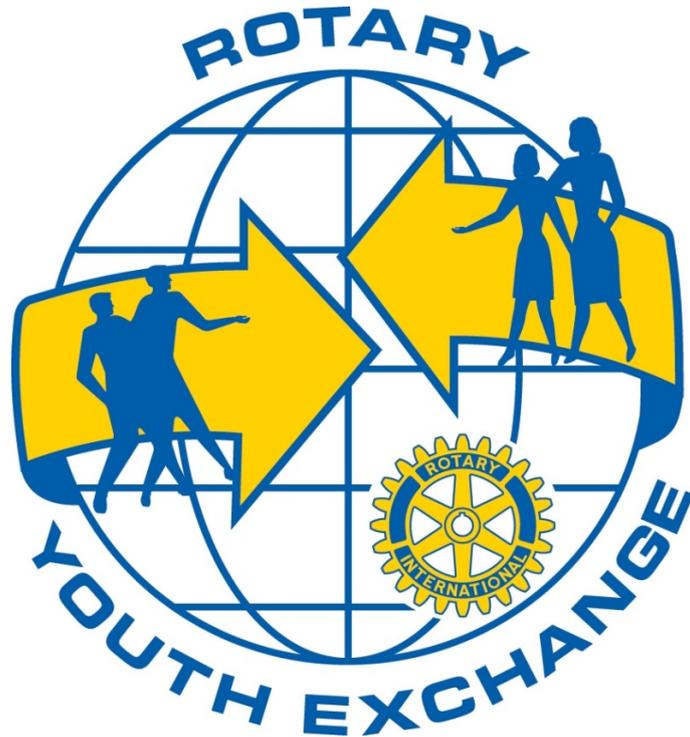


# District 9685



# Host Family Guidelines

# Host Family Guidelines

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## INTRODUCTION

Hosting a youth exchange student from another country is a rewarding experience for all concerned: the student themselves, the host family, their relatives and friends. Being host to an exchange student opens up a new culture for the host family as well as the opportunity to share the hopes, dreams and ambitions of the exchange student. Host families play a vital role in ensuring the health and happiness of the exchange student and the ultimate success of the exchange.

Whilst most exchange students may be 'academic achievers', they are still teenagers and will not be exempt from dealing with the range of problems and issues young people of that age face. As well, exchange students in a different environment and culture, will also experience a range of additional challenges not normally faced by young people of that age.

A host family should, therefore, be genuinely interested in young people, especially those from another culture, and be willing to accept responsibility for their welfare during their stay.

This guide for host families provides an overview of the role of the host family and their responsibilities in hosting an exchange student.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Sponsor Rotary Club and District (overseas)

- select and prepare the student for exchange.
- advise the Host Club of travel details.
- maintain contact with the student and the Host Club and/or District for the duration of the exchange.
- debrief and assist the student on return after the period of exchange.

### Host District (9685)

- Meet the student upon their arrival at the airport
- Conduct an inbound orientation session at which expectations and rules are explained
- Support the student and Rotary Club through the exchange.

### Host Club/Club Counsellor

- Appoint a Rotarian to be the Counsellor for the student who shall act as guardian to the student during the year of exchange. This is the person with whom you, as host families, should communicate if the need arises during the time you are the host family.
- Source, screen and select all host families prior to their participation in the program. This shall involve a background check on the host family and all members of the family residing at home who are over the age of 18, a visit to the host family home and a briefing of the host family. Background checks will involve reference check and working with children check.
- Meet the student upon their arrival at the airport.
- Arrange enrolment at school, subjects selected, books and the extent of fees to be paid. This should be commenced before the student's arrival in the country.
- Maintain contact with the host family during the course of the exchange and assist with the change from one host family to the next.

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## SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOST FAMILIES

As Host parents, you have agreed to take on a number of responsibilities:

- To treat the student as 'one of the family' and not as an honoured guest;
- To Look after the welfare of the student and offer help and guidance when sought;
- To provide a room of their own but, where not possible, to share with someone of the same sex and similar age;
- To provide all meals;
- To include the student in all family activities;
- To explain to the student what is required of them whilst hosted in the family home (use the First Night Questionnaire found in Appendix 1);
- To monitor all aspects of the exchange including school progress and how leisure time is spent;
- Recognize and resolve any problems which may be identified;
- To maintain good communication and understanding with the student and the Host Club Counsellor.

To ensure a successful exchange, it is vital that open and good communication and understanding between the host family and the student is maintained. Firm but sympathetic understanding and loving management by host parents should lead to hosting which is both successful and rewarding.

The exchange is a two-way process and the Host Parents are the adults in the deal. Host parents should be willing to go more than half way in understanding the student. They should try to give an adult lead to the young person, who unless told, cannot be expected to know the family rules or wishes.

### Preparing for the student's arrival

Having agreed to become Host parents, you should immediately prepare yourself to host the inbound exchange student. In making the decision, you should have discussed the implications of hosting with other members of the family living at home, especially those who may be of a similar age to the hosted student. Learn as much as you can about the student you will host, their background, interests, likes and dislikes etc. First Host parents should begin to communicate with the inbound student as soon as possible and also include the natural parents of the student in your communications. Future host families may also contact the student and natural parent before the student's arrival to start building a rapport.

### Meeting the Inbound student

Upon arrival, the inbound student should be met at the airport by members of the Host Club, District Committee and the first Host family. After a period of time, all Host families should meet the student. Sometimes, an informal welcome may be organised so this can be achieved.

On arrival, the student may be suffering from overwhelming feelings so it is important to be warm, welcoming, helpful and friendly during this time and offer as much advice, guidance and support so the student builds their confidence in their new culture.

It is not uncommon for the student to stay with their club counsellor for the first few days of their exchange. This assists with the club counsellor building a rapport with the student and also allows the club counsellor time to organise schooling, bank accounts etc.

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# Host Family Guidelines

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## Settling In

Within the first 48 hours, it is recommended that Rotary's "First Night Questionnaire" be discussed between the student and the Host family (Appendix 1). This should be done at the commencement of each period with a Host family. Most students will be familiar with the "Questionnaire". Host parents should allow for language difficulties in the discussions but the Host family and the student must ensure there are no misunderstandings regarding the rules and expectations of the home stay.

## Orientation

Students arriving in District 9685 are required to attend an Inbound Orientation which is held a few weeks after the students arrive. The Club Counsellor and student will be provided with this date, prior to the student's arrival. At the Orientation, students will also be given an Inbound Student Handbook which outlines the rules and responsibilities of the program.

## COMMON PROBLEMS

Open communication between all parties to an exchange – the student, the Host family, the Club Counsellor and District Counsellor– should ensure that an exchange proceeds well. That does not mean that problems won't arise from time to time. The most common problems experienced during a home stay have been identified as:

☐☐ **Curfews.** The same rules that apply to members of your family should also apply to the hosted student. It may be appropriate to check with other host families so that there is some uniformity in the rules between families and an agreed sensible time. Curfew time should be explained at the beginning of the home stay.

☐☐ **Drinking.** This is one of Rotary's '5-D' rules 'don't drink.' Many students who come on exchange will come from a culture where the consumption of alcohol by people under the age of 18 is different to our own. The legal drinking age in Australia is 18. This should be made clear to your hosted student.

Teenage binge drinking or drinking to excess to get drunk is NOT acceptable and any instances of this should be brought to the attention of the Club Counsellor.

☐☐ **Driving:** Students are strictly forbidden to drive any form of motorised vehicle whilst on exchange.

A D9685 RYEP Inbound Student may not be driven by a Probationary Licence driver (P1 or P2) without the express permission of a current Host Parent. This permission must be obtained by the student prior to each and every case of driving. The current Host Parent should take into account matters such as:

- The Probationary driver's experience
- The number of passengers
- The length of journey
- The type of vehicle (including motorcycles).

☐☐ **Drugs.** This is another of Rotary's '5-D' rules 'don't do drugs'. Should host parents be aware of the student taking any illegal drugs, the Club Counsellor must be informed immediately. It may be necessary to inform the appropriate authorities and such occurrences will lead to the student being returned home.

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## Host Family Guidelines

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□□**Disfigurement:** Students are forbidden to acquire tattoos or piercing whilst on exchange.

□□**Food.** For some students, the change in food may initially be a problem – but probably one of taste only. It is expected hosted students will have the same meals as the rest of the family. Students should be encouraged to try new styles of food but foods should not be forced on them. Some students may have special dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian). This will have been identified on their Application Papers and should be known to you before the student arrives in your home.

□□**Getting lost.** As students are in a new environment when they arrive, first Host families should consider providing the student with a map, explain the public transport system and provide them with a list of emergency contacts telephone numbers.

□□**Homesickness.** Most Inbound students will feel homesick at some stage and it is perfectly normal for them to do so. As part of your role as a host family you should assist the student through these periods. At times, it may be necessary to involve the Club Counsellor.

Sometimes homesickness may be difficult to spot but in most instances the mood of the student will indicate that something is wrong. A student who spends a lot of time alone may well be giving a signal that all is not well. Exchange students who remain involved and busy in their host schools and communities are likely to suffer less from homesickness than those that don't. Homesickness can occur at any time and may be triggered by events such as family birthdays, Christmas and receiving e mails from friends at home.

□□**Host family relationships.** Jealousy between hosted students and other children in the family can be a problem. The jealousy is likely to come from your own children who may see that they are being ignored whilst the hosted student receives all the attention. Any decision taken to act as a Host family should involve your children in the discussion.

□□**Travel Insurance.** Your hosted student will have comprehensive travel insurance which meets the minimum requirements of Rotary Australia. This will have been checked by the District committee before their arrival. You should also be aware of exclusions in the student's insurance as they may determine what recreational and leisure activities you arrange for the student, e.g. flying in a light aircraft.

□□**Medical:** All Inbound exchange students will have Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) and an appropriate health card which is usually issued by Medibank Private. The student should inform you of any allergies they may suffer from and any special medications or prescriptions they have. The Application Papers for the student held by the Host Club/District will contain a medical report.

□□**Keys.** As the student is a member of your family, the rules on the house key should apply to them as it does to your own children. If there are no children living at home, discuss the availability of a key with the student.

## Host Family Guidelines

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□□**Money.** Apart from providing food, lodging and some transport, host families are not expected to suffer any financial burden whilst hosting a student. Inbound students will be provided with a monthly allowance from their Host Rotary Club. This may not be sufficient for their monthly expenditure, so they should also have access to their own funds through a bank or other financial institution. Any additional funds the student may need must come from their natural parents. Students should not borrow money from host families.

□□**Religion.** This is a purely personal matter for the student and the Host parents. Host parents should not attempt to impose their religious observances and practices on a hosted student. It is, though, acceptable for the student to be invited to religious services especially at Christmas and/or Easter. Likewise, Host families must respect the student's own religious observance and, where possible, assist them to practice his or her religion during their stay.

□□**Romantic involvement.** Students are advised not to become romantically involved during the period of their exchange as it can detract from the experience of being an exchange student if they become too involved with the one person. Host parents who suspect a student to be too romantically involved or engaging in promiscuous behaviour should discuss the matter with the student and bring it to the attention of the Club Counsellor.

□□**Telephone & Internet Use.** Use and misuse of the telephone and the internet are the two biggest problems encountered in youth exchange. It is best to establish the ground rules for the use of the telephone and the internet from the outset. Some exchange students will have a mobile phone. This is quite acceptable but they should be made aware of the cost in using it.

International calls can be expensive and many students will use Skype to contact their natural family. You must be aware that Skype uses a large amount of internet download, and may affect your download limits.

□□**Theft.** Any item of the student lost or suspected of being stolen should be reported to the police immediately. Host parents should also make the student crime prevention aware (e.g. locking house windows and securing personal property). Likewise, should any member of the host family suspect the hosted student to have committed a crime, the Host Club Counsellor should be informed immediately.

□□**Visitors.** Hosted students should be informed under what circumstances they are allowed to invite visitors to the host family home.

Many problems in an exchange begin with a misunderstanding. These are best avoided by being open and discussing the expectations and household rules from the start.

# Host Family Guidelines

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## SOME ISSUES FACING EXCHANGE STUDENTS

All exchange students are teenagers and no matter what their country of origin, they will face a range of issues common to all youth. Host families are the first contact for students during their stay. Should any serious problems occur you should raise them with the Club Counsellor.

### **1. Schooling:**

First and foremost youth exchange is an educational experience. It is a condition of their visa that exchange students attend secondary school on a full time basis. The Club Counsellor will have enrolled the student into the host school and made arrangements regarding subjects, books and uniform. As host parents, your role is to monitor the day-to-day progress of the student. Make sure the student knows how to get to and from school and what the arrangements are for lunches. It may take some time to adjust to the new school – procedures and subjects could be radically different - and the student will invariably need your guidance through the settling in period.

### **2. Language proficiency:**

For some exchange students this can be a considerable problem. Host parents will need to be able to identify whether the lack of language proficiency is having a lasting problem. This is most likely to occur early in the exchange and as the student masters their command of English, it will become less of a problem. Initially there may be misunderstandings but it is important the student understands your rules and expectations from the beginning. Be patient but also speak slowly and clearly. The student should not feel embarrassed by the lack of language proficiency no matter how frustrated they may feel in communicating in an unfamiliar language.

### **3. Changing Host families:**

Many students become well settled with a particular Host family and moving from them to another can be a difficult occurrence. It is important to introduce the student to all their Host families early in the exchange and to explain when the change will take place. There should be opportunities for the student to get to know the new Host family before the change takes place. Rotary students should be aware that they will change families two or three times but this knowledge does not always prepare them for the actual change.

### **4. Travel:**

The District 9685 Youth Exchange committee, host Rotary club, club counsellor and host parents are responsible for the students while in Australia. We must always know where the student can be reached in case of emergency or if an important message is received from their home.

- Individual travel approvals will vary based on many factors. Host parents will need to ask themselves if the travel is something they would allow their own child to do. Common sense must be a guide.
- If the host parents are not comfortable, and would not allow their own child to do whatever the student is requesting – the answer is NO. If the student does not accept the host parents' decision, the host parents should contact the club counsellor.

Host parents must know at all times where their exchange student is and must not be afraid to say 'no'. Students may say they are allowed to do an activity at home, or think the rules are too strict. As a host parent you should remember that you are the parents and what you say goes! If you are unsure about a situation, please speak to the club counsellor.

District 9685 has a travel policy which outlines the approval requirements for students when staying overnight away from the host family's house. This can be found in Appendix 2.

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**5. Rotary obligations** The student has certain obligations to both the Host Club and District 9685 and all endeavours should be made to assist the student to meet these obligations. The student will be required to attend Club or District meetings and activities and a range of other Rotary functions. An exchange student is expected to share their experiences and culture as widely as possible and this will involve attendance at a variety of events which may include public speaking. Host families need to be aware of these obligations when planning family events which involve the student.

### ENSURING THE STUDENT'S WELFARE AND SAFETY

The greatest responsibility to fall upon a Host family is to ensure the welfare and safety of the hosted student. The exchange student's welfare refers to any matters of a personal nature many of which have been raised in previous sections. They may range from such issues as homesickness, meals, comfort and privacy to emergency contact information, travel arrangements and knowing where the student is whilst they are in your care.

Matters of safety refer to basic information being provided to the student to ensure their well being. For example, voltages may differ on electrical appliances between the student's home country and our own. Explain how to safely operate the home heating system. If the host family has a fire escape plan, it should be explained to the student.

Above all else, though, host families should be ever vigilant for signs of child abuse and do all in their power to guard against it. Young people can be abused in a number of ways which are mainly categorized into four categories:

- **Physical** – where young people are subjected to ill-treatment and physical injury through bullying, assault and other forms of direct physical contact.
- **Emotional** – where young people are emotionally neglected or ignored, whether by design or accident, subject to continued personal, racial, sexual or religious abuse (usually verbal) or are continually exposed to domestic violence. This may also involve instances of harassment. ALL abuse involves some form of emotional ill-treatment.
- **Sexual** – where young people are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual behaviour from provocative acts such as leaving pornographic material around to actual physical sexual abuse.
- **Neglect** – where children are constantly neglected or there is a failure to protect the student from exposure to any form of danger which affects their welfare and safety. Neglect also refers to failing to meet the young person's basic needs of food and accommodation.

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Rotary's first priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of young people placed in their care. It is a fact that not all students will report instances of abuse to anyone and many will suffer in silence for long periods of time. They may feel they are responsible for the abuse, they may feel they will be blamed and punished for what has happened, they may have faced threats of violence and intimidation from the abuser. For exchange students, these problems can be compounded by language inadequacies preventing open communication, not understanding the laws and customs of the host country, not being able to find an adult whom they can confide in and trust, being unable to communicate what has happened to their parents either through embarrassment or distance and suffering from the belief that once they go home it will all go away.

**If your student reports abuse or harassment to you please contact the Club Counsellor or District Chairman IMMEDIATELY.**

### **CONCLUSION**

In all instances, your Club Counsellor is always there to help, whatever the problem. You may seek more information from them about any aspect of your role and responsibilities as Host Families. It is very important that an atmosphere of trust be developed by all involved in hosting a Rotary youth exchange student: between the student, the Host Club, District Coordinator, the Host Club Counsellor and the Host Families.

# Host Family Guidelines

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## **Appendix 1** **FIRST NIGHT QUESTIONS**

<b>IN THE KITCHEN</b>	
Are meals at set times?	
Can I help prepare / cook meals / bake?	
Can I help with table setting / clearing / cleaning up?	
Can I help myself in-between meals to snacks / fruit without asking?	
<b>IN THE BATHROOM</b>	
What is the best time for me to use the bathroom?	
Can I shower / bath every day?	
Can I use the family toiletries?	
Where can I keep my own personal bathroom accessories?	
Where can I hang my towel?	
Is there a time limit for using the bathroom?	
<i>Girl talk only</i>	
<i>Where can I buy my personal items?</i>	
<i>How can I dispose of these items?</i>	
<b>IN THE BEDROOM</b>	
Do I clean my room ie vacuum, dust etc?	
Do I make my bed and keep my room tidy?	
What is the procedure for changing sheets / towels?	
Can I hang things on the bedroom walls?	
Can I rearrange the furniture in my room?	
<b>Laundry and CLOTHING</b>	
Where can I put my dirty clothes till wash day?	
What are the arrangements for washing and drying?	
Can I hang out the washing / bring it in from the clothesline?	
Do I do my own ironing?	
<b>AROUND THE HOME</b>	
Do I have a key to the house?	

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Where can I store my luggage?	
What areas of the home are private and out of bounds?	
What happens with rubbish?	
Can I use your entertainment system and choose what TV programs to watch?	
What jobs can I do around the home / garden to help?	
Does your household allow smoking and drinking <i>Drinking under the age of 18 is not permitted by law, however, in the home environment, a glass of wine / beer is acceptable if your host parents offer it to you?</i> <i>If you indicated on your application form you do not smoke, then you do not smoke while on exchange!</i>	
What time should I get up on weekends and holiday times?	
Do you have pets / animals I can help to take care of?	
<b>TELEPHONE / INTERNET / COMPUTER</b>	
Do I pay for any telephone calls I make / should I keep a log?	
Can my friends call me?	
Does it matter if I stay on the phone for a long time?	
Can I use your computer for school / email / internet?	
Can I download photos / do you have a CD / DVD burner?	
Do you have a limit for email / internet usage?	
Can I connect my laptop with your internet?	
<b>MAIL</b>	
What is the procedure for posting mail?	
Where is the Post Office?	
Where will I find mail that has arrived for me?	
<b>FAMILY OUTINGS</b>	
If we go out as a family, should I pay my own entrance fees / meals etc?	
<b>FIRST AID / MEDICATION</b>	
What do I do if I feel unwell or hurt myself?	
If I have medication, do you need to know why?	
If I have medication, where should I keep it?	

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<i>I have these allergies ...</i>	
<b>GOING TO SCHOOL</b>	
Where do I get my school uniform from? – <i>most schools have a uniform pool - if you need to buy anything for your uniform, you are required to pay for it.</i>	
Must I always wear a uniform to school?	
What time do I get up to go to school?	
How do I travel to and from school – walk / bicycle / car / bus / train?	
Can I apply for a bus / train pass? - <i>I should now have one</i>	
Can I apply for a student concession card? - <i>I should now have one</i>	
What is the procedure for school lunch?	
Should I do homework / assignments?	
What time should I go to bed for school days?	
Do I pay for my stationery items / text books / excursions etc? <i>Rotary pays school fees and some subject material</i>	
<b>ROTARY</b>	
How often will I attend Rotary meetings?	
How will I go to Rotary meetings?	
<b>FRIENDS / VISITING / GOING OUT</b>	
Can I have friends come to visit?	
Where can I entertain my friends?	
What arrangements do I make with you if I am going to be out with my friends ie how much notice / meals / transport / times / places?	
If I am going to be late, what should I do?	
<b>MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS</b>	
I play a musical instrument, where and when can I practice?	
Can I join a musical group to play my instrument?	

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<b>SPORT AND OTHER ACTIVITIES AFTER SCHOOL</b>	
How can I be involved in sport and other activities?	
What happens with meals / transport when I am doing my activities?	
<b>FAMILY LIKES AND DISLIKES</b>	
What things does the family like?	
<i>I like ...</i>	
What things don't the family like?	
<i>I don't like ...</i>	
<b>RELIGION</b>	
What religious observances should I know about?	
<i>My religious observances are ...</i>	
How can I practice my faith	

# Host Family Guidelines

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## Appendix 2

	<b>Rotary International District 9685 Youth Exchange Program</b>	
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### **Inbound Student Travel Policy**

#### **Purpose**

This policy sets out the requirements for Inbound students who wish to partake in Student Travel whilst on Rotary Youth Exchange in D9685. Further, it works in conjunction with the

***“Rotary Youth Exchange Australia Policy & Procedures for Student Protection Endorsed by Rotary International”***

This policy applies to all exchange students whether or not they are over the age of 18.

#### **Definition of Student Travel**

For our Rotary rules, travel is defined as being away from your current host family’s home for one or more nights.

Travel can only be undertaken if your absence does not clash with the plans of your host family, your host club, District activities and others who provide hospitality to you during your stay with them. It must also not break school attendance requirements, unless authorised.

The host club counsellor and host families are responsible for your safety and well being and they must assess any travel plans you have with this in mind as the first priority.

It should be noted that mobile phone coverage in Australia is not everywhere. If we need to contact you urgently for whatever reason, we need to know how to do this. We therefore require landline phone numbers.

There are generally 5 types of travel covered under this policy.

1. Travel with Host families, Rotarians or other people
2. Visiting friends for sleepovers or nights away from your host family.
3. School excursions
4. Leaving the boundaries of the District 9685 overnight.
5. District sponsored activities

Approval to embark on Student Travel must be obtained using the Student Travel Approval form. Please allow 7 days for the approval to be obtained.

### **Some Travelling which is Forbidden**

1. Travelling by private aircraft is strictly forbidden under Rotary rules. Private aircraft refers to all aircraft that are not licensed as regular public transport aircraft.
2. Travel on gliders, ultra-light planes, hang-gliders, bungee jumping, parachuting and paragliding is strictly forbidden.

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3. Hitch hiking can be dangerous and it is strictly forbidden for all exchange students.
4. When travelling, you should not swim in the surf at beaches in Australia due to the very dangerous waters caused by rips, large waves, sharks and crocodiles unless you are supervised and then swim only in areas permitted and patrolled.

### **Swim between the flags at all times. If there are no flags then don't swim!**

The following is an extract from the *“Rotary Youth Exchange Australia Policy & Procedures for Student Protection Endorsed by Rotary International”*

#### **Definition of Responsible Adult**

A responsible adult is an adult male or female

1. who in a family or group situation is responsible for caring for an exchange student
2. whose role is such that there is seen to be virtually no opportunity for the student to be placed at risk of abuse.
3. who the student's counsellor and/or host parents would establish is a suitable and caring person, acting as conscientious parents would in protecting their own under age teenage child
4. who has not been police or formally reference checked
5. who might be the family of a school friend who invites the student for an overnight stay, a Rotarian who invites the student for a family meal, a close relative of the host family who invites the student to go away with them for a short period, or any similar person where there is virtually no opportunity for sexual harassment to occur.

***This does not extend to other Rotary Exchange Students***

#### **Definition of Volunteer \*\***

A 'volunteer' is an adult, male or female

1. Who may, at times on his or her own, be responsible for caring for an exchange student.
2. Whose role is such that there is seen to be a opportunity for the student to be placed at risk or abuse
3. Who has been police, reference checked and approved as prescribed in Section 1.
4. Youth Exchange Committee member or any Rotary Club counsellor or any host family member over the age of 18 years of age living in the family home while the student is living there. A 'volunteer' may also include Rotarians or others who take students on organised events or adults who it is planned will be caring for Rotary Exchange Students at times on their own where there is seen to be an opportunity for the student to be placed at risk of abuse.

***\*\* This includes people who have had the CL4 form completed and checked***

# Host Family Guidelines

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## District 9685 Youth Exchange Programme REQUEST TO LEAVE DISTRICT FORM



When you wish to leave the District overnight, please complete this form and forward to your DISTRICT COORDINATOR 7 days before you plan to leave.

<b>Student name</b>			
<b>Host Rotary Club</b>			
<b>Present host family</b>			<b>Phone</b>
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Destination</b>		<b>Destination contact ph</b>	
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Suburb</b>		<b>State:</b>	<b>Post Code:</b>
<b>When are you leaving?</b>		<b>When are you returning</b>	
<b>How are you travelling (car, train?)</b>			
<b>With Whom?</b>			
<b>If not host family who are you travelling with?</b>			
<b>Address</b>			
<b>If travelling alone who will see you off?</b>			
<b>If Travelling alone who will meet you?</b>			
<b>PERMISSION</b>			
<b>Club Counsellor's Name</b>			
<b>Club Counsellor's Signature</b>			
<b>Host Parents name</b>			
<b>Host Parents Signature</b>			