

Summer Short Term Exchange Program (STEP) Rotary Youth Exchange - District 5190

Frequently Asked Questions for Students and Parents

Is Summer Short Term Exchange new?

Short Term Exchange has been popular in Europe for decades. District 5190 has been doing short term exchanges for over 20 years. Like the long term exchange, a short term exchange can give the students the opportunity to experience the life changing benefits of youth exchange. Never has promoting world peace and understanding been more important – this is one of Rotary’s prime focus areas.

Who is a good candidate for a Summer Family to Family Exchange?

- Students ages 15-18 (when they leave for their exchange) who want to experience a new culture and want to step out of their comfort zone.
- Students who want to sample an exchange before applying for the long term exchange program.
- Students who can’t make a school year exchange work due to family, school or extracurricular conflicts.
- Students who are curious, flexible and excited to spend time with their new host sibling from another country.

How is STEP different from Long Term Exchange?

- STEP Family to Family is an approximately two month experience during school break vs. a 10 or 11 month experience which includes attending school in another country.
- STEP does not typically require a VISA and students will not be enrolled in school. Some STEP matches may however visit school for a few days depending on how school holidays match up.
- Family to Family exchange is just that – every applicant also hosts so the whole family is involved and must be approved as a host family.
- Matched students and their families work out their exact exchange dates and book and pay for their own flights.

How do students apply and are chosen for STEP?

- Students complete a preliminary STEP application which is at www.rye5190.org
- They submit the preliminary application to a local Rotary club.
- If the local Rotary club selects the student as a STEP applicant, their preliminary application is forwarded to the District 5190 Rotary Youth Exchange Committee.
- The student and at least one parent must attend a STEP Briefing Meeting.
- After the Briefing Meeting the student completes the full online STEP application.
- The student and at least one parent will be interviewed by the District STEP Committee.
- If the student is selected as a STEP candidate the student’s parents complete the Host Family Application which includes a background check.
- The student and at least one parent will attend orientation sessions.

When are STEP applications due?

- The applicant’s local Rotary club sets their preliminary application deadline.
- The local Rotary club needs to submit the approved preliminary application by November 11, 2022.

What does it cost to participate in STEP?

Family to Family applicants pay a \$500 program fee to D5190 Rotary Youth Exchange. Rotary approved insurance is \$75 - \$200. Families will be responsible for travel expenses and can use frequent flier miles if available. Students may use their own travel agency or they can use the travel agency that Rotary uses for the long term exchanges. Tickets are not to be purchased until the match is finalized and the student receives a final confirmation and has paid the program fee.

Parents are responsible for their student's spending money while on exchange.

What countries are choices for Summer STEP exchanges?

- We have a group of approximately 20 countries that we have exchange agreements with. The list is posted at www.rye5190.org. However, for the STEP program students may not be limited to those countries. If a student is interested in a country that is not on the list, we will try (but cannot guarantee) to place a student in that country.

How are matches made?

- Information about the student is exchanged between Rotary STEP partners. Once STEP partners believe they have a good match the partners will share information with the families to approve the match.
- Once both families approve being matched with each other – the match is finalized and students and families can begin communicating.

Can matches be between students of difference genders?

Typically girls are matched with a host sister and boys with a host brother but brother/sister pairs are possible.

If a student goes on Summer STEP could they still go on Long Term Exchange?

Yes! Students are welcome to apply for Long Term exchange after STEP. We hope that STEP families may love exchange so much that they may also want to host a long term student in their community.

What are the exact dates of the exchange?

For Family to Family exchange dates are worked out between the two families, with the approval of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program. Typically exchanges take place in June, July and August, and are 3 – 5 weeks in each country.

What is the timeline for the full process?

1. Submit preliminary application to local Rotary club. Check with local Rotary club for the application deadline.
2. Briefing Meeting (on Zoom) – November 19, 2022
3. Full Short Term Application due by December 9, 2022
4. STEP Interviews (in person or on Zoom) – week of January 2 – 7, 2023
5. STEP Orientation #1 (in person) – March 4, 2023 *
6. STEP Orientation #2 (in person) – May 27, 2023 *

*Date subject to change

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