



**EASTERN STATES
STUDENT EXCHANGE
District 7360**

***Host Family
Handbook***



www.exchangestudent.org

Updated July 2023

Host Family Handbook

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District 7360
Contact persons for Host Family

Club Counselor: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number _____

District Chair: **Kathy Krinks**
1961 Bumble Bee Dr.
Tyrone, PA 16686
814-684-2926
klk1@psu.edu

Outbound Coordinator: Mary Jane Smith
3632 Cold Spring Rd.
Huntingdon, PA 16652
814-599-4268
Mj1em1s@aol.com

Inbound Coordinator: Isaac Fisher
1100 W. Lynn St
Coal Township, PA 17866
570-492-5735
sach17866@yahoo.com

Dist. Student Protection Officer: Marci Pancio
534 Gerald St.
State College, PA 16801
814-880-6515
psumarce@gmail.com

District Governor 2023-2024: **Herb Smith**
12406 Honeysuckle Ln
Hagerstown, MD 21740
240-291-0097
hondaman21740@gmail.com

District 7360 Rotary Youth Exchange Tentative Calendar for Inbound Students

- September 9-11, 2023** **Inbound Orientation**, Shamokin, PA
Attendance is required for students.
Counselors or YEO must attend on Sunday.
- October 20-22, 2023** **District Conference** Gettysburg, PA
Attendance required for Inbound students for the weekend.
- December 1-3, 2023** **Outbound Interviews**, Location TBD
Attendance is required for Inbound Student.
Club counselors, YEOs, and District Committee are invited to participate.
- February 18, 2023** **Winter Picnic**, Location TBA
Attendance is required for both Inbound and Outbound students. Host families, Counselors, Parents, District Committee are invited to attend.
- March 10-12, 2023** **Outbound Orientation**, Location TBA
Attendance is required for both Inbound and Outbound students. Outbound Parents are expected to attend on Saturday.



United States Department of State

Dear Secondary School Student:

Welcome to the U.S. Department of State's Exchange Visitor Program and beginning one of the most important and exciting adventures of your life. Not only will you obtain an American high school education but will experience life as part of an American family. You will make friendships that will last a lifetime. You will have the opportunity to meet many Americans, as well as partake in family traditions and customs.

As an exchange student, never forget that you are part of a larger mission and vision. Like the thousands of students from around the world who have come before you since 1949, you will have the opportunity to share your language, culture and customs with your American host family, your American school, and the broader local community. Your participation in this exchange program fosters a greater understanding between our two countries and works towards peaceful relations throughout the world.

We want you to have a meaningful and successful experience. You will be living with a host family and attending a new school, both of which may have different rules and ways of life from what you are used to, so keeping an open mind will be very important to your success. Your goal should be to learn as much as you can about American customs, values, and culture and to build strong relationships with your host family, new classmates, and new friends.

Your U.S. sponsor is your first point of contact throughout your stay in the United States. Your sponsor is identified on your Form DS-2019, Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Program (J-1) Status. If you have any questions about your exchange program, if you need assistance of any kind while you are here, or if something just does not feel right to you, immediately contact your U.S. sponsor. It is your sponsor's responsibility to help you with any problems, needs, or concerns you may have. Your U.S. sponsor should have given you an emergency telephone contact number in your program orientation materials. This telephone number should be available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you have concerns and/or issues that your U.S. sponsor has not resolved, or you find you cannot reach your sponsor, please contact the Department of State through our J-1 Visa Emergency Helpline (1-866- 283-9090), which is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or by e-mail at JVisas@state.gov. Your sponsor and the Department of State are here to ensure your success and safety on the program.

We are pleased that you made the decision to be part of this amazing program. I hope you enjoy your stay in the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Elkon".

Nicole Elkon
Deputy Assistant
Secretary for
Private Sector
Exchange

GUIDELINES FOR HOST FAMILY INTRODUCTION

Acting as a host to an overseas student can be a tremendously rewarding experience for a family. However, it does also entail some important obligations. Here are some of the ground rules:

1. It is not essential that the Host be a Rotarian.
 2. The Host Family must undertake to supervise the school and leisure hour activities of the student as if he or she were their own son or daughter.
 3. They shall provide room and board and should include the student in all family activities.
 4. It is desirable for the student to have his/her own room or, alternatively, to share with someone of their own age group.
 5. It is not essential that the family have children of similar age and sex to the student being hosted.
- Many very successful hosting arrangements have taken place where there are only very young children-or none at all-in the family.

COUNSELOR The Host Rotary Club will appoint a Counselor who will act as a confidant to the students during their stay in America. The student is expected to consult the Counselor on any problems that may arise. The Counselor is also available to help the Host Families with any problems that they may encounter in hosting the student. Do not hesitate to consult the Counselor if problems of any kind arise.

STUDENT - NOT A GUEST It cannot be stressed too strongly that the student should not be treated as a special or honored guest by the family. The value of this Program centers on the acceptance by both students and hosts that the student will be "one of the family," not receiving any special favors or treatment and undertaking all the normal family chores. For this reason, it is desirable that the student address the Host Parents as "Mom" and "Dad" or some other informal title. They should never call you "Mr." or "Mrs."

HOUSEHOLD CHORES The students should most certainly make their own bed and keep their room tidy-very difficult for some-and assist with general household chores, such as setting and clearing away the table and doing dishes. Students might be expected to help with gardening and similar tasks. Some complaints have been received from students that they are being used as unpaid help or as constant babysitters. Others again have found that they are not allowed to join in with the normal household chores. The object is to strike the right balance and a guiding principle in these cases is to ask what would be expected from the host family's own children.

DISCIPLINE The student is expected to adapt to the supervision and discipline of the Host Family. Remember, the Host Family does not have to adapt to the student; rather the student must learn to adapt to the family. Any sign of reluctance or unwillingness on the student's part to accept this point of view should be brought to the attention of the Counselor, who should then clarify this point with the student. It is better that such a ruling come from a third party such as the Counselor, rather than from the Host Parents. Problems can arise unless the student clearly understands the fact that he or she is expected to conform to the Host Country conditions. At the same time, Host Families should be aware of the problems of adaptation and should be prepared to be flexible.

RELIGION Surprisingly this seldom poses serious problems. Most students are very flexible on attitudes and usually accompany the Host Family to their church even where religions differ. Host Families should not force the issue and if the student wishes to follow his/her own religion, every effort should be made to assist them in this respect.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES No drinking of alcoholic beverages is allowed!!

The 5 D's – NO DRIVING, DRINKING, DATING, DRUGS or DISFIGUREMENT

1. **Driving** -The rules of the Youth Exchange Program prohibit an exchange student from driving a motorized vehicle of any description during the period of the exchange. This includes cars, motorcycles, tractors, motorboats, aircraft, or any similar vehicle. The reason for this regulation is that there are many legal and/or insurance complications which can arise should a student be involved in an accident. For the same reasons students are also barred from activities such as hitchhiking, riding on a motorcycle or hang-gliding. This rule will be strictly enforced, and any violation could result in the student being sent home immediately.

2. **Drinking** – Alcoholic Beverages -No consumption of alcohol is allowed in District 7360. It is illegal for individuals to drink alcoholic beverages under the age of 21 in the United States.

3. **Dating** – Romantic Attachments - Students should not form any romantic attachments or "go steady" while on exchange. This is a good rule because if you "go steady" it can result in all your attention being centered on one person instead of meeting, and learning from, a wide group of people. You are encouraged to mix with as many groups of students at school as you can. Sometimes students also seek out the company of other exchange students as often as they can. For the same reason this is to be discouraged as it can diminish the benefits which you can derive from the Program. In addition, overt display of intimate physical behavior/affection of a sexual nature is not acceptable during their year of exchange in any public or private setting (host family, party). This can result in termination of your exchange. This behavior is also expressly prohibited as well for Outbounds in Training as it can result in termination of your candidacy for an exchange.

4. **Drugs** - You are not permitted to use drugs, except for valid medical reasons as prescribed by a physician. Violation of this rule will result in at least the immediate termination of your exchange.

5. Disfigurement - You are not permitted to get a tattoo or a body piercing during your exchange year. This includes (but is not limited to) piercing of the nose, eyebrow(s), tongue, lip(s), and cheeks. Another example of disfigurement is the extreme dyeing of the hair (purple, orange) as some cultures will not allow it in their schools.

FINANCE The Host Rotary Club will provide the student with a monthly allowance to cover the immediate incidentals. The student will have some additional funds of their own as well as a specified emergency fund under the control of the Counselor. The Host Family is not obliged to provide the student with spending money nor to finance clothing, school uniforms, travel, or other expenses (including telephone calls). However, if the student does not take lunch to school, then the host parents should provide them with lunch money-just as they would do for their own children.

MONEY PROBLEMS Some young people are better at handling money than others; some students are hopeless at budgeting and need some guidance if they are to live within their monthly allowance. Under the Youth Exchange Program rules, each student is required to establish an emergency fund which must be replenished, as required, during the year by the student's natural parents. The amount of this emergency fund will be specified by the District Committee from time to time and should not be expended on day-to-day items; it is there mainly for healthcare expenditures. It has been found that some supervision of these emergency funds is desirable. The best method has proved to be the establishment of a special bank account under the direction of the Rotary Counselor before a withdrawal can be made. This is an issue which should be discussed with the Counselor at the beginning of an exchange. Students should be discouraged from borrowing money and purchasing on Host Parents' accounts.

TRAVEL The Host Family is under no obligation to take the student on holiday or trips, but it will add enormously to the intrinsic value of the program if they are able to do so without financial embarrassment to themselves. Where they are not able to take students away during school holidays, they should make this clear to the Rotary Counselor, who should make alternative arrangements for the student. No special permission is required where a student accompanies a Host Family on a trip or holiday, unless outside the USA, but the Rotary Counselor must be advised. If the student makes a journey away from the Host Town, both the Host Parents and the Counselor must ensure that satisfactory permission to travel and hosting arrangements have been made. Traveling during school terms is discouraged and should be undertaken only under specific conditions which will be established by the Counselor and the Head of the school.

SCHOOLING The Youth Exchange Program rules require attendance at a high school. Usually, the Counselor will take care of the enrollment details and will arrange, together with the student, the optimum subject package, and educational materials. The Host Family's role is to supervise the day-to-day attendance of the students at school and to encourage them to participate fully in both the academic and extracurricular activities of the school. It is important to the success of the exchange that any problems which might arise from language difficulties be dealt with promptly.

HOMESICKNESS Every student experiences homesickness to some degree and the extent of this problem will depend on the student's own background and personality. Host Families should be appreciative of this fact and should expect the student to have some adjustment problems. Many students say that they feel there are times when they want privacy to cope with feelings of homesickness. If your student spends some time alone in his/her room, do not be alarmed-this is fairly normal. But if the student spends a lot of time alone, this could be a danger signal that all is not well. The student who is actively involved in the community will be less likely to suffer from adjustment problems and homesickness than the nonparticipant; therefore, do all you can to encourage your student to accept the opportunities available to become involved in the community.

CHANGE OF HOST FAMILIES Host Families should stay connected with the Hosting Rotary Club through the Counselor regarding hosting arrangements, so that all parties concerned are aware of and know well in advance exactly when each change of home is to take place. It would not be out of place for the current Host Family to meet with the next Host Family to discuss some of the student's habits, likes and dislikes. It can help bring about a smoother transition from one family to the next. As soon as a student is settled in, it is advisable for the new Host Parents to have a detailed discussion with the student and to lay down the house rules so that the student will know what is expected of him/her. Such a discussion can save some frustrations and resentments at a later date.

STUDENT EMERGENCY CARD An emergency card is to be carried on each exchange student's person during their exchange year. District 7360 will provide each student with three emergency cards (one for each host family). The information is to be kept current with each host family move. In addition to the student's and current host family's contact information, it includes contact information for the student's counselor, Club president, District chair, ESSEX Student Protection Officer and the US Department of State. The card and contact information are a requirement of Rotary International Youth Exchange rules and regulations.

TELEPHONE CALLS The abuse of the telephone by students is an area which causes many problems during the students stay with their Host Families. As soon as they move to a new Host Family, international calls should be on a "collect basis," the student must establish with that family the exact procedure to adopt with regard to the use and payment for all phone calls.

SHARED KNOWLEDGE One of the main purposes of the Youth Exchange Program is the exchange of knowledge on an international level. Your student is an ambassador for their country, so show an interest in that country and learn as much as possible about your student's home environment. In turn you are also an ambassador for your country by imparting knowledge about the USA's way of life to your student, so that he/she will be able to take back to their home country a picture of the USA that is as accurate as possible. This two-way exchange of ideas and information can be a very stimulating and rewarding adventure in international goodwill and understanding. By acting as a Host to an overseas student you are doing far more than providing bed and board for someone; you are taking that first very essential step toward world peace, by helping to break down fears, prejudices and misunderstandings which are based on ignorance.

CONCLUSION Finally, as Host Parents, you must accept the responsibility of being parents to your student in the same way as to your own child. The exchange is a two-way process, and you are the adults in this deal. You should be willing to go more than halfway-you should try to give an adult lead to the young person who cannot be expected to know your rules and wishes without being told. You should expect the student to conform to your rules and wishes in the same way as you do your own children, but to no greater extent. It is essential to establish and maintain effective two-way communications between yourselves and your student right from the beginning. The majority of problems with and for Exchange Students can be resolved by effective, firm, sympathetic understanding, and loving control from the Host Parents. You have the responsibility for success and your reward is great - you add a son or daughter to your family.

Student Protection Policy

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, 'Rotarian's spouses and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people ;they come into contact with and protect from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. (Source rotary International Board of Directors: November 2002, Mtg, Bd. Dec. 98: Amended by November 2006 Mtg. Bd. Dec. 72.

Rotary International is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Youth Exchange students and will not tolerate their abuse or harassment. All allegations of abuse or harassment will be taken seriously and must be managed within the guidelines provided. The safety and well-being of students is always the first priority.

If you are sexually or physically assaulted, abused or are accused of sexually or physically assaulting or abusing another person, shou should follow this procedure:

Reporting Procedure

1. **Report the situation immediately where you feel most comfortable:**
2. Local Host Club Youth Exchange Counselor, District Student Protection Officer, Essex Student Protection Officer, the chair or any member of the District Youth Exchange Committee, District Governor.
 - a. Essex Hotline: 1-866-683-0533
 - b. District 7360 Youth Exchange Chair: Kathy Krinks 814-684-2926
 - c. District Protection Officer: Marce Pancio: 814-880-6501
 - d. District Governor: Herb Smith: 240-291-0097
 - e. Essex Student Protection Officer: Ron Smith 215-896-6870
 - f. Department of State: jvisas@state.gov 866-283-9090

Your call will be received in a sensitive and confidential Manner.

Definitions

Sexual Abuse: Engaging in implicit or explicit sexual acts with a student or forcing or encouraging a student to engage in implicit or explicit sexual acts alone or with another person of any age, of the same or opposite sex. This includes but is not limited to:

- Non-Touching offenses
- Indecent exposure
- Exposing a child to sexual or pornographic material

Sexual Harassment: Refers to sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In some cases, sexual harassment precedes sexual abuse. It is a technique used by sexual predators to desensitize or groom their victims. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Sexual advances: sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments about one's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or drawings
- Sexual leering or whistling, any inappropriate physical contact such as brushing or touching, obscene language or gestures and suggestive or insulting comments.

First Days Discussion Topics

The following are suggested topics for discussion between host families and their exchange student during the first few days after arrival:

- Addressing the host parents, Mom, Dad, by first name? Agree on what is most comfortable for everyone.
- Bedroom - cleaning, stuff on walls, place to store luggage.
- Dirty clothes and laundry
- Shower times...use of hot water
- Bathroom and toiletries
- Mealtimes and normal hours of rising and bedtime.
- Chores and assistance with meals, table setting, clean up, etc.
- Availability of food and beverages at any time?????
- Family rules for going out at night, curfew, checking in if late.

- Having friends over to visit and overnight.
- Use of computer and electronic devices such as cell phones, especially as to the amount of time spent on them.
- Likes and dislikes as per food, music, etc.
- Religious practices
- Birthdays and holidays

- Anything else to create harmony and make the transition easier for both the student and the family.

GENERAL GUIDELINES CONCERNING TRAVEL

This is a cultural exchange NOT a travel exchange and students should not go into the program with the expectation of touring. The hosts (district, club, family) are under no obligation to provide or permit it. However, some travel through the generosity of the host club, individual Rotarians, host families is done. The students must follow the travel rules of the host district and under no circumstances make their own travel arrangements and then expect the host/district club to go along with it. Breaking this rule may result in being returned home.

A. Student must Obtain the following Permissions concerning any travel:

Over Night in District 7360 Without missed school days. Overnight stays with adult supervision by a host family member, Rotarian, school group, local church group must be approved by the host family who will inform the Counselor or Club YEO.

Outside D7360 Overnight with host family or any vetted Rotarian or school trip that may or may not involve missing school must be reviewed by the club or YEO. All other adults must be fully vetted through Rotary. No more than 3 days per trip with no more than 10 days of school missed per year.

Overnight outside of USA - Requires copy of travel visa AND DS-2019 40 days prior to anticipated travel. Approval granted by the District Chair and only approved if travel is with Host Family or vetted Rotarian.

Independent Travel Maximum 3 days and 2 nights.
Requires written approval from natural parents and the D7360 Independent Travel Permission Form submitted 40 days prior to leaving.
During vacations to visit nearby relatives.
Independent Travel outside of the USA is rarely approved. Discussions must be conducted with the District Chair 40 days in advance before ANY plans are made. District Chair approves all Independent Travel.

B. Permission form required 20 days in advance for information purposes (emergency contacts, knowledge of travel)

Within D7360 Overnight stays with no missed school

Outside D7360 Overnight stays with Host family or Rotarian with no missed school

C. No permission form needed:

Within D7360 Daily travel with Host family, school group, local church groups, Rotarians, car rides with students around town, or friends of host family.

Outside D7360 Day trips with Host Family, Rotarian, School, or local church group.

If the situation is other than described above, assume the Permission Form is required.



Independent Travel Rules

ESSEX has recently had to deal with students who wanted to terminate their experience and travel on their own. This represents a significant risk to Rotary and to the students.

1. The students and parents have signed agreements to come to their host family/district directly and return by a direct route at the end of their experience.
2. The RI guidelines require that when in a host District's care, a student not travel alone nor be accompanied only by other students. District **MUST** approve all travel outside the boundaries of the district.
3. The Insurance coverage obtained for young people is rated with the expectation that students are under the protective umbrella of Rotary. Continued eligibility for the coverage requires that they be Rotary Exchange Students and under the guidance and supervision of Rotary.
4. The Rotary Youth Exchange Program is not a travel program. Any opportunity to travel is at the discretion of the Rotary District with the permission of the natural parents.
5. You may, with the approval of your Host District/Club and with the approval of your natural parents, enroll in Rotary approved tours that are available to students. Travel on commercial airlines is acceptable for these tours with approved/responsible adults meeting the student at each end.

Therefore, all travel that does not follow these guidelines is not approved for ESSEX students. There may be an occasion when a student elects to leave the host district without the approval of Rotary. In this event, the following steps will be taken: The Host Club Youth Exchange Officer will:

1. Advise the ESSEX country contact who will communicate with the sponsoring district chair.
2. Advise the student and parents that the student has undertaken travel or left the district without the approval of Rotary. Due to this, **the student has elected to end his/her relationship and terminate Rotary's responsibility for the individual.** Due to this decision and action of the student (and parents, where applicable), the following steps are taken:
 - a. The appropriate branch of the host country **government is notified** that the student's visa is no longer sponsored by Rotary and the individual is no longer a student in the school system.
 - b. The Insurance carrier is notified that the student is no longer with the Rotary Youth Exchange program and **coverage should be cancelled** immediately.
 - c. The student should **receive no assistance** from the host or sponsoring Rotary clubs or districts since this may imply a continuing relationship that the student has terminated.
 - d. The student should **not be permitted** to leave items **with host families** nor be permitted to return there.
 - e. The student's **return travel** to the home country is **the sole responsibility of the student** and his/her family.

These procedures have been developed to protect the students and to protect Rotary and the host families from liability and potential litigation. In the event that this situation should arise, please refer to this document. Your cooperation in this matter will be appreciated and is necessary for continued successful exchanges between our young people.

District 7360 Youth Exchange Program Independent Travel Permission and Consent Form

The following information and signatures are required for any form of Independent Travel during the exchange year. Please complete and return the form to the District Chair at least two (2) weeks in advance of the trip. If travelling by bus, train, or plane, please attach complete official itinerary. Completion of the form does not necessarily mean that permission is granted. The final decision is at the discretion of the District Chair.

We, the undersigned, declare that the travel of the exchange student is out of liability and responsibility of Rotary International. He or she is traveling in the time between:

Travel Dates Between: _____ **AND** _____

From (City to City): _____ **TO** _____

Traveling By: Bus ___ Train ___ Plane ___ Other(Specify) _____

Provide full address and contact information of the host family on this travel:

Name _____ Street _____

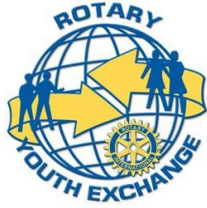
City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email address: _____

Number of school days missed _____ (cannot exceed more than 5 days)

Required Signatures:

	Name	Signature/Date
Natural Parents:	_____	_____
Sponsoring Club YEO:	_____	_____
Sponsoring YE District Chair:	_____	_____
Hosting Parent:	_____	_____
Host Club YEO	_____	_____
Host District Chair:	_____	_____



Rotary Youth Exchange District 7360

Please use this page to add any notes or questions you may have for the Home Visit that will be scheduled soon after your Exchange Student arrives in your home.

NOTES: