

# Rotary District 5040 Parent and Student Guide

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Information for Outbound Exchange Students and their parents for their year abroad.

## **Rotary Support System for Outbound Students**

Host club Counsellor assigned to you

Name, Phone # and email:

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Host club President

Name Phone # and email:

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Host Parents # 1

Name, Phone # and email:

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Host Parents #2

Name, Phone # and email:

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Host Parents #3

Name, Phone# and email:

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Rotex Mentor

Name, Phone #, email:

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District Youth Exchange Committee Member Mentor

Name, Phone # and email:

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Sponsor club YEO

Name, Phone # and email:

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**DISTRICT CHAIR**

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## DISTRICT 5040 ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

### INTRODUCTION

The first seeds for Rotary International's Youth Exchange Program were sown by the Rotary Club of Copenhagen, with a small-scale European program started in 1927. A decade later saw the first student exchanges take place in the Americas. In 1972, Rotary International (RI) endorsed the program to clubs world wide as a "worthwhile international activity". By the end of the century the program had grown to involve more than 80 countries with some 9,000 students participating each year.

Rotary's youth exchange programs fall into two categories:

☐ Long-term exchanges, usually lasting a full academic year, during which time the student lives with more than one family in the host country. This document focuses on details of the long-term exchange program.

☐ Short-term exchanges that entail a direct family to family exchange of two students for several weeks, usually during the summer months. This program is known as STEP (Short Term Exchange Program). Further information on this program can be obtained by contacting the District 5040 STEP Chair, Leone McHugh.

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Rotary Youth Exchange program are as follows:

1. To further international goodwill and understanding by enabling students to study at first hand some of the accomplishments and problems of people in lands other than their own.
2. To enable students to advance their education by studying for a year in an environment entirely different from their own and study courses and subjects not normally available to them in schools in their own country.
3. To broaden their outlook by learning to meet and live with people of different cultures, creeds and colours, and by having to cope with day-to-day problems in an environment completely different from their own.
4. To act as ambassadors for their country by addressing Rotary Clubs, community organizations and youth groups in their host country by imparting knowledge of their own country and its problems to the people they meet during their year abroad.
5. To study and observe all facets of life and culture in the country where they are hosted so that on their return home, they can pass on the knowledge they have gained by addressing Rotary Clubs and other organizations.

## STATEMENT OF CONDUCT POLICY

District 5040 has adopted the Statement of Conduct for working with youth as set out in Rotary Code of Policies Sec. 2.110 for its Rotary Clubs participating in the Youth Exchange Program. This policy states that it is the duty of all Rotarians, Rotarian's spouses, partners and 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. In keeping with the above, District 5040 conducts ongoing training programs for adult volunteers. The program has been reviewed and certified by Rotary International.

## DISTRICT 5040

District 5040 represents over 50 Rotary Clubs located on the mainland of western British Columbia. These clubs are located in an area bounded to the west by the entire mainland coast between the northern and southern U.S. boundaries and include the western end of the Lower Mainland, the Cariboo and Prince George west to Prince Rupert. This document is also available on District 5040's Youth Exchange web site on the internet at the following location: [www.d5040youthexchange.ca](http://www.d5040youthexchange.ca). This website also provides information on youth exchange programs and activities.

## HISTORY OF ROTARY AND ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

Rotary was founded by Paul Harris on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1905, as a way for professionals with diverse backgrounds to meet and exchange ideas, form meaningful friendships and give back to their communities.

*The foundation upon which Rotary is built is friendship; on no less firm foundation could it have stood.*

*~ Paul Harris*

### Rotary's Four Way Test

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

### Rotary's Seven Areas of Focus

1. Promoting peace
2. Fighting disease
3. Providing clean water, sanitation and hygiene
4. Saving mothers and children
5. Supporting education
6. Growing local economies
7. Environment

*Rotary Youth Exchange builds peace one young person at a time.*

**Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE)** is an international exchange program for students in secondary school.

- Began in 1927 with the Rotary Club of Copenhagen, Denmark
- In 1929 the Rotary Club of Nice, France followed
- The current year-long program began in 1958
- Over 9000 students in 80 countries participate

**Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) aims to:**

- Develop lifelong leadership skills
- Learn a new language and culture
- Build lasting friendships with other young people from around the world
- Become a global citizen

### **Terminology**

- **YEO** – Youth Exchange Officer
- **DG** – District Governor
- **RYLA** – Rotary Youth Leadership Award
- **Interact** – Club consisting of students in grades 9-12, supported by a local Rotary Club, conducting volunteer community/school/international programs
- **Rotaract** – Rotarians aged 18 to 30
- **ROTEX** – Students who have completed their exchange and volunteer to mentor students currently on exchange
- **Outbound** – Student sponsored by a Rotary Club to go out on exchange
- **Inbound** – Student hosted by a Rotary Club coming in on exchange
- **Rebound** – Student who has just returned from their exchange

## **OUTLINE OF THE YOUTH EXCHANGE YEAR**

### **AUGUST**

☐ Inbound and outbound students complete arrival in host country

☐ Rebound Reunion held for returned students

☐ Tweedsmuir Trek near Burns Lake, offered by the Burns Lake Rotary Club for Inbound students (not mandatory)

### **SEPTEMBER**

☐ Inbound Student Orientation weekend held in the north of the District - mandatory

☐ Clubs start to advertise in schools for next year's Youth Exchange (YEX) outbound student applications

☐ Clubs provide written confirmation to YEX Chair regarding participation in next year's YE program

## **OCTOBER**

- ☐ Clubs start receiving preliminary outbound student applications

## **NOVEMBER**

- ☐ Clubs close applications for outbound students, interview candidates and select their candidate(s)
- ☐ Full YEX application forms issued to selected student(s)
- ☐ Candidates complete full YEX application form in duplicate and return to the sponsor Rotary club who will forward to the local District YEX Committee area representative for forwarding to the District YEX Chair by **Dec 1st**.

## **DECEMBER**

- ☐ Christmas parties for Inbounds (not mandatory)
- ☐ District Committee interviews outbound student candidates

## **JANUARY**

- ☐ Second Inbound Orientation weekend held - mandatory

## **APRIL**

- ☐ Outbound students are informed of their host country for the upcoming exchange year

## **MAY**

- ☐ Outbound students are informed of their host city/club for the upcoming exchange year
- ☐ Outbound Student Orientation session for all Outbound students and at least one parent/guardian - mandatory
- ☐ Inbound students attend District Conference

## **JUNE**

- ☐ Processing of visas and travel planning

## **JULY**

- ☐ Optional 2 Week BC summer camping tour for Inbound students.
- ☐ Current Inbound students depart for home and Outbound students start departing on exchange



## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF OUTBOUND ROTARY EXCHANGE STUDENTS

### WHAT TO EXPECT -- AS A PARENT

[See also the Introduction - Statement of Conduct Policy]

#### Financial Obligations

In addition to attending the Outbound Orientation, parents of an outbound exchange student are required to accept the following financial obligations:

1. Pay the required outbound youth exchange fee (\$3500 for 2025/26) which includes the following:

- student blazer
- language training program
- Outbound Orientation on-line
- Outbound Orientation in person weekend
- parent accommodation and meals at the Outbound Orientation weekend
- student business cards, pins, badge and hoodie
- Rebound Reunion

A \$500 deposit is required when the main application is forwarded to the District Committee. **This fee is non-refundable should the student withdraw from the program after acceptance at the District interview level.** The second payment of \$1500 is due May 1st with the final payment of \$1500 being due on June 15th. Send cheques payable to "District 5040 Rotary Youth Exchange" to the Youth Exchange Treasurer as listed in this publication or arrange etransfer.

Expenses not included in the application fee are:

1. Open ended return air fare to the host country which will vary depending upon the destination. This travel **MUST** be booked through our travel agent.
2. Medical insurance in the host country. This will vary from country to country but most require you to purchase their insurance which will be specified in their welcome instructions.
3. A contingency fund of approximately \$500 (Canadian) for emergencies. The exact amount will be spelled out in the host country welcome package. This fund must be paid shortly after arriving in the host country (usually to the Club YEO) and is held in trust until required. If accessed, it must be replenished immediately to maintain the original balance. This money is returned to the student upon conclusion of their exchange.
4. All clothing needs for them while abroad.
5. Access to money to support their first month of incidental expenses. While they will be provided a monthly allowance by their host Rotary Club, how and when it is provided varies. Some Clubs provide it at the beginning of the month while others provide it at the end of the month.

NOTE: Families requiring financial assistance can apply for funding from our Sandover-Sly Memorial Fund.

Your child is about to embark on an exciting, enlightening and sometimes scary journey that will most likely be different than anything they have experienced at any other time in their life. You have already done most of the preparation this young person needs to be a successful exchange student, through all you have taught and developed in your child. We have accepted this person to be an ambassador to another country because of the personality characteristics and aptitudes they displayed in the application and interview process. We believe they can handle the challenges of living in another culture, with families different than yours, and with different rules, guidelines and controls than at home, and we will do all we can to prepare your child for the changes they will likely experience.

Much of their success will depend on how you help them prepare for these adjustments during the next few months, and how you act – or react – to the feelings and emotions they will very likely experience before, during and after this exchange year. While we certainly do not know your child as well as you do, we do know how hundreds of “typical” exchange students, from past years, have reacted to these changes and offer this information to parents as an aid.

### **Factors to Consider**

Key to any successful exchange is the student’s ability to learn the language of their host country. This cannot be overstated and is why outbound students are provided with on-line language training programs prior to their departure. While students are not expected to be fluent in their new language prior to departure, having some basic language skills upon arrival in their new country will greatly ease their transition. Having these basic language skills will open the door to other opportunities, such as building a relationship with their host family, learning customs and culture, as well as making new friends.

Exchange students have to make many decisions on their own during the year abroad and in many cases, these are not decisions they have had to make before. You will not be there to make those decisions for them. The host family and host Rotary Club will, to some degree, assume this role but they will likely have more independence and choices to make than at home. Please recognize that while they will be going through a great period of change and adjustment, they need to deal with this change without relying on you, several thousand kilometers away.

They will need your support and encouragement. It is perfectly normal for exchange students to have bad days and experience homesickness. If you are sensitive to this, you will be able to reassure them that these reactions are normal and that they will pass. Encourage them to keep busy and get involved.

If they have poured out frustrations in a letter, email or text to you, know that by the time you receive/read it, those feelings may have already passed. You should not react to what they were thinking a day or a week ago. **Please to not react to any unhappy correspondence by picking up the telephone.** Know that people are doing their best to help and support your child, but they must learn to solve their problems without help from home. It has been our experience that parents who become

overly involved with their child's problems often make them more difficult to resolve and undermines the student's own self-confidence. Experience has also shown that a letter/correspondence from home, expressing your confidence in their ability to succeed will have a lasting positive effect.

We strongly recommend that exchange students and parents limit their social media contact to no more than bi-monthly, in addition to special occasions, such as birthdays and holidays. Frequent communication to or from home can interfere with establishing a good relationship with the host family and can hinder their adjustment and assimilation into the host country's culture. Emails and instant messaging/Facebook/WhatsApp and other social media platforms present a challenge that can be even greater than that of the telephone for negatively impacting their assimilation. We stress throughout the orientations and exchange year that extensive communication back home keeps the student mentally "connected" to home, family and friends and therefore "disconnected" from where they are physically. Such contact can delay, or may completely prevent the student from becoming part of the culture of the host family. Students who spend too much of their time exchanging messages with family and friends back home become Reporters instead of Participants. Important relationships with host families and new acquaintances cannot be developed under these conditions and your child may find acceptance by people in the host country more difficult when "home" has a major role in their life.

Recognize that the educational system in most countries is different to which your child is accustomed. The level of teacher-student relationship, student responsibility and classroom regiment will likely be quite different than in your community. While exchange students must attend school as a condition of their exchange, the real educational benefit is learning to live in a new and different environment. Students often think they are not "learning" anything in the classroom because of language barriers or teaching styles, especially during the early phases of the exchange. If they complain that courses are too easy (or too difficult), or school is boring, please recognize that they may really be confronting other challenges such as a new language, making new friends and being accepted by classmates. While Canadian high schools have many clubs, teams for every sport and season, and band, orchestra, choirs etc., most foreign secondary schools are primarily academically oriented. Sports and social activities usually take place outside of school and are organized at a club or community level. The school your child attends may offer a more – or possibly less- rigid curriculum and fewer social and sports related opportunities than they are used to at home. Acknowledge that school will be different; but not better or worse, than at home.

### **Visiting**

Any intended visits to your child's host country by you, other relatives or friends, should be given careful and cautious consideration. Generally, all visits are discouraged, and in some cases prohibited, especially in the first part of the exchange. Visits can create problems and disruptions for not only your child but also the host families, and may re-surface "separation" problems your child successfully solved in the beginning of the exchange year. Visits can also interfere with school attendance, or disrupt host family holiday plans during school breaks. To avoid these problems, please read closely the *Rules and Conditions of Exchange* that were, or will be, agreed to by both the exchange student and their parents.

These typically spell out restrictions on visits, specifically during the first three quarters of the exchange year, during major holidays and school absences.

If you wish to visit your child during their exchange year, please make sure that this is welcomed by the host parents, host Rotary club and your child! Many exchange students are less than enthusiastic about a visit from parents, but do not know how to address this difficult subject.

We specifically ask that you and child discuss all intended visits with the entire Rotary Support System (host family, host Rotary Club Counselor and District 5040 Chair, Outbound Coordinator) before any visitation plans are finalized. Please understand that these requirements are intended to provide for a successful exchange, for both your child and those who follow.

It is recommended that at least one parent/guardian have a passport that is valid during the period in which your child is on exchange. This is to ensure that someone is able to travel immediately in the case of an emergency.

### **And Finally**

There is obviously no way we can *guarantee* that every exchange student will enjoy a completely successful year. However, we do our best to help them prepare for and experience a year that most students who have preceded them describe as “the best year of my life”. We can tell you that the percentage of “unsuccessful” exchanges is very small, and very few exchange students return home early or without some positive aspects from the experience. Through our selection and assignment process, we have already aligned your child for a successful year; with your support in their preparation and orientation, a successful experience is very likely.

### **Extra expenses**

Mandatory meetings or events will be paid for by Rotary in the host country and typically include at least an Inbound Orientation and a District Conference. As every country is different, your child should inquire as to what is and what is not covered for expenses.

While not a travel exchange, there are usually trips offered by the Host District over the exchange year. These trips are not mandatory and as a result their cost is not covered in the application fee or by the host Rotary Club/District. These trips typically offer students an opportunity to see a part of the country or in many cases other countries, they have not seen during their exchange year. **Many of these trips are provided by tour companies and it is important that you understand the terms and conditions (such as cancellation) when booking them.**

As will be discussed at the District 5040 Outbound Orientation, return tickets are booked for 10 months out from arrival in the host country (this is the longest period of time a return ticket can be booked and is really just a placeholder). In January/February of the year in which your child is outbound, they will be contacted and asked to consult with you, their host family and host club to determine their date of return. It is also important to consider the terms of the exchange agreement signed at the beginning of the exchange year and any visa expiry dates.

### **Student allowance and budgeting**

While your child will receive a monthly allowance from their host club during their exchange, it is not a significant amount of money. The amount paid and how that payment is received varies from club to club and country to country. Typically, it is around \$100 CDN per month but it may include other benefits, such as a bus pass or cell phone. As it is difficult to state with certainty when this allowance will be paid, it is recommended that students have sufficient funds to sustain themselves for the first month of their exchange. The monthly allowance amount will be identified on the guarantee form received from the host club/district, which may assist you in establishing a budget for your child. How much money your child will require each month is impossible to predict as much depends on the location in which they will be living and their individual spending habits. Parents are strongly encouraged to discuss setting a budget with their child prior to departure and adjusting it as required.

### **Period of Re-entry Adjustment**

The first two months after your child returns from abroad will probably be the most trying time of your respective lives. Everyone reports that this is a most difficult time of adjustment for both parties. Tremendous horizons have been opened for the student during their year abroad and students do find it difficult to adjust when they "return to earth". A great deal of patience and understanding are required during this difficult adjustment period. (See Outbound Students - Rebound Reunion).

## GUIDELINES FOR OUTBOUND STUDENTS

### Obligations

Students sent abroad under the Rotary Youth Exchange programs are required to accept the following obligations:

1. You are required to obey the laws of the host country at all times and to accept the rules of the host youth exchange district and the discipline of the host club, counsellor, host school and host parents.
2. You will not, under any circumstance, drive a motorized vehicle of any kind during your Rotary Youth Exchange year.
3. You will not consume alcohol while on exchange. No exceptions.
4. You will not use or possess any illegal drug (see drugs heading below).
5. You will not be permitted to "go steady" with a boy or girlfriend. Dating, preferably in company, will be tolerated but, for obvious reasons, romantic involvement is strongly discouraged to the extent that if you breach the rule, you could be sent home.
6. You will not obtain any new tattoos or piercings while on exchange.
7. You will not participate in any public protest or demonstration while on exchange.
8. You will not download any game, program or information from the Internet without the permission of your host family.
9. You are required to enrol at a high school nominated by the host club and to attend classes regularly and participate in all school activities.
10. You may be required to address Rotary Clubs, other service organizations, youth groups, and community groups during your stay in the host country and will, on your return to Canada, be expected to address similar groups on your youth exchange experiences.
11. During your stay abroad, you may be required to attend the annual Rotary Conference in the host District, as well as other official Rotary and Youth Exchange Program functions as directed by your host Club.
12. You are an ambassador for Canada and must at all times behave in a manner that will reflect credit on your family, community and country.
13. You must return directly to Canada on completion of your exchange period. Students will not be allowed to stay in the host country after termination of the exchange period.
14. You are required to send a monthly report to your sponsor District via the YEAH database.

## Drugs

The use of illegal drug is forbidden by law. Any student using or found in possession of illegal drugs is subject to immediate return home. Smoking (including vaping) of **any substance** is prohibited while you are an Outbound Student from D5040. Be aware that the definition of possession is significantly different from that in Canada in some countries.

## Passport and Visa

If you do not already hold a valid Canadian Passport, you should apply for one as soon as your sponsoring Rotary Club has selected you. If you hold a valid passport, you must ensure it will remain valid at least 6 months after you will be returning from your exchange. This is a visa requirement for most countries. Application forms can be completed on line at: <http://www.ppt.qc.ca/info/form.aspx>. When applying for a visa be sure to read and follow the instructions carefully, noting any application deadlines. Visas cannot be obtained, in most cases, until the Rotary Guarantee Form has arrived back from the host country. Adhering to deadlines and carefully following the instructions will ensure that everything is ready for processing as soon as the signed Guarantee Form arrives. **Travel will not be booked until a valid visa/permit (if required) has been obtained.**

## Hospital and Medical Insurance

This is mandatory. Some countries accept the Rotary International policy available from the District, while others insist that their policies be purchased. The cost of insurance is **not** included in the application fee as it can vary significantly from country to country and in some cases various levels of coverage are offered. **Proof of insurance must be provided before any travel will be arranged**

## Money

1. Upon your arrival in your host country you will be required to deposit the equivalent of \$500 (Canadian) into a bank account that will be co-signed by your counsellor or YEO. You can bring this money with you (typically in the form of a bank draft) or have it made available to you upon your arrival through a banking withdrawal or a bank transfer. This money is to be used for emergencies only. It is NOT to be used for routine expenses or "living it up". Should any portion of the \$500 be spent, it must be replenished to maintain a balance of \$500 during your exchange.
2. If you experience a problem with money, consult your counsellor who may be able to help you work out a budget.
3. We suggest that you take \$50-\$100 with you for any travel expenses incurred while traveling to and from your host country. (You will have access to your emergency money in the week or so prior to your return home – don't spend it all as it may be required for unexpected departure expenses, including excess luggage). You should also have access to enough money to sustain yourself until you start to receive your monthly allowance (this might be up to 30 days).

4. Your host club will provide you with a monthly allowance. The amount is indicated on the signed Guarantee Form. This allowance will vary from club to club as some club's also provide non-monetary allowances, such as a bus pass to their students. How you receive your allowance may also vary from club to club. Some may deposit it into your bank account while others may pay cash, some may pay it at the start of the month, while others may pay it at the end. If you are not receiving your monthly allowance, ask your counsellor about it and if not resolved report it to the District 5040 YEX Chair.

## **Travel**

This is a cultural exchange, NOT a travel exchange, and you should not go into the program with the expectation of extensive travel while abroad. Your hosts are under no obligation to provide or permit travel. However, many students do manage to do some travelling through the generosity of the Rotary Club and individual Rotarians. **You must abide by travel regulations set forth by your host club and District. Do not, under any circumstances, make travel arrangements on your own and then expect the host club to go along with your arrangements.** At the end of the year, some countries arrange for Rotary students, as a group, to travel on a Rotary organized tour. This will be at your own expense.

## **Travelling to Your Host Country**

It is important that you contact your host parents, club youth exchange officer (YEO) or counsellor with your arrival information. Be certain of the arrival date, it is often different from the departure date. Ask the person you notify to confirm that this important information has been received. Your first host family or Rotary representatives will meet you at your final destination airport, providing that you have given them adequate notice of your travel plans. This coordination task is entirely your responsibility and neither Rotary nor our travel agent will forward details of your arrival plans to your hosts. Be aware that most airlines are now charging for checked luggage and any such cost is payable by you at the departure airport.

You must carry with you the name, address, and phone number of at least two contacts in your host country. Keep them with you on the flight, not inside checked luggage. Ideally, these contacts should be your first host parents, host club YEO or counsellor. Carry any other contact information that you have obtained. If the person you expect does not meet you on arrival, ask an employee of the arrival airline to help you phone one of the other contacts on your list. If this fails, phone the District 5040 YEX Chair with a collect telephone call. As a last resort, contact the nearest Canadian Embassy or Consulate to explain your problem.

## **First Night Questions**

Please read Appendix A regarding First Night Questions.



## **Host Families**

Hosting arrangements are entirely the responsibility of the host club. The usual procedure is for you to be hosted by at least two and occasionally as many as four different families, which is determined by the host club. If hosting problems arise, consult your counsellor, who may be able to assist you.

You must - at all times - remember that the burden is always on YOU to adjust to the host family environment. The host family is under no obligation to adjust to you or treat you as a "special guest". You are expected to accept the normal discipline of the family and settle into THEIR routine (not the routine you have been used to back home).

It is best to ask your host parents what they want to be called shortly after your arrival. This is covered in the first night questions, which should also be reviewed each time you change host families. In most cases, you will have a bedroom to yourself. Some students have complained that their host families have involved them in too much and that they wanted some "peace and quiet" on their own. If this situation develops, have a tactful word with your host Mom or Dad. Don't be disturbed if you are quite homesick in the first few weeks. It will pass.

## **Gifts**

Your host families will appreciate a small Canadian gift. Remember to recognize birthdays and other special events/holidays.

## **Counsellor**

Your host Rotary Club should appoint a counsellor whom you should regard as your confidant during your stay abroad. If you have any problems with school, adjustment, your host family or with finances, consult your counsellor. They are there to help you and will welcome the opportunity to act as a mediator if things go wrong. If you are not assigned a counsellor, you must tactfully ask that one be appointed for you as soon after your arrival as possible. Your counsellor should be the same sex as you, if this is not the case, please inform the District 5040 YEX Chair.

## **Making Contact**

As soon as you have been notified of the name of the Rotary Club and country where you will be hosted, you should contact the Club President or YEO giving some personal and family details. If you don't know your host family, ask that your e-mail be forwarded on to the first host family so that communication can commence. It is not always possible to finalize hosting arrangements well in advance of departure, but where this is achieved, every opportunity should be taken to communicate early with your host family. This helps tremendously in the initial "settling in" period in a new environment.

## **Be a Joiner**

To gain the maximum benefit of your year abroad, you should take an active part in the host community. Take every opportunity to join school clubs, youth and church groups, and be an active

member of these groups. You are there to make friends with the young people of your host country. Do not confine your friendship to other exchange students.

### **Keep an Open Mind**

There are usually two points of view on most issues, so keep an open mind on controversial issues (i.e., race, religion, etc.). Try to see the other point of view even if you do not necessarily agree, and above all, be tactful and diplomatic when your hosts express views opposed to your own.

### **Interviews**

When interviewed by the press, radio or television at home or abroad, always be tolerant, never critical of your host country. Their customs, religions and procedures may be a little strange to you, but they are eminently appropriate to the people of the country that evolved them. Careless remarks made on public platforms, or during interviews, may cause serious embarrassment when later reported.

### **Learning the Language**

You will be traveling to a country where English is not the first language and you should not expect people to speak it. It is critical that you make a concerted effort to learn as much of your host country language as possible **prior** to your departure. While no one expects you to be fluent in your new language, there is an expectation that you will have some basic language skills upon your arrival. Having the ability to speak the language early in your exchange will open the door to many opportunities and vastly improve your exchange experience. Learning the language is key to a rewarding exchange and is why you have been provided access to a language training program – **use it**. When speaking with former exchange students, virtually everyone of them wished they had learned more language prior to their departure. It is not surprising then, that the three most important things you can do to ensure a successful exchange are: 1. Learn the language, 2. Learn the language and 3. Learn the language.

### **Pictures**

It is recommended that you take a good set of pictures or develop a PowerPoint presentation for showing to host families, Rotary meetings, and other groups. These should include the following: pictures of your family, pets, home (including interior shots), school, town and area, outstanding tourist spots, and flora and fauna.

### **Notepaper**

You should not forget to write "Thank you" notes to people who host you overnight or for weekends, take you on trips or in any way assist you during your year abroad. This is not only good manners and automatically expected of all exchange students, but also helps build goodwill for Canada. Take a small pad or two of notepaper with distinctive Canadian motifs for this purpose. (Postcards also work great for this).

## **Rebound Reunion**

In August, after returning from your year abroad, you and your parents will be invited to attend a Rebound Session. This is an opportunity to share your experience with other exchange students and their families, to provide feedback to the Committee on your Youth Exchange experience and to learn more about the critical subject of reverse culture shock.

## **After Your Exchange Year - Rotex**

When students return from their year as an exchange student, Rotary has many opportunities for continuing involvement. All students will speak to their sponsoring Rotary club after their return and many students wish to continue their association with others involved in exchange. The ROTEX (Returned Exchange Students) group provides an opportunity for this continuing interaction and involvement with exchange. Students wishing to participate should contact a member of the District Committee.

## **YOUR ROLE AS AN AMBASSADOR**

Rotary does not choose average teenagers to be exchange students; Rotary exchange students tend to be exceptional young adults. When you take part in a Rotary Youth Exchange, you assume the role of an ambassador of your family, your community, your country, your culture and for Rotary.

This is not a task to be taken lightly; it is a big responsibility and takes effort. Your behaviour and approach are important to the success of your exchange and the Rotary Exchange Program. You may be the only person from your country that people in your host community have ever met and they may judge your country and your culture by your behaviour and your attitude.

Things to consider when thinking of your role of ambassador include:

- Being involved with your Rotary club; without the members of your club your exchange would not be possible
- Attend meetings and help with events and fundraisers
- Do a presentation for your club about your home country
- Keep your club informed of your activities throughout the year
- When possible and appropriate, wear your blazer
- Attend school regularly and get involved – consider peer tutoring, extracurricular activities, Interact
- Dress appropriately, if you choose graphic T-shirts be sure they are tasteful
- Inquire about doing presentations at school about your exchange and home country
- Be aware of your presence on social media and how it reflects on you
- Use appropriate language
- SMILE

## COMMON SENSE RULES AND CONDITIONS OF EXCHANGE

1. Become an integral part of the host family, assuming duties, chores and responsibilities normal for a student of your age and other children in the family. Respect your host's wishes.
2. Learn the language of your host country. This integral to any successful exchange. The effort will be appreciated by teachers, host parents, Rotary Club members and others you meet in the community. It will go a long way towards your acceptance in the community and with those who will become lifelong friends.
3. Attend Rotary-sponsored events and host family events. These are MUST-DO activities. Show an interest in host family and Rotary activities and fundraisers to which you are invited. Don't wait to be invited; ask and volunteer to get involved. Lack of interest on your part is detrimental to your exchange and can have a negative impact on not only your exchange but also on future exchanges.
4. Get involved in your school and community sports and special interest activities. Plan your recreation and spare time activities around your school and community friends. Do not spend all your time with the other exchange students.
5. Choose friends in the community carefully. Ask for and heed the advice of host families, counselors and school personnel in choosing friends.
6. Do not borrow money. Pay any bills you incur promptly. Ask permission to use the family telephone and internet, keep track of long-distance calls and internet fees and reimburse your host family each month for the calls you make.
7. Do not travel alone or accompanied only by other students. Travel is permitted with host parents or for Rotary Club or District functions authorized by the hosting Rotary Club or District with proper adult chaperones. Other travel, if allowed, must be approved by the Host District Chair, Host Rotary Club YEO, Counselor and President, host family, and by the student's natural parents or legal guardians in writing that will exempt Rotary of responsibility and liability. If you are offered an opportunity to go on a trip or to an event with Rotarians or your host family, make sure you understand any costs you must pay and your responsibilities before you go. Do not assume you are being invited at no cost; always offer to pay.
8. You must show proof of proper immunizations, most often included on your RYE application. Some countries might require additional immunizations prior to arrival.
9. Students should have sufficient financial support to assure their well-being during the exchange year. Your Host Rotary District usually requires a contingency or emergency fund for such situations. It must be replenished by the student's parents or guardians as it is depleted. Unused funds at the end of the exchange will be returned to the student. These funds must be turned over to your Host Rotary Club YEO or Counselor upon your arrival and are not meant to cover day-to-day expenses.
10. Any costs relative to a student's early return home or any other unusual costs (e.g., language tutoring, tours, etc.) shall be the responsibility of the student and his or her natural parents or guardians.
11. Students must return home directly by a route mutually agreeable to the Host District and the student's natural parents or guardians.
12. You will be under the Hosting District's authority while you are an exchange student. Your Host Rotary Club is your Legal Guardian during your exchange year. Natural parents or guardians may not directly authorize any extra activities, including travel, by communicating only with the student. The

Host Club and District Youth Exchange Officers must be contacted to approve and authorize such activities. If the student has relatives in the host country or region, they will have no authority over the student while the student is in the program. Limited, if any, travel to visit such relatives is regulated by the Host Rotary Club.

13. Visits by your parents or guardians while you are in the program are strongly discouraged. Such visits may **only** take place with the Host Rotary Club and Host District's consent and **only** within the last quarter of the exchange or during school breaks. Students are not allowed to miss school in order to travel with visiting parents. Host Rotary Clubs do not allow visits by siblings or friends with no accompanying adult during the exchange year.
14. Avoid serious romantic activity. Abstain from sexual activity and promiscuity. Such activity can and will ensure a quick return home.

Violations may result in a district review, restrictions, and a possible return home.

Severe or consistent disregard for these rules will result in being returned home.

## ROTARY SUPPORT SYSTEM MATRIX

Resource	When needed	Contact frequency	Comments
Host Family	Every day problems	Daily	Your first point of contact for most simple needs/concerns
Host Club YEO	Problems, successes, social occasions, club meetings, travel	Bi-weekly/monthly	This is your main Rotary contact for any problem not resolved by your host family
Host Counselor	Problems, routine reporting	Monthly	Monitors your wellbeing, problems
Host District Inbound Coordinator	Questions, concerns not resolved or answered at any of the previous levels		
Host District Chair	Any serious problems		
Sponsor District Chair	Any serious problems		
ROTEX	Emotional and YE support	Monthly or as often as required	ROTEX are there for emotional support and mentoring only. They are not able to assist with program issues
Sponsor District Outbound Coordinator	Reporting of exchange experience including health and any problems encountered	At least monthly	Monitors exchange through monthly reports and other correspondence
Sponsor Club YEO	Monthly reporting of exchange experience	As required by the sponsoring District/Club	Regular reporting of your exchange experience
Parents	Routine non YE problems, health emergencies	Regular but not excessively	Limit social media and telephone contact. Once every 2 weeks maximum

## BUCKET LIST

A bucket list is usually a life list of things a person would like to accomplish or experience within their lifetime. For the purpose of your exchange year we would like you to focus on this chapter of your life and identify those things you want to experience or accomplish during your exchange. We don't want you coming back from exchange regretting that you should have done this, or experienced that, when you may have had the opportunity.

While a bucket list can be a list of dreams and wishes, to be meaningful it should be tempered with a dose of reality and intention. This is especially true when you consider that you will only have 10-11 months to accomplish them. Items on the list should not be things that you want to happen they should be things you want to do, recognizing there may be a little work to be done by you to make them a reality. You have a far greater likelihood of completing items on your bucket list if they are meaningful to you and you have genuine interest in accomplishing them. Your list should include items that are important to you. That doesn't mean they need to be extravagant or extremely difficult to achieve, in fact goals that are more easily achieved (those under your control) can be equally satisfying as you track your list of accomplishments throughout your exchange. The litmus test might be: Would you still do it if you weren't able to tell anyone.

Items on your list should be clearly defined (quantifiable) so there is no doubt when the goal has been achieved. Try to avoid vague desires (eat healthier, exercise more) in favour of more specific goals (run a 10k race, cook a Canadian dinner for my host family). The list can be a mix of things you want to experience but can also be a list of things you want to do to leave your legacy in your host country. It may take you several tries to come up with items for your list. There is no right or wrong number of items, only that they are important to you and that you have the intention to complete them. Focus on areas such as travel (visit a specific site/location), skills and knowledge (learn to speak a language), experiences (participate in a cultural event), physical feats (learn a new sport) etc. It is also important to note that you are not locked into the list. You will likely add more items to your list as you become aware of new opportunities and circumstances may alter the importance of something that was on the list previously.

Do some research on your host country, its customs and cultures to identify those things that are of interest to you. Most times people are cautioned against putting things on their bucket list that require the cooperation of others. Fortunately, you are on a Rotary exchange and you will find that you can rely on the cooperation of others, if they know about your goals, they are realistic and your interest is genuine. Students on exchange often have the opportunity to travel and experience things with their host families and/or other Rotarians. It is important that you discuss your bucket list with your host families, YEO or other Rotarians so they can assist you in completing some of it. The level of your engagement with your host family and club will often dictate the level of cooperation you can expect from them.

How to:

1. Brainstorm – write down any ideas that come to you
2. Make an official list – This should contain the items that are important to you
3. Review the list – Eliminate those that while important may be unrealistic/unattainable
4. Keep the list visible – Share the list with others

5. Start with an item that you can achieve fairly quickly. – Start now and don't be afraid to work on more than one at the same time.
6. Celebrate your success as you cross goals from your list.





Name \_\_\_\_\_

## MY BUCKET LIST

[illegible]

## APPENDIX A

You can go onto [http://yeoresources.org/first\\_night\\_questions.htm](http://yeoresources.org/first_night_questions.htm) or [www.yeoresources.org](http://www.yeoresources.org) and translate these questions into your host country's language.

### FIRST NIGHT QUESTIONS

#### Introduction

When an exchange student arrives at a new host family, it can be a challenge to readily adjust to the new environment. Each family is different and their homes operate in different ways. Unless the family has previously hosted students, they may never have even considered the unwritten rules used in every house on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the home operates smoothly. The sooner that the new student understands and adopts these house rules, the less chance there is of an unfortunate misunderstanding occurring which could have a negative impact on a new relationship.

If an exchange student breaks one of these rules, it could create a problem. For example, the family may be unhappy that the student chooses to sit in what has traditionally always been "father's chair" but are too polite to mention it. This can lead to a strained relationship, which the student may detect but not understand. Because families have never thought about their unwritten house rules, usually evolved over many years but rarely if ever discussed, it is difficult to explain them to a new arrival. A sample list of First Night Questions for the students and host families to review at the start of each home stay has been prepared. All exchange students are encouraged to discuss these questions with the host families immediately after arrival. Should this not happen, then host families are encouraged to initiate these discussions.

#### Why Use First Night Questions?

Timely discussion of First Night Questions can not only reduce the risk of unfortunate misunderstandings, but is also a very effective "ice breaker" for an exchange student in a new home. Sometimes this discussion is a little difficult because of a language barrier. In this case, this website shows how the same questions translated into a number of different languages:  
[www.yeoresources.org/First\\_Night\\_Questions.htm](http://www.yeoresources.org/First_Night_Questions.htm)

If language could be a problem, consider printing out these questions from the website in the appropriate languages. The questions are suggestions only. The student and host family should discuss anything that they think is important. Please discuss the items most important to you as soon as possible. A student with limited language skills should probably not assume anything. Ask instead. The simplest questions may be the most important, such as "Where is the bathroom"? You can come back to other questions as they seem necessary.

## List of First Night Questions

1. What would you like me to call you? Should I call you “Mom”, “Dad”, or given (first) name, or something else?
2. What are my daily responsibilities while living in your home?
  - (a) Make my bed?
  - (b) Keep my room neat and clean?
  - (c) Clean the bathroom after I use it? d. Other?
3. What is the procedure for laundering clothes? Where do I keep dirty clothes until they are to be washed?
4. What is the procedure if I need to iron my clothes?
5. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine, etc.?
6. Where can I keep my bathroom accessories?
7. When is the most convenient time for me to use the bathroom on weekday mornings (in order to get ready for school)?
8. When is the best time for me to shower or bathe?
9. Is there anything special about using the bathroom I should know?
10. May I use the family’s shampoo and tooth paste or should I buy my own?
11. When are mealtimes?
12. Do I have any responsibilities at mealtimes, such as to set or clear the table, wash or dry the dishes, dispose of the garbage?
13. May I help myself to food and drinks (non-alcoholic) at any time or must I ask first?
14. May I use kitchen appliances such as the microwave, dishwasher, or stove?
15. What areas of the house are strictly private, for example, your study, bedroom, pantry, etc.?
16. What are your rules about my drinking alcohol? (Note: District 5040 **has ZERO tolerance** for drinking – No alcohol permitted on your exchange.)
17. What time must I get up weekday mornings?
18. May I rearrange the furniture in my bedroom?

19. May I put posters or pictures on the walls of my room? If yes, how do you want things attached to the walls?
20. Where can I store my suitcases?
21. May I use the stereo, home computer or TV?
22. What time should I get up weekends and holidays?
23. What time must I go to bed weekdays? Weekends?
24. What time must I be at home on school nights if I go out?
25. What time must I be in on weekends if I go out?
26. What dates are the birthdays of family members?
27. May I have friends stay overnight?
28. What is your rule on entertaining friends in my room?
29. Can I invite friends over during the day? After school? When no one else is home?
30. What is the landline, and your cell phone numbers here? How do I contact you in an emergency when I am not here?
31. How do I make telephone calls? (discuss if you have brought a cell phone from home)
32. What are the rules about access to the Internet and e-mail, social media usage in the house? Are there time limits or time periods that use is permitted or prohibited? If you are not connected to the Internet, where can I find an Internet service to contact my family and friends?
33. May I receive telephone calls and texts from my friends? Are there times of the day when calls are not acceptable?
34. What is the procedure about sending and receiving (snail) mail?
35. Do any of you have any special dislikes? For example, chewing gum, types of music, being late, wearing a hat at the table, being interrupted while reading, etc.
36. What transportation is available to me? (Walking, bus, bicycle, being driven, riding with friends, etc.) Are there times or places it is unsafe for me to walk unescorted? Are there rules about traveling with friends?

37. What transportation is available for shopping or going to movies?
38. What are your expectations for me about going to church or other religious institution?
39. If I am having a problem, how do you want me to handle it:
  - (a) Write a note to you explaining it?
  - (b) Ask for a face-to-face discussion with you?
  - (c) Tell my Rotary counsellor?
40. How do I enroll in school?
41. What do I do about school lunch? If there is an expense, who pays - me, you, or Rotary?
42. How can I arrange to go shopping for personal items?
43. Is there anything else I can do around the house to be of help?
44. Am I expected to attend Rotary meetings? How often? Who will arrange for this?
45. Is there anything else we should discuss?

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### **Gifts, Banners and Regalia**

- Shop at Dollar stores – Canada Day stuff out now
- Bring pins, we will start you off, drop into your local MLA, MP, Chamber of Commerce
- Make your own pins: ribbon, old pennies and a glue gun
- Bring at least three host family gifts representing your community (smoked salmon, First Nations Tea Towel etc.)
- Consider something 'local' for Christmas gifts
- Bring postcards – great thank you notes
- Bring at least two flags for photo ops and inbound student signatures at the end of your exchange
- Bring your sponsor club banner and exchange with your Host club President
- Bring your business cards to all events and get togethers

## APPENDIX B

Why is social media so addictive?

Like a computer hacker who seeks to exploit the most vulnerable area of an operating system, social media seeks to exploit the most primitive areas of our brain.

Going back to our evolutionary past, survival was predicated on social bonding and the strength of the group. Out on the plains, expulsion from the group meant death which is why our desire to “belong” is so strong as it comes from a time when it actually meant life or death.

Over time sociability became associated with pleasure. A smile, the laughter of a group or the intangible aspects of a shared friendship, all set off a chemical reaction in the brain that makes us feel good. A more intense feeling of pleasure is felt when that experience is unexpected. Think of a time when you planned something versus something that was random or spontaneous, which was more memorable? It is the unpredictability of events that make them more addictive.

Why do people buy lottery tickets when they know they are likely to lose? It is the unpredictability of the situation that keeps them coming back.

That same unpredictability trigger applies to social media on your mobile device. Social media platforms are social validation feedback loops designed to provide validation intermittently, triggering the most primitive parts of our brain to respond. When social media engagement is driven by intermittent reinforcement, it increases anxiety through FOMO.

FOMO drives compulsive social media use. That use is amplified by the “always on” nature of modern communication. Who hasn’t been at a gathering when that little vibration from your mobile device overrides external noises and compels you to attend to it when there is so much else going on.

Perhaps the most damaging aspect of social media is its ability to affect one’s mental health. People tend to use social media when they are bored, anxious, lonely or depressed as a way of connecting with other people. But social media can exacerbate those negative feelings when confronted with others apparently living the perfect life. This can worsen these negative feelings and lead to even more social media. It is a vicious cycle that is difficult to break.

Studies have shown that reducing social media use brings significant reductions in anxiety, depression, loneliness, insomnia and FOMO. How can you break the cycle? Try these proven tips:

- Never bring your phone to bed. Leave it to charge in a different room.

- Turn off your phone when you are doing something else. When you are meeting people, exercising or at a restaurant with friends, turn your phone off. Concentrate on what is in front of you, not what might be on your phone.
- Track your use with an app. See how long you spend on social media during the day, then decide how long you really want to be on there.
- Turn off notifications. That buzz has been designed to pull us out of everything else we are doing and attend to its call. Switch it off.
- Set regular check times. If you must check on social media, set a specific time you will check it rather than compulsively checking it.
- Remove social media apps from your phone. Our phones are constant companions. Deleting the apps will free us from most of the compulsion to attend to them, while still allowing us to engage at times of our own choosing, through a computer or tablet.

Source: the Anti-Anxiety Handbook