



Travel for inbound students is a privilege, not a right.

The Rotary Youth Exchange Program is a cultural and educational exchange, it is not a tourist experience. Students are expected to learn the language, culture, and customs of their host community and to become active members of their host families, school, sports teams, and Rotary club. Travel is not permitted when it interferes with the activities of the host school, the host family, the host Rotary club or the District. The primary responsibility of Rotary is to keep our students safe. It is important that all program responsible adults (host family, YEO, chairperson) know where the students are, who they are with, and what activities they are involved in. All travel must be requested by the inbound student through an approval process. Host parents, YEOs or counsellors can choose to deny any travel requests if there are concerns about the safety and security of the student and/or there are behaviour and attitude concerns.

When a YEO is unavailable, a counsellor may provide approval for travel.

Personal Travel

Students may have opportunities to travel with Rotarians, host families, school friends, and occasionally natural parents. Students are permitted up to ten (10) days of personal travel per exchange year. Students must decide how they wish to use their allowance and track remaining travel days on their own (the District also tracks the days used in the student database).

Travel with School

Students are expected to actively participate in school, complete homework, and submit assignments for evaluation (grades) on time. Students who fail to show active participation in school are not permitted to travel. Students are required to ask their teachers before their planned travel for homework and assignments they will miss while away. Further, students will make arrangements with teachers to make up or schedule tests and exams missed.

Travel with school classes or school groups is not considered personal travel and with good behaviour and participation, should be approved. The student must obtain signed permission from the Host Family, YEO (or counsellor), and chairperson at least seven (7) days prior to the travel date. The exchange student's natural parents may be required to pay for school travel.

Travel with a Host Family

There is an expectation that a student becomes an active part of a host family. The student may be asked to travel with the family. Travel within the geographic boundaries of District 5060 does not require chairperson approval but does require that the student complete and submit a *Travel Request Form* prior to the trip. The YEO (or counsellor) must be aware at all times if a student is travelling and with whom.

If the host family is traveling beyond the borders of the District, the student must obtain additional permission and a signature from the chairperson at least seven (7) days prior to the travel date.

The District suggests that students who do travel with host families contribute financially to their travels. Travel which affects school attendance is considered "personal travel" and will count toward the student's ten (10) day allowance.

Travel with a Rotarian, Responsible Adult or Friend's Family

Students who are invited on day trips (not overnight) with Rotarians, vetted adults, and families of friends within 100km of their host home are not required to complete a *Travel Request Form* - though an email must be sent to the YEO (or counsellor) detailing who (including contact details), what, where, when, and why. The YEO (or counsellor) must have an opportunity to review, ask questions, and accept or reject the day trip plans.

All overnight travel, not with the current host family, must be approved by the District Chairperson. The regular *Travel Request Form* must be completed and circulated for signatures. Students will be permitted to travel on overnight trips if the supervising adult is a Rotarian or a vetted adult (such as a friend's parent who has had a criminal record check) or an adult leading a school group such as a teacher or coach (someone who must have had a criminal records check for working with youth and vulnerable people).

If the student is traveling with a friend's parent(s) and they have not been vetted, planning at least fourteen (14) days in advance is strongly suggested as a criminal records check will be required. The parent(s) will be onboarded to the Youth Exchange Program as a "volunteer".

The student must obtain permission and a signature from the chairperson at least seven (7) days prior to the overnight travel date.

Traveling Alone

Occasionally, students are invited to meet vetted adults or other exchange students from the District and students may be required to travel alone. This is allowed with chairperson approval and on a case by case basis.

Cross Border Travel

For the 2026-2027 exchange year, students will be permitted to cross international borders. Students must have the required documentation for international travel between the US and Canada.

Organized Non-Rotary Group Travel - USA ONLY

Students in the United States may have an opportunity to pay for a for-profit trip to Hawaii or New York provided by *Belo USA Travel*. However, no travel will be permitted if it conflicts with mandatory district or club activities.

Organized Group Travel - Canada ONLY

Students in Canada may have an opportunity to participate in a Rotary lead trip to Central Canada. The trip cost will be the responsibility of the exchange student and will be scheduled so that it does not conflict with mandatory district activities.

Travel Rules Checklist

- ☐ Inbound Student has completed the *Travel Request Form*
- ☐ Student has obtained current host family and club YEO (or counsellor) permission and signatures
- ☐ Student has determined if a chairperson signature is required and submits request
- ☐ Student submits the Travel Request Form to: youthexchangechair@rotary5060.org



- ☐ Student has sufficient funds for the travel
- ☐ Student does not deviate from the travel plans (travel is restricted to the approved form)

Travel & Visitation with Natural Parents

The District 5060 Youth Exchange program **strongly discourages** parents visiting exchange students. However, with prior written approval at least thirty (30) days in advance, immediate families may be welcomed by the Host Club. Written approval is required from the Host Club (both the YEO or Counsellor and the Club President) and the District Chairperson.

Family visits and in-country family travel are only permitted between 1 April 2027 and 25 June 2027 and cannot interfere with mandatory school or Rotary activities and events. All rules of this travel policy apply to family visits.

Visitation from friends, extended family or students traveling to visit extended family is not permitted.

Emergency Travel Home

On rare occasions, students are required to travel home to deal with family emergencies (serious injury or death of a family member, for example). This is permissible and students can return back to their host country for such emergencies; however, the *Travel Request Form* must still be completed. The student or YEO should contact the chairperson by phone to expedite the approval process. This type of travel is not included in the personal travel days allowance.

Students hosted in the United States may encounter visa issues on their return to the USA. The District will do its best to support the returning student from their emergency trip home (with documentation supporting the purpose of the student's leave) to have the student re-enter the country; however, neither Rotary nor the District can guarantee the US Department of State will not cancel the student's visa on their initial departure home or at the time of the student's return.

Consequences of Policy Violation

Because the student's host YEO and the District are responsible for the student's care and custody while in North America, violating any of this policy would result in an early termination of the exchange program ("red card") and a quick return home.

Students and their natural families are **strongly** encouraged to never purchase travel tickets or make other financial commitments for travel without **first obtaining** the necessary permission(s) of the Host Club, the Host Family, and the District. District 5060 Youth Exchange will not be responsible for any costs associated with cancelled or modified travel arrangements.

Returning Home

All students must depart for their home country on or before 7 July 2027 and must take the most direct route reasonably possible.

Students are not permitted to travel home with natural parents and should leave from the same port of entry. There should be no expectation of a host bringing a student to a departure airport different from the one the student arrived at. No diverted or additional travel is allowed enroute home.

Signatures

The student and parent(s) agree to the Inbound Travel Policy and understand the policy and the consequences of not following the policy. The student confirms that he/she is responsible for obtaining the necessary permission and approval prior to all travel.

Student Name:	Date:	Signature:
Parent* Name:	Date:	Signature:

*Only one parent or guardian is required to sign this policy.