
Who needs Host Families?

Host families are needed for LTEP, STEP and possibly for Inbound Camps & Tours but not for Outbound Camps & Tours.

LTE students should have two or preferably three host families during their exchange.

The Criteria for Selecting Host Families

There are two aspects to consider – the home itself and the disposition and personality of the applicants. Of these the most significant is the home. If the accommodation does not allow sufficient space or privacy for the student or the condition is such that the interviewer would not wish to live there, then all that follows here becomes irrelevant.

The Most Effective Host Families are:

caring and respectful with each other

curious about different activities and places outside the home and interested in a variety of topics.

flexible (able to adapt to having someone new in the home).

good humoured and able to put a problem or situation into perspective.

patient and willing to work through common misunderstandings.

They may have:

similar interests, hobbies, sporting and cultural activities,

siblings of a similar age,

compatible personalities and values.

Who could be Host Families?

In **STEP Family to Family** the home hosting is done by the parents of the students paired in the exchange. It is important to consider the parents to be as much a part of the interview process as the student and the potential living conditions into which the inbound student would be placed. All three must 'pass' the test.

The parents of potential STEP students need to be interviewed for hosting on the same occasion as the student interview, if possible, as a decision to go ahead will only be possible if both student and parents are suitable. Be aware, however, that the 'parents' who are at an interview for the benefit of the student may not be family who would be hosting the inbound student – maybe a step parent is involved. It might not be possible in these circumstances to conduct both interviews at the same time.

It is not a foregone conclusion that parents of potential outbound STEP students are suitable to host. Additionally the house will be under scrutiny and you should ask to see where an inbound student would sleep.

If you would not be happy for your child or grandchild to be hosted by the family or you have any doubts, whether it be welfare, safety or other concerns, the student's application must be turned down.

See also *OB3(A): The Student Interview Support Pack - All Programmes*.

For LTEP it is very common for the family of an Outbound student to host the reciprocal Inbound student for part of the time but there is absolutely no obligation upon anyone that this should happen. However, they can be asked to find families from within their community and may be given *IB4. Potential Host Families Form for LTEP* so that they can collect and submit the contact details of anyone they think is suitable. There is further discussion on interviewing potential LTEP Host Parents.

Hosting for Inbound C&T is rather more random but it is most likely to be done by Rotary families connected with the Club(s) running the Camp. Additionally it is always worth asking the parents of local students who have been on a Camp themselves. They are often willing to give back for the great experience that their son or daughter has had. Unlike the other programmes C&T students are often hosted in pairs.

Hosts do not need to be Rotary families but Rotarians may become interested after a YE student visits the club or if an appeal is made at a Partner's meeting.

Rotarians may be able to recommend a suitably qualified non-Rotary family.

They could be families within the Family of Rotary – parents of Interact, Rotaract etc.

Families of potential Youth Exchange students might be willing to host.

ROTEX might have contacts who could be good hosts, maybe even their own parents.

Older ROTEX might be in the position to be host parents.

There is no bar on single parent families or single hosts but it would generally be advisable for the parent to be the same gender as the student.

Interview Questions for Potential LTEP Host Families

The LTEP Host Family has a significant influence over the success of an exchange. Normally over a year the student will stay with up to three different families so that they gain a variety of experiences within the culture of the country in which they are living. It is important to arrive at a high level of compatibility between the student and the hosts so it is important to get to know them. Most families who host have some connection with Rotary or the programme. Their son or daughter may be on exchange and are providing the empty bed, or else the family are grateful to Rotary for an experience that one of their youngsters has had previously. Even so, it is necessary for them to be interviewed and assessed in their own right and in respect to a new student

The following questions could form the basis of an interview with potential host families:

-Why is the family interested in hosting an exchange family?

-What experience (eg travel abroad, professional experience, knowledge of foreign languages) do the family members have with different cultures?

-How would the family incorporate an exchange student into their daily life? What chores would be assigned to the student? What additional activities would the family plan to help a young person

from abroad get to know their host country and community better?

-How would the host parents handle difficult situations with a student? Would they provide appropriate supervision and take on parental responsibility to ensure the student's well-being?

How would they handle language and communication challenges, discipline and emotional issues, and culture shock?

-Is the family committed to attending Orientation and training for host families and facilitating

-What is the general condition of the home (clean, adequate heat and light, etc.)? Would you want your child or grandchild living in this home? Does the family have the necessary resources to host a student (space, time, good health)?

-What are the planned sleeping arrangements for the student? (The student must have his or her own bed. If the student must share a room, it must be with a child of the same gender, preferably of similar age).

-How will the student get to school and activities?