



Rotary International District 5100
Youth Exchange Committee
Located in Northern Oregon and Southern Washington, USA
www.youthexchange5100.org

“Service Above Self”

HOSTING AN INBOUND STUDENT GUIDELINES

HOST FAMILIES: Acting as a host to an overseas' student can be a tremendously rewarding experience for a family, but it does entail obligations. Here are some of the ground rules:

1. It is not essential that either of the host parents be a Rotarian.
2. The host family must undertake to supervise the school and leisure hour activities of the student as if he or she were their own son or daughter.
3. The host families are to maintain the student in their home and are expected to share all family activities.
4. It is desirable that the student has a room of his or her own when possible. However, if this is not possible the student may share a room with someone in the student's same sex and age group.
5. Host families are required to fill out Rotary forms, one which is a volunteer affidavit. This affidavit allows the D5100 Youth Protection Officer (or designate) to perform a criminal background check.
6. Host families are required to have a monthly visit with an assigned Rotarian from the hosting club to discuss the progress of the student and resolve any issues that might have arisen during the hosting period.

The host club has an obligation to arrange suitable host families of good character (not necessarily Rotarians). Non-Rotarian families whose children have been outbound students often are pleased to host a student, but they are not required to do so. They should not host during the first few months after their student has returned from their exchange. A newly selected outbound student's family should be given the opportunity to host if their situation is suitable for hosting. This will give the newly selected outbound student invaluable training not otherwise available.

NOT A GUEST: It cannot be stressed too much that the student should not be treated as a special 'honored guest' by the host family. The whole value of this strategy centers on the acceptance by both student and host family that the student will be 'one of the family', not receiving any special favors or treatment, and undertake normal family chores. For this reason, it is desirable that the

student address the host parents as “Mom” and “Dad” (or similar terms) rather than the formal “Mr.” and “Mrs.”.

HOUSEHOLD CHORES: The student should most certainly make their own bed, keep their room tidy, and assist with general household chores such as lawn mowing, dishes and similar tasks. In some families, students may baby-sit. This chore, however, should not be overdone. Host families should not look upon exchange students as live-in baby-sitters.

DISCIPLINE: The student is expected to adapt to the discipline of the host family. The host family is not under any obligation whatsoever to adapt to the student. All the adaptation must be done on the part of the student and if the student shows some unwillingness to accept this point of view, the host family should approach the counselor appointed by the host Rotary club to make this point clear to the student. It would be better that such a ruling come from an outside person, rather than from host parents. Problems can arise unless the student clearly understands the fact that they are expected to conform to the host country conditions. At the same time, host families should be aware of the problems of adapting and be prepared to be flexible.

RELIGION: Somewhat surprisingly, this poses few problems. Most students are very flexible on beliefs and usually will accompany the host family to their church even where the religions differ. Host families, however, should not force the issue if the student wishes to follow their own religion (where their religion differs from the host family). Every effort should be made to assist them in that respect.

LIQUOR: Consumption of liquor by any student is not allowed.

SMOKING: Exchange students are prohibited from smoking! If students are found to be smoking, the host parents should consult with the student's host club counselor.

DRUGS: There is a total prohibition on students indulging in drug taking in any form while participating in the Youth Exchange program. Any student breaching this rule will automatically be expelled from the program and returned at once to their home. If host parents have reason to suspect that a student in their care is partaking in drugs, they should immediately report their suspicions to the Rotary counselor.

DRIVING: The student is specifically forbidden to operate a motorized vehicle while in the program and this rule must be enforced because all sort of legal problems arise should a student be involved in an accident. Driver training classes are **not** allowed.

ROMANCE: The Youth Exchange program rules state that the student will not become "romantically involved". If host parents consider that a relationship is drifting into deep waters, they should report the matter to the Rotary counselor. This is a difficult area, but the rule is basically sound because a student who becomes romantically involved centers all of his/her interests on one person to the exclusion of the Youth Exchange program.

TRAVEL: The host family is under no obligation to provide the student with travel experiences. Should the host family or other Rotarians wish to include the student in their travel plans, this is most acceptable and no special permission is required, provided it does not infringe on school attendance or required attendance at Rotary-scheduled activities.

FINANCE: The host family is not under any obligation to provide the student with pocket money (this is provided by the host Rotary club), or to finance clothing, travel or other expenses. These must be borne by the student from funds provided by his/her own parents.

CHANGE OF HOST FAMILIES: Host families should keep in touch with the host Rotary club through the counselor on hosting arrangements so that the student and host families know exactly when each change of hosting is to take place. Students must move when told to do so by the Rotary committee.

MONEY PROBLEMS: Some young people need guidance in handling money if they are to live within the monthly allowance supplied by the host Rotary club.

It has been found that some supervision is desirable and the best method has been the establishment of a special bank account that requires permission of the Rotary counselor before a withdrawal can be made. This is an issue that should be discussed with the counselor at the beginning of the exchange, and a firm policy worked out. The student should bring sufficient additional funds for the purchase of necessary clothing and other needs.

HOMESICKNESS: Every student experiences homesickness to some degree. Host parents should appreciate this and should expect the student to have some adjustment problems. The student who is actively involved in community youth groups will be much less likely to suffer from adjustment problems and homesickness than the non-participant. So, do all you can to encourage your student to accept the opportunities offered him/her to take part in community opportunities and school activities.

JEALOUSY: Members of host families should be aware of jealousies developing between family members because of the presence of the exchange student. Siblings will often become jealous because of the attention the 'new' member of the family is getting and thereby depriving the sibling of the attention. The same is true between host parents. If the student is a boy, Dad is jealous of the attention given by Mom and if the student is a girl, Mom is jealous of the attention given by Dad. **THESE THINGS REALLY DO HAPPEN.**

SHARED KNOWLEDGE: One of the main purposes of the Youth Exchange program is the exchange of knowledge on an international level. Your student is an ambassador for his/her country. Show an interest in that country and try to learn as much as possible about his or her home environment. In turn, you are also an ambassador for the United States by imparting as much knowledge as possible about the U.S. way of life to your student so that he/she will be able

to take home a picture of the United States that is as accurate as possible. This two-way exchange of ideas and information can be a very stimulating and rewarding adventure in international goodwill and understanding.

THE COUNSELOR: The club shall appoint a counselor for each student who should not be one of the host parents, a member of the committee, or represent authority to the student. The counselor must maintain regular contact with the student. Personally presenting the monthly allowance to the student is a good way to keep in touch. The counselor should check with the high school from time to time as to the progress of the student.

MONTHLY ALLOWANCE: The club will provide the student with a monthly allowance to cover personal expenses, lunches, transportation, etc. The district average is approximately \$100-\$150 per month.

TIME TABLES: All students arrive after August 15 and return home by mid-July.

ROTARY FUNCTIONS: Students are required to attend certain Rotary functions to which they are invited. Among them are the District Conference and two orientation meetings arranged for the exchange students by the District Committee. Other functions are optional, but their attendance should be encouraged.

TRAVEL: The Host District Youth Exchange Committee may arrange occasions where students will travel to meet other exchange students within the District for get-togethers. The host clubs are under no obligation to provide other travel experiences for the students, but invitations from Rotarian families to accompany them on trips will greatly enhance the program.

COMMUNICATIONS: The success or failure of a student exchange often hinges on communications between the student and the host Rotary club. All too often the student feels that the Rotary club has no interest in him/her and that all is left to the host families. It is absolutely essential that continual and friendly contact be maintained between the student and the Club Youth Exchange Committee so that the student is given the feeling of 'belonging' in the community and of being part of an exciting experience in international understanding. Clubs that can achieve this will reap rich rewards from the Youth Exchange Program.