

Youth Exchange Guidelines

The Board of Directors of Rotary International has established recommended guidelines to assist clubs and districts in implementing their Youth Exchange activities. All club and district Youth Exchange programs are strongly urged to adopt and comply with the following guidelines.

In addition, clubs and districts are strongly encouraged to consult legal counsel regarding liability issues before undertaking Youth Exchange activities, including advice relative to securing liability insurance.

The Board, with a view to promoting Youth Exchange as an opportunity for the development of international understanding, encourages district governors to appoint district Youth Exchange officers or committees, and to provide to the general secretary early in the year the names and addresses of such officers or committee chairpersons. The general secretary should publish annually a list of all Youth Exchange officers or district Youth Exchange committee chairpersons serving one district, more than one district, or all the districts in one country. This list should be revised and distributed annually to district governors and to those who are included in the list.

The district Youth Exchange officers, or committees, serve under the supervision of their respective district governors and should report to them.

The Board encourages the involvement of people with disabilities in Youth Exchange programs and other youth projects where and when this is possible and agreed upon between the sponsoring and receiving clubs or districts. The Board recommends that district governors appoint one member of their district Youth Exchange committee to be responsible for encouraging and aiding in the participation of people with disabilities in both long-term and short-term exchanges.

Employment regulations in various countries make it impractical for Rotary clubs and districts to engage in any international Youth Exchange programs in which participants are paid wages. However, individual Rotarians may provide support to other organizations that are properly equipped to undertake this type of international exchange of youth.

The following guidelines are provided to assist clubs and districts undertaking Youth Exchange activities. Clubs and districts are encouraged to adopt and follow these guidelines in organizing and implementing their programs.

1. It is recognized that many successful exchanges are made for less than a full academic year and that in the interest of international understanding and goodwill, not all programs need be reciprocal. By mutual consent of the parties concerned, any of the responsibilities indicated may be assigned to someone other than the party specified.
2. A Rotary Youth Exchange program is not a privilege for sons and daughters of Rotarians only, but welcomes any young people who meet the requirements of the program and who are recommended and sponsored by a Rotarian, a Rotary club, or a district.
3. Careful selection of all individuals involved in Rotary Youth Exchange programs should be of paramount concern and be done with the utmost care and consideration.
 - a. Exchange candidates of ages acceptable to both sending and receiving districts should submit a written application and should undergo a selection process including personal interviews with the applicant and the applicant's parents or legal guardians at the club level and at the district level.
 - b. The hosting Rotary club or district should conscientiously screen and select host families on the basis of a written application and personal interview. For long-term exchanges, it is preferable for a student to have three or four successive host families.
 - c. The hosting Rotary club should select a Rotarian counselor for each exchangee to serve as a liaison between the exchangee and the Rotary club, host family, and the community at large. The club counselor should not be a member of the student's host family and should be trained in responding to problems or concerns which may arise during the exchange.

4. The sending Rotary club or district should arrange for orientation for the exchangees and parents or legal guardians including a briefing about the local Rotary club and its activities, and should arrange for the exchangee to be accepted by a receiving Rotary club or district. The receiving Rotary club or district should also provide an orientation program for incoming students. Because local laws and customs in one country may differ greatly from those in other parts of the world, orientation should include information on local laws and customs which may apply to young people.
5. The parents or legal guardians of each exchangee should provide health, accident, and liability insurance with respect to each exchangee in amounts satisfactory to the receiving Rotary club or district, with coverage from the time of the exchangee's departure from home until the exchangee's return home. Evidence of coverage of all insurance with a responsible insurance company or companies satisfactory to the host Rotary club or district prior to the beginning of the exchange should be submitted to and received by the host Rotary club or district. Such insurance should provide not less than US\$500,000 or equivalent medical expense coverage, not less than US\$10,000 or equivalent accidental death or dismemberment, not less than US\$10,000 or equivalent for repatriation of remains, nor less than US\$50,000 or equivalent for emergency transport or evacuation. (*See Chapter 6 for more information.*)
6. The parents or legal guardians of the exchangee are responsible for providing appropriate clothing and round-trip transportation to and from the host district.
7. The exchangee should undertake no travel outside the immediate area of the community in which the receiving Rotary club is located without the consent of the exchangee's parents or legal guardians and of the participating Rotary clubs or districts.
8. The exchangee SHOULD NOT under any circumstances be permitted to operate or drive a motorized vehicle of ANY kind during the period of the exchange, nor to own a motorized vehicle in the host country.
9. The exchangee and the prospective host family should communicate with each other before the exchangee leaves home.
10. The host family should provide room and board for the exchangee and exercise appropriate supervisory and parental responsibility to ensure the exchangee's well-being.
11. All individuals involved in the exchange, including exchangees and their parents or legal guardians, host family members, and Rotarian counselors, should agree in writing to all the requirements of the program as determined by the sending and receiving Rotary clubs or districts. All participants should display comportment at all times reflecting credit on self, the home country, and Rotary and should respect each other and act responsibly, befitting their role in the program. Exchangees should strive to adapt to the way of life of the host country, and host family members should assist exchangees in ways to ease that transition. The exchangee should accept the supervision and authority of the host family and the receiving Rotary club or district during the period of the exchange. Exchangees should return home at a time and by a route agreed upon by their parents or legal guardians and the receiving Rotary club or district.
12. Any participant who does not comply with the requirements of the program should be removed from participation in the program. In the case of exchangees, they should be returned home by the receiving Rotary club or district at the earliest practical time by a route agreed upon between the parents or legal guardians or the sponsoring Rotary club or district. All parties involved in the exchange, including hosting and receiving Rotary clubs and districts, host families and the student's parents or legal guardians, should be fully informed prior to the student being sent home.
13. All Rotarians and Rotary clubs involved in establishing exchange activities are urged to be sure that preliminary agreements accurately reflect what they expect from the group with which the exchange is arranged, especially in the area of selection and orientation.
14. The hosting and sending Rotary club or districts should provide exchangees with a list of individuals to contact in the case of a problem or emergency. This list should include the name and contact information for the student's Rotarian counselor, hosting Rotary club president, hosting district chairperson, hosting district governor, sponsoring district chairperson, sponsoring district governor, and sponsoring club president.
15. Clubs and districts are encouraged to use the standard Youth Exchange applications available through the Secretariat.

16. Participants should be between the ages of 15 and 19 at the beginning of the exchange unless a different age range is mutually agreed upon by the participating Rotary clubs or districts. They should be above average in their school work, preferably in the upper-third of their school class. Long-term exchanges should be for one academic year but may be extended to include part or all of the holiday periods immediately preceding and immediately following the academic year.
17. For long-term exchanges, the hosting club should provide for all educational expenses, arrange an appropriate academic program, and provide a program of orientation and continued contacts to familiarize the exchangee with the host community.
18. For long-term exchanges, the receiving Rotary club or district should provide a modest monthly allowance for the exchangee in an amount to be jointly determined by the parties concerned. Where meals eaten at school are not otherwise provided for, the monthly allowance should be sufficient to include the cost of such meals.
19. Following their return, exchangees and their parents or legal guardians should be encouraged to attend a meeting conducted by the district Youth Exchange committee for debriefing of recently returned exchangees for the purpose of assisting them to return to their home, school, and community environment.
20. Any other provisions consistent with the foregoing and which are deemed necessary or convenient for the operation of an exchange program may be adopted by the Rotary clubs or districts concerned.

Multidistrict exchange programs

Each district governor has the responsibility for the supervision of the Youth Exchange program within his or her district. It is recognized that there may be instances where clubs in two or more districts wish to cooperate in jointly undertaking an activity or program. The Board has no objection to such cooperative effort, provided any activity or project is not undertaken as a joint activity or project unless two-thirds of the clubs in each such district have first approved participation in such joint activity or project, and unless the district governors of the respective districts have secured in advance specific authorization of the Board of Rotary International to undertake and participate in such activity or project. Each such proposal to the Board should be evaluated on its merits.

Each district governor is urged to do all possible to foster Youth Exchange activities in the district, while retaining authority over the program. Each district governor should take steps to ensure that no personal financial profit is being made from such activities and that appropriate risk management measures are in place.

Multidistrict activities should be administered by a committee composed of current district Youth Exchange chairpersons and other officers appointed by the respective district governors of participating districts.

Such a multidistrict committee is responsible for reporting in writing not less often than annually on its work and finances to all district governors in the participating districts.

International travel by exchangees

No Rotary club should assist or cooperate in sending a young person abroad on an international travel activity unless careful plans are made in advance covering every aspect of the proposed trip. In particular, no Rotary club should provide an identification card, letter of introduction, request for assistance or other credential or document, intended to identify or introduce a young person to a Rotary club or clubs in another country, unless complete mutual agreement has been reached in advance with respect to the hospitality or assistance to be provided by the host Rotary club.

No Rotary club is obliged to provide hospitality or assistance to any young person from another country, despite any demonstrated or claimed sponsorship of a Rotary club, unless the receiving Rotary club has explicitly agreed in advance to provide such hospitality or assistance. It is the prerogative of any Rotary club to determine what assistance, if any, it will offer to young persons.