



Guide for Club Counsellor

- **When your Rotary Club agreed to host an overseas student as part of its commitment to the Rotary Youth Exchange Program the Club was required to appoint a counsellor for the students.**
- **Congratulations on your appointment to what should be a most rewarding and enjoyable association with the student. The following information is offered to yourself as advice and a guideline as what is required to ensure a successful exchange.**
- **YOUR ROLE AS COUNSELLOR**
 - As the counsellor for the hosted (inbound) student you have a very important and major role in the success of the overall exchange program. You virtually act as the student's guardian on behalf of the club during the year of exchange. You are the Club's representative to supervise the welfare of the student and you are the personal contact with the Club for the student.
- **BEFORE THE STUDENT ARRIVES**
 - As counsellor you need to acquaint yourself with the Conditions - Rules - Expectations for Hosted Students applicable to students in District 9630. Copies of these are available from the District 9630 Youth Exchange Committee. These vary slightly from those which apply in other districts. However, in the main, the rules are universal.
 - As counsellor you need to ensure that the Guarantee Form (part of students application) is completed as required and returned promptly to the District 9630 Youth Exchange Counsellor for that students country. That also includes enrolling the student at the Club's selected school. It is wise to have some preliminary discussion with the school re curriculum.
 - As counsellor, you need to contact the student and parents as soon as you have their name and address. You will be able to send them some information about yourself, the host club, host families and the local area, Also, you should ask the host families to write and introduce themselves. This gives the student a feeling for your Club and a sense of belonging.
 - You will be responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the host families during the year. If any of the host families are non Rotarian then you will be the contact between them and the club. It is, therefore important that you make yourself known to them beforehand and keep them informed of any club functions which they may be interested in attending.
- **PLEASE LIASE WITH THE CLUB YOUTH PROTECTION OFFICER TO ENSURE EACH ADULT MEMBER OF THE HOST FAMILIES HOLDS A BLUE CARD.**
- You will need to arrange a get together of all the host families with yourself and the President and the Club Youth Exchange Committee members to discuss the hosting arrangements. Conditions -Rules - Expectations for Hosted Students should be discussed at this time so that everyone is aware of these. In particular, rules pertaining to travel and alcohol consumption are most important.
- You need to keep your Club members acquainted with preparations being made for the student.
- You need to be aware of the student's arrival date and time and be one of the welcoming party at the airport when the student arrives in Australia.

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■ AFTER THE STUDENT ARRIVES

- It is desirable that the student spends some time with yourself, as counsellor. This should be an initial 7 hosting or as appropriate. During this time you can explain what is expected of the student and talk about aspects of the Australian way of life that the student may not readily understand. This will give you both an opportunity to become acquainted and makes the task of communicating with each other much easier.

■ The following things need to be done within the first few days after arrival –

- Ensure that the student phones home, to advise that he/she has arrived safely.
- You need to discuss and outline the Rules and Conditions for the exchange and what is expected of the student during the year. Give the student a copy of these. They will also be discussed at the briefing held by the District Committee. This will be held within a few weeks of arrival.
- You will be advised of the date of this and any other district functions which the student will be required to attend.

■ The Emergency Fund.

- This is to maintain an amount of \$500 of the student's money and is only used for emergency purposes, if necessary. It operates under the signatures of the student and your own or that of another member of your club. Two Club signatures should be registered for convenience. If any amount is withdrawn from this account, it should be replenished to the set amount as soon as possible by the student or natural parents. Make sure that the student understands the operation of this account.

■ Their Personal Bank Account

- This is for the student to operate as desired under his/her own signature.
- You also need to ensure that the student keeps secure their personal documents such as Passport and Insurance Policy. It is suggested that you make a photocopy of these for your records and in case of loss. The student is to retain possession of these documents – do not take the passport from the student.

■ SCHOOL

- You need to go with the student to the school for enrolment purposes and discuss the courses that the student will do. You need to identify with the school that you are responsible for the student for the year and that any matters of concern or reports or other matters must be passed to yourself.
- You need to arrange for the purchase or loan of any school requisites such as books. The club is responsible for all costs of schooling including fees, excursions relevant to the curriculum and other miscellaneous charges if applicable. The exception to this would be if the student's natural parents requested a particular school, i.e. Private or one not normally used by the Club. In this instance, negotiation could occur between the club and parents to cover any "above normal" costs.



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■ INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT TO CLUB

- When the student attends the Club for the first time, you should introduce the student to the President and as many Club members as possible. Also advise the student that a formal introduction to the meeting is appropriate.
- The student is required to attend meetings of the Club.

■ STUDENT ALLOWANCE

- You need to arrange (with the club treasurer) for regular payment of this allowance. **This is recommended by Rotary to be \$120 and is to be paid monthly in advance.** The first meeting of the month is a regular time to arrange this. The amount should not be varied greatly from the recommended amount.

■ THROUGHOUT THE EXCHANGE YEAR

- As counsellor, you need to be in regular contact with the student to ensure that all aspects of the exchange are satisfactory to everyone.
- You also need to be in regular contact with the host families and the school for the same reason.
- Be aware of important dates such as Birthday, National Days etc. Inform the President of these or perhaps the Program Chairman. These are important “touches” that you can add that will ensure both the student and the Club enjoy the exchange to its utmost.
- Encourage non hosting club members to have the student home for a meal so as to become better acquainted. Have club members take the student on outings or to interesting places, vacations whenever possible.
- Assist the student to send home any excess belongings at regular intervals. This ensures that there are minimum problems at the end of the exchange in getting several tonne of “important stuff” home.
- Write to the student’s natural parents from time to time to tell them how things are going. This gives them some comfort in knowing that the student is in a caring environment.
- Check with the student that the reports which are required by District 9630 and the student’s sponsor District are being done on time.

■ TRAVEL BY THE STUDENT DURING EXCHANGE

- This is covered in detail in Rules and Conditions. These rules applying to travel **MUST** be adhered to at all times for several reasons. These include personal safety, emergency contact and your Club’s control of the student.
- With proper planning of holidays, approval by the District Committee where necessary must be sought well in advance. However, from time to time an opportunity to travel interstate may come at short notice. Provided that this meets all of the rules and the District Chairman is informed beforehand, approval can be expected.



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■ JUST PRIOR TO THE STUDENT RETURNING HOME

- Check with the District Chairman that the flight has been confirmed.
- Check that a farewell function has been arranged by the Club. Ensure that any non Rotary host families are aware of and invited to this.
- Return any personal documents that may have been kept under security to the student. Also withdraw the emergency fund and return this to the student. Ensure that there are no outstanding debts to be paid i.e. phone calls before handing over.
- Make sure that the student is aware of and adhering to the limitations on luggage as per the airline ticket. Arriving at the airport with more luggage than is allowed is unwise. This usually causes trauma and repacking in the midst of the terminal is not a happy time.

■ COUNSELLOR AND STUDENT PROBLEMS

- It is possible that as counsellor you and the student may not get along together. If this happens you should step down in favour of another counsellor. You should not regard this as a failure. It is better to make the change early in order to make a happy exchange.

■ IN CONCLUSION

- It is most important that you as counsellor are aware of your role in keeping open the lines of communication. Keep all Club members involved; in generally overseeing and guiding the welfare and activities of the student; and in initiating change and controls where necessary; in ensuring that there is common sense approach to any issues that might occur.
- **If you do this then it will all be worthwhile for everyone.**
- Both you and the host Rotary Club have the full support of the District 9630 Youth Exchange Committee through the District Counsellor of your students particular country.