



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL  
MULTI-DISTRIKT 1910-1920  
**JUGENDDIENST – YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM**  
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To all Long Term Inbounds to Austria

Dear Student,

I want to welcome you to our country and we hope that your stay in Austria will be a rewarding one in every sense of the word. We will try our best to support you in trying to make the most of it. And there are quite a number of people involved in this effort, like Rotarians, host parents and their families, also schools and their teachers and many others you will meet.

Don't forget that they all offer their private homes, their time and also some financial contribution etc. on their own free will and expecting nothing else in return than enjoying your pleasant company over the year and the satisfaction of having made a worth while contribution to a great project, i.e. having given you the chance to take with both hands what this programme did offer you: to experience a new culture, learn a different language and get to know a, so far, foreign country and people.

However it also needs your active will to accept and really go for the values, as pointed out, that are on offer to you.

I want you to have a successful year like the many who told us when leaving: "this was the most beautiful year in my life".

Unfortunately there are also some who are not really trying and as a consequence they can even make a mess out of this great opportunity. Not only for themselves but also for those around them, the host parents, Rotarians, the teachers etc. In a case of continued lack of interest and progress we even have to terminate an exchange and send home the student, in order to safeguard the reputation and continuation of this Rotary programme.

I want to give you some hints, even if you will not need them, about **reasons leading to success or failure:**

### **Age, School**

Some students have finished their school and just look for fun during this year, a guarantee for failure.

Irrespective of the age of our students, school attendance has **to be regular** and a minimum of **seven subjects** have to be taken and **exams** made where possible.

### **Language**

It is the **key to success**. You can communicate only if you know the language.

We offer an Intensive German Course lasting two weeks at the beginning of the year. But you need to prepare yourself as much as possible beforehand, and also **continue after the course**.

It is much more fun to understand what is said in school than to sit there and guess what is going on.

We will check on the progress in the German language of our students, it reflects their interest in general.

## **Host Family**

Your **most important partners**, you spend every day with them. They will open their house and family to you. Accept it and appreciate it and open up yourself towards them as well.

A particular family may not be your ideal choice; nevertheless if you try hard it can work out fine. Keep communicating, this is the only way.

Some don't really try to become part of the family and try to sit it out in their rooms, this will not work.

Families also expect their exchange students to show an interest in what is around them. They have little understanding in hosting someone who is mainly interested in English TV programs or meeting other exchange students.

It is also good to show your best **manners**, "please" and "thank you" is easily said and opens doors. The way people behave coming from different parts of the world can be very different. What is accepted here may be seen as bad manners there. Have a look how the house is run and what the rules are, even in details, and **adjust** to them, don't expect them to do so. A key to success! Assistance in doing some **house work** should be better offered by yourself than demanded from you.

Try to **become part of the family**, you need this support. It also helps a lot if you are able to share your problems with them instead of frightening your real parents over the phone.

Make arrangements to pay at least for **your long distance calls**, they are quite expensive here. Some students use the phone behind the backs of their hosts, it does not help to build up a healthy and honest relationship.

## **Traveling**

Europe offers many sights of history, culture, arts etc. In order to get to know some of them we organize a two weeks tour.

There are also some school holidays during the year that may be used for traveling under proper guidance and **with our permission** and that of your own parents, host parents, counselor and when outside school holidays school. Beyond that, school has priority!

Traveling of students on their own is not permitted even when in a group.

## **The 4 Ds etc.**

observing them keeps you out of trouble.

With regards to smoking, we rely on your **statements in your application**. If you have declared yourself as a non smoker, then that is what we expect from you.

If you draw the attention of others on you, we would expect that the reason for it is not the **exterior appearance** with flashy hair coloring, piercing, tattoos or indecent clothing etc. It should rather be your interest and success in your school, or activities in local sports teams, music band or your harmonious relationship with your host parents etc.

And never forget you are not just anybody on holiday in a foreign country, you are something special, being selected by Rotary and you **are representing your country** – burdened with your ambassadorial responsibility.

I trust that you understand those points as common sense rules and most likely you find it tedious to read two pages of them. Still, I write them down and send them to every inbound. And if it helps to improve the chances for a good exchange year just for one of them, it was worth it.

So I hope to see you soon at our Language Course and I will give you all my support to make it a great exchange year for you.

Erwin Zeller  
Districts 1910-1920  
Youth Exchange, Chairman

Baden, 12.6.2004