



Rotary District 5040 Youth Exchange Club Youth Exchange Officer/Counsellor Manual

INCLUDING VIRTUAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM
UPDATED MAY 2021



YOU'RE THE YOUTH EXCHANGE COUNSELOR. WHAT'S NEXT?

So, you are the new Counselor (Youth Exchange Counselor) and same gender as the Inbound Student, sponsored by your club.

You have a current Criminal Record Check, on file with our District 5040 compliance person, you have a completed and checked volunteer information sheet on file and both forms current within 4 years.

There are several online courses that will be sent to you regarding Student Safety and our Youth Protection Policy once you let us know that you are onboard with this exciting position.

[Youth Protection Policy | Rotary District 5040 \(rotary5040.org\)](http://rotary5040.org)

Now what? What is your role entail? What can you expect? Here you will find a quick overview of your responsibilities. A much more complete instruction can be found by downloading and reviewing the YEO manual. This position is considered the most fun position on the committee. Your main job is to be connected to the student to make sure everything is going well. It is advisable to meet with the student at least once a month for a "chat". This can be over coffee or a phone call. We suggest that at the same time as the meeting, you had the student his/her allowance cheque and if possible, take them to their established financial institution to make the deposit.

Hockey games, social outings, a simple meal at your home will go a long way in deepening the relationship with the student.

Obviously personal contact is the best to develop the kind of relationship you should have with your student. You may even consider having them stay with you for a couple days early in the year to get better acquainted. A student is more likely to "open up" to you if they feel they know you.

In addition, each club sets up their club committee in a unique way that fits their specific dynamics and you may be asked to assist the YEO (Youth Exchange Officer) in certain aspects of the committee that may include:

Inbound Student Home Inspection

Our district requires a home inspection/visit be conducted by a different “certified Rotarian” than performed the initial home inspection/visit. Your YEO can assist you with this.

Other Activities where you might help are:

Recruiting Outbound Students

In early September the committee will need to make arrangements with the school to talk to students about the program. This can take place in several ways; a school assembly, a class of 9th or 10th graders with a sympathetic teacher that will allow you to take up time in their classroom, flyers, Interact club, and many other possibilities. The committee will need to introduce the program to these students; we say 9th or 10th graders because although a student can choose to go out in their 12th grade year, however, this will be up to the local high school and whether they are able to accommodate in inbound student in this case. It is ideal for them to go in their grade 10 or 11. There are many reasons for this, but an especially important reason is they will be there to help you talk to potential exchange students about the program. In fact, using the current inbound and the most recent rebound to talk about the program is the best sales tool we have. The committee should be there only to advise, let the students do the talking. Set up an information night where you invite interested students and parents to hear more about the program, the committee will then have to schedule an interview night and panel. Interviews should be set no later than November 15. There are pamphlets and posters that are useful to recruit and are available through the District Youth Exchange Chair.

Finding Host Families

Time and time again we hear that this is the hardest part of the job. It is the YEO's responsibility, along with your entire club, to find appropriate host families for your inbound student. To get a view on best practices and how to vet your families review the process under “*Host Families*”. Ideally you should have three qualified families, but two will suffice. All families do not need to be selected prior to the student's arrival, however a first family must be previously vetted in the spring prior to the student's arrival in August in order to fulfil Guarantee Form requirements.

Vetting Volunteers

You may also be asked to assist the YEO in helping to complete the vetting background process on all volunteers that work with the Youth Program, this includes YEOs, counselors and host family members and general club members that want to be involved with the student program.

Monitoring the student's school progress

Either the YEO or the counselor should be checking in with the school on a regular basis to see how your student is doing. Do they require some additional tutoring to help them in the beginning? Would a change in classes be beneficial? Only one person should be the school contact and that is usually the counselor, but you should work this out with your YEO.

Monitor the student's family life

Checking in with the student and family often (at a minimum once every 30 days) to see how things are going. You should ask about school, friends, extracurricular activities, the current host family to name a few. Asking if they have concerns or if there is anything you can do to support them, is very appreciated. We also recommend that you ask the host family via email if there is anything that you or the YEO can do to assist them.

The message: have fun and be the person in your club your student thinks of first when they have a question or concern. The YEO in your club will be the person you check in with if you have concerns or questions.

Virtual Exchange Programs:

Beginning in October 2021, our District will be participating in a Virtual Youth Exchange Program pilot. Chosen sponsoring clubs will be invited to participate in this approximately 3-month program. Each sponsor club in this program will provide a Youth Exchange Counsellor and the following is an overview of the expectations for this program.

In addition to the foregoing:

VEP Rotarian Counselor Responsibilities

- Assist with recruitment, vetting and finding of suitable VEP Outbound Students for your club.
- Assist with Interviews short listed candidates using prepared questions and prepared student profile.
- Assist with paperwork and applications if required.
- Establish contact with the Inbound student before VEP begins, explain the expectations of the club and the district, and maintain and document regular contact (at least once a month).
- Counsel the student in matters such as online participation, ideas for each meeting, making friends, staying safe and matters that the student may enquire including participating fully in activities and meetings.
- Help the student adapt to the program and our culture.
- Actively participate in virtual meetings and assist with preparing meeting agenda and programs.
- Inform the student about abuse and harassment prevention and create a supportive atmosphere in which the student feels comfortable discussing any concerns.

- Serve as an advocate for the student in any matter.

Provide Feedback to D5040 Youth Exchange Committee on the program without divulging confidentiality and maintaining student privacy.

References:



RI Youth Protection
Guide.pdf



VEP Student Profile
for Clubs.docx



2021 Frequently
Asked Questions re



VEP 2021 BEs of
Virtual Exchange.do



2021 Virtual
Exchange Initial App