

The Counsellor is there to ensure that in the event of any problems the inbound student and the host family have a contact who will act swiftly. Counsellors should be familiar with the RIBI Safeguarding Policy and the action to be taken in the event of discovery of abuse or harassment to the inbound student. Listed below are some important points to help Counsellors in their task:

Before the arrival of the student:

- Establish early contact by e-mail or letter with both the student and his or her parents.
- Explain to them the role of the Counsellor and that if the student has any problems or concerns the Counsellor will take whatever action necessary to swiftly deal with the matter
- Obtain details of the student's anticipated date and time of arrival.
- The Counsellor must introduce themselves to the host family preferably by a visit to the home where the inbound student will be staying. The Counsellor must leave contact details with the host parents.
- The Counsellor should check that the host have a viable programme of activities arranged for the student.
- Check that the student has adequate insurance. If there is any doubt then contact Club or District Youth Exchange Office (DYEO). (*See IF5:Travel Insurance for Students*).
- Contact the student and family before the student leaves home to check that there are no medical issues which have arisen recently or which have not been disclosed. Report any changes to the CYEO, the DYEO and the host family.

On the student's arrival in the country the Counsellor should:

- With the first host parents and/or members of the host Rotary Club, welcome the student at the arrival port. If this is not possible the Counsellor should arrange for another member of the Club to do so.
- Check that the student's passport and visa (if appropriate) is in order and will not expire during their exchange. The student should retain the passport.
- Ensure that the student knows how to make contact and they have contact phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses. Explain to the student that they should not be afraid to make contact if they have any concerns.
- Check that the student has returned all documents from his/her Student Preparation Pack which the student and parents were asked to sign and that they are now in the student's Inbound Student Records Folder.
- The student should at least have a local SIM card in a mobile phone with a UK phone number which should be given to the Counsellor, the host parents, the District YEO and the Club YEO.

During the student's time in this country the Counsellor should:

- Contact host parents at least once to make sure that the visit is proceeding well and that there are no problems.
- Contact the student at least once to make sure that the visit is proceeding well and that there are no problems.

If the Counsellor has any concerns about the student s/he should complete *CP10D: Record of Concerns form* which is downloadable from *CP10: Dealing with Incidents* and return it quickly to the DYEO.

Problems may arise in a number of ways:

It sometimes happens that the Counsellor and the student cannot get along. If this happens then the counsellor should step aside in favour of another where there can be a happier relationship. The Counsellor should not take this as an indication of inefficiency as there can be times when personalities clash for no apparent reason.

There may also be a problem between a student and a host family. If this occurs then the Counsellor should have another host family on standby or take on the hosting responsibility until the cause of the problem is established and the difficulty resolved.

If there is a return leg of the exchange where the problem is likely to continue then it is important that the sponsor Club YEO and Counsellor are kept informed. The inbound student's parents should also be kept fully informed.

If a student breaks the rules of the programme then the Club should be prepared to apply the sanction of sending the student home. Before taking the final decision for such action a full explanation of the circumstances should be discussed with the Host Club President, the District Youth Exchange Officer and the District Governor. Early returns should be managed delicately and always with the full knowledge of the sponsoring District and/or Club.

This purpose of this document is to help Counsellors understand how they can fulfill their role, and to make sense of the information which they will receive.

This information will be provided in electronic form in a Dropbox Folder which is shared with the Counsellor. It covers three areas:

1. Materials relevant to the role of Counsellor:

S7A. The Counsellor's Preparation Pack for STEP (Family to Family): ([downloadable from here](#))

- Jargon & Abbreviations in Youth Exchange
- Overview of Youth Exchange for Counsellors & Host Families
- The Role of the Counsellor for STEP
- Record of Concern – for Hosts, Counsellors etc.

2. Copies of Orientation Materials sent by the DYEO to the Inbound student (for Counsellor information and action where indicated below:

S10A. Preparation Pack for Inbound STEP Students (sent before the student leaves home):

- Preparation & What to Bring - Advice for Inbound STEP Students
- ** Rules & Behaviour Guidelines for Inbound STEP Students
- **Permission to Travel within RIBI
- **Photography & Video Consent Form
- Insurance for Inbound Students
- Travel Insurance for Students

S10B. Welcome Pack for Inbound STEP Students (given to the student when they arrive):

- Emergency Contact Information
- Contacts list
- Rotary information
- Advice for Inbound STEP students
- Coping with Culture Shock
- Student Incident Report

3. Material destined for Retention and Storage

R4A. The Inbound Student Records Folder

Collects all the documentation relating to the student, including the application form and anything medical etc for reference and is stored indefinitely after the Exchange.

Students will return the documents marked **signed by themselves and their parents. Counsellors are asked to chase and upload them into the student's Records Folder.

The operative word here is *Family*, and we ask you to help your exchange student become a part of your family during the period that he or she lives with you. That means treating this young person as you would your own son or daughter, not as a guest, and exercising all of the [parental responsibilities and authorities](#) you would for your own child. While many factors will influence to what extent you may need to focus on this role, such as your own experience as a host parent, ages of your own children, here are some suggestions that previous host parents have provided to us:

[Establish a clear understanding of expectations](#) soon after your student arrives. The document [IB9: Interactive First Night Questions](#) that we provide to both students and host parents that cover most of the topics that will help define those expectations. Cultural differences as well as personality differences often lead to misunderstandings unless these topics are discussed and clarified. Many students will use the questions as a “check-off list” to make sure nothing has been overlooked during the first few days; we suggest that host parents also review this list for any topics that are important to them.

[Homesickness](#) can occur at any time in an exchange. Be prepared to help your student recover from homesickness. This can take many forms, from simply general sadness to wishing to stay in his or her room alone. It is perfectly normal for Exchange students to have bad days and experience homesickness. If you are sensitive to this, you will be able to reassure your student that their reactions are perfectly normal. Help them to keep busy and involved. These feelings will pass. Suggest to them that they pour out their frustrations in a letter home (often saying that they want to return home immediately), suggest that they put it away for a couple of days, re-read it, and only then send it - if it applies. Most times the letter will be deleted.

[Understand “culture shock”, and help your student learn *our* culture.](#) The sheet entitled [S14 - Coping With Culture Shock](#) may help you understand some of the feelings your student may experience as a result of the differences between our culture and the one they have known since birth.

Other Information Needed By Host Parents

Medical Matters

Consult with the Student Counsellor about registering the student with a doctor. As host parents, you are asked to make arrangements for medical treatment when necessary, as well as to determine when medical treatment is called for. Your student may be reluctant to discuss medical problems initially, and their own culture, or medical system at home, may be quite different than that which we have, so you may need to patiently ask questions and offer suggestions when you observe conditions that may be medically - based. Many Rotary clubs have arrangements with local medical-services providers (often a member of the Rotary club), and you should be apprised of these arrangements by the Rotary YEO or before a medical problem arises.

[It is always advisable to inform the host Rotary club of any medical treatment or medical problems that have occurred so that information is made available to subsequent host families. Serious illnesses or injuries should be made known to the District YE Chair as soon as possible.](#)

[Lastly, if there are questions or problems.....](#)

While there is no way we or you can guarantee that every Exchange student and host parent will enjoy a completely successful exchange, we do our best to help them, and you, and the percentage of unsuccessful exchanges is very small. Most problems that do occur can be taken care of satisfactorily *if addressed early*, before they become too big to handle.

IF YOU DO HAVE A CONCERN, AND NEED TO DISCUSS SOMETHING, please contact the local Rotary Club Youth Exchange Officer or the student's Counsellor. If he or she is not available, please contact a member of the District YE Committee. They will get in touch with the student, and if appropriate, the counterpart in the sponsoring district for further information and help, if needed.

Please do not dismiss non-compliance with our rules, or try to solve major problems yourself. Because this is an international program, there may be cultural and/or Rotary subtleties of which you are unaware, and there may also be long-range implications affecting future exchanges. Please call and give us the opportunity to show you that we are as concerned about the exchange student and the host family and club as you are. We can't help you or the student, if we don't know that there is a problem.

So that you can communicate your concerns there is a form *CP10D: Record of Concerns – a form for CYEOs, the Counsellor and the Host Family* available for download from your student's Inbound Student Folder. This is on Dropbox and will have been shared with you by the DYEO. Once completed it should be sent to the DYEO without delay

While much of this document addresses rules, regulations, and "dealing with problems", we want you to know that being a host parent is also a lot of fun and full of rewards. You will get to know, and love, someone from another country, another culture, and another part of the world. You will have the opportunity, albeit short, to watch, and help shape, the development and maturity of a young person. You will have opportunities to learn of another culture yourself, and in the process of sharing our culture and our country with this student, gain knowledge and understanding for you and your family, and at the end of the exchange, you will have added to your family a son or daughter who may live in a "foreign" country the rest of their life, but will always be a part of **your** family.

The purpose of this document is to help host families understand how they can fulfill their role, and to make sense of the information which they will receive.

This information will be provided by the DYEO in electronic form in a Dropbox Folder to be shared with the Host parents. It covers three areas:

1. Materials relevant to the role of Host Family:

S9A. The Host Family Preparation Pack for STEP (Family to Family): ([downloadable from here](#)).

- Jargon & Abbreviations in Youth Exchange
- Overview of Youth Exchange for Counsellors & Host Families
- The Role of the Host Family for STEP
- Interactive First Night Questions
- Record of Concern – for Hosts, Counsellors etc.

2. Copies of Orientation Materials sent by the DYEO to the Inbound Student (for Host Information only):

(i) S10A. Preparation Pack for Inbound STEP Students (sent before the student leaves home):

- Preparation & What to Bring - Advice for Inbound STEP Students
- ** Rules & Behaviour Guidelines for Inbound STEP Students
- **Permission to Travel within RIBI
- **Photography & Video Consent Form
- Insurance for Inbound Students
- Travel Insurance for Students

(** indicates documents which the student & parents are required to sign and return.)

(ii) S10B. Welcome Pack for Inbound STEP Students (given to the student when they arrive):

- Emergency Contact Information
- Contacts list
- Rotary information
- Advice for inbound STEP students
- Coping with Culture Shock
- Student Incident Report

3. Materials relevant to the student for Host Family information, to which Hosts may add.

R4A. The Inbound Student Records Folder

contains all the documentation relating to the student, including the application form and anything medical etc for reference and is stored indefinitely after the Exchange.