



Lions Clubs International

MD 201 Youth Exchange

Guidelines for Club Interview of Prospective Youth Exchanges

All participants should be interviewed by the nominating Lions Club to ensure that they are suitable to act as ambassadors for Lions Clubs International and Australia. In a few instances over the years some participating youth have not been interviewed at Club level before an application form has been completed and sent to the District YE Chairman. When this initial interview is not done it places the District Chairman in an unenviable position, as he or she probably does not know the youth concerned and has to accept at face value the suitability of the applicant. By the time the application form reaches the Multiple District Program Chairman, it is usually too late to stop the application if the youth is not of the highest standard.

All Lions Clubs proposing to nominate a youth for Lions Youth Exchange should be aware of the need for this important interview and some guidelines have been prepared to make it easier.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWING POTENTIAL EXCHANGEES

- Endeavour to make the candidate as relaxed as possible, sit in easy chairs rather than at opposite sides of a table.
- Initially, talk to the youth alone; that is, without the parents
- After interviewing the youth, invite the parents to join you. Attempt to answer questions, but only if you are sure of the answers. If you are not sure, take notes and call them back when you have the full information needed.

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- How did you first hear about Lions Youth Exchange?
- What influenced you to apply for this exchange program?
- What influenced your choice of country to visit?
- What are your hobbies? Would you like to tell me about them?
- What languages have you studied in school? (**France and Japan require some language skills**)
- What do you know about Lions Clubs?
- Do you know how large the Lions organisation is?
- What are your objectives if you are accepted into a program?
- Do you understand that Lions Youth Exchange is a cultural exchange and not a tourist holiday?
- Do you realise that when in a foreign country you are taken into a family home organised by Lions in that country and that you will be treated as one of the family; as a son or daughter?
- Are you prepared to speak to groups when you are overseas? Past exchangees have been required to address Lions Clubs and schools, and you may be interviewed for radio, TV or a newspaper. You may be given a Civic Welcome or attend a Mayoral reception and be required to speak.
- How would you prepare yourself for such speeches – what would you talk about? Some suggestions are (a) your family (b) Australia and Australians (c) your State (d) your local area (e) your hobbies (f) your school (g) Lions Clubs International.
- You may be asked to sing the Australian national Anthem or “Waltzing Matilda” – do you know the words of both of these?
- Do you smoke? Are you able to do without smoking for the period of the exchange? Your host family may not permit you to smoke in their home. This you must respect.
- Do you drink? Again the laws in some countries prohibit young people under the age of 21 from drinking. If you are offered a drink in your host family’s home for dinner or some other occasion it may be permissible, but first ask yourself “Would my parents approve of my drinking?”
- What do you think about drugs? That is, cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and prescribed drugs. You should be aware that the Lions Youth Exchange Program has a zero tolerance to illegal drugs and if you are caught with any, you will be sent straight home at your parent’s expense.

- ❑ Religious customs are not always the same as ours. Are you prepared to recognize and respect your host family's religion while you are staying in their home?
- ❑ Cultural differences exist in some countries where you may experience considerable inequality, particularly towards females. Are you prepared to accept this situation without criticism?
- ❑ What do you think the criteria of behaviour should be? Explain your ideas.
- ❑ You are required to wear the Youth Exchange uniform whilst traveling. You should be neatly dressed and well mannered at all times and follow the instructions of Chaperones or Lions in charge while travelling. Are you prepared to abide by these rules?
- ❑ You should not develop any romantic associations during the exchange. If you have a boy or girl friend at home, will you be able to cope with being away from him or her for the period of the exchange? If not, there is little point in wasting time and money on an impossible situation.
- ❑ Will you be able to cope with limited communication problems while overseas? It is not good to have regular contact with family or friends back home as this often causes homesickness – perhaps a call to your parents on arrival at a new host family, for Christmas, birthdays etc. Will you agree to this? Homesickness can be a major problem.
- ❑ Have you ever been away from home for this period of time before? Will you be able to cope?

Further information will be sent to you if you are accepted into the Program, from the District Youth Exchange Chairman, The Multiple District Youth Exchange Program Chairman, the Travel Agent and your nominating Lions Club. Please read all correspondence carefully, respond to requests promptly and as requested.

If accepted into the Lions Youth Exchange Program you will be expected to wear the Youth Exchange Uniform at all times when travelling as a Youth Exchangee. Apart from the obvious reasons that all Exchangees look neat and tidy, there are practical reasons for this.

- ✓ The uniforms make it easier for Chaperones, Host Families and others to locate you at busy airports.
- ✓ Exchangees travelling in uniforms make a good impression on customs and immigration officials worldwide and this usually ensures a smooth passage through these areas.
- ✓ The uniform identifies you as an Australian Lions Youth Exchangee.

THE UNIFORM CONSISTS OF:

- ❑ Navy blue & green Youth Exchange Shirt
- ❑ Navy blue polar fleece top with Youth Exchange logo embroidered
- ❑ Neat tailored dark jeans or slacks
- ❑ Predominantly dark sneakers or shoes
- ❑ Your name badge & Youth Exchange backpack

Wearing a uniform gives a sense of pride and in return the Youth Exchangees are shown a great deal of respect while travelling.

The Lions Youth Exchange Program has been running for over forty years and in that time thousands of Australian youth have benefited through a unique cultural exchange for six weeks. The Lions Youth Exchange Program has some definite and set rules but they are designed to ensure that you have a wonderful time while on exchange - they are not there to restrict you in any way nor preclude you from enjoying a trip that will be a once in a lifetime experience.

As one very recent Lions Exchangee quoted – *“I had an absolutely unforgettable six weeks and I know I will never have that much fun again”*.

Lions Youth Exchange. Try it. You'll Like It!!

www.lionsclubs.org.au/ye