

ROTARY DISTRICT 5010 YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Policy for Inbound Student Travel

Foundational concepts:

VISA requirements – Exchange students are visitors in a country other than their own. They have permission to stay in the host country for an extended period based on having an approved student VISA. Therefore, activities of such students must be of an educational nature as required by the respective national office. In the United States that national office is the U.S. State Department. Exchange Students must attend a local secondary school on a full time basis and meet school requirements as responsible students in good standing.

Rotary Youth Exchange Expectations - Exchange Student are ambassadors of good will. Therefore, Exchange Students are expected to immerse themselves in the lives of their host families, their host schools and their host community. They are expected to act as ambassadors from their countries of origin to their host Rotary clubs and to participate and join in activities their host Rotary club and Rotary District. In addition, when they return to their countries of origin, they are expected to share what they have experienced and learned in a “reverse ambassadorial” role. They will provide comparisons of culture, lifestyles, values and ways of doing things. In this way, the exchange students will become ambassadors of their country of origin and educate their hosts about their home country and culture and then they will reverse that role and become ambassadors of their host country and educate their families, friends, associates and Rotary Clubs about their host country and culture.

Travel for those on a Student Exchange VISA is not the same as that for those on a tourist VISA or on a travel exchange. However, Exchange Students may have opportunities to travel with their host families, school, Rotary Club and/or Rotary District or other recognized groups or Rotarians. Such travel may be permitted if an Exchange Student does not miss school or Rotary events and if the Student has permission from his/her host family, Rotary Counselor, and (if required) school officials and the Rotary District Chairman.

There are three different kinds of travel situations:

1) a. Travel within District 5010, confined to the country (U SA or Canada or Russia) for which the VISA is granted: Generally, travel within District 5010 with Exchange Students host family or members of Students host Rotary club does not require special permission provided that the Students’ host family and club are informed in advance and Exchange Students do not miss school. Similarly, travel with Exchange Students’ school classes does not require special permission as long as that travel does not fall within the

definitions of items 2 and 3 below. Remember, three countries are represented in District 5010 and travel between these countries will require special permission:

1) b. Travel between Alaska and the Yukon Territory, Canada: While inbound exchange students travelling to or from Alaska and the Yukon Territory, Canada are crossing international borders, District 5010 is an international district, thus students are not leaving the district. The following steps are required for students to travel internationally between these two areas which are still within the same Rotary District:

- YEO must verify that the exchange student has a multi-entry visa that permits them to enter/reenter Alaska and/or the Yukon Territory.
- YEO must notify their area coordinator, Inbound Coordinator and the District Administrative person of the location travelling to/from, dates travelling, which they are travelling with, contact information for any day during the trip so as to insure the student can be reached in the event it is necessary.
- The responsible adult should have a copy of the student's application (documenting the parents having given Rotary custody of their child), the student's insurance card, their passport, and their DS2019. It is advisable to have a notarized statement that grants club permission for the student to be travelling, including the dates travelling and the people they are travelling with.

2) Travel outside of District 5010, but remaining within the Country for which the VISA is granted. Travel outside of District 5010 always requires special permission. If the trip is with an Exchange Student's host family or a member of the Student's Rotary club, the District Chairman must be informed of when, where (with address, phone number, and name of contact), with whom, and for how long the Exchange Student will be traveling and must grant permission before the trip. If, in an exceptional case, it is necessary to miss school, the school Principal's permission in writing must be obtained before the trip.

3) Travel to a country outside the geopolitical boundary of the student's host country for which the VISA is granted, whether or not that travel is within the Rotary D5010 boundary (from the Canadian Yukon to Alaska or vice versa, for example): Travel outside of an Exchange Student's host country always requires special permission and may not be granted due to VISA limitations. In this case, not only do the requirements of item 2 above apply, but also the requirements of the U.S. State Department and, usually, the requirements of the Immigration officials of the country the student proposes to visit. Two problems that may occur are, a) the visited country may not allow the student entrance because of an improper or even non-existent VISA for that country, and/or b) once in the visited country, the student may not be permitted to re-enter their host country due to VISA limitations for "Multiple Entry" into the host country.

If the trip is with Exchange Students' school class, then the Students' host family, Rotary Counselor/YEO, and District Chairman must be informed and grant their permission before the trip.

Educational Purpose:

It is important that the educational purpose of the exchange be kept in mind at all times. If a student proposes to travel, regardless of the immediate context, his/her travel must have an educational component. Remember, Students are in their host country on an educational VISA, not a travel or tourist VISA. It is strongly recommended that the student make notes of the trip, take photographs, keep souvenirs and write a paper about the trip upon return. The student will then be asked to include his/her observations when presentations are made to his/her host club and/or schools. In addition, this paper and associated photos and souvenirs will be of use when the students return to their countries of origin as a source of information in their "reverse ambassadorial" role. The educational component of the travel request will be expected for any travel request.

Disallowed Travel:

Except under the most exceptional circumstances (illness, death in the family, or other emergency situation) Individual travel inside or outside District 5010 and/or the Exchange Students' host country generally is not permitted.

Travel with Exchange Students' own parents or to visit family or close friends generally is not permitted unless special arrangements are made and permissions given. The reason for this limitation is that visits by Students' own families may be disruptive to the exchange. Remember that while on the exchange, D5010 is the student's legal guardian and retains specific legal responsibilities under the VISA and exchange program rules regardless of the student's familial ties.

Travel during any nationally recognized holiday is not permitted except with the Exchange Student's host family.

Random travel, alone or with other students, is not permitted.

Travel Requests:

Timing – Written Travel requests must be received by the Inbound Coordinator at least two weeks (further in advance if possible) before the intended travel takes place. Please note (see below) that certain steps are required before the written request is to be reviewed by the Inbound Coordinator. Please note also, the request must be recommended by the YE Area Coordinator and endorsed by the Inbound Coordinator but must be approved by the General Chairman. If the written request is submitted to the Inbound Coordinator in less than two weeks prior to the intended travel, it will probably be denied unless exceptional and/or emergency circumstances exist (which must be explained in the request). Travel requests must reflect the planning for the travel. Requests of an impulsive or last minute nature will probably not be approved.

Travel Request Steps:

For most travel requests, permission of the Exchange Students' natural and host family, Rotary Counselor/YEO, Regional YEO Coordinator, Inbound Coordinator, District Chairman, and (in some cases) school Principal will be required before any travel is permitted.

The following steps are required if a travel request is to be approved:

- Prepare the information and submit it for approval in a single e-mail;
- A written invitation from the people Exchange Student intends to visit or from a principal authority of the event (usually educational or related to a school event) that Exchange Student attend. A request to travel without a written invitation will automatically be denied, or sent back until such invitation is obtained.
- A written permission from Exchange Students' own parents is required. No travel will be approved until this permission is received; A signed letter of permission (can be an email, signed, scanned and returned)
- The Exchange Students' proposed itinerary showing, as nearly as possible, all departure and arrival times, methods of travel, and intermediate stops. It is recognized that the formal travel itinerary may not be available at the time of the request, however, the best and closest schedule must be submitted. This is another reason why the travel must be planned well in advance;
- The name, address, and telephone number of Exchange Students' contact, host and/or travel destination being visited is required;
- Permission of Exchange Students' host family and Rotary Counselor and/or YEO are required;
- Recommendation of approval by the host club's Yeo's Regional Coordinator is required;
- A written explanation of why the trip is appropriate and/or educational with all supporting details for the District. The student will be expected to keep a written journal, take photographs and produce a description of what he/she observed and learned on their travel is expected;
- Upon receipt of the above, the Inbound Coordinator will review the request. If the request is complete he/she will endorse the travel request for the Chairman's approval;
- The Chairman's review and approval must be obtained before the trip occurs.

Liabilities:

The above requirements are strict and substantial. They are not intended to prohibit Exchange Student travel. They are intended to control the difficulties of liability should an unexpected accident or happenstance occur. They are also intended to ensure that the conditions of the exchange as required by the granting of the VISA are not violated.

Along with the steps in the guideline, we always suggest that any student travel be addressed as an educational activity. Students should keep a journal, take photos and think of ways that their travel experience can be incorporated into their host club presentations and in the presentations when they return home.