



DISTRICT 9830

A GUIDE FOR OUTGOING YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS

What does Rotary expect from their exchange students?

- * that they will be a good ambassador for their state, country, and for Rotary

- * That they will be flexible and adaptable, and accept the cultural behaviour and differences in their host country

- * that they will take responsibility for their actions and for creating their own experience

- * that they will participate in host family, school and community activities

- * that they will keep a positive attitude and show continuous effort throughout the experience

* **REMEMBER THE 4 D'S**

No driving, drinking, drugs or dating!

PREPARATIONS

* Do not take too many clothes - you may find that the people in your new country wear very different clothing to us and that what is **IN** here will not be elsewhere. It would be preferable to buy any new clothes you need in your new country than buy them here.

* Be prepared with a collection of small gifts with a Tasmanian/Australian flavour to give to those who host you or are good to you. Also a collection of little nick-nacks to share with other exchange students.

* Take some photos and/or slides of your family, home, school, environment etc. to share with others.

* Practise doing some cooking of typical Australian fare so that you can share it with your new families, and don't forget to take the recipes you need to cook.

* It would be a good idea to take some of our Aussie music tapes to share with your new families and exchange students from other countries. For example, John Williamson and some humorous Aussie songs are very popular with people of other nationalities.

* Write a nice long letter to your Counsellor and to your first host family as soon as you know the details. It will set you on a positive footing for your exchange year and will assist these people in getting to know you. Make your letters warm, and friendly as possible.

* Do your homework and find out as much as you can about your new culture and learn as much as you can of the language to assist you on your arrival if appropriate. A few words of greeting is a 'must'.

* Get some small change in the currency of your host country to take just in case you need to make a phone call on your arrival.

* **Be sure to phone or fax your host family and/or Counsellor your flight details and your expected time of arrival in that country. It is not the responsibility of Rotary to do that - Rotary is not involved in the travel details.**

HOST CLUB COUNSELLOR

Most Rotary Youth Exchange plans to provide for the appointment of a Rotarian who is not a member of a host family as Counsellor to the Exchange student. He/she is there to help. Do not hesitate to call upon him/her.

It is very important that you try to build an open, friendly and positive relationship with your Counsellor to assist in your year. This person is the key, the linchpin, the conductor of the whole exchange!

Exchange students should be able to rely on their Counsellors during their exchange for support, help, and assistance. He/she usually becomes the father/mother confessor and trouble shooter. Sometimes he/she may just be a catalyst to set you on track to solve your own problems.

He/she is there to help everyone associated with the exchange. Do not hesitate to call, particularly if there is a problem in a host family.

However, remember that this person is also a busy person. Don't expect them to be Superman. He/she will give as much time to the student's welfare as he/she can. If he/she cannot be contacted or does not live up to expectations, try contacting the Club President or the International Service Director. They have a responsibility to ensure that the system works. If these strategies do not improve the situation, if you notify us via the monthly reports, we will contact the Host District Chairman to rectify the problem.

The Counsellor is responsible for:-

- organising your banking requirements. This includes the contingency fund (a fund for emergency use of which he is co-signatory with the student), and a normal banking account
- arranging with the Rotary Club to promptly pay the pocket money provided monthly by the club
- establishing the ground rules with the students and host families.
- arranging for your school enrolment
- arbitrating on any problems between students and host families
- generally looking after the overall well-being of the student and be in regular contact with both the student and host families.
- taking the necessary action regarding major problems with the student such as:
 - truancy from school
 - problems reported by host families
 - romantic attachments
 - drug and alcohol abuse
 - use of any motorised vehicle or equivalent
 - any other significant misdemeanours

TRAVEL

The Counsellor must be involved with any arrangements for travel by students outside the District area. Backpacking and hitchhiking are strictly forbidden. The student may request approval to travel unaccompanied for some specific reason. Approval of this may be arranged by the Counsellor under the following conditions:

- a. Prior to departure, written approval must be obtained from-
 - 1) Natural parents
 - 2) Host Club (via the Counsellor or President)
 - 3) Host District Chairman or responsible Committeeman
- b. A copy of the student's itinerary must be lodged with the host District Chairman. This must include the name, address, and phone number of the responsible Rotarian or student's relative at each stopover.
- c. The student must be under the umbrella of Rotary at each stopover, unless the student is staying or travelling with relatives. If any stopover is arranged with a Rotary Club, written confirmation of the arrangements is required.

For these conditions to be fulfilled, careful long-range planning is required.

HOST DISTRICT COUNSELLOR

The Host District Counsellor is a member of the District Committee and is responsible for the overall well-being, care and discipline of the exchange students in their area. At Club levels, the Host Counsellor will report problems direct to the District Chairman, when appropriate action will be taken at District Committee level.

COMMUNICATION WITH HOME

* Write regularly to your family and friends at home - they will be missing you and will be anxious to hear from you on a regular basis.

* Don't forget your monthly reports to the Outbound Co-ordinator of Youth Exchange. A copy of these reports is sent on to the Chairman, to your Sponsoring Club and to Rotex. If there is anything that the Exchange Committee believe should not be sent on, then that information will be edited out of the report. These reports are necessary so that any problems are revealed and appropriate action taken through the Host District Committee.

* You may also like to send your Sponsoring Club more regular updates on your activities. Remember, they are responsible for your stay overseas and most clubs become upset without regular letters from their students. They need not be long, but they must tell the club some details of the exchange.

ARRIVAL

* When you arrive at your destination, you will probably be VERY tired, nervous, apprehensive, and frightened of using your new language. Smiles will go a long way towards making your arrival a happy one, and will help to put your welcoming group at ease as well. Remember that jet lag will normally affect you within the first 48 hours. You may feel confused, homesick and overwhelmed by being surrounded by many and new and different things. In addition, the need to speak another language is tiring and sometimes frightening at the beginning. Learn to laugh at your language mistakes - there'll be plenty of them for a while!

* Be flexible in forming your cultural opinions. Don't let a cultural difference interfere with building a warm relationship.

Remember this motto throughout your experience:

It's not right, it's not wrong, just DIFFERENT!!

Soon after your arrival with each host family, it is a good idea to sit down with them to discuss the expectations in the home. The following questions are given as a guide:-

1. What do I call you? Mum, Dad, or Christian names.
2. I expect to, daily:
 - Make my bed
 - Keep my room tidy at all times
 - Clean up the bathroom after I use it

What other tasks do you expect me to do regularly?

3. What is the procedure about dirty clothes?
4. Should I wash my own underclothes?
5. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine, without reference?
6. Where can I keep my toilet accessories?
7. When is the most convenient time for me to use the bathroom on weekday mornings?
8. When is the best time for me to bath or shower - am or pm? Is there a time limit? Are there water restrictions I should observe?
9. What are the normal mealtimes? The normal daily timetable?
10. Do I have a permanent job at mealtimes? - e.g. lay the table
 - clear the table
 - Wash up
 - Dry up
 - Empty the rubbish bin?
11. May I help myself to food and drink at any time, or should I ask first?
12. What areas of the house are strictly private - eg. bar, study, sewing room, parent's room?
13. May I put pictures or posters in my bedroom?
14. Do you object to my joining you with wine at the table?
15. Where can I store my suitcase?
16. What time must I get up - weekdays, weekends, holidays?
17. What time must I get to bed on weekdays?
18. If I go out at night, by what time must I return? If I am going to be late, should I phone you?
19. Can I have friends around during the day, or stay the night?
20. Under what conditions may I use the phone? Local, STD, Fax, or overseas. May I reverse charges to ring my parents from time to time?
21. What is the procedure about posting letters?
22. What dates are the birthdates of my host family members, and any other special days?
23. How do I get around? Do I use a bicycle? Is there a bus route near by?
24. May I turn on the stereo, TV, video?
25. What are the arrangements about going to church?
26. Does host mum have any pet hates? - not combing hair, taking shoes off before coming into the house?
27. Does host dad have any pet hates? - chewing gum, loud music, being interrupted when reading?

DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING THROUGHOUT THE EXCHANGE

The key to understanding each other and receiving maximum benefit from your experience is COMMUNICATION. Honest open communication will help you to fit in quickly and develop warm, friendly relationships which will last for many years. Frank discussions during the year about any and all topics will contribute to your development and maturity. Communication will also help to nip potential problems in the bud. In your host family situation, the more you communicate, the sooner you will feel like a member of that family. Little problems can be cleared up before they become big ones.

Make sure you understand the rules - curfews, how far from home you are permitted to go and with whom, school attendance, etc. If you do not agree with these rules you need to discuss the reasons why your family feels they are necessary.

FOOD

The food you will be given is a part of the culture. You are expected to try everything at least once, unless you are allergic to the food. It may take a little time for you to enjoy some foods; others you may never learn to like.

In a strange country, you may want to sample anything and everything because of the novelty. In some cases students may eat more than they normally do because of nervousness or homesickness. Whatever the reason, you may gain a little weight. If you find that this happens, your host mother may be able to help you to monitor your weight and adjust the diet accordingly.

YOU WILL GO THROUGH A NUMBER OF FAIRLY PREDICTABLE PHASES ON EXCHANGE

It is important for those involved in the exchange experience to view it as a process - a process through which participants go in several fairly predictable stages. They arrive as an 'unfinished product' and are well on the path towards being a 'finished product' at the end of their stay -

The Honeymoon Stage	Everything seems exciting and interesting
Culture Fatigue	They start to see differences and begin to feel uncomfortable
Surface Adjustment	Things start to make sense and they feel more comfortable
Hidden Problems	Although they seem to be fitting in on the surface they begin to question things, get homesick and possibly have conflicts with friends and family.
"I feel at Home"	They accept their host culture and feel comfortable with the way of living. They may even feel like "one of them".
"Going Home"	They begin to have mixed feelings about going home.

HOMESICKNESS

The Youth Exchange Committee are often criticised for not stressing the homesickness problem. In fact we do, but students rarely take it on board as they believe it won't apply to them! It mostly does!!! Very few students escape at least one bout of homesickness. Your host family can help you to overcome this depression if they recognise the symptoms or **you** tell them you are feeling like this, discuss the problem, and together work out a plan to beat the homesick blues.

In the early period of the exchange there is the excitement of a new land, new people, new customs, and being the centre of attention. This level is later replaced by a more normal pattern of school and family routine. Students miss the many little things at home that they took for granted, and their ears are bombarded by a strange language throughout the day. They become frustrated by their inability to communicate adequately, and suddenly start to wonder just how they are going to get through the next nine or ten months. This is when they are most vulnerable.

What are the symptoms?

- * You get the blues and feel lousy for no apparent reason.
- * You lose your cool over small things that you would normally shrug off.
- * You start to compare habits and customs unfavourably with how it was done at home.
- * You may suffer some physical discomfort: headaches, upset stomach, uneven menstrual cycle.
- * You may stay too long in your own room, where you feel secure from the alien world outside.

What can you do?

- * Recognise this as a classic case of homesickness, and seek help to overcome it.
- * Talk over the problem with anyone who can help.
- * Keep comfortably busy. Take part in extra activities.

What you should NOT do

- * Mope around feeling sorry for yourself.
- * Eat your way back to happiness - a common mistake!
- * Ring home - it will only make it worse for you and your family!
- * Ask to go home at the first sign of homesickness. This is the very last resort for extremely severe cases only.

SIBLING RIVALRY

Host brother or sister jealousy toward the newly arrived student is not uncommon. You may find the problem embarrassing and difficult to raise this issue with the host family. The sooner you are treated as a normal member of the family, the better! Just be aware that this jealousy can be a problem, especially with younger children, and take any steps you can to alleviate it.

SCHOOL

School is one of the most important parts of your exchange experience. All Rotary Exchange students are expected to attend school full time during their entire stay. School is where you will make friends, learn more about the history, culture, society and language of your adopted country. You are also expected to participate in normal extra-curricular activities.

Some students express boredom with school, specially in the second half of their stay. To combat this boredom, you could arrange to give talks at local primary schools, act as teacher's aide in appropriate language and geography classes, and attend 'Personal Enrichment Programme' classes of particular interest, even if these are normally for other school year classes. It is a good idea to include in your school course some subjects that would not have been available in your home country.

ROTARY OBLIGATIONS

Most districts require the students to attend Rotary functions and address club or district meetings. These occasions are an important feature of the exchange, part of the ambassadorial aspect. They will help you reach understandings of the host culture.

It is a good idea to go to Rotary Club meetings early in the visit, simply as part of the familiarisation process, but no student should have to undertake speaking assignments until time has been provided to settle down.

To have a really successful rapport with the members of your host club, it is a good idea to get to meet and talk with them all. A good way to do that is to sit with different Rotarians each time you attend a meeting. You will be amazed at the opportunities you will be given by establishing these good relationships. You will probably be offered a wide range of trips and experiences that would otherwise have been missed.

You are not expected to be orators; audiences are more interested in seeing the visitor and hearing the student's reactions than they are in polished public speaking. They will listen to what is said rather than how it is said.

AND FINALLY

Remember, to get the most out of your time, you should join in every available activity whether in your host family, your school or in your Rotary Club. You can make this next year the best year of your life with the right attitudes, acceptance of the culture, and total involvement and participation in your new environment.

We are sure that the next year in your life is going to be an exciting and rewarding one, and you will meet many people who will become lifelong friends.

Best wishes for your Exchange year.