

## Travel Rules for Inbound Exchange Students

### Why do we have travel rules?

The 3 districts of Rotary Youth Exchange Switzerland / Liechtenstein have been certified by Rotary International and are therefore following the Policy of Rotary International and the Guidelines for youth exchange. Rotary Youth Exchange Switzerland/Liechtenstein has adapted the official travel rules to Swiss customs.

These travel rules are valid and binding for all participants in the exchange program.

Rotary clubs, host parents, and exchange students may not reinterpret or alter the rules for individual cases. These travel rules are a topic of discussion during the official welcome weekend. They are also handed out to Swiss host parents in German or French and given to the inbound students in English or Spanish. Nevertheless, we advise and encourage Rotary club representatives (YEO / Counsellor) to go over these rules in detail with their inbound exchange student as well as with the host parents.

### Travelling in Switzerland

#### Transportation and Responsibilities

1. All Host Clubs are obliged to take over the public transportation costs of the exchange students in Switzerland and Liechtenstein for the travels mentioned under point 3. They are free in choosing an appropriate travelcard/pass (GA, Half-Tax, etc.). They chose the most valuable kind regarding the expected travel (see the list of events) and buy it.
2. All Host Clubs are responsible – in cooperation with the Host Families – that no unnecessary and non-permitted travels are done by the students. The travelcards/passes remain the property of the Host Clubs, although the travelcard/pass is issued in the student's name. The travelcard/pass must not be overused for travel activities and meetings with other exchange students. Host Clubs (YEO or Counsellor) and Host Families make the decision about the use of the travelcard/pass. The responsibility for the use of the travelcard/pass belongs to the Host Clubs exclusively. In case of abuse of the travelcard/pass, the Rotary Youth Exchange Association is to be informed immediately. The Association reserves the right to take appropriate steps against the Host Club / Exchange Students (conversation, collection of the travelcard/pass, "yellow card", etc.) if necessary.
3. No special permission is needed for the following travels:
  - Travel to school
  - Travel to language courses
  - Travel to language tests (TELC/DELF)
  - Travel to events, organized by Rotary Youth Exchange Association
  - Travel to events, organized by ROTEX
  - Travel to events of Host District and Multidistrict Switzerland/Liechtenstein

For all other travel, permission of the Host Club and/or Host Family is requested.

Travel caused by emergency is treated as extraordinary and is not subject to this regulation.

### **One-day individual trips and excursions within Switzerland**

Excursions and travelling in Switzerland are possible if host parents give permission. Rotary Youth Exchange Switzerland / Liechtenstein and ROTEX organize about 10 events and excursions for inbound exchange students during the exchange year (see event list) during which exchange students can meet and share experiences. To ensure that students do not prevent themselves from integration into the Swiss culture and from learning our language by meeting other exchange students too often, the rule is that exchange students should not meet up with other exchange students more than twice a month in their free time, including the official events.

### **Travel in Switzerland with overnight stay**

If accompanied by host parents or members of the Rotary club, there are no limits to travelling with an overnight stay. However, excursions of several days within Switzerland have to be approved by Swiss club representatives (YEO/ Counsellor) and are only allowed if the destination address has a reference to Rotary and if a proper adult chaperon is guaranteed (no hotels, youth hostels or parties all night long). Such travel is to be discussed with the host parents. In addition, the student must submit a written program and must be able to be contacted at any time.

### **Overnight stays at other host families or families of Swiss friends**

Inbound students should not spend the night in families other than their own host family (family of Swiss friends or host family of other exchange students) on a regular basis. Should they wish to do so, their host family as well as the inviting family must be asked for permission and contacted beforehand. After the overnight stay there should be a short debriefing about the stay.

### **Open-Airs**

Any visit to an Open-Air Music event is subject to permission of the Swiss YEO. Students are not allowed to spend the night at an Open-Air site without being accompanied by a Rotary club member or a host parent. If a student cannot spend the night at the normal host family home due to the distance, the student must organize an overnight stay near the event site according to the above paragraph "Overnight stays at other host families or families of Swiss friends".

### **Parties**

Privately organized parties must be chaperoned by an adult person familiar with Rotary and the Rotary Youth Exchange office must be informed at least 5 days prior to the event.

### **Hitchhiking**

Hitchhiking is forbidden.

## **Travelling abroad (outside of Switzerland)**

### **Accompanied travel outside of Switzerland**

During school breaks, host parents, Rotary club members and their respective sons/daughters of at least 25 years of age may travel with inbound students to the neighbouring countries of Switzerland and Liechtenstein without specific conditions for 2- 3 days. If longer excursions or vacations are planned, club YEO's and Counsellors must be asked permission in advance. In addition, the birth parents of the inbound student must approve the travel plans in writing.

Exchange students do not need a visa for travelling to countries belonging to the Schengen area/states. Please note that e.g. England does not belong to the Schengen area.

### **Individual travel outside of Switzerland**

Inbounds are at no time allowed to travel abroad alone overnight without the company of Rotary club members, host parents or their respective sons/daughters of at least 25 years of age.

### **Group travel outside of Switzerland**

Exchange students are not allowed to travel abroad with other exchange students without adults (host parents, Rotarians). Being of age or good behaviour during the exchange year does not justify an exception to this rule.

### **Visit of relatives or family with Rotarian ties outside of Switzerland**

In the first half year of the exchange such individual travel abroad is not allowed.

In the second half year of the exchange such travel may be allowed if the following conditions are met:

- Approval by the Rotary club (YEO / Counsellor) and information of the MD youth exchange office
- Only outside of school time.
- Written agreement of **birth** parents stating that they assume full responsibility for their child during the trip abroad and exempt Rotary of responsibility and liability.
- Written travel plan and program with detailed information about the destination(s). Valid destination addresses of relatives or a family with a Rotarian reference (e.g. family of an exchange student hosted once by the own family of the inbound) so that proper chaperones and adequate supervision and control are guaranteed. Youth hostels, campgrounds or hotels cannot be accepted.
- The student must be contactable through the named address(es) at any time.
- Before a student starts a journey abroad, it must be clarified if the student's health and accident insurance covers travel to/in the destination country(-ies) and if a visa is needed. Any visa needed must be organised by the student.

Visiting relatives outside of Europe is generally not allowed during your exchange.

### **Europe Tour and other Tours organized by Rotary**

A Europe Tour is organized by a specialized tour operator in cooperation with Rotary Youth Exchange Switzerland, participation is facultative. Students can either book the full tour or the first or second part only. The tour operator is responsible for the invitation and payment administration. The costs must be carried by the students themselves. The student asks his parents if they allow and are able to pay participation prior to the inscription. If the Europe Tour takes places during the official school time of the student, the Swiss YEO and or counsellor asks the host school for a leave of absence. Rotary Youth Exchange Switzerland will not allow inbounds to take part in Europe trips organised by other countries and Rotary Districts in Europe.

### **Visits by parents, siblings and friends in Switzerland**

- Friends from home may not visit the inbound exchange student in Switzerland
- Rotary discourages visits by parents and family. If the family of the inbound absolutely insists on visiting their son/daughter, they must plan their visit in the 2nd half of the exchange during school breaks and they must – prior to any flight booking - ask for approval by the Swiss host club.
- Visits during major holidays such as Christmas, New Years and Easter are prohibited. Students should spend these holidays with their Swiss host parents/host Rotary clubs.
- Students are not allowed to travel outside of Switzerland/Liechtenstein with a family member or any other genuine friend during their exchange year.
- A visit by the parents at the end of the exchange year (= fetching their son/daughter) must be permitted by the Swiss host club as well as the chairperson of the Multidistrict Rotary Youth Exchange Switzerland. Prior to any flight booking, the parents must confirm in writing consent that they take over full responsibility for their child at the given moment of their arrival/ taking over their child. At this moment, the Rotary insurance coverage ends and the exchange year is officially over.

### **Return home**

**August-inbounds:** The exchange year finishes with the end of the Swiss school year (which begins in August and lasts to early - middle of July, exact dates differing from canton to canton).

***No return earlier than 30 of June, no return home later than 20 of July.***

**January-inbounds:** Inbounds are to travel home in the first half of January (the Swiss visa permit normally expires in the middle of January).

***No return home earlier than 02 of January and no return home later than 15<sup>th</sup> January of the following year.***

**Any return home earlier than the indicated above** are subject to special permission by the Swiss Multidistrict Chair RYE Switzerland/Liechtenstein.

Inbounds are requested to buy an open-return flight ticket (with a fictive/optional return date that can later be changed for a small fee). The final return date must be fixed about 6 months prior to departure from Switzerland (August-Inbounds: in December / January-Inbounds: in July).

According the guidelines of Rotary International, the inbound student must return home directly and immediately without making any stops on the way. Individual travel at the end of the exchange year is not allowed. This rule also applies to students being sent home early (early return).

Lenzburg, 30.03.2020