



## ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

The Board of Directors of Rotary International have taken some very important decisions regarding Rotary Youth Exchange. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board have made several important decisions to limit or suspend Rotary activities that require travel or in-person meetings, including meetings of the Board and Trustees, Institutes, and appointment of President's Representatives. They also acknowledged that student safety is Rotary's top priority and as such requested the general secretary to prepare a risk assessment for conducting Rotary Youth Exchange and continue to monitor the uncertainty related to COVID-19 globally, especially as it relates to international travel, school delays and closures, and the ongoing or increasing risk of infection.

**Please review the following decisions carefully and share with anyone involved in Rotary Youth Exchange in your district.**

### ***DECISION:*** The Board

in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, agrees that the health and safety of all participants in Rotary programs is of paramount importance and with this in mind adopts the following guidance specific to Rotary Youth Exchange, subject to review by the Board on an on-going basis:

1. All districts are strongly encouraged to arrange for the return of students currently on exchange in countries that are or may become impacted by COVID-19 as soon as it is determined to be possible and safe to do so after consulting travel advisories and guidelines issued by their embassies or consular offices, international public health agencies like the World Health Organization, and local health authorities for the latest and most relevant information.
2. Districts are strongly encouraged to voluntarily suspend long-term Rotary Youth Exchange in the 2020-21 Rotary year, especially where the district cannot reasonably assess the risks related to COVID-19 and/or does not already have an emergency risk management plan in place.
3. Districts may not conduct long-term or short-term Rotary Youth Exchange through 30 June 2021, and before administering exchanges must follow additional safety measures, including:
  - Districts must be certified;
  - Travel must be permitted between countries, and the administration of the exchange must not be in conflict with the host and/or sending district's

government's or government health authority's recommendations for travel or student exchange activity;

- All parties (sending and host districts and parents/legal guardians) must agree in writing to a procedure detailing how decisions for terminating an exchange and repatriating a student will be made and carried out in the event the virus resurges and poses risk to student safety or volunteers at any point during the exchange;
- All parties (sending and host districts and parents/legal guardians) must agree in writing to a plan outlining who shall assume financial responsibility for covering costs or reimbursements associated with cancelling an exchange early, including but not limited to flight/travel rebooking fees, emergency repatriation, tour cancellations, program fees, etc.;
- Districts must have a crisis management plan in place that includes specific provisions related to health emergencies and disease outbreaks (i.e. COVID-19), and incorporates the following:
  - The crisis management plan must be reviewed and/or developed in consultation with a local health authority;
  - Each district must have procedures to monitor health and safety developments related to COVID-19, such as travel restrictions and quarantine measures impacting both inbound and outbound students;
  - A comprehensive communications plan to:
    - 1) ensure consistent communication between volunteers, students and parents, host families, and RI about important developments related to COVID-19, and
    - 2) allows program leaders to quickly locate and communicate with all parties in the event of an emergency;
  - A procedure for repatriating students or ensuring their safety in the event quarantine measures or travel restrictions are implemented during an exchange;
- The district must be able to ensure students can remain in the country legally under valid visas and without disruption to student travel insurance coverage should new travel restrictions prohibit students from returning home as expected;
- Districts must be able to provide proper medical care in the event a student contracts the virus or falls ill;
- Districts must have a temporary backup host family willing to host each inbound student, regardless of the student's given health status or local stay-at-home orders, should an immediate move be necessary;
- For long-term exchanges, students must be enrolled in a school that is in session and operating normally upon arrival in the host district; and
- For long-term exchanges, districts must report the following information to Rotary International prior to any student travel, and any updates to the following information are communicated to RI within 48 hours:
  - Participant full name, age, sex, and contact information (email and/or telephone number)

- Participant's parent/guardian full name and contact information (email and telephone number)
- Participant's parent/guardian signed consent form, including acknowledgement that personally identifying information will be reported to Rotary International in accordance with Rotary's data privacy policies and other data privacy regulations, such as the General Data Privacy Regulations (GDPR)
- Sending district and hosting district numbers
- Host family full name and contact information (email and/or telephone number and physical address)
- Start date and end date

5. Consistent with Rotary International's youth protection policies for unauthorized exchange activity, any district found to be participating in any exchange activity contrary to this guidance that puts students at risk shall have their certification to participate in Rotary Youth Exchange suspended for a period of two consecutive years.

6. The general secretary shall develop a mechanism to collect and store program participant data and contact information as deemed necessary to support the administration of Rotary Youth Exchange consistent with Rotary's data privacy policies and other data privacy regulations, such as the General Data Privacy Regulations (GDPR).

7. Districts are strongly encouraged to keep young people that would have otherwise participated in Rotary Youth Exchange engaged alternatively through virtual (online only) exchanges or other Rotary programs such as Interact, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA), or plan for a Rotary Youth Exchange or New Generations Service Exchange during the following Rotary year.