

IMPORTANT FACTS 2

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For students accepted to the one-year exchange

Stiftelsen Rotarys Ungdomsutbyte i Sverige & Lettland

One-year exchange

www.rotarystudent.se

Congratulations – your exchange is taking shape

A Swedish Rotary club has interviewed you and your family and agreed to be your sponsor club. We hope you and your parents now want to complete your application to take part in our exchange programme.

Rotary Youth Exchange's correspondents have worked to find places abroad and allocate them among all accepted students. The placement you are offered is shown in your offer. Because the number of places is limited, the offered placement is difficult to change.

Once you and your parents have accepted and confirmed, your application documents are sent to the district abroad. There, a Rotary club is to accept you and arrange a host family and a school place – this gives the **final placement**, which you are normally notified of between 15 May and 15 June. Your placement is not definitive until a club abroad has accepted you. It is the host district in the country you are going to that decides where you are placed geographically.

Please note

An offered placement may sometimes need to change – you may then be offered another district in the same country, or even another country. Reasons can include allergies, clubs withdrawing, or economic/political problems in the country.

Accept and confirm

You and your parents receive an email with the agreement (placement notice) and Family Information. If you have questions, contact the relevant correspondent (see Appendix A). To accept, sign the placement notice and return it within **10 days** to info@rotarystudent.se. The agreement is then confirmed with the enrolment fee (instalment 1), invoiced at about the same time. Once we have received it, the agreement is binding – only then can we send the documents abroad.

What happens next?

1. You accept and confirm through the first instalment.
2. In February–April you are invited to a first information meeting in the district.
3. In March–April you order the blazer, shirt and business cards via our chosen supplier. More information comes from RU.
4. In April–May you receive information from the travel agency, and news of which inbound student is placed in your sponsor club (arriving in late July).
5. At about the same time you receive information about the visa application and insurance.
6. In late May or early June the placement notice from abroad arrives. You make first contact with your host family and club and apply for the visa as soon as possible.
7. At the end of June you take part – ideally with your family – in the mandatory national gathering before departure, Inspiration Camp.

8. The flight booking is finalised and departure takes place in July or August depending on the destination.
9. If your sponsor club is to host a student from the southern hemisphere, you are notified in the autumn; they arrive in mid-January the following year.

Being a host family

In many cases the family chooses to host an inbound student while you are away. We really recommend it – it adds another dimension to the exchange year and involves the whole family. If you wish to host, fill in the “Family Information” form and return it with the offer. RU makes the final placement. Tell us if your family circumstances change, especially if you move or get a pet – many young people have allergies. More advice is in the booklet “Being a host family” at rotarystudent.se.

Note these dates

Inbound students for the exchange year arrive earliest **1 August**. Students from the southern hemisphere arrive earliest **20 January** the following year.

Costs and payment

Programme fee	
Europe	65 000 kr
Other countries	75 000 kr

The programme fee covers administration, the insurance premium, the blazer, a small bag/backpack and other equipment. A binding agreement is formed when the enrolment fee (instalment 1) has been paid. The invoice is sent a few days after the placement notice – if the programme fee is not paid in full, you cannot take part in the exchange.

Cancellation

All cancellations must be made in writing to info@rotarystudent.se. For cancellation without special reasons:

Time before departure	Fee
Earlier than 4 months	enrolment fee is retained
4–3 months	15 % of the programme fee
3–2 months	20 % of the programme fee
Within 2 months	25 % of the programme fee

In the event of prolonged and serious illness, accident or death of yourself or a close relative, RU only charges an administrative fee of 5 % of the programme fee. For an interrupted exchange year the programme fee is not refunded, whatever the reason.

Costs beyond the programme fee

- **Flights:** travel outside Europe is booked via Tranås Resebyrå; travel within Europe you book yourself.
- **Visa:** almost all countries charge a fee, and legalisation, a notary public or a deposit is sometimes required.
- **Transport** to and from the departure and arrival airports.
- **Vaccinations** and any **school uniform** or fees for subjects outside the core plan.
- **Camps and travel** abroad (voluntary) and the cost of collecting an inbound student at the airport.

Conditions and recommendations

You have undertaken to follow the conditions below in your application documents (Section G). Districts abroad may adapt the document and add provisions, so you may receive further rules in the spring from your host district.

1. Always obey the laws of the host country. If you break the law you cannot expect support from Rotary and must return home at your own expense.
2. Possessing or using illegal drugs is forbidden. Medication prescribed by a doctor is permitted.
3. All unlawful consumption of alcohol is forbidden. Students of legal age should abstain; if the host family offers it, it is permitted under supervision in the home.
4. You may not drive motor vehicles or take driving lessons.
5. You are subject to the host district's conditions; your parents cannot overrule the host district's decisions, and relatives in the host country have no authority over you.
6. You must attend school full-time and do your best.
7. You must have travel insurance covering medical and dental care, accidents and illness, death and repatriation, medical transport, 24-hour emergency assistance and legal services – valid for the whole trip.
8. The host district may require an emergency deposit, and you should have enough money for your expenses. Any unused deposit is refunded.
9. Follow the host district's travel rules. Travel with the host family or an adult at Rotary activities is allowed; all other travel requires written permission from the host club, host district, host family and your parents.
10. You must return directly home by the agreed route.
11. Parents are responsible for costs for early return or other special costs.
12. Contact your first host family before leaving your home country.
13. Visits from parents, siblings or friends should be avoided and may take place only with the host club's and host district's approval, generally during the last quarter or school holidays – not during major holidays.
14. Talk to your counsellor, host family or another trusted adult if you experience any form of abuse or harassment.

Recommendations for a successful exchange

- Do not smoke, and stick to what you stated in your application. For health reasons it is not permitted to get piercings or tattoos during the year.
- Respect your host family, behave as a family member and help with everyday chores.
- Learn the host country's language – it opens doors and gives you friends for life. Start as soon as you have your placement notice.
- Take part in Rotary events and school and community activities. Take the initiative and don't only socialise with other exchange students.

- Avoid romantic relationships. Choose your friends carefully and consult your host family and counsellor.
- Do not borrow money and pay all bills promptly. Find out costs and obligations before joining trips or events.
- Limit contact with family and friends back home. Focus instead on relationships in your new country.

"DOS":

- Be positive, friendly, polite and smile.
- Try different foods.
- Go to school.
- Make friends.
- Become active in school sports, music etc.
- Answer questions about Sweden.
- Find out rules; where things are, what's expected of you, etc.
- Be considerate to others.
- Be helpful. Do not wait to be waited upon.
- Keep your room neat.
- Be on time.
- Know your obligations to Rotary, the Club, District and Host Family.
- Keep your family informed of your activities.
- Participate in family activities.
- Accept offers and invitations.

Remember that the first days matter. "First impressions last!"

The six D's

No Driving · No Drugs · No Drinking · No Dating · No Decorating · No Downloading

The ban on operating motor vehicles applies to all motorised vehicles, including electric ones, and to driving lessons. No Decorating means no new tattoos or piercings during the exchange year; No Downloading means no illegal downloading. The first three prohibitions are absolute. Rule violations are handled with a yellow-card/red-card system, where a yellow card is a warning and a red card means immediate termination of the exchange year and direct return home.

Preparing for the exchange year

A whole year abroad takes preparation, both mental and practical. Think through what it means to leave family, friends and classmates, and to be somewhere where at first you know no one. The better prepared you are for things that can happen – a delayed flight, lost luggage – the more easily you will solve them if they arise.

Training meetings

The districts hold training meetings during the six months before departure. RU also arranges a mandatory national closing event at the end of June, **Inspiration Camp**, attended by inbound students in Sweden and former outbounds too. There you receive the final departure information and the equipment included in the programme (blazer, polo shirt, hoodie, backpack and business cards). Attendance is mandatory for you and at least one parent. If you are prevented, contact your district chair.

Visa and passport

Your responsibility

You are responsible for having a valid passport and visa in good time before departure.

If you have no passport, arrange one immediately at the police. If you have one, check that it is valid for at least the whole exchange – for some countries also for a while after your return. You travel on a visa for upper-secondary studies, not a tourist visa. The visa requires a **Guarantee Form (GF)** from your host district confirming a school place and accommodation; it is sent to RU in the spring and on to you. You and your family must be reachable while the application is processed, and you may need to submit your passport to the embassy.

Insurance

RU insures most students through **CISI Bolduc**. The insurance is mandatory and included in the programme fee. The most important rule is always to contact the insurer before a visit – in the USA CISI Bolduc must be contacted before every doctor's visit. For single visits you pay yourself and keep all receipts (no receipts, no reimbursement), then file a claim. For larger or planned treatment, contact the company first. In acute illness or accident, show your insurance card at the hospital – do not let the host family pay or guarantee costs.

Vaccinations, medicines and prescriptions

Ask your doctor or a vaccination centre whether you need to update your vaccinations for your destination; Rotary issues no recommendations. Some countries may require specific vaccinations for entry or a visa – check with your host district. You pay all vaccination costs yourself. If you take medication, bring the prescription translated into English; medicines that may be classed as narcotics require a doctor's certificate in English. Never buy medicine in the host country that a doctor has not prescribed.

Money

- **Travel cash:** bring cash for personal purchases and unexpected costs, about USD 100–200 in small denominations, plus ideally a credit card.
- **Pocket money:** budget it to last the whole year. The amount varies between countries and clubs. For comparison, pocket money in Sweden is SEK 1,000/month.
- **Contingency fund:** many host districts require a reserve, often equivalent to about €400. It is your money and is repaid before you go home.

Equipment

The following is included in the programme fee and handed out at Inspiration Camp: **pins**, a dark-blue **blazer** with the Rotary emblem, a **name badge** with your name and “Sweden”, an embroidered **polo shirt** and **hoodie**, **business cards** (with photo, home address, host district and club, and an email you can use abroad), a **bag/backpack** suitable as hand luggage and a **Swedish flag**. Wear the blazer at club lunches and when representing Rotary. If you want more equipment, email info@rotarystudent.se.

Advice and tips

- Take copies of your passport, visa and ID and keep them separately. Bring a few spare passport photos.
- Be careful with food and water at first – your stomach needs to adjust.
- Prepare to answer questions about Sweden and to give presentations. Material is available from the Swedish Institute (si.se).
- Read up on your host country and start learning the language before you leave.
- Bring thank-you cards and small Swedish-made gifts for host families, teachers and friends.
- Check with your bank and post office whether you need to give your parents power of attorney.

As an exchange student you are not entitled to the study grant during the exchange year. For studies within the EU you may in some cases keep it – contact CSN (csn.se).

The journey

Before departure you receive detailed instructions from the travel agency. Pack light – bring only the essentials, since excess baggage is expensive and you must be able to carry your luggage yourself. Make an English description of your bags and photograph them, which helps if baggage goes missing (a so-called PIR report is made at the airport).

Keep valuables close

Keep your passport and visa, money, credit card, insurance card, ticket and important addresses and phone numbers in a pouch close to your body. Never leave luggage unattended. In your hand luggage keep the essentials: medication, phone, charger and laptop.

The travel agency (Tranås Resebyrå) sends a questionnaire in the spring where you state, among other things, which airport you want to fly home to. This choice **cannot** be changed once you have the ticket – only the date can be changed, with instructions from RU in late January during your exchange year.

Approximate departure dates

Destination	Approximate departure
South Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand	mid-July
Brazil	mid/late July
USA, Canada, Mexico	early/mid-August
Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand	mid-August
Europe	the latter half of August

The dates are approximate and decided together with the travel agency; a preliminary date is in your offer. If you are going to Europe, the relevant district tells you when to arrive.

The exchange year

An exchange year is a school year. You attend the country's equivalent of upper-secondary school – for example high school in the USA, Canada and Australia. Schools can differ greatly from the Swedish gymnasium, but that is part of the experience. When you land in your host country you also need to leave Sweden mentally. Nothing will be like home – and that is the whole point.

The Rotary club and the counsellor

Your host club is responsible for looking after you. The club ensures there are host families (ideally three), arranges a school place, invites you to activities and club meetings (where at some point you give a talk about yourself and Sweden) and pays your pocket money. The club appoints a **counsellor** who is not a member of your host family, plus at least three people who can help you if problems arise.

The counsellor is very important – establish good contact right away. If problems arise, always turn to the counsellor first. If it is not resolved, contact one of the other designated people, and as a last resort your district chair in Sweden. **The most important thing is that you contact someone – otherwise you cannot get help.**

Host families and language

You live with two to three host families during the year. You become one of the family, which means adapting to their way of living – they are not expected to change their lives for you. Keep things tidy, ask when unsure and be considerate. Appendix B contains questions to ask during the first days with each new host family. You undertake to learn the host country's language; an orientation course often begins the year, and for non-English-speaking countries language teaching is usually included.

Contact with Sweden

Keep in touch with your family, but moderation is best – limit contact so that you can live in your new country. We also recommend that parents hold back, however tempting it is to call or video chat; frequent calls can trigger unnecessary homesickness. Do write a newsletter covering a few weeks' events. Also send a quarterly report to your district chair in Sweden – your feedback is important for future exchanges with the district.

Travel and visits

Your year is first and foremost a school year, so there are restrictions on travel during term. Travel is allowed with host parents or at Rotary-approved activities with adult supervision; other travel requires written permission from the host district, host club, host family and your own family. You may never travel alone or only with other young people. Hitchhiking and inter-railing are not permitted, and some host districts have stricter rules. Before each trip, check that it is covered by the insurance. If your parents want to visit you, they should start by contacting the district chair in Sweden.

If something happens

In serious illness or accident: read your insurance certificate, inform your counsellor and each host family. Your family in Sweden is informed and can turn to the district chair. The insurance is valid from when you leave your home in Sweden until your return, but for at most one year. In a natural disaster or political unrest, contact your district chair in Sweden as soon as possible and notify the nearest Swedish embassy or consulate.

Homesickness

Most people feel homesick at some point – it is completely natural, usually once the novelty has worn off. Signs can be low spirits, irritability and withdrawing. **Do this:** talk it through with your host family or counsellor, get involved in activities, write home in a cheerful tone and stay positive. **Avoid** sulking, feeling sorry for yourself or calling home – write instead. In the vast majority of cases the situation resolves itself once you talk it through.

If the exchange must be ended

Sometimes an exchange has to be ended – for example due to severe homesickness, rule-breaking or serious illness. A decision is preceded by several conversations, and it is the host district that makes it; RU cannot influence the decision and takes no financial responsibility for an interrupted year. For legal offences or serious rule-breaking you can be sent home immediately. Parents cannot take their child home on their own initiative without informing Rotary. The programme fee is not refunded, but the insurance may in some cases cover costs.

Length of the exchange and return

The length of the programme varies between countries. Be aware of the official length – many districts plan closing events you are expected to attend, so you cannot count on going home to, for example, take a summer job before the programme officially ends. The return journey is planned together with the host family, host club and host district.

Country	Approximate official length
Australia, New Zealand, South Africa	12 months
Japan, Taiwan	12 months
Brazil, India, Canada, USA, Mexico, Thailand	about 11 months
Korea	about 10–11 months
Europe	as long as the school year lasts

If your official length is 11 months you may stay longer if your Rotary club, host family and host district give permission, but at most as long as your visa and ticket are valid. The exact length is confirmed with your placement.

For the return journey you book through our travel agency; instructions come in late January during the exchange year. You are entitled to one (1) free rebooking. The ticket is a return ticket that must be kept as a valuable document throughout the year. Agree the return date with your host family and counsellor before you book.

After the exchange year

A year abroad goes quickly, and suddenly it is time to go home. Once home you will want to share – keep doing so when people ask, but if you want to really talk it through, contact other former exchange students, ideally through **Rotex**. Offer to talk about your year at upper-secondary schools near you; you are an important ambassador for Rotary Youth Exchange. Keep your contacts in the host country – your year will always be yours.

The programme includes a mandatory returnees' meeting, arranged by the district or in connection with Inspiration Camp the year after your exchange. You should also give a talk about your year in the Rotary club that sponsored you – contact them as soon as you get home.

An exchange year in stages

- **The honeymoon** – everything feels exciting and interesting.
- **Culture fatigue** – you start to see differences and feel uncomfortable.
- **Surface adjustment** – things start to make sense and you feel more comfortable.
- **I understand and I feel at home** – you accept your host culture and feel at home.
- **Going home** – mixed feelings about returning.

A final word

We wish you an eventful, exciting and rewarding exchange year in a new country. Dare to try something new – and come home with friends for life.

Contact details

Office	
Address	Stiftelsen Rotarys Ungdomsutbyte i Sverige & Lettland, c/o Högberg, Hasselstigen 78, 141 71 Segeltorp
Phone	+46 8-644 74 10 · weekdays 09.00–17.00
E-post	info@rotarystudent.se · www.rotarystudent.se

You can find further contact details, including district chairs and correspondents for different countries, at **www.rotarystudent.se/contact**.

Questions for the first night with your host family

Ask these questions during your first days with each new host family – they are listed in English so you can show them to the family.

- What do I call you – Mum, Dad, or your first names?
- What are you expecting me to do around the house (make my bed, tidy my room, clean the bathroom after use)?
- What is the laundry procedure, and where do I keep dirty clothes?
- When is a convenient time for me to use the shower or bath?
- What time are meals, and how can I help (set/clear the table, wash up, empty the bin)?
- May I help myself to food and drink, or should I ask first?
- Which areas of the house are private?
- May I put up pictures or rearrange my bedroom?
- How do you feel about alcohol – wine at the table, or the occasional beer?
- What time should I get up and go to bed on weekdays and weekends?
- What are the rules for going out at night, and when must I be home?
- May friends visit during the day or stay overnight?
- What are the rules about using the phone and making calls home? Any costs?
- How do I get around – to school, locally, and into town?
- Does the Rotary club pay my cost of travel to school?
- How often should I attend Rotary meetings?
- What arrangements should I make for school lunch?
- Do any of you have dislikes I should know about (music volume, lateness, smoking)?
- When are the family's birthdays?
- Should I phone home if I will be more than 30 minutes late?
- When we go out as a family, should I pay my own entrance fees and meals?
- Is there anything else you would like me to know?

For you as a student

Ask once too often rather than once too little. Sweden allows a lot of freedom that is not a given everywhere – adapt first, before questioning rules you find unreasonable. If difficulties arise, ask the counsellor first; if nothing changes, contact the DC in your host district.