



A. Guidelines for Rotex

The members of North Star Rotex - former Rotary Youth Exchange Students who also are individually called Rotex - provide invaluable service and assistance to North Star Rotary Youth Exchange.

Among other duties, younger Rotex frequently serve as mentors, language interpreters, cultural guides, youth exchange coaches, and chaperones to prospective outbound exchange students - soon to depart to points around the world; and to current inbound exchange students - representing dozens of countries, cultures and languages as international ambassadors in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Older Rotex often become local Rotarians where they might serve on their club's International or Youth Exchange Committees; or as Rotarians or not, they sometimes provide service to North Star Rotary Youth Exchange by serving in program leadership roles or as Country Officers.

Like all volunteers with any organization, when serving in their role of a Rotex volunteer, Rotex of any age are representatives of North Star Rotex and/or North Star Rotary Youth Exchange. This means that they need to know and abide by the rules and policies of those organizations.

Every North Star volunteer is the public face of the local organization and of Rotary International Youth Exchange. The long-term, positive public perception of North Star Rotary Youth Exchange and North Star Rotex must be foremost in every volunteer's mind at all times. This means that not only must all North Star volunteers provide every exchange student with a safe and positive environment, but that it must also outwardly appear to be a safe, positive, and well-run program, organized and executed by thoughtful, responsible and mature individuals, all of whom have the best interests of our prospective and current exchange students in mind.

While North Star Rotex has its own governance, separate from North Star Rotary Youth Exchange, North Star Rotex should not supplement planned North Star Rotary activities without first clearing proposed additional activities or programs with North Star Rotary. And unless approval is given by North Star Rotary, no activities should be represented as “official” Rotary or Rotex events to exchange students or host parents.

Presented here are guidelines of how Rotex volunteers of any age should interact with prospective and current North Star Rotary Exchange Students. These rules apply at all times and not just during North Star Rotary or North Star Rotex events. They are based on the 4-Ds and 6-Bs that should be familiar to all North Star volunteers.

B. The 4 (+2) Ds

1. No Driving

Rotex should not facilitate or condone a current exchange student driving a motorized vehicle. The liabilities and precedents are just too enormous.

2. No Drinking

Rotex should not facilitate or condone a current exchange student drinking alcoholic beverages. This prohibits Rotex from inviting current exchange students to social events where alcohol is being consumed by other young people, Rotex or not. The mere perception of a youth exchange student being in attendance can jeopardize both the student’s exchange year, and the reputation of Rotex.

3. No Dating

Rotex should not date or be intimate with a prospective or current exchange student. Rotex serve as mentors and coaches to prospective and current exchange students. This requires an invisible wall of responsibility and professional distance between the mentor and the mentee. Hanging out, going to movies or a sporting event, and attending other social activities – these all can be appropriate for a Rotex to do with a prospective or current exchange student, providing the student has his/her parents permission. But at all times, the Rotex is responsible for the exchange student, and this precludes any romantic or physical relations.

Rotex should feel free to invite current exchange students to partake in supervised family events, including overnights, but all the common rules of teen-aged social events apply. The responsible heads of household should communicate prior to the event. The rules of the 4-Ds should be made clear, as should any financial expectations. This means inviting an exchange student to the family cabin for the weekend is fine, as long as the Rotex’s parents or spouse/partner are present. But inviting an exchange student to a college student’s dormitory or apartment for the weekend is not appropriate. One-on-one overnights anywhere are never acceptable.

4. No Drugs

Rotex should not facilitate or condone a current exchange student partaking in illegal drugs. Should a Rotex encounter a current exchange student at a location where illegal drugs are being used, it is incumbent on the Rotex to immediately remove the exchange student from the locale and safely get him or her home or other safe location. Remind the student of the dire consequences of drug use, both physical and legal.

5. No Debts

Rotex should never lend money or other valuables to an exchange student. If an exchange student is having financial difficulties, direct him/her to his/her Exchange Officer or Country Officer.

6. Don't be Dumb

Rotex should never facilitate or condone a current exchange student doing anything illegal or dangerous. This ranges from shop-lifting to rock-climbing in prohibited areas. Be smart; think about what host parents or Country Officers would say if they knew the activity was happening; and don't let the worst happen.

C. The 6 Bs

1. Be First

Rotex should encourage prospective and current exchange students to be first in all things. This means not only be the *first* volunteer, but also the *best* volunteer. The most successful exchange student is the one who eagerly accepts every opportunity to be an integral part of the program. This student will find the opportunities offered him or her to be nearly unlimited.

2. Be Curious

Rotex should encourage prospective and current exchange students to try new things, even some things outside of their comfort zone or familiarity. Good exchange students should return home with dozens of stories of new things they have tried - some of which they liked, and some not so much.

3. Be Purposeful

Rotex should encourage prospective and current exchange students to set goals for their exchange year. Every day gone by is a day that cannot be recaptured. If a Rotex learns of a goal that an exchange student cannot achieve without Rotary's help, make sure to pass that information on to the Country Officer or Exchange Officer to see if and how it can be facilitated.

4. *Be Grateful*

Rotex should encourage prospective and current exchange students to frequently and vociferously express their gratitude for the many hours and much expense provided by those who make their exchange experience possible. This includes thanking not only Rotarians, North Star Rotary volunteers, and host parents, but also other Rotex for the many efforts on their behalf!

5. *Be of Service*

Being volunteers themselves, Rotex should encourage exchange students to join them in their spirit of volunteerism. This is not common in all cultures and sometimes needs to be taught. Current exchange student can be of service by making public speeches about the benefits of being an exchange student; by volunteering to staff registration tables at Rotary conferences; or by presenting an excellent booth at the annual Country Fair. The opportunities are endless and Rotex can help facilitate this.

6. *Be Here and Now*

Rotex are the most likely to hear exchange student's complaints or laments. While many have validity and thus need to be addressed, others are merely expressions of impatience or cultural differences. Rotex should encourage exchange students to appreciate what is going on right here and right now, and remind them of all the incredible things being done by myriad volunteers in order to facilitate their exchange year.

D. Conclusion

At all times, use your own best judgment. As a Rotex, you have been an exchange student yourself. How would you want a situation handled to your best long-term advantage when you were an exchange student? Is this something you could proudly report to your parents, the exchange student's host-parents, or their Country Officer? What is the best possible outcome of this experience for the exchange student and those who have made his or her year possible?

Finally, North Star Rotary wants to express its boundless gratitude to all North Star Rotex – near and far – for making our program perhaps the best Rotary Youth Exchange Program in the world! Thank you!

www.NorthStarYouthExchange.com

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