

Guidelines for Host Parents and Families

INTRODUCTION

Acting as a host to an overseas student can be an extremely rewarding experience for a family, giving it the opportunity to learn about the country from which the student comes as well as sharing the day to day experiences of the student during his/her stay in Australia.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOST PARENTS

Hosting an overseas student presents important obligations. The Host Parent must :-

1. Care for the student and look after his/her well being in the same way as if the student was one of the Host Parents' own sons or daughters.
2. Provide room and board for the student and include him/her in all the family activities.
3. Monitor the student's school and leisure activities, ensuring that problems are recognised and minimised.

It is desirable for the student to have a separate room of his/her own, or alternatively, to share a room with someone in his/her own age group.

Host Parents :

- a. Need not have children of similar age and sex as to that of the student. Many a successful hosting has occurred with families who have had young children, or no children.
- b. Need not be a Rotarian, however, it is essential for non-Rotary Host Parents to have been accessed and endorsed by the Host Rotary Club.

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's rules and wishes.

Host Parents should expect the student to conform to their supervision, but to no greater extent than they expect of their own children. Host Parents should maintain a two-way communication between themselves and the student. Firm but sympathetic understanding and loving control from the Host Parents should lead to a hosting which is both successful and rewarding - and which will also happily add a son or daughter to the family.

COUNSELLOR

The Host Rotary Club will appoint a Counsellor to look after the student's interest for the entire period of the Exchange. The Counsellor is virtually the student's guardian and the student should be encouraged to consult with the Counsellor on any problem that may arise and which requires help. The Counsellor is also available to assist Host Families with any problem they may encounter in hosting the student.

STUDENT NOT A GUEST

It is most important that the Host Family does not treat the student as a special or honoured guest. The value of the Programme centres on the student being "one of the family" and not receiving any special favours or treatment. The student should contribute to the family life by undertaking normal chores. Similarly, the student should not address the Host Parents as Mr and Mrs, but as "Mum" and "Dad" or some other informal title. To save any embarrassment, this matter should be resolved as soon as the student arrives in the family - refer to the Question sheet.

HOUSEHOLD CHORES

The host student should assist with the household chores - making one's bed, keeping his/her room tidy, setting and cleaning away the meal table, assisting with the meal dishes etc.

Students are not unpaid home help or live-in baby sitters, but on the other hand, they should not be excluded from household work - a correct balance should be established.

DISCIPLINE

The student is expected to adapt to the supervision and discipline of the Host Family - the family does not have to adapt to the student.

Any sign of reluctance or unwillingness on the student's part to accept this requirement should be brought to the attention of the Counsellor, who should then clarify the point with the student. It is preferable that such a ruling comes from a third party (i.e. the Counsellor) rather than from the Host Parents. Problems can arise unless the student clearly understands that he/she is expected to conform to host country conditions. At the same time, however, Host Families should be aware of the problems of adapting and be understanding of the student.

RELIGION

Religion seldom poses serious problems. Most usually accompany the Host Families to their church even where religions differ, but the issue should not be forced. If the student wishes to follow his/her own religion, the Host Family should respect the student's wish and be supportive in this respect.

ALCOHOL

The consumption of alcohol can present a problem in two ways :-

- a. A student who has been accustomed to consuming liquor at home may be placed with a teetotal family. In such a case, the student must respect the wishes of that family.
- b. A student from a teetotal home may be hosted by a family where alcoholic drinks are regularly consumed. The Host Family should respect the beliefs/practices of the student and make no attempt to induce him/her to partake of alcoholic drinks.

Students are not permitted to consume alcohol in public places.

DRUGS

The possession and/or consumption of illicit drugs are a breach of the laws of Australia and as such are strictly prohibited under the Programme.

Any student breaking this rule will be immediately expelled from the programme and repatriated.

If Host Parents suspect that a student in their care is taking drugs they should immediately report their suspicions to the Counsellor who in turn should contact the District Committee and the Host Club President.

DRIVING

Whilst on exchange, the student is specifically forbidden to drive any form of motorised vehicle, which has to be registered/licensed and/or the driving of, which requires a license. Many legal problems can arise should a student be driving such a vehicle and becomes involved in an accident. For safety reasons, students are not permitted to drive farm tractors. Violation of these rules can lead to the students being removed from the Programme and returned home.

ROMANCE

The Youth Exchange Programme rules state that students should not become romantically involved with members of the opposite sex. This involves human relations and is not easy to enforce, but if Host Parents consider that such a relationship is developing, they should discuss the matter with the student and the student's Counsellor. It is a difficult matter, but the rule is sound, because a student romantically involved with another person centres all his/her attention and interest on that person to the exclusion of the broad aspects of the Youth Exchange Programme.