

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. There are two STEP types – Family to Family exchange and camps/tours. We participate in the Family to Family exchange. 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 have the time to spend with their matched sibling (not working or too busy) and have a family that is excited to host and share their life and culture.
- Students who are curious, flexible and excited to spend two months with their new sister or brother 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 airline tickets.

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 preliminary applications due?

- The applicant's local Rotary club sets their preliminary application deadline.
- The local Rotary club needs to submit the approved preliminary application to the District STEP Committee by November 10, 2023.
- If you do not have a relationship with a local Rotary club, or there are no Rotary clubs in your area, let us know and we help you find a Rotary club.

What does it cost to participate in STEP?

Family to Family applicants pay a \$500 program fee to D5190 Rotary Youth Exchange. \$75-\$200 for Rotary approved insurance, buy or use frequent flier miles for travel, and 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 a specific country.

How are matches made?

- Information is exchanged between Rotary STEP partners including the applicant's gender, age, hobbies, interests and exchange country preference.
- Once STEP partners believe they have a good match – they exchange applications and review these in detail for compatibility.
- If coordinators believe that the two students/families would be a good match – they 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. Typically USA students go abroad first sometime after school ends and their exchange sibling will come to the USA later in July or August. Exchanges are typically about 3 – 5 weeks in each country.

Can frequent flyer miles be used for the airline ticket?

Yes – families book their own student’s flight so they can pay for a ticket or use miles. 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, has paid the program fee and has completed orientation.

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 18, 2023
3. Full Short Term Application due by December 8, 2023
4. STEP Interviews (on Zoom) – week of January 8 – 12, 2023
5. STEP Orientation #1 (in person) – March 2, 2024
6. STEP Orientation #2 (in person) – May 25, 2024

*Dates subject to change

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