



Rotary Youth Exchange
District 5360

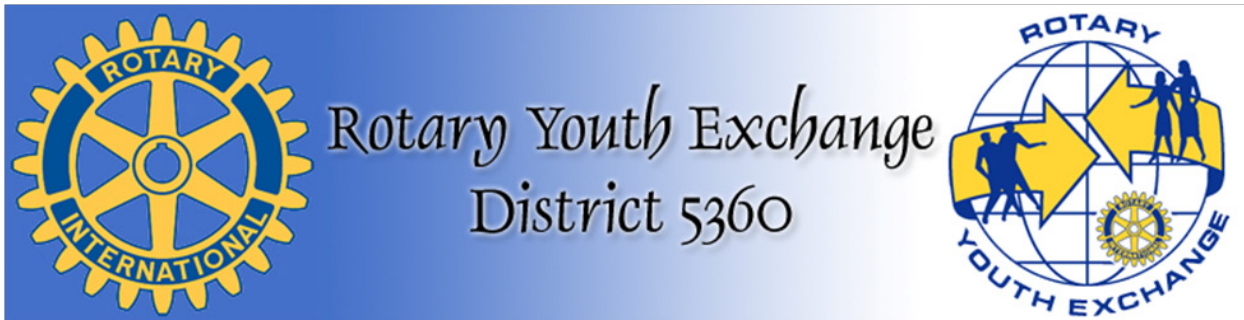


Outbound Counsellor Handbook

Sponsoring outbound exchange students is a process that begins long before the actual exchange and continues through the student's return home. The duties... include promoting the program, recruiting prospective students, selecting suitable candidates, corresponding with students during their exchange, and helping the students and their families adjust to life after the exchange.

Excerpt from Youth Exchange Handbook

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Role of the Outbound Counsellor

The Outbound counsellor acts as a liaison between Rotary (the sponsoring club and the District Youth Exchange Committee) and the Outbound Youth Exchange Student and the student's parents.

It is important to remember that the outbound counsellor's role does not end when the Outbound departs for his or her exchange. In addition to reporting back to the Sponsoring Club about the student's progress overseas, the Outbound Counsellor is part of the student's support network.

Before leaving District 5360 to go overseas, the students are told that their first line of contact, in case of a problem, is their Inbound Counsellor, or someone in their host country. However, if a problem is not being resolved in the host country, the student needs to be able to contact someone here to reach a solution. Rotary has resources that the student's parents do not have, which is why **students are strongly encouraged to contact their Outbound Counsellor before contacting their parents.** For the student to feel comfortable doing this, he or she needs to know that you are still interested and engaged in his or her exchange. The best way to do this is to develop a bond before the student departs, and maintain it through regular communication while the student is overseas.

Returned students, or Rotex, can be valuable resources for your Rotary Club, so it is a good idea to keep in touch with them after their exchange year is over.



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Three-year Overview

Being an Outbound Counsellor is a three-year commitment for each student, but the responsibilities each year are different.

The **first year**, your student is an *Outbound*. This year actually begins months before the student has been selected, with promotion in the schools and setting up the interviews for the selection process. The outbound year continues through the orientation and country placement process, until the student departs for his or her exchange. This is the most intense year for the counsellor.

The **second year**, your student is an *Inbound*. For the next year, the student is overseas, and your primary responsibility is to be a part of the student's support network. This involves maintaining contact with the student, the student's parents, and keeping your Rotary Club updated on the student's progress.

The **third year**, your student is a *Rotex*. The student has returned from his or her exchange, and still needs a strong support network. Counsellor's responsibilities also involve ensuring that the student knows about and attends the required orientation events.

See the current Outbound Calendar of Events, available at www.yex5360.org for exact deadlines, especially the deadlines when the outbound student fees are due to the YEX Administrative Assistant.

All cheques for outbound fees must be issued by the Rotary Club, even if the family of the outbound student are paying the fees. In this case, the family should pay the Rotary Club, and the Rotary Club should pay the district.



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Detailed Calendar: Year One

May-June

- Begin promoting the program in local schools by speaking to guidance counsellors or administrators
 - Provide promotional materials
 - Schedule a time to meet again in the fall
 - Enlist the help of the current Inbound student to promote the program within his or her school

September-October

- Promote the program to local schools and youth groups
 - Meet with guidance counsellors or administrators
 - Arrange to host an information session for students (bring your Inbound and Rotex with you)
 - Provide promotional material and preliminary application form

November

- Arrange selection interviews. Interviews should take place by the end of October or within the first week of November
- Contact the selected student, your new Outbound
 - Meet with the student and his or her parents to explain your role and the process going forward
 - Give the student the Complete Application Form, which must be completed and submitted to the YEX Administrative Assistant by the date specified on www.yex5360.org
 - Make sure the student has a **passport that will be valid for at least six months beyond the end of the exchange**
- Check the completed form **before the deadline**
 - **Make sure it is complete, accurate, and on time**
 - **If it is not, it will be returned to be redone**
 - **Incorrect application forms will delay the placement process**



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- Forward the completed documents to the YEX Administrative Assistant by the deadline (end of November)
- Invite the Outbound student and his/her parents to a Rotary meeting and introduce them to the club

January

- Make sure the Outbound student attends the Outbound Orientation in January. This one-day Orientation is mandatory for the student. **Students who arrive late for the Orientation miss out on important information and introductions, and may not bond as well with the other Outbounds who did arrive on time.**
- At the Orientation, the Outbounds will be interviewed by the Coordinators to determine country placements. You and your student will be advised of the country the student is going to in late January or February.

February

- Ensure that you, the Outbound student, and at least one of his or her parents are registered for the Outbound Orientation Weekend in March. Accommodations are arranged for the students, but counsellors **and parents must arrange their own accommodations.**

March

- Attend the Outbound Orientation weekend. This weekend is mandatory for the Outbound students, their parents, and you.
 - Even if you have attended this event before, please remember that the information and process are new to your Outbound and his or her parents. Please attend all sessions and be supportive of your Outbound and his or her family.
 - In addition to sessions about what the students can expect overseas, there will be valuable information about insurance, visas, and travel health.



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- There are country-specific sessions, with opportunities to speak to Rotex and Inbounds who have been to, or are from, the country your Outbound will be going to,
- There is a Counsellor's Forum and Counsellor training session. This is a good opportunity to invite potential counsellors from your club to come along.

April

- **Assist students and parents with preparations for the exchange as needed:**
 - The students will receive visa forms from the travel agent. These must be completed so they can be sent **as soon as the Guarantee Form comes back from the host district overseas**
 - The students receive a contract. This signed contract **must be returned by the deadline (usually the May Orientation)**

May

- Ensure that the Outbound attends the one-day Orientation in early May.
 - This is the session where the student will receive information and training about Youth Protection.
- Help the Outbound student with preparation of a PowerPoint presentation to give while overseas

April-June

- Keep in touch with the Outbound as he or she waits for the Guarantee Form to arrive, and make sure the visa application is submitted as soon as the student receives the Guarantee Form (*this process is slightly different for each country, and is subject to change each year)



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- Provide the student with a typed list of information about your club (the host Rotarians will want to know this)
 - When was the club chartered?
 - How many members are in the club?
 - How many members are women?
 - What is the average age of the club?
 - What are some of the clubs key projects?
 - When/where does the club meet?
 - Does the club have a major annual fundraiser? How much money does this usually raise?
- Arrange for the student to do a practice run of his or her presentation at your club.
- Once the student has been contacted by his or her host club, email the Inbound Counsellor to introduce yourself.



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Detailed Calendar: Year Two

July-August

- See the student off at the airport if possible. **You or someone from your club should be “on call” until the student has arrived safely in his or her host country.**
 - The student will have an emergency contact list with contacts in both District 5360 (including you) and the host district. Make sure you have this contact information too. If something does go wrong during travel, you and or/the Coordinator should be contacted immediately. Rotarians have better resources than the parents to handle any issues.
 - Ask the student to contact his or her parents upon arrival at the destination. You should be notified too, either by the student or the parents.

Throughout the next year

- Keep in touch with the student while he or she is on exchange
 - Periodically remind the student to keep in touch with his or her host club
 - Remind the student to file quarterly reports with his or her Student Coordinator
 - Report back to your club about your student’s progress
- Keep in touch with the student’s parents
- If an emergency arises in the host country (natural disaster, political situation) and the student does not make contact immediately, work with the parent’s and the Student Coordinator to contact the student’s host District



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- Here's a suggestion for including the Outbound students in your club while he or she is away:
 - Bring a stamped and addressed postcard for the student to your weekly meetings
 - Ask a different member to write the postcard each week, with news about the club, community, Stanley Cup playoffs, etc. Have the Inbound student write the postcard at least once.
 - Make sure the postcards are mailed right away

January

- Find out the date the student will be returning to Canada. The student must return by the date specified by District 5360 Youth Exchange Committee (usually by mid-August).
- Remind the student about the mandatory Re-Entry weekend in August (this weekend is mandatory for the student, but not for you)
- Contact the student's parents and see how they are feeling about the return of their son or daughter

June-July

- Make sure the student has the details about the Re-Entry weekend, and plans to attend



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Detailed Calendar: Year Three

June-August

- Meet with the student as soon as possible after his or her return
 - Confirm that the student is attending the Re-Entry weekend, and has transportation
 - Set a date for the student to make a presentation to your Club about his or her year overseas. Find out what technology the student might need for the presentation (projector , laptop etc.), and make sure it is available
 - Find out what his or her plans are for the next year
 - Remind the student that he or she must attend the Outbound Orientation in March
- Keep in touch with the student throughout the following year (and beyond)

January

- Remind the student that attendance at the Outbound Orientation in March is mandatory. This is when he or she will get the performance bond back— a cheque for up to \$500.00 (if all obligations were fulfilled) in the student's name

Rotex students are a valuable and under-utilized resource for your club. They can help with promotion of the Youth Exchange program, selection interviews for future students, and any other projects the club has. Don't forget that they could also be future Rotarians!



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Selection Interviews

The selection interviews should take place in October. Here's what you'll need:

- A venue
- A greeter
- A panel of interviewers

Before the Interview

- Once all the applications have been reviewed, go through them and determine the eligibility of the students (see the sample *Outbound Interview Template* on www.yex5360.org for more details)

Interview Panel

- Include members of the club involved in the youth exchange program
- Include club members, and their partners, who have been host parents
- Include club members who have been youth exchange counsellors in the past
- Include previous students sponsored by the club (Rotex)
- Include club members who are former exchange students

Conducting the Interview

- Decide on the interview questions ahead of time and distribute them to the panel members (sample questions can be found on the following pages)
- Both the applicants and their parents should be interviewed, separately
- The greeter should greet the applicants and their families as they arrive, let them know where they can wait, and usher them into the interviews

After the Interview

- Once all the applicants have been interviewed, the interview panel must decide who to select
- The greeter should be included in these discussions, and give his or her impressions of the candidates.



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Selecting a Candidate

The interview process is important whether you have one applicant or one hundred. You are choosing a student to represent your club, your community, your country, and Rotary as a whole.

If you are fortunate enough to have too many applicants, you can use the applications to make a “short-list” for interviewing.

Sample Questions: Parent Interview

1. How did you feel when your son or daughter decided to apply for this program?
2. Are you aware of the costs? Have you budgeted for this?
3. Do you have any concerns about your son or daughter adjusting to a different culture with different customs?
4. Do you have any immediate concerns about the countries your son or daughter wants to go to?
5. Are there any countries you do not wish your son or daughter to go to? Why not?
6. Why do you think your son or daughter wants to be an exchange student?
7. What do you hope your son or daughter will gain from this experience?
8. Whose idea was it to apply for the program? Are you entirely committed to letting your son or daughter go on an exchange?



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9. Hypothetically, how would you feel about having an exchange student live in your home? (Note: it should not be a requirement for the outbound family to host an exchange student, although you could ask if they are willing and able).

10. Is your son or daughter a picky eater?

11. Are you planning any major lifestyle changes over the next two years (i.e. divorce, marriage, moving)?

12. If there was a family emergency, such as a funeral, would you expect your son or daughter to return immediately?

Sample Questions: Student Interview

1. What do you know about Rotary?

2. Why do you want to be an exchange student?

3. How would you describe your community to someone who is unfamiliar with it?

4. Tell us about your most important personal accomplishment, and what you did to achieve it.

5. How do you deal with peer pressure? Give an example

6. What kinds of situations do you find stressful? How do you deal with this?



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7. Have you and your parents talked about the costs associated with this exchange? Have you budgeted for it?
8. Being a Rotary Youth Exchange Student means being an ambassador for your community, for Canada, and for Rotary. What do you think this means?
9. Have you ever encountered someone who believes something different than you? How did you deal with this?
10. Which countries would you like to go to? Why? If you were sent to a different country, how would you feel?
11. Are there any countries you do not want to go to? Why?
12. How will a year as an exchange student fit into your schooling and extracurricular activities?
13. What is your greatest strength? How has this helped you?
14. What is your greatest weakness? How have you overcome this?
15. How do your parents feel about you applying to this program? How will your absence affect them?
16. How would you handle being different from everyone around you? Have you had experiences that will help you cope with this?



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17. If there was a family emergency here in Canada (such as a funeral) while you are an exchange student, what would you do?
18. Do you know someone who has been an (Rotary) exchange student? What do you admire about him or her?
19. What do you think is the difference between a “good time” and a “good experience?”
20. What do you consider to be the most important purpose of the International Youth Exchange Program?
21. Why should we choose you to be our successful candidate?
22. Looking back at this interview session, did we get an accurate picture of who you are? If not, what additional information would we need to have in order to make our decision?

An *Outbound Interview Process Template*, prepared by the Rotary Club of Medicine Hat, is available on the website for you to use and adapt for your club (<http://www.yex5360.org/docs/docs.html>).



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Resources

For additional resources and links, please refer to our
website:

www.yex5360.org