



# Rotary Youth Exchange

## Guidelines for Counsellors For Hosted Students

Rotary International District 9750

Revised August 2008

### **APPOINTMENT OF COUNSELLOR**

Upon agreeing to accept and host a student from overseas under the Rotary Youth Exchange program, the hosting Rotary Club must appoint one of its members to be counsellor for the student .

The counsellor is appointed for the duration of the Exchange even though this means overlapping from one Rotary year to the next. Continuity in the role is important, leading to a stable relationship with the student. The Club Counsellor must be the same sex as the student.

### **PURPOSE OF COUNSELLOR**

The counsellor will act as the student's guardian whilst the student is in Australia. Prior to the student's arrival the counsellor will attend to arrangements in preparation for the Exchange, and will act as liaison between the student and the Host Club during that time.

### **QUALITIES OF COUNSELLOR**

The person appointed as counsellor should be:

1. Interested in young people and be supportive of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program.
2. Patient and tactful, be understanding and sympathetic, but also be ready to be firm when the situation so requires.
3. Capable of gaining the student's respect and confidence.
4. Preferably be a family person, experienced in raising a teenage family with all its varied problems.

### **"CO-COUNSELLORS"**

The Club may find it advantageous to enlist the help of an independent counsellor of the same sex as the student when the student is of the opposite sex to that of the counsellor. Such action often enhances the relationship with the student, leading to better communication and understanding. Returned students, carefully selected for their maturity, may also be useful "Co-Counsellors", particularly if a foreign language is involved.

### **DUTIES OF A COUNSELLOR**

Normally, the role of counsellor is very rewarding and enriching. Being a

counsellor is an exacting and personal task which individual Rotarians will handle in their own manner.

The Counsellor should attend to the following matters:

### **BEFORE THE STUDENT ARRIVES**

1. The counsellor should acquaint him/herself with the rules and guidelines of the Program, and so be in a position to discuss such matters with the student and to provide proper guidance.
2. Establish contact with the student and his/her parents, providing them with information about the locality in which the student will be hosted, and generally assist the student in his/her preparations prior to departure for Australia.
3. Ensure the student is enrolled at the school nominated by the Host Club, provide the school with details as to the student's current studies and gradings. Where possible, liaise with the student on the matter of subject selection.
4. Be aware of host family arrangements and make contact with those families not known to the counsellor.
5. Keep the Host Club members acquainted of the preparations being made for the student, thus ensuring the Club's enthusiasm for the hosting is maintained.
6. Be aware of the student's arrival date, time and flight number and be at the airport to meet him/her. Arrange for a welcoming function to be held by the Host Club members.

### **UPON THE STUDENT'S ARRIVAL**

1. Ensure that the student's airline ticket and passport is handed to a District Youth Exchange Committee representative or the

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student's counsellor for safe custody throughout the period of the exchange.

2. Ensure the student telephones his/her parents as soon as possible advising safe arrival.
3. Check the student's insurance policies are in order and arrange for any "top-up" should such be considered necessary. See that the policies are stored in a secure place where they cannot be lost - recommend bank safe, etc. Have a photocopy of the policies for easy reference.
4. Check that the student's visa is in order, noting whether renewal is required during the host period: make a diary note if renewal is necessary. As with the insurance policies, ensure the student's passport is kept in a secure place - the student should retain a copy.
5. Arrange the method and dates for the monthly allowances to be paid to the student.
6. Outline the rules and guidelines regarding the Exchange, setting out what is expected of the student throughout the year.
7. Accompany the student, with his/her passport to a Medibank Private Office to collect the student's Medibank Card and apply for the recommended optional extra medical cover, "First Choice Extras Cover".
8. Accompany the student to school for enrolment purposes. Arrange the purchase (or borrowing) of school uniform (if such is required) and other school requisites. The cost of school clothing is the responsibility of the student's natural parents.

### **THROUGHOUT THE EXCHANGE**

1. The counsellor should arrange a regular meeting (weekly) with the student during the whole period of the student's stay. Likewise, the counsellor should make frequent calls to host parents and the Principal of the student's school to ensure that there are no problems.
2. Make diary notes of important dates from the student's home, e. g. birthdays, anniversaries, national days, etc., thus ensuring these important events will not be

overlooked. The counsellor must see that the Club acknowledges the student at Christmas and on his/her birthday.

3. The counsellor should ensure that the student is submitting the regular reports required by both the host and sponsor District Youth Exchange Committees. The counsellor should also see that the student is writing to the sponsor Rotary Club.
4. Throughout the year, assist the student in sending personal effects home, ensuring that luggage at the end of the Exchange will be within the limits set by the airlines.
5. From time to time, the counsellor should write to the student's parents, informing them of the student's progress.
6. See that the student is continuously involved with the Club. Arrange for the student to visit Club members for meals and other social events and speaking engagements at the club.

### **BEFORE THE STUDENT DEPARTS**

1. Arrange a farewell function for the student to be held at a Club Meeting.
2. Ensure that the student has all the necessary travel arrangements confirmed and that the air ticket has been received back through the District Committee or the counsellor. Ensure that the student's luggage complies with the restrictions applied by the airlines.
3. Before releasing the Emergency Fund back to the student, ensure that all debts contracted have been settled.
4. Be at the airport to assist the student with departure.

### **TRAVEL**

The Student Travel policy is attached. All absence from the host family is covered under the travel policy.

### **PROBLEMS**

It is possible that a counsellor and the student might not get along together. If this happens the counsellor should stand down in favour of another counsellor. The original counsellor should not regard this as failure or an indication of one's inefficiency as personalities can clash for no apparent reason. It is better to make the change in order to achieve a happier relationship.

### **IN SUMMARY**

It is imperative that the counsellor is fully aware of the vital contribution he/she can make to the success of the Exchange. The counsellor is virtually the student's guardian whilst in Australia.

The counsellor should see to matters prior to the student's arrival; after arrival, actively monitor and guide the student throughout the period of the exchange.

The counsellor must maintain Club members' involvement and interest during the student's twelve months Exchange.