

Orientation is the process of preparing students and parents for an exchange. The Certification Renewal document describes the provision of Orientation by districts and clubs for all students as mandatory. On the Application Form students and parents promise to attend all orientation sessions and the DYEEOs and Clubs in both Sending and Receiving districts commit to providing them.

Orientation Events are very enjoyable occasions but they are considerably more than that. They bring together students who up to that point thought they were embarking on Youth Exchange on their own. They also enable past Youth Exchange students (ROTEX) to pass on their own experience and advice – this kills two birds with one stone as it keeps ROTEX in touch with Rotary as well. Other Rotarians should be asked to attend, especially District and Club Officers, enabling them to learn more about Youth Exchange and lend support to their students. This in turn helps to bond the students to Rotary. It is also an opportunity to invite the Mayor and other civic and community officials and the local Press.

And – of course, there are the photo opportunities.

The circumstances in which such sessions take place are variable. In the past outbound students used to meet in one central location in England for a residential weekend which included a session near the end for parents to attend. This was mainly for Long Term Exchange students who benefit from the extra time to explore issues which they are likely to encounter during their year abroad.

With mainly STEP and C&T students for whom to cater Orientation events are either one whole day or a half day long and take place in different locations where students from a number of districts may conveniently assemble. This is cost and time effective as well as providing the students with an opportunity to meet others. It provides scope for different ways of presenting the subject matter and there is the opportunity to widen the range of expertise and experience to a larger group.

Parents are also expected to participate in part of the event and it is an opportunity to hold a training session for STEP parents who will also be Host Families for the inbound student, and also for Counsellors.

Orientation events are paid for by parents, covering the cost of the venue (if applicable), meals and refreshments during the event.

It is essential that the date for Orientation shall be fixed early enough for students, parents and CYEOs to put it into their diaries.

The Content of an Outbound Orientation Event

The absolute minimum requirements of the Orientation process as set out by RI in the Certification Renewal Document are stated below:

At orientation participants are informed about the rules, procedures and expectations associated with the Youth Exchange program and includes a briefing about the local Rotary club and its activities.

The sending club or district provides abuse prevention and awareness training for both students and parents or legal guardians.

In practice these Rotary requirements do not come close to the list of questions in the minds of students and parents so use this opportunity to cover as much as possible.

In particular Orientation Day is the best occasion on which to reinforce for all the students and their parents the Rotary International Travel Insurance requirements, *IF4(O): Insurance for Outbound Students*. This information should already have been given to students in *OB3C/S/L: Applicant's Guide* at the beginning of the application process.

It is also an opportune time to print off and hand out *CP7(O): Outbound YE Student Photography & Video Consent Form* and have it signed by parents and students.

Also to be printed off and given to outbound students is the document *OB6D: Officers in the Sending District – Admin Year and Exchange Year*. ([download here](#)) The full information may not be available at Orientation but it is important that the student has it to take away.

An Example of an Orientation Programme

OB6A: Orientation Presentation, ([download here](#),) has been used as the basis of several different orientation events. It is not specific to any one YE exchange programme and so is very adaptable to different needs. It consists of a powerpoint presentation whose slides structure a day from 10am until about 4pm covering different aspects of the exchanges. The students may be preparing for a mixture of all four Youth Exchange programmes and sitting among them are ROTEX and Rotarians who at every stage pitch in their advice and observations. The students each have a printout of the slides with space to make notes, *OB6A: Print Out for Powerpoint Presentation* ([download here](#).) Topics are dealt with first generally and then additional variations are highlighted by those present.

The morning session for students on 'Personal Safety' uses materials from the Suzy Lamplough Trust - 'Secondary School Quiz,' and an afternoon session with parents on 'Dealing with Abuse', using workshop exercises, such as *OB6B: Cultural Considerations* ([download here](#)) and *OB6C: Abuse and Harassment Facts*, ([download here](#)).

They originate from *RI 'Abuse and Harassment Prevention Training Manual'*, an RI publication which maybe downloaded from *PM1: Miscellaneous Publications*.

There are ample refreshment breaks for networking as well as a meal and the students exchange contact details.

How long is needed for the last item, the Open Forum, is a measure of how exhaustively the subject has been explored and the extent to which earlier questions have had satisfactory answers.

No commentary has been scripted – it grows organically according to the needs of those who are present. The presentation may be used as it is or adapted with a commentary added, or it could serve merely as a checklist of what to cover. Specialist knowledge may be found elsewhere in the Manual.