

# Safety and Security while on exchange

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# Before you go

- Familiarize yourself with the laws and customs of the country in which you will be living.
- Students on exchange are expected to obey all laws and respect local customs.
- The more you know about the culture the better prepared and safer you will be.
- Learn as much of your new language as possible.
- Inquire about cell phone plans/activation with your first host family or counsellor – make this your priority after arrival.



# Before you go

- Make at least 3 copies of your passport, airline ticket, proof of insurance, credit cards or any other documentation you will be taking with you.
- Place each copy into a separate envelope (emergency envelope).
- When traveling to your host country always carry your original documents on your person.
- Ensure you have contact information for your first host family and Club counselor on your person as well.

# Emergency envelopes

- Prepare at least three envelopes.
- Leave one with your parents and pack the remaining envelopes in your checked luggage.
- Once you arrive, give one to your Counselor and keep one for yourself.
- Once with your first host family determine a safe place to store your documents. Especially your passport.



# Emergency envelope contents

- Copy of your passport
- Copy of your medical insurance card with instructions for its use.
- Emergency phone/email list for family – home and work.
- Copy of contact information for host family and Counselor.
- Copy of prescription for medication, glasses or contacts.
- Copy of credit card information.
- Copy of medical release form signed by your parent.

# Prescriptions

- Let us know if you are taking medication not listed on your application form.
- For ongoing prescription medicine, bring enough to last your entire exchange. Remember to always carry prescription medicine in its original container.
- If you wear glasses or contacts, bring a copy of your prescription.
- Bring an extra pair of glasses and enough contact lenses to last through your exchange.

# After you have arrived.....

- Remember that part about learning as much of your new language as possible...here is where you find you could have learned more.
- Regardless of your language skill however, you can still practice the six Bs: Be First, Be Curious, Be on Purpose, Be Grateful, Be of Service and Be Here Now. They will serve you well during your exchange.
- While you are largely responsible for your personal health and safety you will, at least initially, need to rely on the help of others.

**Rotary**  
District 5040



rotary  
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exchange

# Welcome to Your New Host Country!

- Being in a foreign environment, you will be at a distinct disadvantage. Things that were routine and considered safe at home may not be in your new country. Listen to the advice of your host family.
- You will need to develop a heightened awareness of your surroundings and be more security conscious than you would be at home.
- Avoid going out at night alone when you first arrive.
- Always carry your emergency contact list.

# While you are out

- Always ensure you carry some form of picture identification (do not carry your passport unless required for travel).
- Get your cell phone activated and ensure it is charged and has sufficient minutes whenever you are going out.
- Emergency # is 911 in British Columbia.
- Enter ICE into your phone contacts ‘in case of emergency’
- Think things out carefully before you act and do not take unnecessary risks.
- Dress and behave sensibly and responsibly.
- Be sensitive to local customs and culture.

# While you are out

- Always tell someone where you are going and when you will be home. Be sure to call or text your host parents if your plans change.
- When you go out, have a plan. Think about what you would do if you got lost, separated from your friends or ended up in a situation you needed to remove yourself from. Where would you go, who would you call? Discuss your plan with your host family to ensure it is viable.
- If out at night, try to remain in well lit public places.
- Always have an exit strategy.

# The other Ds

- While Rotary International has their 4Ds of exchange, we have added some additional Ds to be aware of.
- Demonstrations or Civil Disobedience – You are not to participate in any demonstration or acts of civil disobedience while on exchange. In many countries, the right to peaceful protest varies significantly from what is accepted in Canada. These situations can turn dangerous quickly and as a result participation is prohibited.
- Disfigurement – No new tattoos or piercings.

# The other Ds

- **Disengagement** – Live in the moment and embrace the differences you will experience during your exchange. You need to be mentally in the country not just physically in the country. This is the number one reason that students are returned home early.
- Take advantage of opportunities presented to you. Not every experience will be memorable but being engaged will lead to those that will.
- Have a bucket list and let people know what is on it.
- Clubs have returned students who are, or who appear to be disengaged.

# Student protection

- Rotary is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all of our youth exchange students, both inbound and outbound.
- We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of our exchange students and preventing physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse.
- Your safety is important to us but we can only help if we know there is a problem.



# Student protection

- No student will be brought home for reporting an incident, unless it is required to ensure their personal safety.
- You have the right to adhere to personal standards involving your body. While respecting vast cultural difference, you have the right to judge how you deal with unwelcome sexual contact or related physical activity.

"No" is a complete sentence.  
It does not require justification or explanation.

# Rotary support system

- Host Family – Given you daily interaction, they will be your first point of contact for most problems/concerns.
- Host Club Counselor/YEO – another local contact who can help you with minor problems.
- Host District Inbound Coordinator – Gina Rawson. Should have contact at least monthly, receive progress reports.
- Host District Youth Chair – More serious problems, travel authorizations and progress reports.

# Other support

- Your Parents – Routine contact, health emergencies and non-YE problems.
- Try to limit contact.
- We will ensure that your parents are informed of any situation (safety/security) involving you, but we need to hear it from you first.
- They love you but they cannot help you. Often when parents become involved they make matters worse.

# Safety vs discomfort

- There is a difference between feeling confused and uncomfortable and feeling unsafe.
- Experiencing discomfort is part of being in a new culture.
- If you feel unsafe, there is a problem that needs to be addressed.



# Safety vs discomfort

- If you feel unsafe, trust the little voice inside your head that is telling you something is wrong.
- Be vigilant and seek safety with others or at a safe place.
- Tell someone. You need to tell your host parent, counselor, teacher, or some other trusted adult/mentor.
- Rotary is committed to your safety and will intervene to keep you safe.

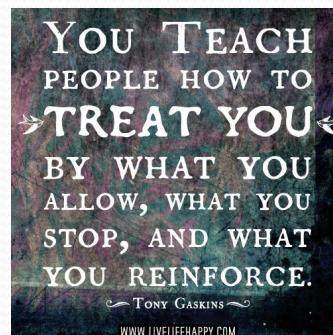


# Reporting

- If you have been or feel threatened with physical, psychological or sexual abuse:
  - 1. Report the situation to your host YEO/Counsellor immediately.
  - 2. Report the situation to District 5040 immediately. Contact your sponsor District Chair!
  - 3. You can call at any time from any where.

# Reporting

- Be assured that you are not making things worse.
- Do not keep it a secret. If something happens to you or to someone else it needs to be reported to protect you and others.
- You have the right to: trust your instincts, expect privacy, say no to unwanted touching or affection, say no to an adult's inappropriate demands or requests, withhold information that could jeopardize your safety.



# Expectations

What you can expect from Rotary:

- That someone will listen attentively, stay calm and support you in your actions.
- That any report will be treated seriously.
- That we will work quickly to resolve the situation.
- That when appropriate we will work with the proper authorities and have you immediately removed from any unsafe situation.

# Travel safety

- Terrorist attacks have happened in virtually every country.
- Places of mass gathering are “soft targets” and are frequently targets of attack.
- “Soft targets” include – public transportation hubs, sporting arenas, entertainment areas and shopping centers.
- Do not ‘hang out’ in transit exchanges, stations or bus stops, move through these areas quickly and be alert to any potential dangers.
- Consider the current threat level /recent activity when attending these areas.

# Travel safety

- If you are at the site of an attack your first priority is your safety.
- Leave the area as quickly as possible, as secondary attacks may occur.
- If in a building, exit as quickly as possible, do not stop to retrieve personal items, do not use your cell phone. Help others if it does not place you at further risk.



# Safety in the event of an incident

- If outside, move away from windows and glass doors or other potentially hazardous areas.
- Continue to move away from the incident.
- Look for emergency officials who will direct you to a safe location.
- Limit the use of your cellular phone.



# Safety in the event of an incident

- If you are nearby, but not in the immediate attack area, assess the environment around you before taking any action.
- Avoid being lured closer to see what is happening. Secondary attacks pose a significant risk.
- Listen for, and follow, instructions from local authorities.



# Safety in the event of an incident

- If on a train or bus, it is generally best to remain inside unless you are in immediate danger.
- Listen to the communication system/staff to receive instructions.
- If you must leave the train or bus, be aware of hazards outside, such as other vehicles or trains. Move to the nearest station or follow the directions of emergency personnel.



# Conclusion



- These safety rules are meant to help you, not scare you.
- Knowing how to protect yourself and effectively respond to situations, will help you avoid problems and make your exchange year and the best adventure of your life.

