
Summary of Rules and Guidelines of Exchange -

Although Rotary International offers support to local Rotary Youth Exchange programs through publications and suggested guidelines, Rotary districts and clubs run their programs independently of Rotary International. Therefore, each club or district program will have its own specific rules in addition to the RI rules for students to follow. Students accepted into the program signed and agreed to abide by a list of program rules at the time of application and before they departed from home.

Basic program rules consist of common-sense stipulations, such as no drinking, no use of drugs, no driving of any type of motorized vehicle, and, especially important, the need to obtain special permission for travel while on the exchange.

We take these rules/guidelines seriously, not because we are trying to spoil your fun but because we want you to have the best experience possible. There is a reason behind each of the D's, and if not now, sometime during or after your exchange experience you will learn to appreciate why we worked so hard at constantly calling them to your attention.

Some rules are designed for safety; others are to help students integrate into their new country and culture. There is a standard list of Rotary Youth Exchange rules in the application, which must be read and signed by the student and their parents prior to selection as a RYE student. Your host country, host club, and EACH host family may have additional rules by which you must also abide.

Perception of America

Your perception of America has been formed to a great extent by magazines, movies and television. The America you will find is much, much different. Your role as an exchange student is to adapt to our culture and way of life. This means that the customs and laws of this country may not be the same as yours, but that does not mean they are wrong, just different.

Do not waste time and ruin your exchange by constantly comparing America to your home country and being critical of your new culture. **Observe, learn, and adapt.**

The “Why” for the Rules and Guidelines

The rules and guidelines are in place to assist you in maintaining the high standard of behavior expected of all Rotary Youth Exchange Students. You are an ambassador of your country and the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. The impression you make on your club, host family, and school, determines the present and future success of the exchange program.

One very important point to remember is “if the rules of your sponsoring country are more restrictive than District 5100’s rules and guidelines, then the more restrictive rules shall apply. If your host families’ rules are more restrictive than either the hosting or sending district, then the family’s rules will apply”. (Please do not get confused, and think it is the other way around)

STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS

Some of our rules are in response to State and Federal requirements that may be stricter than what you experienced in your home culture. Such would be the case with cigarettes and alcohol. The age for drinking and purchasing an alcoholic beverage in Oregon and Washington is 21. It is also a violation of the law for a person over 21 to either purchase or serve you alcohol.

The rules concerning cigarettes and vaping (e-cigarettes) are even more difficult as America has become a culture where the use of cigarettes at any age is discouraged. Smoking and vaping have been banned in most public places. It is very difficult to find host homes for students who smoke. If you are a smoker, you should either quit before coming on your exchange, or reconsider your decision to come here. If you come to the U.S. as a smoker in disregard for the rules you and your parents signed, you will be unable to continue the exchange.

As a brief reminder - here is a summary of the rules, guidelines and conditions of exchange:

STRICT RULES AND CONDITIONS OF EXCHANGE —

VIOLATIONS MAY RESULT IN THE STUDENT’S IMMEDIATE RETURN HOME.

- **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO OBEY THE LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF THE HOSTING COUNTRY -**
- **NO DRUGS**
- **NO DRINKING (ALCOHOL)**
- **NO DRIVING (No operating Motorized Vehicles) -**
- **NO SHOPLIFTING and Fraud are crimes** No exceptions, your exchange will be over!!
- **NO INDEPENDENT TRAVEL** -This means **no traveling alone or with other exchange students/friends without an approved adult chaperone.**
- **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (Mandatory)**
- **ABIDE BY RULES and GUIDELINES OF THE HOST DISTRICT**

COMMON SENSE RULES AND GUIDELINES OF EXCHANGE —

VIOLATIONS WILL RESULT IN A DISTRICT REVIEW, RESTRICTIONS, AND A POSSIBLE RETURN HOME. SEVERE OR CONSISTENT DISREGARD FOR THESE RULES WILL RESULT IN BEING RETURNED HOME.

- **NO DATING**
- **NO DISFIGUREMENT**
- **RESPECT**
- **ABIDE BY THE CUSTOMS OF THE COUNTRY YOU ARE IN**
- **NO SMOKING** - No Vaping, use of Tobacco in any form is allowed...NO Exceptions.
- Become an integral part of the Host Family,
- Learn the language of your host country.
- Get involved in your school and community sports and special interest activities.
- Choose friends in the community carefully.
- Do not borrow money.
- Do not travel alone or accompanied only by other students.
- You must show proof of proper immunization
- Students should have sufficient financial support to ensure their well-being during the exchange year.
- Any costs relative to a student's early return home or any other unusual costs (e.g., language tutoring, tours, etc.) shall be the responsibility of the student and his or her natural parents or guardians.
- Students must return home directly by a route mutually agreeable to the Host District and the student's natural parents or guardians.
- You will be under the Hosting District's authority while you are an exchange student. **Your Host Rotary Club is your Legal Guardian during your exchange year.**
- Visits by your parents or guardians while you are in the program are strongly discouraged.
- Check email daily - this is the primary way that Rotary will communicate with you.
- Initial 90 Days on exchange - limited to no text, video, etc.-Video Chatting included.
- Keep your Social Media Professional. No matter how private you think these communications are, they aren't.
- Do communicate by e-mail with your parents up to once weekly,
- Do communicate with your sponsoring Rotary Club, and District 5100 Youth Exchange Officer once a month.
- Communicate With Host Parents before the exchange-

But I Won't Get Caught

Students may have heard from previous and current exchange students about the D's. Don't do this, don't do that. We have heard the poems and songs written about them, including the add-on D "Don't get caught". There are many situations in which students can find themselves on a plane home...early. The most obvious cause would be if they break the laws of their host country....that is if they are not in jail.

Before and during exchange, students may become aware of other exchange students who are 'getting away with breaking some of these rules' and nothing has happened to them. It may be only a matter of time before they are faced with the consequences of their actions. Please do not follow their example. These rules have been developed by both Rotarians and former exchange students who have said, 'If only I had...' following severe problems they experienced during their exchanges.

You and your parents signed a document entitled Program Rules and Conditions of Exchange as part of your Long-Term program application. You have already agreed to follow these rules for the duration of your exchange. If you need to clarify any issue that arises, please ask your YEO or club counselor for assistance. They will be happy to help you.

Remember 'Character' means doing the right thing when nobody's watching. Ask yourself if you and your parents can be proud of your decisions.

Concluding Thoughts

The Rotary International Youth Exchange Program, through your host Rotary Club, is offering you a unique experience to live in a new and different environment. You are expected to immerse yourself in the culture and customs of the host country, learn the language quickly (if it is different from your own), to accept gracefully the differences you will encounter, and join wholeheartedly in Rotary, school, and community activities.

Your compliance with the rules and guidelines will assure you of a successful and rewarding experience. Students who do not wish to assume the responsibilities of the Program put their exchange at risk of coming to an early end. For most of you, however, this is the beginning of the most WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE OF YOUR LIFE. THE ROTARIANS AND FAMILIES OF DISTRICT 5100 ARE EXCITED YOU ARE HERE!!

