

Rotary
District 9640



rotary
youth
exchange

OUTBOUND STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023/24

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1. WELCOME TO ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

To have the opportunity to study abroad with Rotary Youth Exchange is a unique, life-changing experience.

As an outbound Rotary Youth Exchange student some of the amazing things you are about to gain include:

- self-confidence.
- independence and maturity.
- a global network of family and friends.
- a better appreciation of other cultures as well as your own.
- an understanding of your own personal strengths and weaknesses.

How?

- You have chosen to be removed from your comfort zone and live in a foreign environment where you don't know anyone.
- You have chosen to be exposed to new ways of living and new social customs.
- For some students, you have also chosen to learn to speak a new language.

Studying abroad is full of many amazing experiences, from learning a new culture and language to making new friends from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds. Exchange will help you learn to analyse the things around you in a constructive manner and learn how to solve problems on your own.

By participating in youth exchange you will learn skills that will stay with you for the rest of your life. Rotary youth exchange is the best of the best of Rotary's youth development programs. It can only be as successful and as valued as it is because of the personal commitment of the students, their families and all of those in Rotary who are facilitators of the program through being Youth Protection Officers, host families, club supporters and members of the district youth exchange committee.

This handbook is intended to help guide you through some of the challenges you might face as an exchange student. It is the product of many years of experience in youth exchange at all levels. In addition to this guide, all Rotary Youth Exchange students are expected to adhere to the specific rules approved by Rotary International for worldwide application. Adherence to these rules is acknowledged by both students and parents when you sign the application form.

Please spend some time going through this handbook and ensure that you and your parents/guardians have a full understanding of your responsibilities. If you have any questions, speak to your club YEO or your district Country Coordinator, Deputy Chair or Chair.

We hope your exchange experience is as life-changing as we know it can be. The District Youth Exchange committee is here to support you every step of the way

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is a combination of information from the guidebooks of other Rotary district youth exchange programs. We appreciate the hard work that has gone into producing these documents.

We welcome suggestions or any other comments from Rotary clubs, student youth protection officers, host families, exchange students and others who might use this handbook. Such assistance will ensure that the strength and wellbeing of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program is constantly being reviewed for the betterment of its participants and supporters.

2. COMMON TERMS

You will hear a lot of names and acronyms used in Rotary Youth Exchange. But what do they all mean? Here's a quick guide to some of the more common ones before we get started!

NAME/ACRONYM	MEANING
RYE	Rotary Youth Exchange
YEP	Youth Exchange Program
D9640	District 9640
RI	Rotary International
DG	District Governor – this is a District leadership position that changes each year. The DG is the 'CEO' of the district for that year and has ultimate responsibility for the youth exchange program.
Outbound	Student going to a foreign country (you, now!)
Inbound	Student in a foreign country (you once you are on exchange)
Rebound	Student who has returned from exchange (you when you return).
ROTEX	The club for rebound students (ROT for Rotary, EX for Exchange)
YEO	Youth Exchange Officer – the person in charge of youth exchange in your sponsor club and host club.
YPO or Student Counsellor	Youth Protection Officer – also sometimes called a Student Counsellor. This is the person in your host Rotary club who will be your sounding board and mentor. You will also have a YPO in your sponsor club, but it is the YPO in your host club that is one of the most important people for your exchange journey.
Sponsor District/Club	The district and club in your home country that is sponsoring you to go on exchange.
Host District/Club	The district and club in your destination country that will host you while you are on exchange.
YEAH	Youth Exchange Administration Hub – our youth exchange database.

3. ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

3.1 WHO WE ARE

Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million neighbors, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.

Solving real problems takes real commitment and vision. For more than 110 years, Rotary's people of action have used their passion, energy, and intelligence to take action on sustainable projects. From literacy and peace to water and health, we are always working to better our world, and we stay committed to the end.

The Rotary Club of Melbourne was the first Australian Rotary Club chartered in 1921. The Australia-wide membership of Rotary exceeds 32,000 people spread over more than 1,100 clubs.

Rotary in District 9640 consists of 64 individual Rotary clubs with more than 1,000 members (as at June 2023). Our district stretches from Goondiwindi to Grafton and throughout the Gold Coast. Since 1982 we have sponsored and hosted more than 1,600 exchange students to/from all over the world.

You can find out more about Rotary International on [the Rotary website here](#) and District 9640 on the [District website here](#).

3.2 WHAT WE DO

Rotary members believe that we have a shared responsibility to take action on our world's most persistent issues. Our 46,000+ clubs work together to:

- Promote peace.
- Fight disease.
- Provide clean water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Save mothers and children.
- Support education.
- Grow local economies.
- Protect the environment.

At Rotary we believe in Service Above Self. Our service projects are categorized into Five Avenues of Service - Club, Vocational, Community, International and Youth. Youth Exchange is a program of the Fifth Avenue of Service – Youth.

Rotarians around the world also follow the Four Way Test when we consider the things we say and do:

Is it the **TRUTH**?
Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

3.3 ROTARY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL - THE ROTARY CLUB

There are more than 46,000 individual Rotary clubs in communities around the world.

The 'personality' of each Rotary Club is a reflection of the community it serves and the membership of that club. Most Rotary Clubs meet weekly, but some meet fortnightly or monthly. Most meet in person but some meet only online. Some have a breakfast meeting while others have a lunch or dinner meeting.

Rotary districts administer the Youth Exchange program in collaboration with local Rotary clubs. A Rotary district is a group of Rotary clubs in a specific area or region. Unlike many exchange programs, Rotary Youth Exchange is managed by volunteers, resulting in relatively low administrative costs and a strong support network of engaged Rotarians. Rotary's youth protection policies and district Youth Exchange certification program ensure that the safety of our youth is the highest priority.

Exchange students often find that the Rotary Club hosting them will be very different from the Rotary Club sponsoring them, and both will be very different from other Rotary Clubs they may have the opportunity to visit during their exchange year. However Rotarians around the world all share the common philosophy of 'Service to Others', and they are there to help provide a successful exchange experience for their exchange students.

As with most organisations, Rotary clubs are led by officers who are elected by the membership for one year terms, beginning on 1 July, which is the beginning of the Rotary year. The officers include the Club President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice- President and/or President-Elect and Directors. Rotary Clubs participating in the Youth Exchange Program appoint Youth Protection Officers or YPOs (formerly known as Student Youth Protection Officers). These YPOs serve as the primary liaison between the Rotary Club, the exchange student and the host families.

4. ABOUT ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

4.1 WHAT IS ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE?

Rotary Youth Exchange is a country-to-country (long term) or family to family (short term) exchange of high-school age young people. Students going on exchange from District 9640 must be aged between 15 years and 18 years at the time of departure from Australia. The duration of a long term exchange is typically 11.5 months with the students departing in January. The duration of a short term exchange is just under 3 months with the students departing at different times throughout the year.

You can find out more about [youth exchange in District 9640 on our website here](#).

4.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The objectives of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program include:

- Instilling international understanding and goodwill in students.
- Creating positive change by empowering youth.
- Making lasting connections for host clubs, host families, communities, and the students involved.

4.3 THE ROLE OF THE ROTARY DISTRICT AND YOUTH EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) is an exchange of students between one Rotary District (and an associated club) and another Rotary District (and associated club) in another country. Conduct and administration of RYE is the responsibility of each participating Rotary District under the authority of the respective District Governor.

All Rotary Districts participating in the Youth Exchange Program agree to comply with Rotary International guidelines. This responsibility is delegated in Rotary Districts to the District Youth Exchange Committee. The Youth Exchange district Chair manages the youth exchange activities within the district.

To ensure a complete understanding of the District's rules, regulations, and guidelines, the District Youth Exchange Committee provides a comprehensive orientation to outbound students prior to their departure.

The Youth Exchange Committee establishes and maintains communications with the outbound students both before their departure, during their year abroad, and on their return.

The District Youth Exchange Committee is a valuable resource for you and it's members are familiar with the conduct of the exchange program both here and in the country where you will have your exchange. Feel welcome to contact any member of the Committee anytime you have a question or help with a problem. You can [see the full committee here](#).

4.3.1 CONTACT LIST FOR THE DISTRICT 9640 RYE COMMITTEE

The email address for the District 9640 committee is yep@rotary9640.org

The key contacts for outbound students from District 9640 can be [found on the website here](#).

4.4 THE ROLE OF YOUR SPONSOR CLUB IN AUSTRALIA

Without committed and passionate Rotarians volunteering their time and energy to our youth exchange program, student exchange within Rotary would not be possible. This extends from the youth exchange committee to your sponsor and host clubs.

Your sponsor club is the Rotary Club in Australia that has selected to send you on exchange. When you are an exchange student, you are not only an Ambassador for your country, school, family and Rotary in

general, but you are specifically an Ambassador of this club. All outbound exchange students are expected to get to know their sponsor club, attend meetings before and after they return, and participate in community activities that are hosted by the club.

The club president oversees the club's youth program and appoints the Youth Chair each Rotary year. The Youth Chair is also either nominated as the club's Youth Exchange Officer (YEO), or they select another member to be the YEO.

Once you have been advised of your selection into the District 9640 Youth Exchange Program, make contact with your club YEO to organise a visit to your sponsor club to introduce yourself to club members and to thank the club for sponsoring you on the amazing journey that is about to unfold.

4.4.1 YOUR CLUB YOUTH EXCHANGE OFFICER & YOUTH PROTECTION OFFICER

Your **sponsor club Youth Exchange Officer (YEO)** plans, implements and supports all activities involving the sending and hosting of long- and short-term exchange students. The YEO leads the promotion of YEP and selection of students and host families, establishes the club's expectations for student participation in club meetings and activities, and ensures students attend mandatory functions such as orientations or district conference. The YEO will notify the District YEP Chair of any student issues or concerns and maintains club communication with the District committee. The YEO assigns all inbound and outbound students a Youth Protection Officer (YPO).

Your **sponsor club Youth Protection Officer (YPO – formerly known as a Student Counsellor)** serves as liaison between the student, the club, the host family (for inbound students) and the community at large. While YPO's have a more critical role working with inbound students, the YPO for an outbound student will help prepare students for departure and provide support on their return.

In district 9640 we cover both Queensland and New South Wales. It is now law that all volunteers who work with children should hold either a Queensland Blue Card or in NSW a 'Working with Children Check'. This is an obligation for all Rotary Youth Exchange volunteers under the Rotary Youth Protection Policy. This includes all District Youth Exchange Committee members and your sponsor club President, YEO and YPO.

4.5 THE ROLE OF YOUR HOST DISTRICT & CLUB

Once you have been assigned to your host country and a host district, the Country Coordinator for Australia, Inbound Coordinator or other similar person from that Youth Exchange Committee will be in touch with you to share details of their committee and program. Your host district will have their own Inbound Student Handbook for you with all of that district's own information, guidelines and rules. You will receive an inbound orientation hosted by your host district soon after your arrival.

Your host district is responsible for assigning you to a local Rotary Club who will host you for your short or long term exchange. At your host club there will be a Youth Exchange Officer, or Youth Chair, and you will be assigned a Youth Protection Officer (or Club Counsellor). The role of your YPO is critical. It is their job to:

- Establish contact with you before arrival, explain the expectations of the club and the district, and maintain and document regular contact.
- Counsel you in matters such as choosing classes, making friends, and participating in activities.
- Help you to adapt to the culture and language.
- Work with the community and school to help ensure you are involved in positive activities and community life.
- Inform you about abuse and harassment prevention and create a supportive atmosphere for you to feel comfortable raising concerns.
- Serve as an advocate for you in any matter.
- Be a consistent resource for you as you rotate through host families during your exchange.
- Ensure you are receiving your monthly allowance from the club (usually between \$120-\$150 per month in equivalent local currency).

It is important to establish a good rapport as quickly as possible. Your Youth Protection Officer is effectively your guardian, friend and confidante.

In most countries your Youth Protection Officer will host you for the first week in their home, before you go to your first host family. This helps form the bond that is really essential between your Youth Protection

Officer and yourself. This arrangement is not always the case though, and you may go directly to your first host family.

Your YPO may also organise safekeeping of your passport and any other important documents in a place where they will be safe but accessible if/when needed. You may need your passport if you travel to another country, especially on the Euro Tour in Europe, so ensure your Youth Protection Officer is not away or uncontactable when you require your passport to travel.

If at any time you have any concerns about your YPO, or are not sure who your YPO is, please speak immediately to your Club YEO, your host District Youth Exchange Committee, or your Country Coordinator in Australia.

4.6 THE ROLE OF YOUR HOST FAMILIES

Most host Rotary clubs will have three or four families planned for your stay (for long term exchange students). The main reason hosting responsibilities amongst several families is:

1. To give you an opportunity to experience several different family lifestyles.
2. To give more than one family the opportunity to know you.
3. To spread the cost of supporting you.

When you first arrive, it is normal that only your first one to two host families will have already been decided, so don't panic if your final one or two families are yet to volunteer. It takes time to find and vet excellent host families, and sometimes it is only after meeting you that some families will feel confident to put their hand up to host.

Families who volunteer to host are thoroughly vetted by your host Rotary Club and must pass all the required volunteer checks to comply with [Rotary's Youth Protection Guide](#).

Some important things to remember about living with your host family:

- Your host families are not being paid to host you – they are doing it as an act of service, to support your exchange experience, and to provide a cultural experience for their themselves and their family. You are not a guest in their home, you are part of their family.
- If you have developed a good bond, it is sometimes difficult to change host families. Just remember that your old host family will still be there to support you, you have likely created a lifetime bond, and that you might just create the same connection with more than one family so try to embrace the move.
- Every family is different and one may be more 'comfortable' for you than others. Try to accept and appreciate the differences and what you can learn from them and how they are helping to make you a more adaptable person.
- Try not to make comparisons and take time to get to know your second, third and fourth families.
- Be respectful when you speak about your families to others. Gossip travels quickly and it is easy to cause hurt feelings. Remember that your host family have very kindly opened their door to their home to you and welcomed you in as a family member. If there is anything that you find uncomfortable, speak with your YPO/Counsellor, but try not to gossip with other exchange students, past host families or friends from school.
- Try to appreciate whatever your host families do for you. Be an active listener and ask lots of questions. If they take you in the car somewhere, try not to sleep the whole way.

The operative word here is **family**. Your host family have been asked to help you become a part of their family during the period that you live with them. This means treating you as they would their own child, not as a guest, and exercising all the parental responsibilities and authorities they would for their own child.

Host families come in all shapes and sizes:

Host families will represent the diversity of the culture of your host country. They will be of varied economic, religious and racial backgrounds and may include:

- Working parents.
- Multi-generational families.
- Couples without children.
- Couples with many children.
- Single people and single parents.

- Blended families.
- Adoptive parents.
- Empty-nesters.
- Retired couples.

Some will live in mansions, some on vast properties, some in cramped city apartments and some will have family pets that share the home.

However – whoever or whatever your host families are, they will treat you as part of their family and expect that you fit in with their lifestyle. If you accept each family for who and what they are and embrace their style of living, you will enjoy the time spent with them. If you complain and compare, you will be very miserable.

Settling in on your first night:

The first night with each of your new families is usually the hardest as you start to get to know each other and you learn about how your new family lives and what is expected of you. It's important that you establish a clear understanding of expectations soon after you arrive in their home. To help you with this conversation, we recommend you sit down with your family on the first night and discuss our 'First Night Questions' that you will find in APPENDIX A. Don't worry, your host family will also have been asked to have this conversation with you, so it won't be a surprise!

What happens if one of your host parents goes away?

If one host parent is going away from home for a period of time e.g., a weekend/business trip/holiday, and you are of the opposite gender to the remaining host parent, and there are no siblings living in the home at that time, you must advise your YEO and agree with them and your host family how you will be accommodated during this time. It is recommended by Rotary that you are either hosted in separate accommodation for the period of time nominated, or another trusted adult would come to stay in the home during that time. This protects both the student and the host family.

5. THE ROTARY RULES

For a comprehensive list of all program rules and conditions of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program, please see APPENDIX B.

5.1 THE FOUR D'S

The primary rules that all short-term and long-term Rotary Youth Exchange students must abide by at all times are referred to as the '4 D's'. Breaking any of the 4 D's may be grounds for the termination of your exchange year.

1. **NO DRUGS:** Students must not use illicit or illegal drugs. The only drugs permitted are those prescribed by a physician for medical reasons.
2. **NO DRIVING:** Students are not permitted to own or drive a motor vehicle including a motor bike, motor boat or motor vessel nor private aircraft regardless of whether the student has the appropriate license in their home country for that means of transport. You cannot afford to be involved in an accident where you are the driver – you will not be covered by insurance.
3. **NO DATING:** Serious dating is not permitted. Students should not become romantically involved with anyone during the period of the exchange – it can lead to emotional stress and will take away from the objectives of your year – to meet lots of new people and enjoy many activities.
4. **NO DRINKING:** Students are not permitted to drink alcohol except in the following circumstances:
 - a. When in the physical presence of your host parents or a Rotarian who is specifically responsible for you at the time.
 - b. The circumstances for you to drink are completely legal.
 - c. It is done in moderation.
 - d. You have express permission from your Rotary District and are not disobeying any specific rules regarding drinking, even if you are of legal age.

5.2 THE SIX B'S

We don't just have rules about what you can't do, but we also have 'rules' about what you should do while on exchange!

These are not rules as such, but what we consider good rules of thumb for having a great exchange experience.

1. **BE FIRST:** Get out there, jump in, don't hold back! (But do get permission if you need to) 😊
2. **BE CURIOUS:** You're in a new country. Turn over some rocks, you'll never know what you might find.
3. **BE PURPOSEFUL:** If you're going to do something, do it with gusto. If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well.
4. **BE GRATEFUL:** There are a lot of host families, volunteers, Rotarians, students and teachers who volunteer a significant amount of their time to make your exchange possible. By being grateful and thanking them, you are encouraging them to do more. They will feel good about helping you and you'll feel good that they did
5. **BE OF SERVICE:** Pitch in and help. Rotary's motto is Service above self, but it's a good motto for life in general. By helping others, you'll feel good about yourself.
6. **BE HERE NOW:** Seize the day! Don't dwell on the past. The future is a long way off. Enjoy each and every day of your exchange to the fullest. It will be over before you know it.

5.3 CREATING POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions are what people believe about you and are not necessarily always based in fact - people may dig deep into their store of perceptions and compile a list of your misgivings and behaviors based on past experiences. This is often experienced by exchange students who are following in the footsteps of the students who have gone before them – if a club member or family has had a poor experience with a past exchange student, you might find this impacts their perception of you even if they don't know you.

While you can't always control people's perceptions of you, it's important that you follow the rules and make good decisions to ensure you are creating the best possible perception of yourself and for the students you

are paving the way for in the future.

Here are some examples of poor decisions made by students in the past that have impacted their exchange experience, created negative perceptions of their motivation for/interest in being on exchange, and in some cases resulted in them being sent home:

- Using very poor judgment with regard to time that they come home from parties etc.
- Poor school attendance record.
- Not co-operating and helping around the house (including not keeping your room clean).
- Not accepting the host families rules.
- Did not respect the authority of Rotary, the school and host families.
- Not taking up invitations graciously.
- Going out without permission.
- Not prepared to eat the food prepared, having not listed any allergies or dislikes on your application.
- Not participating in extra-curricular activities at school.
- No intention to make sincere friends in the new culture.
- Put the host families, the school, the club counselor and the Youth Exchange Committee off side.
- Not taking up traditional activities and not attending social functions.
- No effort to enjoy the different way of life.
- Having a member of the opposite sex in the host parent's home without informing them or asking permission.
- Sleeping in on weekends until midday and showing little interest in leaving the family home.
- Staying up until 3 or 4am in the morning speaking to friends and family back home and then waking up tired and grumpy.
- Constantly being on social media.

5.4 BEING SENT HOME

Approximately three percent of all exchange students return home early. Some leave because of severe homesickness, illness, or problems back home. Others are sent home because of problems that occur in the host country during the exchange. A student can be sent home for violating a district youth exchange program rule or for geopolitical crises or other health and safety issues that may arise during the exchange.

A student must not be sent home solely for reporting problems, and breaking a rule is not always a reason to send a student home. Students will only be sent home when agreed by the host club, host district, host family, sponsor district and the student's own parents/guardians. All options to avoid an early return are always first attempted or explored, including warning students when initial behaviour problems surface. If the decision to be sent home is made, the host district will work closely with the sponsor district and parents/guardians to arrange an acceptable return travel itinerary.

6 WHAT TO EXPECT ON YOUR EXCHANGE

6.1 PLANNING FOR BEFORE, DURING & AFTER EXCHANGE

Be aware of, know and understand the rules, responsibilities and obligations of participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange Program.

Before Departure: The months before

- Meet all requests and deadlines, including all application form requirements as requested by the youth exchange committee.
- Attend all required orientation camps.
- Meet with your school to discuss any academic credits you might be able to receive or any special arrangements needed for your return. Although you will be studying in a school overseas, Rotary has no control or involvement with your graduation requirements.
- Get to know your sponsor Rotary club, its members and the work they do in their community.
- Make some time to get a head start on learning the language of your host country if the national language is not English.
- Learn something of the culture of your host country and what you want to do while you're there.
- As soon as you learn of your exchange destination, establish contact with your host Rotary Club via email or whatsapp, and arrange to meet with your host Rotary club and your first host family on a video call with your family.
- Prepare your presentation(s) to be given to your host Rotary Club and other organisations while you are on exchange.
- Contact your mobile phone company to determine if you will be able to use your existing phone overseas, under a local plan, or if you will need to buy a new one when you get there.
- Finalise all vaccinations and/or other medical needs you might have while on exchange.
- Apply for any required visas and a new passport if you need one. Make sure your passport has in excess of six months validity post your return date.
 - Also check that one of your parents has more than 18 months validity on their passport in case they need it in an emergency situation.
- Visit www.smarttraveller.gov.au/before-you-go and review the travel advice for your host country.
- Discuss your financial plan with your family – what are your spending limits, and how will you fund trips? How will money be transferred to you from home?
- Organise gifts for your host families and other Rotarians who might take you away or invite you into their homes. Take pins to exchange with other students.
- Your sponsor club Youth Protection Officer will ensure you have a supply of Rotary club banners (if available) to take with you on Exchange. You will be able to present these to your host club president and to other clubs you may visit whilst on Exchange.
- Plan what you will need to pack – check the weather in your new home town and ask your host family for any clothing advice.

Before Departure: The week before

- Ensure you check the details regarding your checked baggage allowance, size and weight of cabin baggage, departure date and time, and meeting point and time on day of departure.
- Make sure you have copies of all your important documents such as your passport, visa, insurance policy, travel itinerary, parents travel authorization and/or any other documents that have been advised to you by the youth exchange committee or your host country that you need to have on you for entry to your host country.
- Be prepared for arrival into a different climate and pack accordingly.

Departure

- Be on time!
- Don't pack your ticket, passport or money in checked luggage. Carry them securely on you at all times.
- Never carry a package for anyone else on or off the aircraft.
- Be comfortably dressed but well presented.

Whilst you are on exchange

- Keep in regular contact with your sponsor club YEO/Youth Protection Officer and your District Chair and Country Coordinator.
- Accept all decisions of your host Rotary Club and your host families (and your parents/guardians). If there is a decision you are not comfortable with, speak with your YPO.
- Be adaptable – become part of the family.
- Say yes to new experiences, even if they don't sound that exciting. You never know who you might meet or what might come or it.
- Be prepared for culture shock and know how to deal with it.
- Present talks to your host club, school and other organisations about Australia, your community, yourself, and Rotary Youth Exchange.
- Participate and get involved in your school, your community, your Rotary Club. Attend as many Rotary meetings as you can and participate in your club's community activities.
- Dress appropriately for all occasions, and respect dress code differences in your host country. If you're not sure, check with your host family or YPO.
- Never plan without asking – ask your host family and your host club before you commit to anything.
- Keep in touch regularly with home, but not daily. Remember that youth exchange is about developing yourself as an individual and growing and learning. Sometimes you will feel outside of your comfort zone and that's OK! Calling home every day will impact your ability to do that.
- Talk through any problems that are causing you concern as soon as possible with your host club Youth Protection Officer. If you feel something needs addressing and you haven't been able to resolve it in your host country, don't wait until the end of the month when you do your monthly report to report your concerns – get in touch with the D9640 Chair or your Country Coordinator at any time. We're always just a call or email away.

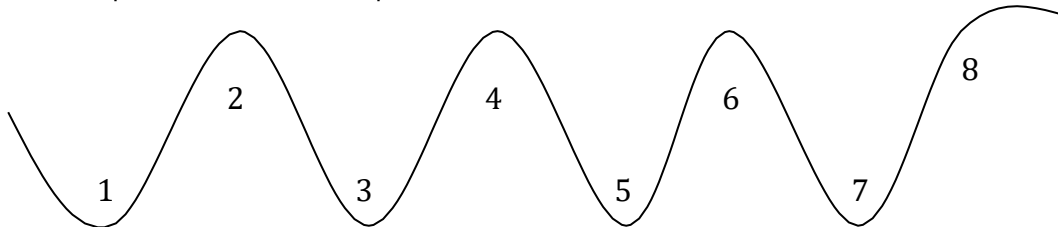
When you return home from exchange

- Confirm your flight arrival time with your country coordinator and your sponsor club YEP/YPO and advise them of any changes to flight details as they will be intending to be at the airport to welcome you home.
- Upon your return home, your YEO/YPO will arrange for you to be the guest speaker at your sponsor club where you will have the opportunity to share your experiences of your year abroad (but if you don't hear from them soon after your return, make sure you reach out to them!). Your family will be invited to attend this meeting. You may present, to the club president, any Rotary banners that you have received while on exchange.
- The YEP committee and your club YEO/YPO will assist you to settle back into your home environment.
- Be prepared: adjusting back into your home can be as difficult as when you first went away!
- Make sure you know the date of the District Debriefing Day. We will notify you and your parents as soon as the date has been confirmed. This is a compulsory event, and you are expected to attend.
- Join Southern Star Rotex to stay connected to Rotary and other rebound exchange students who know what you're going through, and know what a life changing experience you have just had. A member of the Southern Star Rotex team will be in touch with you on your return, and they will also be in attendance at your debrief day.

6.2 THE EXCHANGE CYCLE

All exchange students experience phases of elation, anxiety and depression. You may experience one or more of these phases. Various phases will then continue even after you return home. It is important that these be anticipated and calmly accepted and dealt with. The best method to resolve each occurrence is to keep yourself busy and remember that all exchange students before you, and who follow you, will experience similar things!

Your Youth Protection Officer and your host families need to know when you experience these phases. They will be ready to help you work your way out of the down cycles. The time necessary to work through each phase is not predictable and will depend on the circumstances.



1. Application Anxiety: *will I be selected? How will my interviews go?*

2. Selection/Arrival: *Elation, excitement, fascination*

3. Initial Culture Shock: 1-6 Months. *Novelty wears off. Language difficulties. Fatigue (Mental/Physical). Changed eating habits.*

4. Surface adjustments: *settling in, making friends, navigating the culture.*

5. Mental Isolation: *bored, frustrated, lack of motivation, homesick, ongoing language or other problems.*

6. Integration/acceptance: *of surroundings and self*

7. Return Anxiety: *Preparation for departure. Realise changes in yourself, desire to stay. Pain of breaking bonds.*

8. Shock/Reintegration: *Elation to be home BUT. Difficult to accept change, not the centre of attention. Others not interested in experience.*

6.3 CULTURE SHOCK

“Not good, not bad, just different.”

What you experience on your Exchange will most likely be very different from life in Australia. Some of the differences you experience you will like, others you will find irritating, some may be unbearable, but all experiences challenge and prepare you to cope with life. Always consider things to be different and don't be judgmental that something is better or worse than what you are used to – it is just different!

You may find differences in all or some of the following:

- School
- Language
- Sport
- Climate
- Food
- Lack of news of or about your home country
- Gender roles
- Dress and appearance
- Religion and religious observance
- Social attitudes i.e. drugs, sexuality, gender, nudity, contraception, smoking and alcohol.

Here is a video from our exchange partner **North Star Rotary Youth Exchange** in the USA about culture shock that you might find useful to watch:

There are four stages of culture shock that you might experience as part of your exchange:

1. **The Honeymoon Stage**

Think of the first stage of cultural shock as the honeymoon stage. This occurs in the first few days of you arriving in your host country.

Symptoms of honeymoon stage:

- Excitement and euphoria.
- General anticipation of everything that you are about to experience.
- Everything and everyone you encounter is new and many times exciting.
- You'll probably be eager to learn the language spoken in your host country.

During the honeymoon stage you will be poised to take on the challenges of living broad.

2. **The Frustration Stage**

After the honeymoon stage your initial excitement may wane. This is the onset of the frustration stage.

Symptoms of the frustration stage:

- Some of your initial excitement dissipates.
- Feelings of anxiety, anger and homesickness creep in.
- Find somebody of trust to talk to about your frustration.
- You might reject your new environment and begin to have a lack of interest in your new surroundings.
- You'll become frustrated with trying to speak a foreign language.

How to handle the frustration stage:

- Don't blame the host country or its people for your feelings. Your anxiety and frustration happens to millions of people who study, work or travel abroad.
- Remember, you're in a new environment and getting accustomed takes time. How you handle this frustration that determines how you to grow from your experience abroad.
- Don't be negative; you'll only prolong the feelings of frustration.
- Stay positive. Think about the experience you're having living abroad and learning about new people, food, and culture.
- Try keeping a journal chronicling your experiences.

3. **The Understanding Stage**

The understanding stage arrives when you develop a more balanced view of your experience abroad.

Characteristics of the understanding stage:

- You become more familiar with the culture, people, food and language of your host country.
- You will have made friends.
- You become less homesick.
- You'll be more comfortable with speaking and listening to the language spoken in your host country.
- You become more comfortable and relaxed in your new environment.
- You better handle the situations you previously found frustrating.

4. The Acclimation Stage

During the acclimation stage you will begin to feel like you really belong in your new environment.

Characteristics of the acclimation stage:

- You'll be able to compare the good and bad of your host country with the good and bad of your home country.
- You feel less like a foreigner and more like your host country is your second home.
- You laugh about things that frustrated you at earlier stages of cultural shock.
- Once you reach the acclimation, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you can live successfully in two cultures; this is a huge milestone.

6.4 COPING WITH HOMESICKNESS AND STRESS

Many of our exchange students may come from a small country town and will be hosted in a large city just as often as those from large centres of population will be hosted in smaller centres. No matter what the size of your host community, things will be different the moment you arrive.

It is strange to arrive in a foreign airport and not know what you are looking for upon arrival. But you can be assured that upon reaching your final destination there will be people to meet you who are genuinely very pleased you have arrived safely and are looking forward to welcoming you into their family and community.

Very few students avoid homesickness. It may appear as soon as one week after your arrival or several weeks after the settling in period has passed. Some long term students even report homesickness only arriving after five to six months.

There are many things that can cause homesickness including:

- Missing little things from home, which you had normally taken for granted.
- Being frustrated by an inability to communicate.
- Being overpowered by the 'culture shock'.
- Finding it slow to make friends or connect with your host family or other people your own age.

Each individual will have his or her own way of coping with homesickness when it occurs. The key is to not 'bottle it up'!

Some ideas for dealing with homesickness:

- First, recognise the symptoms:
 - Feeling miserable,
 - Irritability over little things that wouldn't normally annoy you,
 - Always thinking, and saying, 'things are better at home'.
 - Feeling insular: the security of familiar surrounds,
 - Physical discomfort.
- Talk about and share the problem with your host Youth Protection Officer and host family/
- Keep active and busy.
- Stress and homesickness are related, for stress can occur as a result of not being able to cope with the feeling of homesickness that may overcome you. Stress can begin the moment you are selected to go on the exchange. You may begin to feel it between now and your departure.

One of the aims of our orientation camps is to prepare you for the exchange so that you will feel confident in handling your new environment in order that you get the most out of the exchange free of worry and anxiety.

Here is another video from the North Star Rotary Youth Exchange Team, this time on homesickness, that you might find useful to watch:

Prepare yourself to deal with stress before you depart

Try putting yourself outside your comfort zone while in a safe space like the orientation camps:

- Introduce yourself to the other students, Rotarians and parents who are also attending.
- Sit with different people at meal times.
- Break away from your comfort zone.

These are some of the things you will have to do whilst on exchange. You will have to be proactive in your new environment. Take the initiative to speak to people – don't sit back and wait for them to speak to you.

Who else may feel stress and how can you help them deal with it?

- **Your parents:**
 - Keep in touch regularly and let them know what you're up to.
 - Solve small problems yourself.
 - Don't call only when you have problems, or call with a problem and then don't let them know you've resolved it.
 - Discuss bigger issues as they arise, but try and speak to your local YPO/YEO or host family first.
 - Don't forget parents/family birthdays and special occasions at home.
- **Host Parents**
 - Become part of their family.
 - Ask their advice and seek their guidance.
 - Keep them informed.
 - Discuss problems with them.
 - Share the household chores.
 - Respect family rules at all times.
 - Take an interest in what they tell you.
- **Host Brothers and Sisters**
 - Get to know their friends.
 - Spend time with them.
 - Involve them in your activities if possible.
 - Remember their birthdays.
 - Be interested in what they do.
- **Sponsor District and Club (in Australia)**
 - Stay in contact with your Country Coordinator, and club YEO/YPO.

- Send your report by the end of each month to your country coordinator.
- Reach out to us when you are having a problem you can't resolve – we don't want to hear about these problems in the first instance from your parents.
- **Host Club**
 - Attend meetings as often as possible.
 - Make your presentation to the club as soon as possible.
 - Involve yourself in their activities.
 - Make the effort to form a strong relationship with your Youth Protection Officer and keep them informed of your movements and activities at all times.
 - Introduce yourself to members –some clubs may be significantly larger than your sponsor club.

We understand at times whilst you are on Exchange that you may feel sad, lonely, homesick or unhappy about a situation. Your host Youth Protection Officer, host family, host Rotary club and host district will do everything they can to help you get through any difficult times you have.

Remember – when you have a problem - what everyone will notice is not so much what the problem is, but how you respond to it and how you deal with it.

6.5 LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR NEW COUNTRY

Many of you will be travelling to countries that speak a different language. Some of you will have spent years in Australia already studying this language, and for others you will have had little to no exposure to this language before. Considerable effort will be needed on your part to understand and be understood within your family, at school, at Rotary and just getting by day-to-day.

Your host district may have a language camp when you first arrive to assist you with learning the basics, but we encourage you to spend at least 40 hours before you depart doing some basic language skills via an online app such as DuoLingo. Prioritise learning conversational skills rather than writing skills, and rope your family (or a member of the Rotex club who is a rebounder from your host country!) in to practice with you. This will not only help you when you first arrive, but creates a great first impression. If you haven't even bothered to learn some basics, it does not reflect well on you or Rotary.

Some tips for accelerating your language skills before you depart and while overseas:

- Listen/watch radio/TV/movies in your host language (with the subtitles on). Get used to the patterns, pace and rhythms.
- Go to the library and check out children's books in your host language. They have simple vocabulary and lots of pictures.
- Buy a '501 Verbs' book and practice learning a set number of verbs every day before you leave.
- You must practice by engaging in real conversation.
- Reading and writing the language is necessary to develop true proficiency.
- Some host families will label objects around the house, which can be a fun activity – perhaps ask them to do so if they have not already.
- You can help yourself by asking questions that require more than "yes" or "no" answers, having patience when communications are not clear, and consciously speaking slowly and clearly, with frequent checks for understanding.
- Have google translate or a similar translation tool close at hand at all times – but try not to rely on it too much as this will slow down your learning.
- Think of other words, other phrases, complete sentences and non-truncated words to use so you are better understood.
- Do not 'pretend' to understand because you believe you are 'expected' to understand. You may be agreeing to something that you don't understand the consequences of. Ask for an explanation or translation.

6.6 VISITORS FROM HOME

Your host district will have restrictions on visits from your parents and family back home. If your parents intend to visit you while you are abroad, you must first check with your host District Chair and YEO about their guidelines. Some rules of thumb:

- Visitors from Australia should be discouraged. Past students have reported that they can find the experience of parents visiting quite disruptive, and it can either exacerbate feelings of homesickness once their parents return home, or on the opposite end of the spectrum it can generate feelings of dread about going home! We want all exchange students to be able to experience their exchange without the added worry of entertaining family and friends from home.
- Visiting family can also be inconvenience and added expense for hosts. Plus hosts are left to deal with the feelings of the student following the parent's departure.
- Visits within the first 9 months are not allowed. If your parents insist on visiting, you must obtain permission from your host club and host district and the visit is to be at a time that suits your host family and club. We recommend the visit is for no longer than one week.
- They should not visit you during special holiday times such as Christmas or your birthday and must not expect you or your host parents to act as tour guides nor should they expect to take you on holidays with them. Your parents must not disrupt your school, Rotary or host family commitments.

6.7 GOING TO SCHOOL

Whether you are still in high school or just about to graduate, an essential requirement of being a Rotary Youth Exchange Student is attending high school in your host country. This will be one of the most fun, rewarding and potentially challenging parts of your exchange.

The District 9640 committee will make all of the necessary arrangements for your exchange with the Department of Education in Queensland or New South Wales, but you are responsible for making the arrangements with your high school, if necessary. If you need assistance with this, please ask the District Chair or your YEO.

If you are still in high school when you depart for exchange:

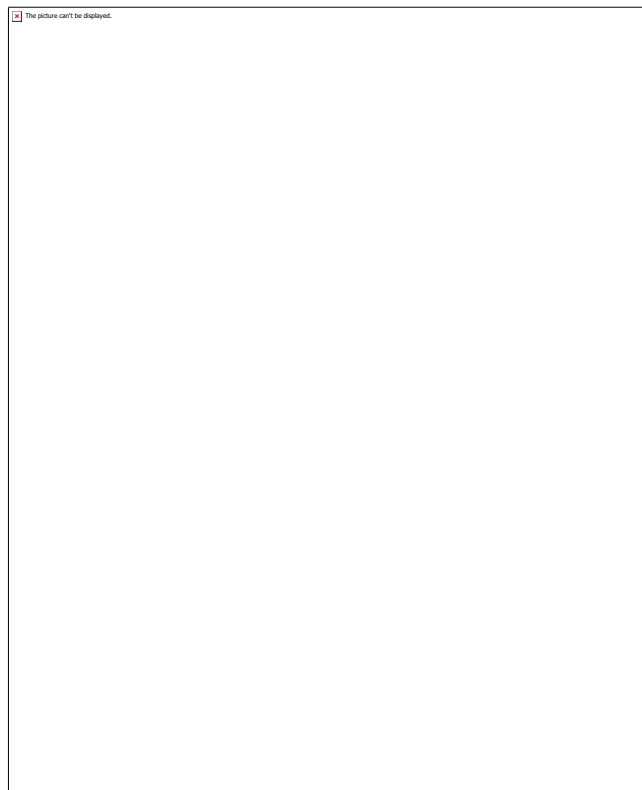
- The majority of students who go on exchange during their high school years do so as a 'gap year' ie they will miss a year of schooling here in Australia. This allows them the freedom to fully experience the cultural exchange and what will be the most incredible educational experience of your life! It is also often not possible, due to language skills, for students to successfully complete coursework in their host school to an acceptable level for school credits.
- If you are aiming to get any school credits, it is imperative that you agree with your school before you go any credits you might receive while you are on exchange, or any arrangements that need to be made for your return.
- If your school does agree to offer you some credits, make sure you get this in writing before you go, and plan to bring back a copy of your school transcripts from your host school. To determine what school credits might be available, request a copy of the school handbook from your host school.
- Rotary has no involvement in or control over your graduation requirements, this must be discussed with your school.
- It is important that you do not try to complete a year of schooling back in Australia while you are on exchange (for example through remote learning or distance education). This will significantly impact your ability to immerse yourself in the life and activities of your new school, family, Rotary club and community.
- Before you return, make sure you get in touch with your school to confirm your enrolment and select your subjects. Also ask them for the opportunity to make a presentation to the school about your exchange experience – this is great for you to help with the return culture shock, and also great to help promote YEP to other students.
- Should any special educational needs be required, these should be made known to the host club well in advance of your arrival. Your parents will be required to meet any costs incurred in these special requests.

If you have completed school before you go on exchange:

- You must still enrol in, and attend, the local high school chosen for you by your host Rotary club. Failing to do so may result in you being sent home.
- Do not ask or expect to be sent to college or university.

Your host Rotary club will make all of the arrangements for your schooling in your host country:

- Most clubs will enrol you in a school that is free of charge. If it is a private school that involves any cost, they will either cover this themselves or they may ask your parents to contribute – note that this is absolutely not compulsory, and we can assist you with these conversations if needed.
- Some students find that their host school is very relaxed about their grades and taking tests, while other students find their school treats them like every other student and expects them to participate fully in all assessments. Discuss your school's expectations with your Principal or Guidance Officer when you first enrol, and if you have any concerns make sure you talk about these with your YEO and ask them to assist you with any discussions with the school. All that we ask is that you already do your best.
- Ask your host school about the possibility of giving a presentation to your class or on assembly. Speak in your host country language, it is sure to gain you lots of kudos even if your pronunciation might not always be right!
- Uniforms:
 - Your school uniform will normally be supplied by your host Rotary club, but you may be asked to make a financial contribution to this.
 - If you are travelling to Europe or North America you will more than likely find the students do not wear a school uniform.
- We encourage you to join as many school sports and activities as you can.
- Avoid 'hanging out' mostly with other exchange students who might be at the same school as you. Although they will be the most comfortable group for you in the beginning, you need to stretch outside of your comfort zone to make new, local friends and experience the local culture.



7 SUPPORT NETWORK & YOUTH PROTECTION

Sometimes things go wrong on youth exchange, which is all part of life. Some of these things will be small, and other things might be big. Either way, you will have an extensive support network to draw on.

Rotary International and Rotary District 9640 take seriously our role to protect students from harassment and abuse, and have international guidelines established for the protection of students.

When you arrive in your host country you will be given additional training and instructions on how to manage problems that might arrive in your host country, and who to speak to. We will ask you to confirm with us that you have received this information as part of your monthly report.

If you do not understand your rights, or need further help, do not hesitate to ask a trusted Rotarian or reach out to the District 9640 Chair or Deputy Chair at any time.

[You can read the full Rotary Youth Protection Guidelines here.](#)

7.1 YOUR HIERARCHY OF SUPPORT

If you experience an issue at school:

- Notify your host parents and/or YEO in the first instance.
- Speak to your school Principal and/or Guidance Officer. Your YEO can assist.
- They then should attempt to resolve the issue.
- If your host family or YEO are unable to help you resolve the issue, contact the Host Club President, District Country Coordinator, or your Host District Chair.
- If the issue is still unresolved, the District Chair will elevate the issue to the District Governor.

If you experience an issue with your host family:

- Try to openly and calmly discuss any issues directly with your host family first.
- If unable to resolve quickly, speak with your Youth Protection Officer.
- Youth Protection Officer may suggest other Rotarians take student for a 'break'.
- If you find the matter is still not resolved – do not let it go on. Your YEO should contact your Country Coordinator and Host Club President, and after that elevate it to the District Chair and then the District Governor.
- During the entire resolution process, counterparts in the student's home country are often informed of the situation. The District Youth Exchange Committee works very hard to ensure fair and proper resolution.

We also encourage you to **connect with the ROTEX club in** your host district, if there is one, to get support and advice from other rebound exchange students. If there is no ROTEX club, ask your District committee country coordinator to connect with you some local rebound students.

We know that one of your first tendencies will be to call your Mum and Dad when things go wrong. For health emergencies or serious safety breaches you should absolutely be reaching out to your parents in addition to the people listed above. For more routine problems you might encounter, we encourage students to make every effort to use the local support network to help resolve these problems, or if talking to their parents to not expect or ask their parents to step in unless it is a serious issue or is ongoing without resolution. We want students to gain skills in independence and problem solving as much as we can, and we also know that too many calls from children on exchange sharing challenges and problems can be extremely stressful for parents who are far away.

7.2 YOUR SAFETY WHILE ON EXCHANGE

“If it doesn’t feel right, it isn’t right.”

Risk is inherent in virtually all aspects of society. Rotary’s goal of developing world citizens by exposing you to other cultures brings with it some risk. But ever since its earliest days, programs for youth have been a central focus of Rotary and we have stringently managed the associated risks. A few important things to note about your safety while on exchange:

As an Exchange Student, you need to recognise abuse when it occurs. Indeed, all involved in Youth Exchange have to be able to do that. Your best protection is your sponsor club and/or host club Youth Protection Officer/Counsellor. They are there to look after your wellbeing during the period of the Exchange. They will be your mentor, friend and confidante – somebody to turn to for advice, guidance, help and counsel. While you are in your host country you must feel confident enough to talk through problems and issues with your host club Youth Protection Officer or another member of your host club.

Rotary take our duty of care very seriously. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure the risk of harm is removed and that you feel safe and confident when in our care. As Rotarians we rely on the cooperation of our fellow Rotarians in the countries we exchange with and trust they will also take all such reasonable steps. All international districts we exchange with have to be regularly certified for youth exchange by Rotary International, and their local government authorities. As part of this certification they must demonstrate their youth protection policies and how these are implemented, including in the selection of host families and other Rotary volunteers.

The Rotary International Code of Conduct binds us all. Perfection and the total removal of all elements of harm are not, and cannot, be expected but all will be done within our power to reduce and eliminate the risks.

Rotary has a Zero Tolerance Policy to abuse and harassment, which means that we consider even one incident of abuse or harassment to be unacceptable, and we commit to treating every incident as a serious matter.

Some tips to help you stay safe:

- If you have a problem or are worried about something, always tell an adult you trust about it, such as your teacher, Youth Protection Officer or current or recent host parents. NEVER suffer in silence!
- Pack your own suitcase and never carry items abroad for others.
- Before you go on exchange find out how to use a public phone in your new country. Carry the telephone numbers for the emergency services in that country and keep them handy. Memorise the mobile numbers for your host parents and your YPO.
- Tell someone where you are going and what time you will be home – don’t change your plans at the last minute as this can cause confusion.
- If you are out at night in the centre of town, stay in places with street lights – wherever you are, make sure that you don’t get separated from your friends.
- If you need to use a public toilet, go with a friend.
- When travelling keep your belongings secure and beware of pickpockets,
- If you do get lost or separated go to a shop or place where you will be seen by lots of people to ask for directions.
- Have the details of your accommodation on you, whether it’s your host family’s address and telephone number or hotel or campsite details.
- Always make sure you have some cash on you.
- Arrange for someone to pick you up at night unless you can take public transport where you are amongst a sizeable group of people.
- Make sure you know the person who is coming to pick you up. Never get into a car unless it is with this arranged person.
- If you are on a bus and someone makes you feel unsafe, move to a seat near the driver.
- Be sensitive to local codes and customs.
- Think things through carefully before you act and do not take unnecessary risks.

7.3 RESPONSIBILITIES: YEO, YPO/COUNSELLOR & STUDENT

Your host club YEO and YPO/Counsellor play a critical role in helping you deal with problems as they arise while you are on exchange. Please refer back to Sections 4.4.1 and 4.5 for more information on the role of the YEP and YPO within the Rotary Club.

Your host Rotary club will appoint a YEP and a YPO/Counsellor for you. When you arrive, if you are not already aware of who your YEO and YPO/Counsellor are you should ask your hosts, and make contact with them if they have not been in touch with you (all Rotarians are volunteers and occasionally important tasks can slip off the radar!). If you do not have a Rotary appointed YPO or Counsellor, please advise your host Country Coordinator or D9640 Country Coordinator as soon as you can. Your YEO and YPO should not be your host parents (this is very important).

Outlined below are basic international guidelines for YEO's, YPO's/Counsellors and Students:

Host YEO Responsibilities:

- Think of your host club YEO as the Administrator of youth exchange in your host club.
- To select, screen and confirm all host parents for the students stay. To arrange the date and time of changing host families.
- To orient the host parents and students as to their responsibilities.
- To enrol the student into school and to arrange the necessary uniforms and other school resources the student will require. Introduce the student to the Principal and other key school contacts.
- To look after the student's emergency fund and any other important documents.
- To introduce and integrate the student into the host Rotary club and ensure the student is invited as a guest to meetings and other activities. Arrange for the student to give a presentation to the club. Assist the student with transport to the meeting if required, and assist the student to obtain any additional funds from the club for attendance at Rotary district events or conferences as deemed appropriate.
- To ensure the student receives their monthly allowance from the club.
- To help the student set up all necessary bank accounts when they arrive, and to assist them with local mobile/cell phone needs.
- To deal appropriately with any unresolved difficulties between students and host families and the school.
- To ensure the student has completed all necessary travel forms for any out of district travel, and to be aware of where the student is staying/travelling at any given time.
- To notify students of any Rotary-approved tours for the exchange students that they can participate in.

Host YPO/Counsellor Responsibilities:

- Think of your host club YPO as your advocate/trusted advisor in the club.
- Your YPO should be the same gender as you.
- Your YPO should meet the student once or twice per month (or more if you need it) to give you advice and to deal with any problems or issues you might be having (and to celebrate your successes!).
- To advocate for the student when they are having difficulties at school or with the host family.
- To help a student with self-discipline if they go off track. Provide advice and coaching.

Student Responsibilities:

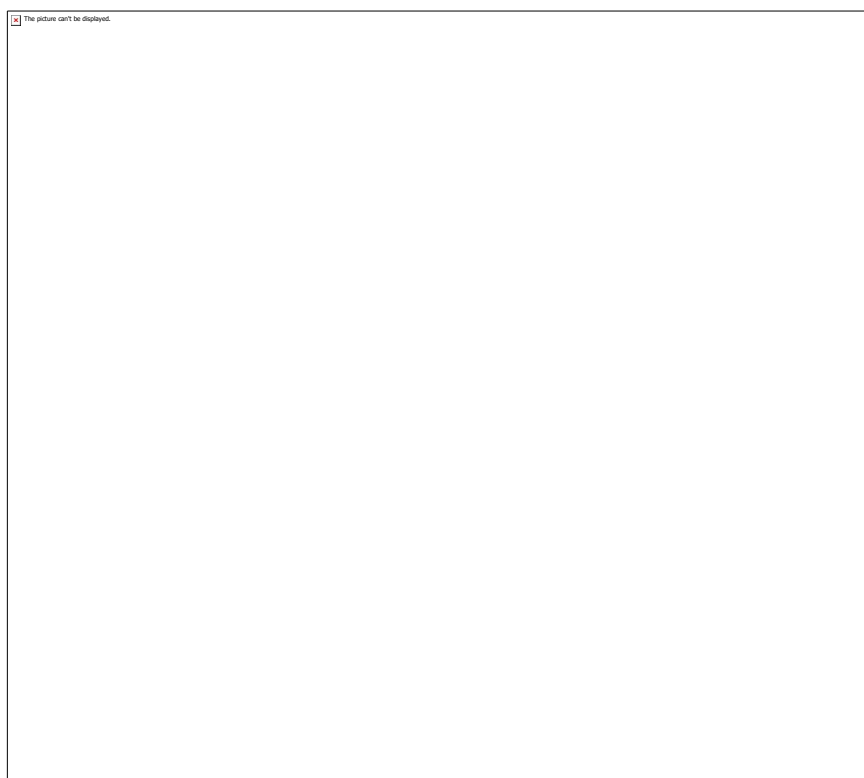
While on exchange you are not on an extended vacation. You are expected to adjust to your new home as a member of your host family, and as a student in your new high school. You are also expected to actively engage with your host Rotary club.

- Follow the rules and guidelines as set out by your host district in your inbound handbook and at your first orientation.
- Use your YPO/Counsellor when you need a shoulder to lean on. This will also help to keep your relationship with your host family less complicated.
- Show appreciation for all that your hosts and other Rotary volunteers do for you.
- Keep your YEO & YPO informed of all your activities. Seek travel approvals as required.
- Submit your monthly reports to D9640 via YEAH promptly, and be open and honest in your answers and any help you need from us.

- Write to your sponsor club regularly to keep them up to date with what you're doing.
- Discuss problems while they are still small.
- Accept the decisions of your YEO/YPO with grace, even if you might not agree with them.
- Do not play your YEO, YPO or host parents against one another. This never ends well.
- If you find you and your YPO do not get along, or they do not seem to have time for you, speak to your YEO or your D9640 Country Coordinator.

For any serious harassment or abuse situations, it is imperative that you alert a trusted Rotarian to this immediately. Don't worry if you think you might be overreacting, or what you think their reaction might be – we would rather you raised it and it turns out to be a small issue or nothing at all, then you not raise it at all.

Make sure your YEO/YPO or host district committee also provide you with a list of emergency contact numbers when you arrive.



8 THE LOGISTICS OF YOUR EXCHANGE

8.1 FINANCES, MONEY AND BANK ACCOUNTS

What does your exchange cost?

Rotary Youth Exchange is the most affordable exchange option for students around the world as the program is powered by volunteers. Every Rotarian that is involved in youth exchange is a volunteer who is not paid for their work – this is why it is so important to show your appreciation for the work they do to make your exchange possible.

Actual costs of the exchange vary depending on the country of exchange and your personal budget. Here is what costs need to be covered by your family, and what is covered by Rotary:

- A 'global fee' is payable by you/your parents to the District Committee which covers the formal parts of your exchange including travel, insurance, your attendance at training days, blazer, business cards and assistance in obtaining visas.
 - The 'global fee' and the payment timeline will be discussed with your parents at the first orientation camp, if not earlier.
- You will receive a monthly allowance from your host Rotary club of approximately \$100-\$150 AUD equivalent, but your family should be prepared for additional day-to-day out of pocket expenses such as clothing, entertainment or mobile phone costs.
- Your host family will cover your living expenses while you are living with them including meals and any family activities. Likewise you will find that Rotarians will cover certain expenses when they take you places, or on trips or weekends away. However, you should be willing and able to 'pay your own way' for travel and entertainment with your host family and other Rotarians and friends. Don't expect to be treated as a guest at all times and understand when it might be appropriate to offer to pay.
- When going out with friends or on your own, you pay for yourself.
- You/your parents are also required to pay for Rotary organised tours in the host country (voluntary but most exchange students undertake them), and some schooling expenses (as agreed with and determined by the host club) as well as language camps/classes in your host country.
- Your parents are also responsible for providing an emergency fund of approximately \$500 which is set by the host district but which is redeemable at the end of your exchange if not used. The 'emergency account' should have your host club YEO or Youth Protection Officer as a co-signatory to operate the account. This account will be closed off and the money given back to you before you return home. Don't forget to have enough money on arrival to set up your emergency fund.

Prior to departure you and your parents need to come to an agreement about money and you should establish a budget for your spending money, and then follow that budget carefully so that you don't run out of money before you run out of exchange year. Sign up for online banking so you and your parents can monitor your accounts.

- Your parents may decide that you must live on the monthly allowance, or
- Your parents may agree to put in an extra amount per month, if required.
- Never borrow money – if you have financial problems, speak with your Youth Protection Officer who will assist you to budget appropriately.

Your Rotary Allowance

- Allowances paid by host clubs will be around AU\$100-\$150 per month, paid in local currency.
- Don't be afraid to politely ask your club Youth Protection Officer for your pocket money or allowance.
- Find out from them how it is to be paid. In some clubs the payment may be made directly to you at a meeting, whilst in others it could be deposited into your bank account.
- Although it is a monthly allowance some host clubs may pay it fortnightly.
- Sometimes the host Rotary club or individual Rotarians will subsidise your expenses, but this is the exception, not the rule.

Rotary Tours

- The Rotary tours are not compulsory, but highly recommended. Most districts will run one long/major tour for students during the year in addition to some smaller/shorter tours.
- The Rotary Tour is the second largest single payment requirement for your year away on exchange.
- Although not compulsory, it is a great opportunity for you and other Exchange Students to get

together on an organised tour. It may be a Euro, West Coast USA, Amazon, or other, depending on your country of exchange.

- You or your parents pay this for. If you need assistance, speak to your host club about opportunities to do some fundraising to help you pay for your tour.

Overseas Bank Accounts

You and your parents should check with your bank about setting up an international credit card or ATM debit card, which will provide you with an easy and inexpensive way to deposit funds here and withdraw funds in your host country without incurring interest charges or high transfer fees. Having this card will mean you will not need to travel with a large amount of cash.

We recommend that you have BOTH a debit card for ATM use AND a credit card for emergencies. When talking to your bank, BE SURE TO ASK if the card is readily accepted in your host country. If not, try a different card provider.

Take extra precautions to protect credit cards and cash from theft, especially when traveling, and make sure you and your parents know what to do in the event you lose these items. Become familiar with the currency of your host country and understand the exchange rate for conversion to your home currency. The buying power of your dollar will vary, and costs for needed items may be significantly different than what you consider as 'the norm'.

You should also maintain a bank account in your host country. The type of account used depends on the advice received from your club Youth Protection Officer.

- Upon arrival, your club Youth Protection Officer will assist you in opening your account.
- The host club will provide you with a monthly allowance; many clubs will deposit this directly into your account.
- Verify with your Youth Protection Officer when and how you will receive your allowance. If you do not receive your allowance speak to your Youth Protection Officer.
- You are required to have an 'emergency account' opened in your host country for just that purpose. This should be kept at a level, as set by the host district, but generally around AU\$500, and should be kept at that level by your parents topping it up if the funds are accessed to meet any emergencies. It is not meant to be another source of funds for you to access on a day-to-day basis and to this end.

8.2 INSURANCE

Rotary Youth Exchange Australia has arranged a comprehensive Travel and Medical Insurance Policy for all short term and long-term students. All students accepted into the Youth Exchange Program must be provided with the Rotary insurance package, which covers the risks of:

- Personal accident, injury and/or death
- Funeral expenses
- Return of body remains
- Travel
- Loss of personal belongings
- Personal liability
- Medical insurance
- Hospitalisation
- Terrorism

The Rotary Youth Exchange Australia policy covers amounts in excess of past RI minimum levels and is among the most extensive Student Exchange policies available anywhere in the world.

Please note that there are one or two countries we exchange with who might insist you take out their local insurance policy. In these instances, we will work with you and your parents to determine the best outcome.

The travel insurance policy is underwritten by the insurer, CHUBB Insurance Limited (CHUBB) and arranged through Aon Risk Services Australia Ltd (Aon). The policy provides 12 months door-to-door coverage – it begins from the time you leave your home to the time you return to it at the end of the Exchange period.

Access to your cover automatically ends from the time you no longer meet the insured person definition (eg. You are no longer nominated as a Rotary Youth Exchange Student, or you return to Australia after completing the program.

[For full details of the insurance policy coverage for 2023 and 2024 outbound students, please click here.](#)

Before you leave

- Familiarise yourself with the contents of your policy.
- Have a complete medical and dental check-up – especially in relation to wisdom teeth.
- Check personal items you wish to take and remember Rotary only recommends inexpensive jewellery, watches, cameras, clothing etc.
- Ensure you have listed on the policy any additional items high in value i.e., musical instruments, laptops, camera equipment – remember, the higher the value, the higher the risk.
- Ensure your parents have a copy of the insurance wallet.

Whilst away:

- Carry your CHUBB Assistance Card with you at all times. We will provide you with a copy prior to your departure.
- Ensure your host family and/or your host club Youth Protection Officer is aware of the contents of the wallet and how to use the card.

How to use your CHUBB Assistance Card For assistance:

- Contact the local telephone operator in your host country and ask for a reverse charge call to CHUBB Assistance on **+61 2 8907 5666**.
- 24-hour telephone access 365 days of the year.
- Say: "I am a Rotary Exchange Student".
- State your name and contact details [your phone number] and the nature of the problem.

When to use the card:

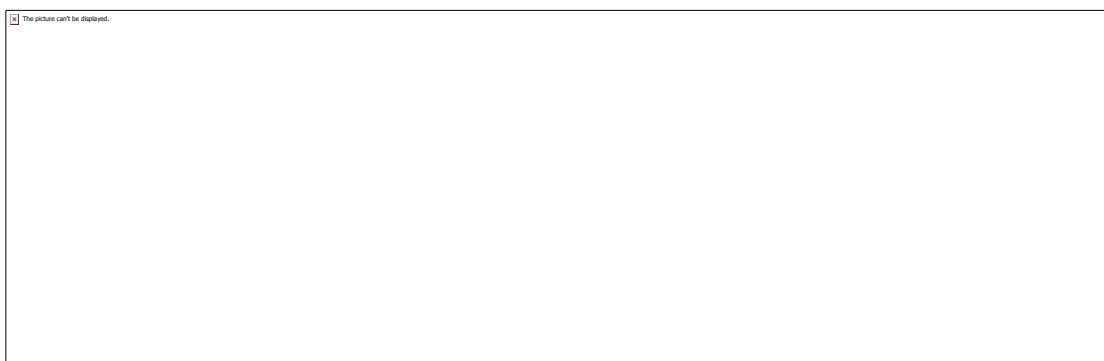
In any emergency situation only - do not use the card for general enquiries.

- Whenever authorisation for payment is required e.g., for hospital or medical costs.
- For urgent legal advice.

Full details of the policy and how to use the card are contained in the insurance wallet, which will be distributed to you prior to your departure.

**** Remember ****

To make a claim you must fill in and forward a claim form, with your receipts to your
SPONSOR DISTRICT CHAIR
Who will send it to our Insurance Officer.



8.3 HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES

Air Travel and Your Health

Due to the altered atmosphere in the aircraft cabin, you are more likely to suffer from dehydration. This increases the risk of you suffering from jet lag and Deep Vein Thrombosis.

Jet lag is a condition where a combination of factors will contribute to your feeling unwell after arrival at your destination:

- It is often worse after long periods of travel and crossing a number of time-zones.
- To reduce its impact, it is a good idea to change your watch to the time of your destination. Then try to time your meals and sleep to coincide with the new time-zone.
- Remember to avoid dehydration by drinking lots of water.
- Deep Vein Thrombosis, or DVT, is a condition where a blood clot forms in the deep veins, usually in the calves. It is characterised by a pain, usually in the back of the calf, leg swelling and redness. If a clot should break off it can travel to the lungs causing shortness of breath, cough or chest pain. Should you experience any of these symptoms, even days after travel, seek medical attention immediately. Blood flow is enhanced by adequate hydration and movement – make sure you get out of your seat regularly and move around.
- When safety measures and instructions are being demonstrated on the aircraft, make sure you listen even if you think you already know it.

Remember – It is important to be comfortable while travelling, so wear loose, comfortable clothing and pack a change of underwear, a toilet bag with toothbrush and face towel, and a change of clothes for your arrival to meet your host parents and other representatives of Rotary. This is your first impression, so make sure you look neat and presentable. Don't get off the plane wearing a tracksuit or the same clothes you've been wearing for the past 24 hours!

Disease Prevention

- Before your departure, ensure all your vaccinations are up to date including hepatitis and tetanus and that they are valid for one year. Certain countries also have high risks associated with some diseases/illnesses e.g. Malaria. Check with your doctor for detailed specific advice on these matters as part of your application medical assessment, or refer to www.smarttraveller.gov.au for the latest government advice.
- Many countries will require you to carry proof of your vaccinations with you as part of your essential papers, so make sure you have those with you when you travel.
- Many countries still require either proof of a Covid-19 Vaccination OR a negative PCR test in the days leading up to your arrival. Our travel agent will advise you which is required for your host country.
- Most countries are free of rabies, but others are not: Be careful around dogs, cats and monkeys in those countries where rabies is still a problem. Do not allow animals to lick you and if bitten seek prompt medical attention.
- Eating uncooked meat and seafood can cause some illness and disease.
- Be aware that raw, pickled and spicy foods may cause discomfort.
- Do not hide any continuing or severe illness especially abdominal pain.
- Advise your host parents of any health problems or issues as they arise.

Periods

When travelling long distances overseas some girls may experience a change in your menstrual cycle. Stress and weight change can alter the timing of your periods. This is a common occurrence and although it can be inconvenient, should not cause concern. However if you are worried about it, speak to your host Mum, YPO or another trusted female adult.

You might also find that the period products you are able to source in your host country are different to those who you are used to using at home. Do some research and plan ahead to determine if you need to take any favoured products or pain medication. [Here is an article](#) that might assist with some ideas for travelling overseas with your period.

Weight

It is very common for students to gain some weight while they are on exchange – this is due to a multitude of factors related to eating different foods, being fed different portion sizes by their host families, changes in commuting habits (i.e. getting driven places instead of walking or catching public transport), and simply having a good time! Try not to worry too much if you find yourself putting on a little bit of weight – it usually falls off again easily once you're home. If it's something you're concerned about while you're on exchange, speak to your host parents about the food you're eating and how you can fit some more exercise into your daily routine.

Pre-existing Conditions

- If you have a significant medical problem or condition before you depart, a letter from your doctor will be helpful – especially if medication is required.
- Take a supply of medications you may need: They should be sealed and accompanied by a copy of the prescription and a letter from your doctor indicating the need.
- Research the medication availability in your host country, or ask your host district country coordinator for advice. Do not rely on your host country to have the exact same medication.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, it is a good idea to take a copy of the optical prescription with you in case they are lost or broken whilst on exchange. You may even take an old pair of glasses to help whilst a new pair is made. Likewise if you wear contact lenses.

Make a Plan for Emergencies

Prior to departure, discuss family wishes in the event that there is an emergency during your year abroad – such as illness or death in the family. You should try to anticipate your wishes and those of your family if you are confronted with a situation in which your early return home is a consideration. There have been occasions when a student has had to be told by phone of a death of a friend or family member, though they are not necessarily expected to come home. Most often, when a student is called home for a family emergency, it is not an option to return to your host country. Any emergency that causes you to leave should be very serious.

8.4 PASSPORT & VISA

Passport

If you do not already have an Australian passport you should make immediate arrangements to obtain one, for which you will require the following:

- Passport Application Form – obtainable from post offices.
- Your full birth certificate – not an extract.
- Two (2) passport-size photographs – one to be endorsed on the reverse as set out in the Application Form.

Our appointed travel agent will be able to provide assistance if required.

At least one parent must also have a current passport with at least 18 months travel time available on it.

Visa

- The appointed travel agent for District 9640 will advise you of any visa requirements for your host country, and will send you visa application forms and instructions.
- Please ensure all visa application forms are fully and properly completed and returned with your passport to the travel agent as soon as directed to do so.
- Mail all important documents using registered mail.
- You must meet all deadlines asked of you.

8.5 MOBILE PHONE, DEVICES & EMAIL

Mobile phones

Contact your mobile phone company before you depart to learn what you might be able to do to allow your mobile phone to work in your host country. Ask if the phone can be “unlocked” so you can attach a new plan while you’re abroad. You might learn that you’re better off purchasing a new phone after you arrive in your host country. Make sure you have a way to communicate with your own family as well as your host family during all of your travels.

Other Devices

We recommend you take your own laptop with you, if you have one, to make it easy to write emails and complete Rotary reports while you are on exchange. Remember to pack appropriate charging devices/adaptors for your host country, or make a plan to buy them when you arrive.

If you do not have a laptop, your host family may have a home computer you can use. Discuss this with them on your first night, as well as any family rules around the use of devices and the internet.

Email

It is very important that you check your emails regularly as your country coordinators will use email communication to keep you informed.

Today many people have email addresses that are quirky and fun. While iloveburritos@gmail.com is fun to use amongst your friends and peers, when it comes to being an ambassador for Rotary, your country and your community then your email address should reflect an appropriate and professional image.

With that in mind, if there is any doubt about the appropriateness of your present address then we will be insisting that you set up a new address that is more suitable for a Rotary Exchange Student. When setting up an email account, it is helpful to include your name in the address as it makes it easier for people to identify you immediately.

8.6 WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

8.6.1 Luggage and Packing

Luggage selection and packing requires good planning. Most international airlines have strict rules for checked and carry-on luggage. Find out from our travel agent the specific requirements for your destination, including limits with partner airlines.

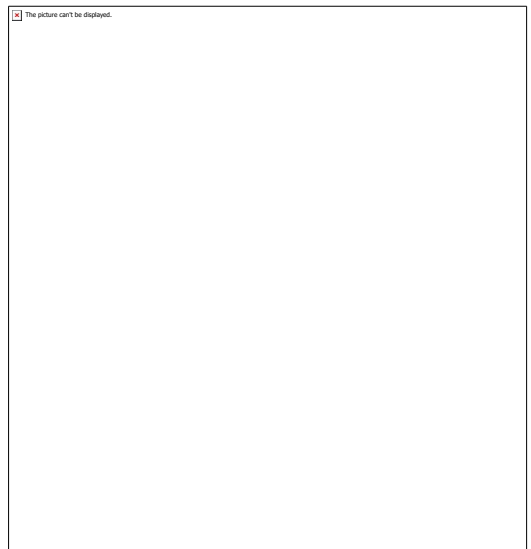
You will very likely be traveling during your exchange year, very possibly by train or bus, so smaller, lightweight luggage may be more appropriate for those shorter trips. Pack selectively and don’t overload! Don’t run out and go shopping for an entire wardrobe of new clothes prior to your departure either. In most countries, you will want to make some clothing purchases to meet the climate or the styles of the area. Your style (and size) may likely change quickly when you reach your destination.

8.6.2 Your Rotary Youth Exchange Blazer & Badge

All long-term Rotary Youth Exchange students are presented with a Rotary blazer.

Today, many Rotary Exchange Students can be recognised by their Rotary Youth Exchange blazer. The Rotary blazer is a great source of pride for Rotary exchange students the world over.

The colour of the blazer usually depends on which country or region the Exchange Student is from but they can vary from navy blue, pale blue, maroon or dark green. In District 9640, and throughout most of Australia, our blazers are dark green.



A Rotary tradition is that students cover their blazers in pins and patches they have traded with other students or bought in places they have visited as evidence of their exchange. It is popular for the students to take a collection of pins and trade them with other students, so be prepared for this before you depart. Your blazer starts out without any pins but when you get back home after a year it will likely be full of pins and weigh many kilograms!

During the first orientation camp you will be measured for your blazer, which will then be presented to you at the second orientation camp in December.

Do not pack your blazer in your suitcase – you must wear it when you depart and arrive in your host country. Wear your blazer with pride at all formal Rotary occasions. It is always suitable to wear when 'dressing up' for Rotary occasions, and will attract attention to who you are and where you are from when you wear it at school. Some students also report that wearing their blazer while travelling helps to make transiting customs and immigration much smoother.

In addition to your Rotary blazer, you will also be presented with your Rotary name badge at the December orientation camp.

8.6.3. Banners, Business Cards, Pins and Flags

Traditionally Rotary clubs around the world exchanged small club banners when Rotarians from one club visited another club. This tradition is not followed by all clubs these days, but you should ask your Sponsor Rotary Club if they have banners and if they do, if they have a few you can take. They can be presented to your host country Rotary club or any other club you visit while on exchange. You will usually receive one of their banners in return, to bring back to your sponsor club.

D9640 YEP Committee will provide you with a small selection of pins to exchange with or give to people you meet during your exchange year. However we encourage you to purchase/make some of your own to take with you as well.

Your local Federal Member of Parliament and/or state/provincial tourism offices are good resources to ask for supplies such as pins and brochures. They may also be able to donate you an Australian flag.

You will be supplied with 250 personalised 'business' cards, which you will take with you on Exchange and share amongst other Exchange Students, Rotarians and colleagues. These will feature your picture and home address and will have the name of your host country and room for you to enter your current host family address. Your cards will be presented to you at the December orientation camp.

8.6.4 Powerpoint Presentation

As an exchange student you will be asked to speak at a variety of places to a variety of audiences. Each audience will be different, but we recommend you prepare in advance a standard presentation that you can modify for each audience.

Contents of your presentation

Your presentation should cover - you, your family, your Rotary District, your sponsor Rotary Club and Australia. Remember that your audience may have heard from other Rotary Youth Exchange Students before you, or even visited Australia themselves, so make sure your presentation is personal and not just a tourism brochure on Australia. Check out the video in section 9 which shares some unique ideas about how to structure your presentation to make it fun and interesting.

Consider including the following depending on the audience:

Yourself:

- Age
- School you've come from
- Last school year and subjects taken
- Interests, hobbies, sports, issues that are important to you.
- Pets
- Special friends (not too many pictures of friends)

- Why you became a Rotary Youth Exchange Student.

Your family:

- What your parents do.
- Family interests.
- Your home.
- Holidays.
- Unique aspects of your family/home.

Rotary Youth Exchange:

- The history of Rotary Youth Exchange.
- Famous former exchange students!
- What it means to be a Rotary Youth Exchange Student.
- How you can get involved.

Rotary in Australia and around the world

- What is Rotary?
- What a Rotary meeting in your home town is like.
- History of Rotary in Australia.

District 9640 – its special features:

- Population and location.
- Businesses/industry that are prominent here.
- Schooling.
- Any unique issues and aspects of your community.
- Rotary in our district including any special projects.

Your sponsor Rotary club

- How old/when chartered?
- Size and composition.
- Special activities.
- Involvement in the community.
- If you don't know, interview someone from your club before you leave.

Australia – the nation

- Some general topics are listed below but think about your audience and what they'd be interested in, and tailor this information to them. Think of how you can personalise it ie your favourite places, your favourite Australian food etc, top 5 most dangerous snakes etc.
- Geography, size, population
- States and territories
- National flag, emblems and icons
- Brief history
- Major cities
- National capital
- Political system
- Economic base
- Current and key issues
- Our unique flora and fauna

Speaking opportunities:

The most likely places you will be asked to speak include:

- Your host Rotary club.
- A Rotary District Conference.
- Your school and/or other schools.
- Other service clubs.
- Community gatherings.
- Youth groups.
- Church groups.

Some presentation tips:

- Don't fill your slides with text. You're not writing a novel! If you do have simple description words on my slides, you don't need to read them out to the audience. They are there mainly as a prompt for yourself.
- Don't read from the slides – maintain as much eye contact with the audience as possible and keep your tone conversational.
- Remember that if you feel your language is not very good, make your presentation very 'visual' – 'pictures speak louder than words'.
- Keep it consistent – use the same background throughout your presentation. Changing backgrounds with every slide detracts from your content.
- Stick to the same font throughout. Using a variety of fonts will not enhance communication it may even be a distraction.
- To emphasise something, use an italics or bold font.
- Use high contrast between text colour and background.
- Proof read – Don't let spelling errors make people think less of your work.
- Practice on your parents, friends, other exchange students and your host family. Ask them for their input and feedback – both on the content and how you were as a presenter.
 - Make sure you practice your timing as well, often you will only have 15 minutes plus Q&A.
- Make backups of your work, and always have a copy of your presentation on a backup disk or memory stick.
- Make sure you can show it – Arrange ahead of time for a computer and projection equipment to make the presentation. If you cannot show your presentation for lack of equipment, your work will be wasted.
- Arrive a few minutes early for your presentation so that you can boot up the computer and have the projector warmed up and running for when the time comes for you to present. Don't make your guests sit there waiting for you.
- Speak clearly and slowly and loudly enough to be heard – remember, you have an accent!
- Don't worry if you think your knowledge of the language of your host country is not good enough, your audience will be supportive and encouraging.
- Don't use slang unless you're explaining it.
- Don't 'ramble', ensure you have a structure to your speech.
- Wear your blazer! It will actually help you feel more confident.
- Get your audience involved – teach a song, phrase or some slang, play some music, wear a costume or prepare your favourite food or snack.

Look for opportunities where you think you can make a presentation and ask the organiser. People are always looking for interesting speakers, and it's an amazing opportunity to develop your public speaking skills.

8.6.5 Gifts

The best gift you can take costs nothing and is easy to pack: a smile coupled with politeness, courtesy, manners and respect.

That said, it is thoughtful to take gifts for your host families and other Rotarians and families who host you in their homes or support you while you are away. There are a number of considerations to be borne in mind when considering what gifts to take.

It might not be possible to take a large selection of gifts with you – take something for your first host family and a couple of other small gifts, and make plans for your family to send you another package while you are away. This will allow you to personalize the gift to your host family – for example if you find out they love basketball you can get them some Australian basketball team gifts.

Other gift ideas:

- Make your own e.g. laminate stamps, or gum leaves.
- Buy 'Australiana' ribbon from craft stores and make ribbon pins with 5c coins.
- Stick pins depicting Australia – Rotarians love collecting pins!
- Purchase 'Australiana' gifts from souvenir shops, \$2 shops or markets. Items like tea towels are always well received.
- Arts and crafts from makers and artists in your local community.
- Australian chocolate and lollies.
- Australian cookbooks.

8.7 YEP MERCHANDISE

In District 9640 we have our own merchandise store that is available for students to purchase branded tees, polos, sweatshirts, hoodies and bags.

All outbound students, both inbound and outbound, will receive one complimentary hoodie or sweatshirt which will be presented to them at the second orientation camp.

Students are free to purchase any other items for themselves. Everything is sold at cost price.

[You can find the merchandise store here.](#)

Note that it takes two weeks from the date of order for the items to be shipped.

8.8 ATTENDING YOUR FIRST ROTARY MEETING

Depending on your host country assignment, students are generally invited to attend all Rotary meetings with their host club – check with your YEO when you arrive. They will provide you with information about the day, time and location of club meetings and your plan for how you will get to/from the meeting.

You will be asked to make AT LEAST one presentation to your host club. Your host club may also expect you to participate in special events. As a young ambassador, you become an important part of these activities as well. Don't forget that it takes a host club a lot of time, energy and money to host you, so show you appreciate that by actively supporting the club in their community activities. By creating a positive experience with you, you are also paving the way for future students to come.

During the year, all students will be required to attend some District meetings in your host country. If you do not understand what is expected for attendance at Rotary events, ask your host Youth Exchange Officer and/or your District Chair.

8.9 MONTHLY REPORTS

Once your year on exchange has commenced there will be many people interested in knowing and hearing about your experiences whilst away and the progress of your exchange – both the good and the bad! They include your family, your sponsor club, your Youth Protection Officer, the members of the District Youth Exchange Committee and your friends back home.

Of course, in the ever-changing world of communication, it's now so easy to share your experience through social media and email. It's important to keep open the lines of communication with your home, community and especially your friends, as it will help you 'settle back in' when you return from your exchange.

During your exchange, you will be required to complete a report, each and every month. The report is a **Monthly Report** that will be sent to your email, via YEAH, each month. We cannot emphasise enough the importance of completing your report in a timely manner each month. It is in this report that you will tell us of any concerns that you may have. Please also tell us about any concerns that you may have had but have been resolved and you are now comfortable and happy with the outcome.

- The Monthly Report asks specific questions about your experiences, challenges and successes that you have encountered during the month and to inform us of anything that you feel is important for us to know. The report will be available to your District Chair, Deputy Chair, Country Coordinator, sponsor club President, YEO and YPO.
- It is a mandatory requirement of your exchange that this report be completed within a week of receiving it, unless you have a valid reason otherwise.
- If a serious issue arises that you need to tell us about, don't wait until you send your monthly report. If you have not been able to resolve the issue with your host club Youth Protection Officer, host family or Rotary club then you must make immediate contact with your country coordinator, your sponsor club Youth Protection Officer or the YEP Chair and we will respond and act immediately.
- You might need to make notes in your diary of important points so you remember them at the end of the month.

8.10 SOCIAL MEDIA

We know that you will want to capture your exchange experience on your favourite social media channels to keep a record of your exchange, and to share your experience with friends and family back home. We look forward to seeing these too! Just a few things to remember when it comes to using social media during your exchange:

- We recommend that you disconnect from home for the first eight weeks of your exchange: we know it will be tough but disconnecting from home for the first eight weeks of your exchange will help you adapt more quickly to your new environment and make new friends. If you are constantly connected to your friends and family back home, it will be much harder for you to settle in. This goes for both posting AND scrolling. Be present in your new country.
- Connect with new friends and your host family.
- Connect with Rotary in your sponsor and host country (your districts and clubs as well as the youth exchange committee) and engage with them on social media. Tag them into posts you make about your Rotary activities and life as an exchange student.
- Be careful what photos and videos you post. Remember that you are an ambassador for Australia and for Rotary and it could be a Rotarian from your sponsor or host club, your Youth Protection Officer or a host family member who finds an inappropriate photo or reads some of your posts about a reckless adventure. This could send you home.
- Don't mock or say disparaging things about your host country in any of your posts.

8.11 TRAVEL RULES AND APPROVAL

The intent of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program is to provide students with an academic year abroad – which will encompass cultural and language immersion. Travel is a privilege, not a right. A host family may invite a student to travel with them. However, not every host family has plans to travel or has the ability to pay for travel. Keep these things in mind:

- Remember that you have traveled a long way just to reach your host country.
- You will come to understand and meet the people better if you concentrate on your host town and area.
- Your host parents want you to enjoy your stay, but like any natural parents, they may not have time or money to travel often.
- You can have fun in your new surroundings. This is a wonderful opportunity to see and learn in another country and another culture. Travel is not the objective.
- Immerse yourself in the 'everyday' things. This is what the cultural experience is all about! Simply taking a walk around town to look at the buildings may provide an interesting surprise.

Some travel rules you will need to abide by:

- You 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.
- Trips organised through school and approved by the Rotary club and host family are permissible.
- Rotary-sponsored functions are permissible – and sometimes expected.
- If you plan to participate in a Rotary approved student tour, then you are responsible for the costs involved.
- You must not travel outside your city of residence alone.
- You are not permitted to take 'road trips' with friends and you must not hitch hike at any time.
- You must not phone or write to any other Rotary club and ask to be hosted.
- Rotary exchange students cannot travel in aircraft other than a scheduled flight on a recognised airline.
- If you have an opportunity to travel, we ask that you show sensitivity to other exchange students who may not have the same opportunity. It's OK to share your trip but not to boast.
- At the end of an exchange, students are to travel home by the most direct route – you cannot make any stopovers or side trips along the way.
- Any exceptions to travel rules must have written and signed approval of student's natural parents, Host District YE Chair, Host Club and Host Family.

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 Youth Exchange Program rules, however, are design with the student's safety as the number one priority.

Arranging special travel approval:

- First obtain permission from your host club YEO and your parents/guardian at home.
- The student and the YEP will then need to submit a travel approval request to the district (through YEAH if the district uses this database) which will include:
 - Who you will travel with (must be accompanied by an adult).
 - Purpose of the trip.
 - Destination and contact details there.
 - Beginning and end dates of travel.
 - An emergency phone number during the travel.
 - Any additional information that outlines your plans.

Your host district might have some other particular requirements for approving special travel. Make sure you are aware of this from your Inbound Student Handbook and your orientation.

8.12 TRAVEL BOOKINGS FOR DEPARTURE/ARRIVAL

All travel for Rotary Youth Exchange in District 9640 is organised through Susanne Sharp from 'Holidays on Location'.

You and your family can contact Susanne directly if you have questions, issues or concerns, or you can direct these to the District Chair and we will also assist you.

Contact details:

Susanne Sharp
Travel Specialist

HOLIDAYS ON LOCATION - OPERATIONS

DD: +61 3 9851 8723 | +61 3 9851 8747 | Mobile: 0405567614

Email: Susanne@holidaysonlocation.com | <http://www.holidaysonlocation.com>

Prior to your departure:

- 'E' tickets/ticket itinerary will be issued to you.
- These are valid for twelve months from the date of travel. As such, they are needed for your return journey.
- Keep a scanned copy of your tickets/itinerary (and your passport's main page) in a folder on your email account and with your parents. This can then be accessed at any time whilst you are away. We also maintain copies on our YEAH database.
- You will be advised by your Country Coordinator of your date of departure, which is usually mid-January.

9 RETURNING HOME

When you return to Australia you will have a wealth of experiences and a new culture to share with family and friends in Australia.

Please talk about the positive things you have learned to your family, your friends at school, and your sponsor Rotary club. We believe that the more we send our young ambassadors abroad, the greater the opportunities we will have to foster understanding between our Australian culture and other people around the world. Your success will be our best advertisement!

Through you and other Rotary Students, we seek to make peace around the globe, and you have now become an important factor in helping us to achieve those goals.

It might be hard to come back home...

- It is only a short year – make the most of it.
- In many ways you will be on your own and very independent.
- You will make so many new friends – it will be hard to leave them.
- You will have strong ties to your host families.
- Possibly you will be torn between leaving your new home and returning to your family.
- Once you begin your return flight it feels a lot better.
- Talk to your family about any homesickness you feel about your host country when you return home and let them support you through it.
- There will be a difficult re-adjustment period once you return home. You could experience a feeling a loss; a 'let down', a homesickness in reverse, "nobody understands me, nobody loves me, I just want to go home."
- It is important to make a determined effort to return to study, and again get involved, to pick up the strands of your life.

Debriefing

Re-adjusting to your home culture after a year abroad will probably be just as difficult as it was to adjust to your host country when you first arrived overseas. To assist both yourself and your parents it is a mandatory requirement of Rotary to debrief you on all aspects of your exchange year after your return. During this you will have an opportunity to discuss either in a group or individually any concerns or the benefits that you have gained from the exchange.

You have a group of peers among the other returned Exchange Students in the District. Reconnect with them and build a support network for your self.

Join Southern Star ROTEX

Southern Star ROTEX is our District 9640 Rotary Club for rebound exchange students. ROTEX work with the Committee and Outbound and Inbound Exchange Students. This is a way of giving back and you will be a wealth of knowledge to those new to exchange.

We highly recommend joining the ROTEX club when you return to assist with your re-adjustment to life in Australia, and to maintain your connection with Rotary.

As a member of ROTEX you will be invited to come along to the Youth Exchange Camps to share your experiences and knowledge of your host country and what it is like to be an exchange student. You may also be an understanding ear to an inbound student who is experiencing some of the culture shock and homesickness that you experienced while on exchange.

Once you have turned 18 years of age you will need to apply for a Blue Card (QLD) and/or Working with Children Check (NSW) card prior to being able to attend the camps. Speak to the D9640 YEP Compliance Officer for more information.

Club Presentation:

After you return, make sure you contact your sponsor Rotary club and attend a meeting to thank them for their generous support, and to do a presentation on your exchange experience. For ideas on how to make a great rebound presentation, check out the video below from NAYEN (North America Youth Exchange Network).



APPENDIX A: Host Family First Night Questions

These questions are suggestions only. You and your host family should discuss anything you think is important.

1. What do I call you? (Make sure you are all comfortable with what's agreed – you will be using that name for life!).
What do I want you to call me?

Around the house:

2. What am I expected to do daily other than:
 - a. Make my bed.
 - b. Keep my room tidy.
 - c. Clean the bathroom up after I use it?
3. What is the procedure for dirty clothes/laundry?
4. Where do I keep my first clothes until wash day?
5. Should I wash my own underclothes?
6. Should I wash my own clothes? If so, how do I use the washing machine?
7. Can I use the dryer?
8. What is the procedure if I need to iron my clothes?
9. May I use the iron, washing machine, sewing machine, etc.?
10. What areas are strictly private e.g., your study, bedroom, pantry, etc.?
11. May I put posters and pictures in my room? On the wall? How do you want things hung?
12. May I play music in my room?

The bathroom:

13. Where can I keep my bathroom accessories/toiletries? Can I use the family shampoo and tooth paste or buy my own?
14. When is the most convenient time for me to use the bathroom to bathe or shower – mornings or evenings?

Food:

15. When are mealtimes?
16. Do I have a regular job at mealtimes? Set, clear, wash, dry the dishes, the garbage?
17. May I help myself to food and drinks (non-alcoholic) at any time or must I ask first?
18. Do I make my own lunch to take to school?
19. Let host family know of any food allergies/intolerances etc. (this should have been disclosed in your application but check). Do you have any food intolerances or allergies?

What time:

20. must I get up weekday mornings?
21. should I get up weekends and holidays?
22. must I go to bed weekdays? Weekends?
23. must I be in on school nights if I go out? (Exceptions by special arrangement).
24. must I be in on weekends if I go out?

Family and friends:

25. What dates are the birthdays of family members?
26. What special days are celebrated? (Fathers Day/Mothers Day)
27. May I have friends stay overnight?
28. Do you have any rules for entertaining friends?
29. Can I invite friends over during the day? After school? When no one else is home?
30. How often may I go out during the week? Should I phone if I am going to be late home? If so, after how long - 10, 15, 20 minutes?
31. Do you attend church and am I expected to attend with you?

Mobiles, Internet and Devices:

32. Do you have any household rules for the use of mobile phones and/or the internet? Are there time limits or time periods that use is permitted or prohibited?

33. Do you have a Wi-Fi password that I'm able to use?
34. Are there any restrictions I should be aware of re: data use?
35. How would you like me to communicate with you outside the home (text, WhatsApp, phone call etc)?
36. Where do you watch TV? Do you all watch TV together? Am I able to watch TV when no one else is home?

My youth protection officer:

37. Do you know who my Youth Protection Officer/Counsellor is?
38. Can you give me the contact details of my Youth Protection Officer?
39. Will I be meeting regularly with my Youth Protection Officer?

Other questions:

40. What is the procedure for posting mail?
41. Do any of you have any particular dislikes that I should be aware of?
42. How do I get to where I need to go, such as school, friends' houses? Can I ride with friends in their car? Is there public transport nearby that I can use, and if so, how do I use it?
43. How can I arrange to go shopping for personal items?
44. Do you attend the Rotary meetings? How will I get to Rotary meetings?
45. What should I do if I need to visit a doctor or am feeling unwell?
46. What are your expectations of me for going to church or another religion institution? What other activities do you do as a family that I can participate in?
47. If I have something bothering me, how do you want me to handle it?
48. Who pays for "event" expenses for things we do together, such as eating out or going to a movie?
49. Is there anything else we should discuss?

APPENDIX B: Rotary Youth Exchange – Long-Term Exchange Program Section G: Rules and Conditions of Exchange

As a Youth Exchange student sponsored by a Rotary club or district, you must agree to the following rules and conditions of exchange. Violation of any of these rules may result in dismissal from the program and immediate return home, at student's expense. Please note that districts may edit this document or insert additional rules if needed to account for local conditions.

Rules and Conditions of Exchange

- 1) You must obey the laws of the host country. If found guilty of violating any law, you can expect no assistance from your sponsors or native country. You must return home at your own expense as soon as released by authorities.
- 2) You will be under the host district's authority while you are an exchange student and must abide by the rules and conditions of exchange provided by the host district. Parents or legal guardians must not authorize any extra activities directly to you. Any relatives you may have in the host country will have no authority over you while you are in the program.
- 3) You are not allowed to possess or use illegal drugs. Legal medications that are prescribed to you by a physician are allowed.
- 4) The illegal drinking of alcoholic beverages is expressly forbidden. Students who are of legal age should refrain. If your host family offers you an alcoholic drink, it is permissible to accept it under their supervision in the home. Excessive consumption and drunkenness are forbidden.
- 5) You may not operate a motorized vehicle, including but not limited to cars, trucks, motorcycles, aircraft, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, boats, and other watercraft, or participate in driver education programs.
- 6) Smoking is discouraged. If you state in your application that you do not smoke, you will be held to that position throughout your exchange. Your acceptance and host family placement are based on your signed statement. Under no circumstances are you to smoke in your host family's bedrooms.
- 7) Body piercing or obtaining a tattoo while on your exchange, without the express written permission of your natural parents, host parents, host club, and host district, is prohibited, for health reasons.
- 8) You must make every effort to learn the language of the host country, and may be responsible for any costs for tutoring, language camps, or other instruction.
- 9) Limit your use of the Internet and mobile phones, as directed by your host district, host club, and host family. Excessive or inappropriate use is not acceptable. Accessing or downloading pornographic material is expressly forbidden.
- 10) You must attend school regularly and make an honest attempt to succeed.
- 11) You must have health and accident or travel insurance that provides coverage for accidental injury and illness, death benefits (including repatriation of remains), disability/dismemberment benefits, emergency medical evacuation, emergency visitation expenses, 24-hour emergency assistance services, and legal services, in amounts satisfactory to the host Rotary club or district in consultation with the sponsor Rotary club or district, with coverage from the time of your departure from your home country until your return.
- 12) You must also have liability coverage through a travel insurance or other applicable policy, in amounts satisfactory to the host Rotary club or district in consultation with the sponsor Rotary club or district.
- 13) You must have sufficient financial support to assure your well-being during your exchange. Your host district may require a contingency fund for emergency situations. Unused funds will be returned to you or to your parents or legal guardians at the end of your exchange.
- 14) You must follow the travel rules of your host district. Travel is permitted with host parents or for Rotary club or district functions authorized by the host Rotary club or district with proper adult chaperones. The host district and club, host family, and your parents or legal guardians must approve any other travel in writing, thus exempting Rotary of responsibility and liability.
- 15) You must return home directly by a route mutually agreeable to your host district and your parents or legal guardians.
- 16) Any costs related to an early return home or any other unusual costs (language tutoring, tours, etc.) are the responsibility of you and your parents or legal guardians.
- 17) Visits by your parents or legal guardians, siblings, or friends while you are on exchange may only take place with the host club's and district's consent and within their guidelines. Typically, visits may be arranged only in the last quarter of the exchange or during school breaks and are not allowed during major holidays.
- 18) Serious romantic activity is to be avoided. Sexual activity is forbidden.

19) Talk with your host club counsellor, host parents, or other trusted adult if you encounter any form of abuse or harassment.

Recommendations for a Successful Exchange

- 1) You should communicate with your first host family prior to leaving your home country. The family's information will be provided to you by your host club or district prior to your departure.
- 2) Respect your host's wishes. Become an integral part of the host family, assuming duties and responsibilities normal for a student of your age or for children in the family.
- 3) Learn ahead of time as much of the language of your host country as possible and use the language regularly. Teachers, host parents, Rotary club members, and others you meet in the community will appreciate the effort. It will go a long way in your gaining acceptance in the community and with those who will become lifelong friends.
- 4) Attend Rotary-sponsored events and host family events and show an interest in these activities. Volunteer to be involved; do not wait to be asked. Lack of interest on your part is detrimental to your exchange and can have a negative impact on future exchanges.
- 5) Get involved in your school and community activities. Plan your recreation and spare-time activities around your school and community friends. Don't spend all your time with other exchange students. If there is a local Interact club, you are encouraged to join it.
- 6) Choose friends in the community carefully. Ask for and heed the advice of host families, counsellors, and school personnel in choosing friends.
- 7) Do not borrow money. Pay any bills promptly. Ask permission to use the family phone or computer, keep track of all calls and time on the Internet, and reimburse your host family each month for the costs you incur.
- 8) If you are offered an opportunity to go on a trip or attend an event, make sure you understand any costs you must pay and your responsibilities before you go.