



# **District 6690 Rotary Youth Exchange Program**

YEO/COUNSELOR/CLUB

Handbook

## MISSION

Developing global citizens by providing enriching, safe and affordable global exchange experiences for youth in Central and Southeastern Ohio.

## TERMS USED IN ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

**Inbound Student** -The student living in our district, who is from another country

**Outbound Student** -The area student preparing to or currently living overseas

**Rebound / Rotex Student** -The student who has returned from a successful exchange overseas

**Sponsor Club** -The Rotary Club who selects a student for exchange overseas

**Host Club** -The Rotary Club responsible for looking after an inbound student.

**YEO - Youth Exchange Officer** –Oversees/administers local program

**Rotary Counselor** -The local person who advocates for a student and helps solve problems that might arise.

**Host Family** -Family that provides housing and one-on-one support for an inbound

**Inbound Chair** -Assists the host club with problems that cannot be solved at local levels. Also collects MANDATORY monthly reports from students.

**Outbound Chair** - Assists with preparation of students selected for overseas exchange, and scheduled „check-ins“ with outbound students while living overseas.

**District Chair** - Oversees/administers the DISTRICT Rotary YE Program and mandatory emergency or crisis procedures if they arise.

**Ohio-Erie – Ohio-Erie Rotary Youth Exchange Multi-District** – a collaborative effort of 12 Rotary districts with common borders, to help with training, student support and program administration.

**STEP** – Short Term Youth Exchange Program

**Country Contact** – Individual who is responsible for assigning students in a district and main contact person for overseas communication.

## ORGANIZATION CHART

### Your Rotary Club

The Youth Exchange Officer and the Student Counselor are **the primary contacts for students and host families.**

Within some parameters, you may structure your responsibilities in your club in any way that best fits your local circumstances. Some clubs have a full committee to handle only youth exchange issues. As an alternative, some clubs have only two YE officers in place, and use the resources of the Executive Board when group decisions are needed.

### Key Club Officers

**1. Youth Exchange Officer** - Administrative & program management

**2. Youth Exchange Counselor** - Student Advocate.

The Youth Exchange Counselor works side-by-side with and reports to the Youth Exchange Officer.

When difficulties arise that cannot be worked out at local level or when you have questions about program management, you should contact the appropriate District Officer. Please notify the inbound chair immediately even if it's a small issue.

### District Committee:

**1. District Chair** – Walter Lundstrom – Westerville Sunrise Rotary Club

**2. Short Term Exchange Program (STEP) Chair:** Kathy Gatterdam – Columbus Rotary Club

**3. Inbound Student Chair:** Sema Thimmes – Short North Rotary Club

**4. Rotary Youth Exchange (Long-Term) Scholarship Program Chair:** Ashley Wade – Newark Rotary Club

**Rotary Youth Exchange (Long-Term) Scholarship Program Chair:** Brooke Perin

**5. Compliance Office:** Rand Guebert – Delaware Rotary Club

**6. Treasurer** – Judy Root – Lancaster Rotary Club

Note: Your District YE Chair works directly with the Rotary Youth Exchange Committee and with your District Governor, as needed, for program administration matters and when critical student issues warrant intervention.

## YEO RESPONSIBILITIES (ADMINISTRATOR)

1. Is a member of the host Rotary club, appointed to serve as the inbound student's main contact with the Club.
2. To confirm who the host parents will be during a student's stay. To arrange the date and time of changing host families.
3. To orient the host parents & students as to their responsibilities.
4. To arrange for schooling and introduce student to principal/teachers.
5. To look after student emergency fund and other important papers.
6. Arrange to celebrate the student's birthday, Christmas and other holidays.
7. Is respectful of the religious beliefs and practices of the student.
8. To introduce and integrate student into the Host Rotary Club and ensure that student is invited as a guest to meetings and other activities.
9. Develop a club activity calendar that includes different members spending personal time with your student.
10. To be sure that student receives monthly allowance from the host club on time.
11. To find out the dates of the required meetings – and to arrange for transportation. Students should be told of these events well in advance, to help avoid schedule conflicts.
12. To obtain appropriate funds from the host club to cover travel, food and board expenses for student attendance at required meetings.
13. Assist Student when there is a need to file insurance claims.
14. To deal appropriately with any unresolved difficulties between students and host families and school.
15. To sign written permission for travel and other situations in which permission is due, and to ensure that permission has been obtained from Rotary District, and (when needed) natural parents, host parents, and school.
16. Keeps a log of visits to and with the student and the host families. The log should be sent to the Inbound Coordinator with each family change. It is now a mandatory requirement to visit "at least monthly" with the student and host family.
17. Listens to student's comments and concerns, and establishes a rapport/relationship with the student.
18. Refers any problems or concerns to the Inbound Chair when they occur. **Don't wait till the problem becomes so unruly that you are requesting to send the student home.**

## COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITIES (ADVOCATE & FRIEND)

1. May be a member of the host Rotary Club or a member of the community, appointed to serve as the Inbound Student's advocate and additional contact.
2. Carefully complete the Youth Volunteer Application, undergo a criminal background check and attend a training session including viewing the Ohio-Erie Rotary Youth Exchange DVD. It is suggested that the Counselor view all sections of the DVD so as to be familiar with the responsibilities of each party in the exchange. This needs to be done on an annual basis.
3. Establish contact with both the student and his or her parents and provide any necessary information to assist in their final travel preparations. Let the student and parents know a little about yourself (and partner, if applicable) and identify your role as the student's counselor. Assure that the host family is also in communication with the student and that either you or the host family is providing details on the family, the school and the community. Get the details of the student's anticipated date and time of arrival including flight details. Communicate to the student who will meet him or her at the airport. A greeting committee consisting of members of all host families, Rotary club members and the counselor creates the ideal situation. If the student will be spending the first several days with the counselor and not the first host family, make sure the student understands the arrangement.
4. It is preferable that the student stay with the Counselor during the first several days following arrival. If this is not possible, the Counselor must then set aside as much time as possible to spend with the student, so that a meaningful relationship can be achieved. It is extremely important that the Counselor achieves a level of trust with the student, so that when a problem arises it can be discussed in an open and frank manner. If the student is spending the first few days with the Counselor, it is helpful to go over the First Night Questions ([www.yeoresources.org](http://www.yeoresources.org)) with the student.
5. Within the first two days of the student's arrival in the country, the Club Counselor must:
  - Check that the student's passport and visa(s), and entry documents are in good order. Be sure they are kept in a safe and readily accessible place (preferably not a safe deposit box).
  - Check the student's airline ticket to be sure that the student is in possession of a full round-trip ticket (from the arrival airport to their originating airport). A return ticket is necessary in emergencies or if the student must be returned home for disciplinary reasons. The return ticket should also be kept in a safe and readily accessible place in case of emergency travel.
  - Ensure that the student either telephones or e-mails confirmation of his or her safe arrival to the parents back home.
  - Notify the appropriate District officer the exact date of the student's arrival and confirm the details of the first host family including their name, address, e-mail and telephone number. Ohio-Erie must report this to the US Department of State or the student's visa could be revoked.
6. During the first week following the student's arrival, the Counselor should:
  - Review the Rotary rules for the exchange and be sure that the student understands what they mean. Specifically go over the "4-D's" (No drinking, no driving, no dating, no drugs).

- The student and Counselor should establish a joint account which requires two signatures before money can be withdrawn for the emergency account. This emergency account should have a minimum of US\$350 or the Canadian equivalent. It is also advisable to open a second account in the student's name with ATM access so that they are able to cash and or deposit their monthly stipend and money from home for their personal use. In the United States, the Counselor usually will need to provide their Social Security number to the bank to open both accounts.
- The Counselor should accompany the student to school for enrollment purposes. The Counselor should help the student choose the subjects he or she takes during their Exchange. English must be taken by all students. Some schools also offer an English as a Second Language (ESL) which may be helpful if the student's English skills are poor. Students are encouraged to take U.S. or Canadian government and history classes to gain a better understanding of the culture. It is also recommend student's take one or two 'fun' classes or courses that are not offered in his or her home country.

#### 7. Counselor Role as School Liaison:

- Notify the school when the student changes host families and promptly provide the school with these details.
- Obtain a copy of the student's report card, so that you can monitor their progress in school (grades and attendance) and keep it on file for forwarding to the district at the end of the exchange.
- Assist in resolution of school difficulties (e.g. poor grades or behavior issues)
- Keep the District Chair & Inbound Chair informed of any school issues.

#### 8. Counselor Role as Club Liaison:

- Arrange with the school, host family and club for the student to attend Rotary regularly (at least twice each month), including transportation.
- Keep the student informed of club events scheduled during the year and make sure the student sets aside the time to attend.
- Assure student gets monthly stipend at the beginning of each month.
- Arrange for cards, presents, etc. for the student, as appropriate, during the exchange year (e.g. birthday, Christmas, end of year). This will vary from club to club.
- Make an effort to introduce the student to as many club members as possible. Often this can be achieved by changing tables each week and sitting with different club members.
- Encourage club members to engage in other activities with the student such as dinner at the member's home, going to the theater, sporting event etc.
- Assist the student in preparing a program for a club meeting and schedule the date with the program chair.
- Keep the club YEO informed of student moves, school problems, host family difficulties and other reporting requirements.

9. It is not the Counselor's duty to make decisions regarding travel by the student. Extended trip plans must be approved by the Club and District Chairmen to assure that the plans meet requirements of the program. Trips should be planned at times other than on school days when possible. (See Travel Section on pg 14)

10. Maintain a contemporaneous Counselor Monthly Log of your meetings with the student and the host family.

11. Counselor role as Host Family Liaison:

- Provide each host family with the dates that they will be hosting the student and the names, addresses and phone numbers of the other host families.
- Provide each host family with a calendar of events for the year: club, district, school
- Make at a minimum, monthly contact with the host family and monitor how the student is doing at home and school. Contacts may be made by phone, e-mail or in person. You must make at least one unannounced visit to each host family.
- Invite each host family to the Rotary club meeting for the student's presentation and other special events as appropriate.
- The Counselor should know the whereabouts (including contact information in case of emergency) of the student at all times. When the host family travels with the student, the Counselor should make sure that the club YEO is kept informed and has granted permission for the travel, if necessary.

12. Problem Solving and Early Returns:

- It is imperative that the Counselor should be fully aware of the vital role he/she plays in the program and his/her contribution to its success. The Counselor must keep the lines of communication open, and try to keep Club members involved in overseeing and guiding the activities of the student, and initiating changes and controls where necessary. It sometimes the Counselor and the student cannot get along. If this happens then the Counselor should step aside in favor of another Counselor. The Counselor should not take this as an indication of his or her inefficiency as there can be times when personalities clash for no apparent reason.
- Problems with the student occasionally occur. The club should seek assistance from the District Committee for all but the smallest problems. Small problems should not be allowed to grow into big ones that result in the termination of the student's exchange. Sometimes it is helpful to involve the Ohio-Erie Country Contact in resolving the problem, particularly if it involves cultural differences.

**The club is never allowed to send a student home. This decision can only be made by the district and Ohio-Erie.**

13. Counselor agrees to become familiar with the District 6690 policies in order to be able to assist the student with questions, without contradicting Rotary philosophies and expectations.

14. Counselor to advocate for a student when he/she is having difficulties at home or at school.

15. Counselor to represent the Inbound Student's point of view in case conflict resolution is needed.

16. Counselor to help a student with self-discipline if he/she goes off track.

## STUDENT PROTECTION

District 6690 Rotary Youth Exchange is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all participants in Rotary activities. It is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses, partners and any other volunteers to safeguard to the best of their ability, the welfare of and to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people with whom they come into contact.

### ***Definitions:***

***Volunteer:*** Any adult involved with Rotary Youth Exchange activities who has direct interactions with students, either supervised or unsupervised. This includes, but is not limited to, club and district Youth Exchange officers and committee member, Rotarian counselors, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, their spouses and partners that host students for activities or outings or who might drive students to events or functions, host parents, and other adult residents of the host home (including sibling and other family members).

***Sexual Abuse:*** Sexual abuse refers to engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student, or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts, alone or with another person of any age of the same sex or opposite sex.

Additional examples of sexual abuse could include, but are not limited to:

- Non-touching offenses
- Indecent Exposure
- Exposing a student to sexual or pornographic material

***Sexual Harassment:*** Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse and is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or „groom“ their victims.

Examples of sexual harassment could include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual advances
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, and comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact, such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures, and suggestive or insulting comments.

### **Abuse & Harassment Allegation-Reporting Guidelines**

The most powerful force in the promotion of international understanding and peace is exposure to difference cultures. Youth Exchange provides thousands of young people with the opportunity to meet people from other lands and to experience their cultures.

A Youth Exchange student will spend a year, or perhaps just an extended period of time, living with a host family in a country other than their own. Rotarians, their families, and non-Rotarian volunteers are expected to use their

best efforts to safeguard the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse or harassment of every student with whom they come into contact.

Rotary International is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of Youth Exchange students and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be handled within the following guidelines. **The safety and well-being of students should always be the first priority.**

### **IS IT ABUSE OR IS IT HARASSMENT?**

Whether the alleged conduct amounts to sexual abuse or sexual harassment is NOT to be determined by the adult to whom the allegations are made. After ensuring the safety of the student, all allegations should be immediately reported.

**Any adult to whom a student reports an incident of abuse or harassment is responsible for following these:**

#### **Allegation Reporting Guidelines**

##### **1. Report from Student:**

- a. Listen attentively and stay calm. Acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse. It is appropriate to listen and be encouraging. Do not express shock, horror or disbelief.
- b. Assure privacy but not confidentiality. Explain that you will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment to make it stop and to ensure that it doesn't happen to other students.
- c. Get the facts, but don't interrogate. Ask the student questions that establish what was done and who did it. Reassure the student that s/he did the right thing in telling you. Avoid asking "why" questions. Remember your responsibility is to present the student's story to the proper authorities.
- d. Be non-judgmental and reassure the student. Do not be critical of anything that has happened or anyone who may be involved. It is especially important not to blame or criticize the student. Assure the student that the situation was not their fault and that they were brave and mature to come to you.
- e. Record. Keep a written record of the conversation with the student as soon after the report as you can, including the date and time of the conversation. Use the student's words, and record only what has been told to you

##### **2. Protect the Student**

Ensure the safety and well-being of the student. Remove the student from the situation immediately and all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser. Give reassurance that this is for the student's own safety and is not a punishment.

##### **3. Report to Appropriate Law Enforcement Authorities**

Immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment to the appropriate law enforcement authorities first and then to the club and district leadership for investigation.

In most situations, the first Rotary contact is the Rotarian counselor who has responsibility for seeking the advice of and interacting with appropriate agencies. However, if the allegation involves the conduct of the Rotarian counselor, then the District Student Protection Officer or District Youth Exchange chair should be contacted. All allegations will be reported to Rotary International as soon as reasonably possible. The person responsible for doing so is the District Youth Exchange Chair.

#### **4. Avoid Gossip and Blame**

Do not tell anyone about the report other than those required by the guidelines. Care must be taken to protect the rights of both the victim and the accused during the investigation.

#### **5. Do Not Challenge the Alleged Offender**

The adult to whom the student reports must not contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment, the district youth exchange chair and district governor are responsible for investigating, and will be in contact with the alleged offender after the student has been moved to a safe environment.

#### **6. Follow-Up**

After reporting allegations follow up to make sure steps are being taken to address the situation.

#### **Post Allegation-Reporting Guidelines**

##### **Responding to the Needs of the Student**

There will need to be a cohesive and managed team approach to supporting the student after an allegation report. The student is likely to feel embarrassed, confused, and may become withdrawn and appear to be avoiding members of the host family or club. After a report of harassment or abuse, students may or may not want to remain on their exchange. If they do, they may or may not want to continue their relationship with their hosting Rotary club, depending on the circumstances. In some cases, a student may wish to remain in country, but change to a different host club.

It may be difficult for club members and host families to understand how the student is feeling, but it would be helpful for the student to know that the club and family remains a support for them. Club members and host families may experience ambiguity toward their roles and may feel unclear regarding their boundaries. However, they need to do whatever is necessary to reassure the student of their support at all times.

##### **Appropriate Response for Addressing Issues within the Rotary Club for Allegations Made Against Rotarians or Non-Rotarians**

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of the students. You should not speculate, make editorial comments, or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations. You are cautioned about speculating or commenting on the matter during the investigations. Do not comment about alleged victims in support of alleged abusers, OR against an alleged abuser.

## DAY TO DAY MANAGEMENT OF YOUR INBOUND STUDENT

### Finances

IMPORTANT NOTE: Working to earn income is prohibited for students. The student visa restricts this.

#### *Student Costs*

- Emergency fund (held in the care of the local Rotary club)
- Sufficient spending money for personal expenses, clothing & entertainment
- School activity fees and needed supplies
- Ohio-Erie approved trips (optional)
- School lunches and/or ala-carte (if student chooses to purchase lunch at school)
- Medical Fees not covered by insurance
- Airline fees for changing a return ticket and/or for excess baggage

\*The student may arrive with a visa/debit card from home country, or a large amount of cash to pay for personal expenses during the year. Communicate with your student about this, and help determine the best method of securing personal funds for the duration of the stay.

\*Students may need guidance in understanding currency, and the buying power of a dollar here – as opposed to the buying power of currency in home country. It is a good idea to help your student establish a budget, so he/she doesn't run out of money too soon!

#### *Host Family Costs*

- Room and board
- Adequate supply of lunch items, if the student chooses to carry lunch to school

\*A host family may provide additional support as circumstances allow. This varies by host family and should not be expected by the student or Rotary club.

#### *Club Costs*

- Monthly allowance equivalent to \$75 minimum in U.S. currency (host club)
- Any required tuition for high school education in host country (host club)
- The costs of transportation to any required student meetings during the year

\*A sponsor club may offer additional support at their discretion. This varies by district and by individual club policy.

### **Student Insurance**

All District 6690 exchange students are covered by a medical/accident insurance policy which meets Rotary International standards. Your student should have the insurance information with them as it was a requirement that they purchased it before they arrived. For claims and coverage, please contact the insurance company directly.

### **Vaccinations/Immunizations**

Most countries require students to carry proof of vaccination record with essential papers. Students should arrive with all required vaccines completed. If this is not the case, you may need to help your student arrange for vaccinations at your local clinic. Your student will need to pay for these out of pocket. Vaccinations are not covered by our insurance policy.

### **The Rotary 'Uniform' – The Youth Exchange Blazer**

The Rotary Blazer will identify your Exchange Student and draw attention in a positive way. It is always suitable when the occasion calls for "dressing up". It is always expected when attending Rotary events, and appropriate for your student to wear at all Rotary meetings. You will notice the number of pins and ribbons multiply on the blazer during the year. That is the practice of „pin trading“ – which is worldwide among Rotary Youth Exchange Students. It becomes an important symbol of their year of study abroad.

### **Medical Records**

Some students arrive with prescription drugs, some arrive with a variety of „over the counter“ medications from their home country, and some arrive with physician orders for medications that need to be filled during the year or eyeglass prescriptions for „back-up“ if their glasses or contact lenses are damaged. If your student fits into any of these categories, make sure you provide appropriate guidance, and ask as many questions as you need in order to understand the situation.

Occasionally, a student will arrive with a serious undisclosed medical condition. If you learn of something of this nature, or if you have other concerns, contact your district officer.

### **Computer and Internet**

Student computer and internet use may become disruptive in the host family and/or could prevent your student from forming bonds in our culture. Reinforce structure and time limits with the host family AND your student. Students and their families were informed of a 30 day black-out period and they were not allowed to bring their laptop with them.

Keep in mind, the Rotary reports and meeting schedules are often sent by e-mail. If your student spends very LITTLE time on the computer, make sure you at least encourage him/her to check e-mails – or else ask your district to send things by regular mail.

Other than basic responsibilities, the computer and use of the internet should be kept at a MIMIMUM. It is a common trap for students to sit at the computer and chat with friends and family back home, longer or more frequently than they should. This limits their experience in a new country, and inhibits their ability to adjust to your culture.

Naturally a student wants to tell friends and family at home all that's happening the first weeks of their exchange, but students will adjust faster and easier if they write the experiences in a journal. If they are chatting with old friends and parents all the time, they haven't emotionally left home yet.

You should strongly encourage alternate activities. If the computer use is getting out of hand, have a serious discussion with your student. If this is not enough, ask for reinforcement from your district officer.

### Cell Phones

Students may be provided with a cell phone by their host families, though this is not expected. If a student is added to a personal phone plan, he/she needs guidelines for use. The way cell phone company's structure accounts and how they charge for usage is different in every country. Explain to your student that international calling on the cell phone will be very expensive. A good alternative would be to have your student purchase an international calling card. They are widely available, with a variety of rates.

If a host family provides a phone to their student, the cell phone must be returned to the family when your student changes homes. The next family will set their own rules for cell phones. Students may wish to purchase their own cell phone with pre-paid minutes. If so, discuss this with your student on what is considered „acceptable use“. Keep in mind that once he gives the number out to family and friends in his home country, excessive call volume may be difficult to monitor; and it can potentially interfere with a student's integration. Contact your district officer if you are uncertain what kind of advice to offer.

You should verify school policies on cell phone use, and communicate this information to your student.

### Student Presentation

Your student will arrive with a fully-prepared 15-minute (minimum) talk that they have written and practiced themselves. Some bring a power point presentation or slides or photos. You should invite your student as a guest speaker, as soon as you feel he/she has adequate grasp of the language. Your student might be nervous. Provide encouragement and reassurance that he is among friends. He/She may also have a photo album to show host families and friends. These are good conversation starters. Encourage your student to share this with you.

## THE 4 D'S

There are many situations in which students can find themselves on a plane home...early. The most obvious cause would be if they break the laws of their host country....that is if they are not in jail. The Four D's address offenses that can get them into trouble and might result in their exchange being terminated.

**DRUGS** - Any association with drugs, drug users or drug dealers will violate the intention of and spirit of youth exchange. If students find themselves in the company of anyone who falls into this category – they should get out of the situation as quickly as they can. They were selected because they are leaders. We do not expect them to behave like followers.

**DRINKING** – In some countries, alcohol may be consumed at meals. If offered by host parents in this circumstance, students may accept. Regardless of the legal drinking age in their host country, students are not permitted to drink alcohol with friends at parties or in bars. Alcohol abuse may be grounds for termination of an exchange year.

**DRIVING** – Students cannot drive any motorized vehicle while on exchange. Their health insurance will not pay for injuries while driving any motorized vehicle. This includes cars, motorcycles, scooters, farm vehicles, power boats, snowmobiles, personal watercraft, etc. Students cannot afford to be involved in an accident in which they are the driver. Do not take this risk. They may not be covered by their insurance.

**DATING** – Students should not become romantically involved during their year abroad. It will lead to emotional stress, and will take away from the objectives of their year...which is to meet many people and enjoy many activities.

## GOING TO SCHOOL

**ALL ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND FULL-TIME SCHOOL AT HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, TO PARTICIPATE IN A MEANINGFUL WAY AND TO TAKE ALL PRESCRIBED TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS.**

1. Even if students have completed high school in their home country, they should not ask or expect to be enrolled in college or university classes. The student visa that is issued to your student requires attendance at high school level.
2. Although academic credits are not the primary objective of our program, the attitude of school officials towards granting exchange students time off for other activities will vary. There may be Rotary functions and Rotary-approved travel that will help to broaden a student's education, but these must be discussed with the Rotary YEO and school principal in advance.
3. Exchange students are the new kids and easily noticed in the high school. Good or bad, they will be noticed. They are expected to be respectful of their principal and teachers. They are expected to obey the school regulations, even if other students do not.
4. Rotary students are expected to complete homework assignments the same as any student. Language may be an obstacle, but nobody should ask them to do more than their best. You may offer to help them with homework, and you should help them understand basic norms for school. For example, your student may be faithfully doing homework every night, but might not realize it must be turned in for grades. (In some countries, students keep their homework for practice, and grades are based on one large test at the end of the semester.)
5. Students should be aware that schools are places in which drugs, sexual harassment, and violence are not uncommon. Help prepare them for this experience. Our school systems may be very different for them in this way. Remind your student that not all other students are nice and some may try to take advantage of him/her. Encourage your student to choose friends with care.
6. Help your student to understand how to avoid the "wrong crowd" and situations that might lead to breaking the law. Exchange students can be prosecuted for crimes in a host country, the same as any other resident of that country. Rotary cannot protect them from this. If your student breaks the law, becomes truant, or is under investigation for crime— you need to notify your district officer immediately.
7. We encourage our exchange students to participate in school and sports activities outside of the classroom. It is the best way to meet others and begin healthy friendships. It is also a good way to limit or prevent the culture shock phenomenon.
8. Exchange students should try to limit friendships with other exchange students – though this will be the most "comfortable" group for them at first. Our students should make friends locally in order to better integrate into our culture.

9. Although our exchange students are here to learn our language and culture, they should be prepared to accept every opportunity to give talks about their home country while in school and in other places within the community. Most of the people that our students meet will probably never have the chance to visit their country, but many others may be interested to know about it.

## STUDENT TRAVEL

Students are NOT permitted to travel outside the Rotary District, except when being taken by a Rotarian, a Rotary host family or an adult person pre-approved by Rotary.

Rotary-sponsored functions are permissible and sometimes expected. If students plan to participate in a Rotary-approved student tour, then the student and/or their natural parents are responsible for the costs involved.

Students must not travel outside their city of residence alone.

Students are not permitted to take road trips with peers.

Students must not hitchhike at any time.

Students must not phone or write to any other Rotary club and ask to be hosted.

At the end of an exchange, students are to travel home by the most direct route. They cannot make any stopovers or side trips along the way.

If parents wish to pick up students at the end of exchange they may do so. Other relatives may pick students up only with Rotary approval and written permission from natural parents. In regards to this:

- The Club YEO and District Chair must be informed. Students must provide written documentation of travel plans and the flight details for returning to home country. Rotary is not responsible for students at the time that natural parents arrive.

Rotary's greatest concern is for student safety. Please respect the precautions that have been established. You might know of other programs in which students have more freedom to do as they wish. The Rotary Program, however, is oriented to structure and a student's best interests are in mind at all times.

### IN ORDER TO TRAVEL STUDENTS MUST:

- Natural parents written and signed permission (if traveling outside of district)
- Obtain written permission from the Rotary club (host & sponsor)
- Obtain written permission from your District Chair & Inbound Chair
- Be accompanied by Rotary approved adults (requires a background check)
- Provide detailed trip information
- Provide emergency contact information for their time away

### Natural Parent Visits

Some countries prohibit, and most countries strongly discourage, visits by parents. Family visits are not allowed during holidays. It is of great cultural significance for students to celebrate holidays with their hosts. It is also very

meaningful for the host families to share these celebrations with their students. A family visit during the exchange year places students at risk for culture shock, since students are left behind to finish their exchange. At minimum, the student will re-experience the pain of separation. The emotional impact will include anger, resentment, withdrawal and deep sadness (similar to the stages of grief). Host families and student counselors can become exhausted with the effort of helping their student start over. However, if natural parents would like to visit, they can do so at the last quarter of the exchange year (typically after March/April). This will also need to be approved by the hosting and sponsoring district before the Natural Parents can start making arrangements.

## SPECIAL ISSUES

### THE PROBLEM STUDENT

*Although we hope that we do not have any problems with the students, we must remember that they are STUDENTS!*

The YEO and Counselor should investigate any problems or situations that are reported by the host family, the school, or the student. Inform the student if they are not the ones making the complaint. Work through the problem and suggest solutions. Notify the inbound chair immediately and make sure to document the issue.

If the problem continues after the first warning, meet with the student again and set a time limit during which the problem will be resolved. Contact the inbound chair that a **contract** needs to be written specifying what actions needs to be taken to correct the problem.

This contract will be signed by the student, counselor and the inbound chair. It will be send to the country contact, sponsoring club and natural parents informing them about the problem. Hopefully, the sponsoring club and natural parents will contact the student for correction of the problem.

If problems persist, and the district and Ohio-Erie elects to send the student home, country contact will notify the Rotary counterparts overseas about the decision. The Club should NOT contact the student's sponsoring club or the natural parents. It is painful enough to receive word that your child has failed in their exchange. Parents will naturally be inquisitive and probably emotional. We work hard to be sensitive in these matters.

All cultures have protocols. Please bear in mind that more harm than good might be done if the process is steamrolled. Depending on the circumstances, it might take only a few hours to make all the necessary contacts, or it might take a few days. You are assured that we will be diligent in achieving quick resolution.

Some major reasons for the students being sent home early include

- Attitude.
- Illness
- Poor grades/poor school attendance
- Romantic involvement
- Drinking alcoholic Beverages
- Drugs
- Operating a motorized vehicle
- Breaking the law

The Counselor should be called in to speak with the student in case of problems. We do ask you to try intervention strategies to end a student's self-destructive behavior. In some cases, students might be acting out for underlying reasons that are not easily understood. We believe that all students are good and all deserve fair treatment. Your Student Counselor is to be the student's advocate in all situations of disagreement between the student and the host family or YEO. The Counselor should be acquainted with your student from the beginning of the stay.

### **Warning Signs THAT YOU SHOULD ACT ON IMMEDIATELY**

- Excessive sleeping or insomnia
- Significant weight gain or loss
- Prolonged acute depression
- Constantly feeling sick and/or feeling like they do not want to go to school
- Excessive calls or e-mail home
- Excessive calls or e-mail from parents
- Disrespectful behavior
- Serious communications barriers with host family
- Student beginning to say he/she MUST go home
- Suicidal tendencies and/or behavior

If your student reports any of these symptoms, seek the guidance of your district officer. These are signs that your student may be at risk for severe depression.

### **MANAGING A STUDENT "EMERGENCY"**

Occasionally, an emergency happens that may require a student's early return home or a parent to fly here. Every situation is different, and fortunately these are rare. If this is the case, Rotary leadership must be notified and will provide guidance.

#### **There are some general guidelines you should follow when an emergency happens:**

1. Seek to the safety and well-being of those in your care.
2. Seek the assistance of local Rotary leaders to bring about order and calm to the situation.
3. As soon as possible, notify your district YE leaders. If a District YE Committee member is not available, contact your district governor. Report as much relevant detail as possible, and follow instructions that they provide.

\*If Rotary leaders contact you, they will provide instructions on what you should do.

Emergency procedures are in place, for Rotary leaders to handle notification of Rotary organizations and student families overseas. You should not make direct contact overseas, without being first instructed to do so by an officer within the District.

In a situation where your student is being cared for, is able to communicate in a calm and rational manner, and does wish to contact his family, he should be permitted to do so. A call from a student to his family might be

reassuring for all involved. But if the situation is not yet under control, a premature phone call could also lead to panic. Use your best judgment in making this decision.

In all situations, communicate as clearly as you can, provide specifics, communicate updates as often as necessary. Your primary contact person is your District YE Chair unless you have been instructed differently by someone in a position of higher authority.