

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

DISTRICT 6440 Youth Exchange Program

Computer Use, E-Mail, and Instant Messaging Guidelines

Most Rebound students would advise you to limit how often you e-mail and chat on-line with friends and family at home, especially during the first few months of your exchange. Too much emailing can limit your exposure to face to face contacts during your exchange. We ask you to **limit the amount of personal email use to 1-2 hours per week.**

Computer use can also be a source of host family/student controversy. It's very important to discuss with your host family the restrictions they place on the use of their computer. They may have strong preferences, such as: restricting what you download from the Internet, how often and how long you are on the computer, your use of chat rooms, and how you change any of the computer settings. The "Host Family First Night Questionnaire" posted on our website contains several questions regarding computer usage. Assume that you are not permitted to download or change computer settings. We ask you to **discuss these issues** to discover what they expect in order to avoid any problems.

Required Communication:

Inbound and Outbound students are required to file monthly reports using the form on the District 6440 RYE web site or via mail. The form can be found for download on the Volunteer & Info page. They are also required to communicate their address and phone number as they move from one host family to another using the form. This form is also found on the same webpage. If you do not already have email, establish a free email account (e.g. [Yahoo](#) or [Hotmail](#)) which can be accessible from anywhere in the world.

Communications within the RYE Group:

We encourage students to stay in touch with their new RYE friends during their exchange. This is important as all students are experiencing similar feelings, struggles, and anxieties. Reach out communications have been a source of support for the exchange students as they figure out how to manage their new life without the guidance of mom or dad. Communicate in your host country's language to further boost your language skills and development.

Recommendations

We strongly recommend that you limit e-mail to family and friends back home during the first 3 months of your exchange as this is a common cause of homesickness and cultural adjustment problems.

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1. Do not use the computer during the time that the family can be together during meals or activities. This time should be spent developing relationships with your family members, not chatting or e-mailing. Responsibly choose times when you are alone or have personal time.
2. Your host family has the final word on what is and is not permissible. The District will encourage them to restrict your computer usage.
3. Never download / view pornography. Always have permission to download new programs onto your host family's computer. Concerns for viruses outweigh your need to have access to special software.
4. Computer usage is a privilege that should be managed responsibly.
5. Don't spend all your free time playing computer games or some other computer related activity that will keep you away from making friends or being further involved with your host family or Rotary Club.
6. **Everything you learn about your host family while using their computer is personal and private—not to be discussed outside the family. You are a trusted member of the family, do not breach that trust.**