be a wonderful exchange for you.

More rules/guidelines of exchange that don't start with a "D"

No SMOKING, Vaping, use of Tobacco in any form...NO Exceptions

SHOPLIFTING is a crime. No exceptions, your exchange will be over!!

No INDEPENDENT TRAVEL – This means no traveling alone or with other exchange students/friends without an approved adult chaperone. Properly chaperoned school, family and Rotary trips are allowed with proper documentation as required by your host country. Please notify your YEO in District 5100 whenever you will be away from your Host home for more than three (3) days. It is important that we know where you are in case we need to contact you.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (Mandatory) – This is a STUDENT exchange program. If you do not attend school, you will not learn the language, history, and culture of your host country. Your hosting country can and will revoke your student status if you do not attend school on a regular basis.

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO OBEY THE LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF THE HOSTING COUNTRY CHANGING HOST FAMILIES

Your hosting club will decide who your host families are and when you will move from one host family to the next. You may not change host families without the consent of your Host Rotary Club.

RETURNING HOME – Students must return directly home to the point of departure in the US on completion of the exchange. There are no side trips allowed on the way home.

BEING A GOOD AMBASSADOR Be sure your actions reflect favorably on your family and community and sponsoring Rotary Club and Country.

CAN YOU AND YOUR PARENTS ACCEPT THESE RULES?

You and your parents signed a document entitled “Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange” as part of your Long-Term program application. You have already agreed to follow these rules for the duration of your exchange, which started when you signed the agreement (other than driving while in the US). If you need to clarify any issue that arises, please ask your YEO or club counselor for assistance. They will be happy to help you. Remember ‘Character’ means doing the right thing when nobody is watching. Ask yourself if you and your parents can be proud of your decisions.

Before and during your exchange you may become aware of other exchange students who are ‘getting away with breaking some of these rules and nothing has happened to them. It may be only a matter of time before they are faced with the consequences of their actions. Please do not follow their example. These rules have been developed by both Rotarians and former exchange students who have said, ‘If only I had...’ following problems they experienced during their exchanges.

Travel Arrangements

The District Committee has contracted with **It's Your World Travel, (IYWT)**. They will handle all student airline reservations and arrange for all student VISAs. **You MUST use our Travel Agency for your students' travel.** The student will be instructed when they should go to the IYWT portal to set up their profile. Once the student profile is set up, the travel agent will communicate directly with the student regarding the required information and documents needed for their tickets and Visa, depending on what country the student is going to. IYRT also attempts to book the student on a plane with other students from the US going to the same country.

The **Travel Agent will assist in obtaining the student VISA that will be required for student entry into their exchange country.** IYWT does not charge an additional fee for VISA processing but individual countries might. Any VISA processing fees required by the destination country will be the responsibility of the student or their family. Some countries also require a personal visit to one of their consulates outside the Portland area. This could be a day's travel from home, most often to San Francisco, Seattle, or Los Angeles. We have been fortunate in the past that this requirement has not been placed on most of our American student VISA applicants, however, this is changing. If our students are required to present themselves at a foreign embassy or consulate prior to receiving their travel documents, the Travel Agent will notify the student.

Requirements to obtain the VISA will vary from country to country and may include chest X-Rays, police reports, document translations, etc. Please comply with all verbal and written requests from the Travel Agent as soon as they are received.

Each country imposes its own documentation fees. They can vary greatly from country to country. In some cases, the VISA may be temporary, and the student **MUST** present themselves at a specified government office upon arrival to obtain the permanent document. Failure to do this can result in expulsion from the country.

The Travel Agent will obtain, on your student's behalf, round-trip tickets. Once the departure date and arrival airport are known, and the Visa is issued, the student will work with It's Your World, Travel! to arrange the required round-trip airfare. You must have "open-return" round-trip airfare as a requirement of the exchange program. Although airline rules and regulations differ, most airlines will issue return flight tickets for a specific return date and allow one change with no- or a low-cost change fee. Inform your Sponsor District and those in your host country (Host Club YEO, Host Family, etc.) of your travel itinerary as soon as the information is known. The return date on the ticket will vary from country to country and airline to airline.

You may not use air miles or attempt to book your tickets over the internet. While perhaps less expensive, these tickets have a lower boarding priority than the ones obtained for Long-Term Rotary Youth Exchange Students. It is a requirement of most countries' VISAs that an unemployed student has a return ticket in their possession when entering the country. Internet return tickets are unavailable more than 365 days from the booking date and therefore do not meet the travel requirements of the student. The District Committee's primary interest is your student's safety in getting to and from their host country. While our travel agent does an excellent job of getting airline tickets at competitive prices, price is not our highest priority.

You will be required to select a return date by mid-February during your exchange year. Be sure to verify with your host family, natural family, club, and country officer the return date to be sure it can be accommodated by all parties. Changes to tickets after the February date will incur a change fee to be paid by you. All information related to travel will be communicated via your It's Your World, Travel! portal.

Layovers – We do not guarantee that your student will be met at any layovers en route to their exchange. We provide travel situation training during our orientations and expect that students will remain in the passenger area of airports while in transit. They should not have an occasion to leave these areas of an airport while on a layover en route to their destination.

Student Confirmation of Plans – While the travel agent makes the best travel plans possible based upon information provided by the hosting District, it is the responsibility of the student to confirm all travel plans with the airlines and the host family prior to departure. Plan to be a good exchange student from the beginning by considering host family work and holiday travel plans before departing from Portland.

AT LEAST ONE PARENT SHOULD HAVE A VALID PASSPORT IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

Application for a U.S. Passport

To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to one of 7,000 passport acceptance facilities located throughout the United States with two photographs of yourself, proof of U.S. citizenship, and a valid form of photo identification such as a valid driver's license issued by the US state of residence.

Acceptance facilities include many Federal, state, and probate courts, post offices, some public libraries, and several county and municipal offices. There are also 13 regional passport agencies.

You'll need to apply in person if you are applying for a U.S. passport for the first time: if your expired U.S. passport is not in your possession; if your previous U.S. passport has expired and was issued more than 15 years ago; if your previous U.S. passport was issued when you were under age 16; or if your currently valid U.S. passport has been lost or stolen.

For All Minors Ages 14 to 17:

- Each minor child shall appear in person.
- For security reasons, parental consent may be requested. - If your child does not have identification of their own, you need to accompany your child and present your identification.
- Passports for students under the age of 16 are valid for 5 years, otherwise 10. Passports must not expire for 6 months AFTER the student's return date.

Possible and Probable Challenges

Student Not Checking Email

- The most successful exchanges are those where the student, not the parents, maintains contact with the YEO, travel agent, etc. **CHECK YOUR EMAIL DAILY AND RESPOND in a timely manner.**

Parental Over Involvement

- Parents, you will not be with your student during the exchange. Please help them learn how to handle details, communications, paperwork, etc. prior to leaving. **Don't do everything for them!**

Culture Shock

- Culture shock cannot be avoided, but you can prepare yourself. Our training will cover the many aspects of culture shock and we recommend you review a book on culture shock for your specific country, once it is assigned. Common cultural issues include:
 - **Food** – Your diet will be different, make the adjustment. Try the US version of the country you will be going to. It won't be the same but will give you an idea of what to expect. Be willing to try different foods. If you have made voluntary diet choices, be flexible. Do not make your host family adjust to your eating preferences. With the change in diet and culture, you may gain weight. Get regular exercise to help manage any weight gain. If you have food allergies or medical restrictions on what you can eat, make sure to let your host families and club know.
 - **Customs** – Learn the customs of your new culture. Respect and Celebrate them. The worst thing you can do is disrespect your host country's cultural differences.
 - **Dress** – Dress to fit in, not to stand out. Take minimal luggage with you. Purchase what you need to be part of your culture after you arrive, or do the research and purchase appropriate clothing before you leave.

Homesickness

- Keep yourself busy. Stay out of your room. Be with your Host family. Reduce or eliminate verbal/video communications with home. Get involved in something new. BE willing to try new things. Learn the language so you can talk to people. Don't wait for the exchange to come to you, go out and make it happen!!

School and Language

- Take your full Transcripts from your US school with you. Take ACT/SAT before leaving or after returning but not while on exchange. Get your school's agreement for credits to be earned before you leave and **IN WRITING**. Bring a Transcript from the school you attended home with you. Avoid taking your US school classes on-line while on exchange. You should have plenty to keep you busy learning your new language and attending classes in your host country. Attend school regularly in your host country, even when you don't understand the language well, you will get better. Practice, Practice, Practice!

Religion

- Do not attempt to convert your hosts to your religion – this is a student exchange, not a religious mission. Learn all you can about your host's religion. Be willing to accompany your family to their church from time to time. On a similar note, should not try to convert you or require you to attend their religious services.

Politics

- Do Not Engage in Political Activity! Learn about the form of government in the country you are in. Do not criticize or compare but learn. You need to be able to explain the American Form of Government. You do not need to defend American Political activity.

Rotary Meetings

- Attend when invited.
- Provide a presentation about your home and exchange.
- Participate in your hosting Rotary Club's community and international activities.
- May be more formal or less formal than in the US.
- Will be in the native language, and it might be difficult to understand during the first few months.
- Clubs might be all of one gender.

Why Language Learning is Important

One of the major benefits to be gained by participating in a foreign exchange program is the chance to become fluent in a new language. Speaking and understanding the language is the key to acceptance in any country, even in countries where English is a commonly-learned foreign language. Generally, the host family, Rotary club, and school will expect the student to have at least some understanding of the language upon arrival. Remember, you will be attending school as an integral part of your exchange. The teachers are not expected to be able to speak English for your benefit. Set yourself up for success academically as well as socially and culturally by showing your willingness to learn the language.

If a student arrives in their host country and does not understand anything that is said to them, they may immediately feel isolated and alone. They will likely have a more difficult time communicating with their host family and connecting to their host culture. **The more you learn about your host language prior to your departure, the more quickly you will be able to assimilate into your host family, school, and community.**

However, if in the first few weeks and months you need to use English to communicate, you should not be ashamed to. It is important to make good first impressions with your classmates and others, and while you should try in your host language first, it is even more important to build a relationship (which will open up language learning opportunities down the road). It is also important that you take care of official business like visa paperwork, banking, etc., which can be challenging in English, let alone a new language (your host family can help with this). Exchange is a marathon, not a sprint. Strike an appropriate balance early on, realizing that every English conversation is a missed opportunity to become immersed in your new language and culture.

Language Learning Expectations

Rotary expects all participants in the long-term student exchange program to give their best efforts to learn their host language. You will be hosted in a country where the native language is not English. **YOU must make a conscientious, disciplined effort to learn your host country's language as quickly as possible.** You have about six months between country placement and departure to study the language of your host country. This is ample time to acquire a solid foundation in grammar and vocabulary of the language of your host country, which you will build on during your exchange year. **It would be blatantly disrespectful to arrive in your host country with no basic grasp of the language. It reflects poorly on you, your country and culture, and Rotary.** Many of our exchange partners are expecting that after three or four months in country, exchange students will be able to speak, read and write with fluency and have demonstrated considerable effort to acquire the language. Lack of effort and proficiency can be a reason to send you home.

Some of you have been placed in a country that speaks a language that you can study (or have already studied) in your US school. Unless you have been involved in an immersion program, your school language studies will not provide you the level of proficiency that you will need before you depart. **You will need to study above and beyond your high school language classes.** Our expectation is that you will prioritize language learning by making time in your busy schedules for studying. You will be amazed at how much you can learn by setting aside thirty disciplined minutes every day.

Before you go, what should you know about your host country?

Students should be able to answer the following questions about their host country before starting their exchange:

- How do you say hello and goodbye?
- How do men and women generally dress? Which types of clothing are considered appropriate and which are not?
- What is a typical day like in the host country? When do people eat meals? What meals do they eat?
- What is considered taboo?
- When are national holidays, and how are they celebrated?
- Is there a predominant religion? If so, what important religious events are observed, and how are people with different beliefs received?
- What are common leisure activities? Which sports are popular, if any?
- What is the government structure? Who are the current leaders?

How to Have a Great Exchange

Utilize and Embrace the SIX B's

Rather than focusing on what you cannot do while on the exchange, all students should focus on the following:

1. BE FIRST –

A year of growth means jumping in with both feet. Be a person of action!! Make things happen. Just “DO IT!”

2. BE CURIOUS –

Be a person who seeks to understand. Ask question. Explore. Take Risks... Eat insects!

3. BE ON PURPOSE –

Be certain of your outcome and move steadily toward it. Set goals. Make plans. Remember WHY you wanted to be a foreign exchange student.

4. BE GRATEFUL –

Be a positive thinker and focus on things you can be thankful for. Don't compare yourself to other exchange students. You get what you get. Be appreciative of the unique opportunity you have been given. Always say Thank You.

5. BE OF SERVICE –

Build bridges. Be generous and look for ways to do something meaningful. Offer help. Ask if you can help. Make just a small difference in the lives of those around you.

6. BE HERE NOW –

Look for the here and NOW. Live in the moment and in your host family. Seize the Day!

Country Selection for Long-Term Exchange

Does a student get to choose their country? The answer is ... yes and no. The countries we exchange with are those we know run top-quality programs, and we re-evaluate them each year. We normally have a longstanding exchange relationship with our exchange countries and know that we can rely on them. We have often met key people involved in the operation of the Rotary exchange Program in our partner countries.

There are a limited number of exchanges available with each country, and we will not overload any country in either direction, inbound or outbound. When applying for an exchange you can nominate your five preferred countries and we will endeavor to provide one of your choices, but you might also go to another country.

The philosophy of the Rotary exchange program is that the exchange experience is the key part of an exchange and that this is not country dependent.

Do yourself a favor and learn about all the other regions and countries. You will be surprised to overcome some objections you might have based upon preconceived notions. You might find you are wrong. Maybe a country you hadn't thought about before will become your new favorite.

Considerations

- The list of countries is subject to change from year to year and placement in a particular country is not guaranteed. We encourage you to keep a curious, open mind and be willing to expand your cultural boundaries in many different directions.
- Your country choice may depend on a variety of factors, including availability, your age, your language preparation, and even your health or diet. We discuss these details at our January orientations before you actually make your selection.
- Most of our partner countries **will not accommodate major dietary restrictions**. If you are a vegetarian, would you consider eating meat during your year abroad? If you have food allergies, are lactose intolerant or have religious dietary restrictions, these needs may be accommodated.
- In some countries, you may be asked to remove any facial piercings.
- Some countries may offer language training, trips, or special events. Any optional activities will be at an additional cost.
- We encourage you to be flexible and open to having a fantastic exchange year anywhere in the world. We find that our students gain a great love and devotion to their host country, as well as near-fluency in their host country's language no matter where they go!
- Remember there are no bad exchanges. Each one is unique.
- Learn as much as you can about your country from the Inbounds at the Country Fair and do your own research.
- See the Appendix for information on the countries we exchange with

- Get to know all the country officers and Rotex you can, and each other. Sometimes one region is really popular for whatever reason. In the end we have found that Country Assignments work out naturally.

Process:

At January Orientation

- Research your countries of interest. We have included country information, customs, etiquette, food, etc. in this manual. You can also do your own searches using the internet. It is best to use credible sources.
- Talk with the Country officers to identify their criteria for a candidate to their countries
- Speak with Inbounds about their country
- Talk to Rebounds about their experiences
- Try not to limit yourself based on your perceptions of a country. Be open.
- At the end of orientation, you will be asked to provide a list of your top 5 country choices.

After January Orientation

- Once you have selected your top 5, be sure to seek out connections to current Outbounds, Rebounds, Rotex, and Country Officers.
- You may be asked by a country officer to detail your interest by completing research or answering questions they ask you regarding your country choices.

Eastern Oregon Trip

- This is an all-day drive to Cove, Oregon, approximately 5-7 hours.
- Initially, you will be paired with an inbound student from the country you identified as your first choice.
- Buses are organized by Latin America, Europe and Asia. You might need to switch buses to meet with inbounds from all the countries you are interested in.
- Use the bus time to ask questions about culture, school, social, family life, etc.
- Also on the bus, speak with other inbounds about the other countries you are interested in. Don't forget to speak with the country officers on this trip.
- Be sure to express yourself and your interest in the countries you really would not mind going to.
- At the ski location, you will be asked to select your top 5 countries in order of preference. Be sure you would be happy going to any of these countries. Do not try to play the system by putting countries you are not really interested in or that your parents have put on a restricted list. This behavior does not reflect well upon the student.
- The committee will meet to select the students based on their preferences. You will be assured of getting one of your top 5.
- The student will find out the country they are going on Saturday evening after skiing and the committee selection meeting.

After Your Country is Assigned

It will be between 60-90 days after the Eastern Oregon Trip before the student hears from their host family or receives the guarantee form back. The Guarantee Form will tell the student their Host District, Host Club, school and host family information. At this point, the student should:

- Write to the host club counselor
- Write to the first host family

Provide information such as the following:

- Information about you, including your interests.
- Include a current photo of yourself, especially if you have changed your appearance at all from your application photo.
- You should use this letter as an opportunity to ask about school, school clothing/uniforms, climate, activities, etc.
- Every opportunity should be taken to exchange correspondence with the host family before departing, as this helps tremendously in the initial settling-in period in a new environment.

Current Exchange Countries

The following countries are available for exchange. Note that this list is ALWAYS subject to change. STEP students may also have a wider range of countries they can choose from. Speak with the STEP Coordinator for more information.

Country information has been compiled (with minor edits by Rotex) from Commisceo Global at <https://www.commisceo-global.com/resources/country-guides> – (Countries are NOT GUARANTEED, CHANGES FROM YEAR TO YEAR)

Asia

- India [ASIA – INDIA](#)
- Japan [ASIA – JAPAN](#)
- South Korea [Asia _ South Korea](#)
- Taiwan [ASIA – Taiwan](#)
- Thailand [ASIA – Thailand](#)
- Turkey (Exchange is in Asian portion of country) [ASIA – Turkey](#)

Europe/British Commonwealth

- Austria [Europe _ Austria](#)
- Belgium [Europe _ Belgium](#)
- Czechia/Slovakia [Europe _ Czech Republic and Slovakia](#)
- Denmark [Europe _ Denmark](#)
- Finland/Estonia [Europe _ Finland and Estonia](#)
- France [Europe _ France](#)
- Germany [Europe _ Germany](#)
- Italy [Europe _ Italy](#)
- Switzerland [Europe _ Switzerland](#)

Latin America

- Argentina [Latin America – Argentina](#)
- Brazil [Latin America- Brasil](#)
- Chile [Latin America – Chile](#)
- Colombia [Latin America – Colombia](#)
- Ecuador – [Latin America – Ecuador](#)
- Mexico – [Latin America – Mexico](#)