



Rotary District 9455



YOUTH EXCHANGE IN A NUTSHELL A GUIDE FOR ROTARY CLUBS

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Preamble

There is a host of Rotary information available on Youth Exchange. So much so that it can be bewildering for clubs seeking guidance on the programme.

The purpose of this document is not to replace existing information but rather to provide a more concise guide through the YE programme - a navigation aid, so to speak.

As a web site document it will also provide quick links to more specific information and manuals.

Introduction

Youth exchange is an official programme of RI which allows around 8,000 students in the Rotary world to exchange annually with about sixty different countries.

It is offered to final year high school students who are under 18 yrs of age as at 1 January in the year of their exchange.

It has a proud history in Australia, beginning in 1958 when the Rotary Club of Myrtleford, Victoria, welcomed John Rodgers from the Rotary Club of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, USA.

Rotary Clubs are encouraged to take part in this rewarding programme.

Getting Started

The District Youth Exchange Committee annually invites clubs to participate in the programme by selecting a candidate for outbound placement and by offering to host an overseas student.

If a club decides to participate then it is necessary for the club to appoint a Youth Exchange officer who will provide the necessary liaison between the club and the District Placement Officer.



Conduct for Working with Youth

Participating clubs must comply with RI and District *abuse and harassment* policies.

It is necessary for the club to appoint:

- a *Club Protection Officer*, and
- *Rotary Mentors* to look after the interests of the inbound and outbound students.

Club Protection Officer

The Club Protection Officer is an appropriate Rotarian in the club, not directly involved in running the club's youth programmes. This Rotarian could be the club's Risk Management Officer.

The main duty of the Club Protection Officer is to ensure that all of the club's major duties in relation to hosting and/or sponsoring an exchange student have been carried out.

RI policies and details of the Club Protection Officer's duties are set out in the Rotary District's [*Working with Children Manual*](#).

It is important to read this document carefully as it provides a structure that Rotary District and Club Programmes need to comply with to satisfy the requirements of the RI guidelines and the Western Australian *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*.

Note that a club cannot participate in any youth programmes unless it has formally appointed a Club Protection Officer.

Mentors



Mentors for exchange students should be able to relate to young people easily so that they can gain the student's confidence and respect and be in a position to assist and advise them.

Because of the role they play, Mentors must not be host parents.

Ideally, the Mentor should be of the same sex as the student. However, if necessary, the spouse of a Rotarian could act as a Mentor.

For full details on Mentor duties refer to the Rotary [Student Mentor Manual](#).

Note that the term student *Mentor* is preferred over student *Counsellor* which is used in some Rotary documents.

The Role of District

Rotary Youth Exchange in the District is administered by the RYE Committee.

This committee is well experienced in all aspects of Youth Exchange and is ready to advise and provide help and information to clubs and students.

For contact details go to [District Youth Exchange Committee](#).

Some District responsibilities:

- Promote and market the programme with schools and Rotary clubs;
- Carry out final interview and selection of students put forward by clubs;
- Co-ordinate exchanges with overseas districts;
- Confirm placement (country and club) for outbound students;
- Confirm host clubs for inbound students;
- Co-ordinate travel arrangements for inbound and outbound students;
- Prepare an annual budget and set fees for outbound exchange;
- Hold briefing sessions for inbound and outbound students;



- Provide documentation and manuals for the guidance of students, clubs, mentors, and host families;
- Ensure compliance with RI and statutory requirements with respect to student protection;
- Organise orientation camps and exchange student excursions;
- Maintain contact with both inbound and outbound exchange students;
- Have procedures for dealing with emergencies and student abuse/harassment situations;
- Arrange for exchange student involvement in the District Conference.

Outbound Students

Towards the end of January, just prior to the start of the new school year, the District committee will distribute promotional material to schools and Rotary clubs.

Final year students are invited to visit the RYE website and, if interested, to complete an initial application form for overseas exchange taking place the following year.

They are required to submit their application to their local Rotary Club by 31 March.

For the guidance of students, the web site has a complete list of Rotary Clubs in the State.

Clubs should check that they are on the list and that the postal address given is correct.

Selection

On receipt of an application, the Rotary club needs to contact the student and arrange an interview. The purpose of the interview is to establish that the student



- possesses qualities, such as flexibility and a willingness to try new things that will enable the student to fully experience life in another country;
- will be an excellent cultural ambassador;
- can demonstrate leadership in the community and school.

The parents should also be interviewed, separately, to provide an understanding of the exchange. Parents are expected to cover the following expenses:

- Round-trip airfare
- Health and accident insurance and travel insurance that meet the requirements of the host club and district
- All travel documents such as passports and visas
- Clothing and spending money
- An emergency fund for unexpected expenses during the year
- Ancillary travel and tours.

Note that financial constraints should not deter worthy applicants, as some limited funding is available.

Applicants who have been accepted for sponsorship by the club are required to complete and submit an official application. These close with the District committee on 30 April.

Further interviews are held at District level and completed by 30 June.

The successful students are then chosen from the applicants interviewed and overseas placements confirmed.

Club Responsibilities

The District will advise the club that its exchange applicant has been accepted. The club needs to:

- introduce the student (and parents) to club members at a weekly meeting;



- ensure the student attends Rotary briefing weekends and outbound sessions;
- encourage the student to make contact with the overseas host club/parents;
- present the student with a RYE blazer just prior to departure overseas;
- maintain contact with the student whilst overseas;
- welcome the exchange student on return home;
- invite the student to be guest speaker at the club.

The student's *Mentor* should carry out most of these tasks.

Inbound Students

It is expected of sponsor clubs that they will in turn host an incoming student.

The responsibility may be shared between a country and city club, helping the student experience life as a city/country student.

District will advise the club of the inbound student's name, sponsor country and approximate arrival date. Students from Asia and Brazil usually arrive in January. Students from other areas arrive in July.

Prior to the student's arrival, the club needs to:

- Assess and endorse Host parents. Guidelines for obtaining Host Families appear in the [*Student Mentor Manual*](#). It is important that the Mentor and the Protection Officer work together to obtain and record all necessary *Working with Children Cards* for the host families, as required by the [*Working with Children Manual*](#). Host families should be provided with a copy of the [*Host Parents Manual*](#).
- Attend to enrolment details for the student at the local secondary school. Syllabus details can be confirmed after the student arrives. Note that secondary school attendance is mandatory.



- Arrange for club members to meet and welcome the student on arrival.

Upon arrival, the club needs to:

- Ensure that the student is properly settled in with the first host family. The Mentor will need to make frequent visits so as to establish a good relationship with the student. The student should be given a copy of the [Host Parents Manual](#) as it provides guidelines for hosted students.
- Arrange for additional medical cover, if required.
- Open the student's emergency bank account and a personal account.
- Ensure regular monthly payments, in advance, of the student's allowance from the club.
- Finalise schooling arrangements, including syllabus. The Mentor should accompany the student to the school on the first day.

The student should be encouraged to attend the club's weekly meetings and should be invited to take part in club activities.

A more detailed summary of club responsibilities can be found in the [Student Mentor Manual](#).

Most of these activities would be carried out by the student's Mentor.

Compliance with RI and District Abuse and Harassment Policies

Through the *Club Protection Officer*, the club must confirm that it has followed the procedures set out in the [Working with Children Manual](#) by completing [Compliance Forms 1, 2 and 3](#).

District Events Calendar

Each year the District Committee prepares a calendar which shows when key Youth Exchange activities will take place. It is important for clubs to be aware of the [District Calendar](#) and ensure that their student is available to attend District events where required to do so.



Appendix

Youth Exchange Web Site

www.youthexchange.asn.au

District 9455 Web Site - Youth Exchange Matters

http://www.rotaryd9455.wa.inaust.org/html/Public/Files/Public_Folders.php?PrimeID=D9455_Projects/Youth_Projects/Youth_Exchange

Useful Links -

1. [*Compliance Forms 1, 2 and 3.*](#)
2. [*District Calendar*](#)
3. [*District Youth Exchange Committee*](#)
4. [*Host Parents Manual.*](#)
5. [*Inbound Student Manual*](#)
6. [*Outbound Student Manual*](#)
7. [*Student Mentor Manual.*](#)
8. [*Working with Children Manual.*](#)