



Youth For Understanding USA

Lines of Communication

International Student / Host Family

Area Rep

Area Coordinator

SSM who consults with

Field Director

District Counselor

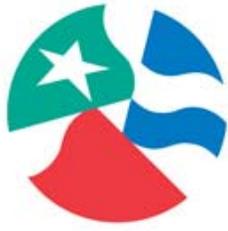
District Director

Student Support Liaison

National Partner Office

Area Rep in Home Country

Natural Parents



Youth For Understanding USA

What should I tell my Area Coordinator or SSM?

Support Issues

Call your Area Coordinator or Support Services Manager within a few days of identifying the issue, in addition to any mention of it on a contact report.

- Medical issues (non-emergency)
- Severe language problems after an initial period of adjustment
- Continuous poor grades (lower than a C-average in each class after first marking period) or other school adjustment issues reported by the school
- Continuous signs of culture shock (more than one month)
- Travel without proper permission (but with the knowledge of the host family or natural family)
- Caught drinking alcohol (on one occasion)
- Suspected drug use
- Suspected eating disorder
- Continuous frequent contact with natural family (for more than one month, having an effect on the student's adjustment or integration)
- Continued violations of host family rules (e.g. stayed out past curfew on more than one occasion)
- Continuous hygiene issues (for more than one month)
- Continuous difficulty in communicating with or integrating into host family (when the Area Rep feels the need for mediation or to meet privately with the student)
- Student seems isolated from peers

Serious Support Issues

These should be reported to the Area Coordinator or Support Services Manager as soon as possible (next business day). These examples are not grounds to page the Support Services Manager after hours:

- Caught taking drugs (on one or more occasions) or drinking alcohol (on more than one occasion) - no involvement of law enforcement.
- Medical emergencies of host family members
- Notice that host parents will be separating or divorcing
- Signs of an eating disorder (after having already monitored eating habits for 1-2 weeks)

- Continuous signs of culture shock (more than one month and after an initial intervention by the Area Rep)
- Driving
- Participating in dangerous activities without permission
- Pregnancy
- Concern about sexual conduct with peers (not involving a potential legal issue)
- Unapproved visit by natural parents or home country friends to the student
- School wants to dismiss student
- Student violated terms of a warning or probation
- Student reports odd or questionable verbal or physical behavior from host parent or other adult or a violation of privacy⁸⁰ Area Representative Training Manual
- Theft of student or host family belongings or damage to host family or student property in the home
- Student has no supervision at night for one night.

Very Serious Support Issues

These should be immediately reported to the Support Services Manager (SSM). These examples are grounds to page the Support Services Manager (SSM) after hours and if you cannot reach the Support Services Manager (SSM) within one hour, to call the YFU USA National Office emergency line at 1-800-424-3691:

- Medical emergencies requiring emergency evaluation and/or hospitalization or need to evacuate the student to the native country (including emergency reunion to the bedside of an immediate relative)
- Disappearance of a student
- Sexual, physical or emotional abuse of the student or by the student in any setting
- Student in inappropriate and unsafe host home environment (e.g., filth, no bed, no food, no supervision at night or for several days at a time)
- Suicidal ideation or psychotic/uncontrollable behavior by the student or a host family member
- Family demands immediate removal of the student from their home or student refuses to spend another night in the host family home (e.g., runs away to a friend or neighbor)
- Legal issues (anything that could involve the police)
- Natural disasters in host family locality – contact us with status of student and host family if known
- Death of student, immediate host family member or immediate natural family member



YFU must have certain policies to be consistent, fair, and protective of all its participants. The following policies provide a framework for the Youth For Understanding (YFU) participant support system. This support system includes the host family and host community, the exchanging YFU Organizations and the natural family.

Alcohol

Policy: Students are required to observe all laws of their host country with regard to the minimum drinking age. Students are also expected to follow host family guidelines on the use of alcohol. YFU students should not use alcohol in a manner that is excessive, unsuitable or embarrassing to the host family or Youth For Understanding. A student will be considered for Early Return if he/she demonstrates an inability to control his/her use of alcohol.

Specific policy for YFU USA: The legal drinking age in the United States is 21. Therefore, no YFU student can legally drink while on program. Students who drink are breaking the law and will be considered for Early Return. Alcohol related medical treatment may not be covered by student medical insurance.

Confidentiality

Policy: Due to the realities of a program such as YFU, confidential information must often be shared to resolve difficulties or facilitate understanding. All YFU staff and volunteers, including professional counselors, should refrain from promises of confidentiality, advising participants of the limitations of confidentiality within our organization. However, all YFU participants have the right to expect that YFU will share confidential information conservatively.

Counseling Sessions: Information shared with a YFU counselor or in a comparable situation is shared only on a need-to-know basis. Resulting reports are written to assist YFU staff in problem identification and problem solving. These reports are not to be given to non-staff or anyone outside of the organization (without the consent of the writer of the report). Counseling reports are sent to the partner National Office, but are not given to natural parents. Caution: laws in the sending or in the receiving country may require YFU to release such reports.

Student/Host Family's Personal Belongings: The student's right to privacy must be respected. YFU considers it unethical to examine and/or confiscate a student's personal belongings (e. g. mail, diary, etc.). No representative of YFU has the legal right to withhold from the student any legal personal possession such as a passport, visa form, or driver's license. However, in some situations, YFU does have the right to demand, as a condition for remaining on program, that a student agree to destroy or mail the item home.

Student/Host Family Address, Telephone Number, Status on Program: YFU prohibits any release of such information to non-YFU persons regarding a student or host family without the latter's permission (or that of the natural parent in the case of a student).

Specific policies for YFU USA: The student must respect the same rules regarding host family belongings.

YFU USA works on a need-to-know basis. Information is shared appropriately with others who need to know such information in order to help participants. This means that information that is shared by the student or the host family with the YFU volunteer may be communicated to YFU USA staff if it is directly related to the student's exchange experience.

Contact from Natural Family, Home Country Friends

Policy: Natural families and home country friends are strongly discouraged from visiting the exchange student during the program year, especially during the initial adjustment period. The interruption breaks the continuity of the relationship with the host family and may lessen the exchange experience for the student and the host family. This break sometimes leads to adjustment difficulties so serious that YFU may consider Early Return of the student to his/her home country. Natural families who consider such visits must contact their YFU National or District Office before any arrangements are made. Host families must not be expected to accommodate visiting family members or friends with regard to room, meals or transportation.

Specific policy for YFU USA: It is very important that students maintain limited contact with natural families during their stay in the USA. Their families will understand much better what the experience as an exchange student means if they are informed of student activities at appropriate intervals. Host families are also encouraged to write to their student's natural family. In this way, the experience includes all family members. Encourage your student to send an e-mail, letter or postcard home to let the natural family know that the student has arrived safely. However, students should not spend so much time writing, sending e-mail, or telephoning home that they don't have enough time to do anything else. Too much contact may increase feelings of homesickness and make the adjustment to the host country much more difficult. Thus, contact with the home country should be limited to not more than one e-mail or phone call per week. If YFU believes that a student is contacting his or her natural parents too often, both the student and the parents may be asked to limit such contact. If excessive contact continues, this can be grounds for Early Return.

Counseling

Specific policy for YFU USA: YFU USA offers counseling services to students and host families, if needed. These services include help from Area Representatives and/or District Office staff, and consultation, evaluation, and counseling by professional counselors arranged for by the YFU Support Services Manager (SSM). YFU USA does not provide on-going, therapeutic counseling. Recommendations from a counselor for such on-going treatment for the student will be grounds for an Early Return recommendation.

Host families and students should always try to talk first with each other if there is a problem or misunderstanding. If this does not resolve the situation, contact your Area Representative. If you are unable to reach a YFU volunteer, you should call the District Office at 1.866.4.YFU.USA.

Dangerous Activities

Policy: Youth For Understanding may withhold authorization for any activity if it is considered hazardous or unacceptable for the student to participate. **The following activities are strictly prohibited: hang-gliding, parachute jumping, piloting a private plane, bungee jumping, parasailing, and driving a car or motorcycle.**

National or District Directors may permit or prohibit some activities judged to involve an element of danger or a range of danger. Written permission will be required from both natural parents and host parents to authorize the student to participate. This permission must satisfy the YFU National Organization in the hosting country and must release Youth For Understanding and the host family from all responsibility during the time the student is involved in that activity. Further, it will be the responsibility of the

student and natural parents alone to obtain additional insurance if necessary.

Specific Policy for YFU USA: YFU USA has very specific guidelines regarding activities that are not permitted for exchange students and are not covered by the insurance students receive. There is an explanation of Dangerous Activities and a *Dangerous Activities Permission Form* included in the host family packet and available in the Host Family Lounge on my.yfu.org.

The *YFU USA Dangerous Activities Permission Form* (with all required signatures) must be on file at the District Office before any such activity begins. If the student is unable to get the form to his or her natural parents for their signatures, the natural parents can write a letter which states that they "release Youth For Understanding USA and the host family from all responsibility during the time our son/daughter is engaged in that activity." Permission to engage in a dangerous activity does not imply that the approved activity is covered by the insurance policy of the student. Host parents and students are responsible for reviewing the student insurance policy before engaging in any approved dangerous activities.

Students are not permitted to drive any motorized vehicles including: all-terrain vehicles (ATV's), automobiles, snowmobiles, trucks and motorized trail bikes, even on private property. Additionally, permission will not be granted under any circumstances for students to operate the following vehicles: go-carts, personal watercrafts, mopeds or motorcycles. Students are permitted to ride as passengers on the above vehicles provided they follow all the local laws and practice reasonable safety precautions. Lastly, permission will not be granted for students to participate in the following activities: bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachute jumping, parasailing, or piloting a private plane.

Students are expected to take adequate safety precautions and must follow all local laws when participating in any kind of physical activity (i.e., helmets may be required when riding a standard bicycle; life jackets are required when boating or white-water rafting, etc.)

If a student engages in a dangerous activity after permission is denied, that student will be considered for Early Return. If a student engages in a dangerous activity without ever having requested permission, the severity of the infraction and the amount of danger involved will determine the consequences.

Driving

Policy: Exchange students are not permitted to drive cars or motorcycles. This policy applies even if the student has an International Driver's License or the host family thinks that the student is a responsible and careful driver. Violators of this policy will be considered for Early Return.

Permission to use farm equipment, trail bikes and mopeds is different in each country, and the decision is left to the hosting National Office. If the hosting National Office allows the student to use one of the above vehicles, the student is expected to take safety precautions and obey the laws.

Specific policy for YFU USA: YFU USA does not allow students to take driver's education classes or obtain a driver's license. Students who drive or engage in driver's education classes will be considered for Early Return.

Drugs

Policy: Youth For Understanding students may not buy, sell, possess, or use drugs that are illegal in their home or host country. Violators of this policy will be considered for Early Return. A verified violation normally includes physical evidence, student admission of usage or reliable witnesses who have seen the student with or using drugs.

Specific policy for YFU USA: In cases of suspected drug use or abuse by a student, YFU USA reserves the right to request a drug test at the student's own expense.

Keeping your Students Safe

guidelines for YFU Area Reps

International exchange is an experience that thousands of teens enjoy every year. While students develop a new level of independence, caretaking responsibilities are transferred to Youth For Understanding. With such a task, a realistic approach to child safety is essential as we try to provide our students with a carefree and secure environment. So, as unseemly as it is, we must face the fact that exploitation of teenagers, whether it be financial, sexual or otherwise, is a harsh reality that we have a responsibility to be aware of and report immediately to your Field Director or District Office staff.

SAFEGUARDING AGAINST EXPLOITATION

There are steps that everyone at YFU can take to help ensure that our international students have a positive experience.

- Perform thorough reference checks on potential host families. If there are two host parents, ask references about each of them individually, rather than asking solely about the couple as a pair.
- If there are two host parents, talk with both of them, making sure that they are each committed, individually and as a couple, to welcoming in their new student. Regulations require both parents to be present for the interview unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- Provide proper orientation training to host families. Distribute the “Five Simple Safety Tips” handout to your host families and be ready to talk with them about it.
- Be sure to make direct contact with students each month. Leaving numerous messages with no return call could be a red flag in and of itself. An isolated student is more vulnerable and thus an easier target for abuse or exploitation.
- Ask students direct questions about their host family relationships, what they talk about and what chores they are expected to do. Ensure they have established their own bank account.

DETECTING SEXUAL ABUSE

There are behavioral signs that may indicate victimization. You should be alert to the signs of sexual abuse including

- a fear of certain places, people, or activities— especially being alone with certain people. **Exchange students should not be forced to give affection to an adult or teenager if they do not want to.** Be alert to signs that an exchange student is trying to avoid someone, and listen carefully when he or she tells you how they feel about someone.
- behavioral changes, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, fearfulness, and excessive crying.
- a sudden “acting out” of feelings or aggressive or rebellious behavior.

You should note that some of these behaviors may have other explanations. A child who studies abroad is entering a strange environment and may experience homesickness or anxieties that can lead to behaviors similar to the signs of

sexual molestation. Do not, however, simply discount the behavior as homesickness. Bring it to the attention of your Support Services Manager and Field Director right away. Even if the student's behavior is a result of homesickness, his or her exchange experience will be much more enjoyable if the cause of the distress is addressed, and the child feels comfortable discussing it.

Be aware also of clues about relationships with host family members. Specifically, if

- a host parent confides personal or marital problems to the student. Talking to a teenager about these topics is inappropriate and could be a sign that the relationship is heading in the wrong direction. Again, ask your students what types of things they talk about with their host parents.
- one host parent is remote and uninvolved in the hosting experience. Though this may be natural in some households, be aware that it can point toward "hosting for the wrong reasons."

WHAT TO DO

At some point a student in your area may tell you that someone has exploited or molested him or her. If this happens, you should be prepared to help the child. Follow these guidelines, and report it to your District Office Support Services Manager immediately.

DON'T claim that the student misunderstood what happened.

DON'T blame the student.

DON'T panic or overreact to the information disclosed by the student.

DO listen to and believe the student. Discounting what the student is reporting can result in the oversight of a serious situation.

DO believe that the behavior, however serious or benign, is making the student feel uncomfortable, which is what we must protect against. If the student is uncomfortable, you must react.

DO respect the student's privacy. It is important that you provide a safe space for the student to talk about what happened, and that you discuss the situation only with your Support Services Manager and Field Director or other District Office Staff.

DO listen to host families when they report improper behavior, whether it is their own or their student's. Passing information on to your Support Services Manager, Field Director or District Office staff is critical because it allows for necessary safeguards and precautions to be put in place.

REPORTING CASES OF EXPLOITATION

Remember, most people are not trained to make judgments about whether a child has been abused. If you suspect that an exchange student in your area is the victim or perpetrator of exploitation, you should report this to your Support Services Manager and Field Director or District Office staff immediately. A YFU employee will follow up appropriately, according to established YFU USA protocol. It is not your role to confront the abuser—you must report and carefully document the allegations. Please note that if your profession requires you to report directly to authorities, to be sure to coordinate the report with the Support Services Manager.

Knowing what you know now, keep in mind that sexual exploitation should not be confused with physical contact that is a true expression of affection. A warm and healthy relationship can exist between a host family and exchange student **if all family members respect one another and place reasonable limits on physical interaction**. If a student or host family comments on any level of discomfort though, you must react appropriately; report it to your Support Services Manager, Field Director or District Office staff.

Dangerous Activity Participation Policy



Intercultural Exchange Program

To participate in a dangerous activity, Youth For Understanding USA (YFU USA) requires that students obtain special permission. Also, in many cases students must be licensed or certified in the activity and/or provide proof of supplemental medical insurance to cover accidental injuries or death in the pursuit of the high risk or dangerous activity.

Prior to participating in any of the dangerous activities listed here, students must provide their District Office a *Dangerous Activity Permission to Participate* form signed by the student, natural parent(s), host parent(s), Area Representative, and YFU Support Services Manager or District Director. Student and natural parents must provide proof of other medical insurance coverage as a condition to YFU approving participation in an activity not indemnified through YFU USA group insurance or YFU partner insurance.

Before engaging in a high-risk activity NOT expressly listed below, students must inform their District Office. ***The assumption should always be that medical, accident, and repatriation insurance is NOT in place if a student takes part in a high-risk activity without YFU's permission.***

Students are expected to take adequate safety precautions and must follow all local laws when participating in any kind of physical activity (i.e. helmets may be required when riding a standard bicycle, life jackets are required when boating or white water rafting, etc.). Violating YFU rules governing dangerous activities (e.g., driving) will nullify a student's medical/liability coverage through YFU.

YFU USA provided insurance does not provide liability coverage for damage caused by a student in pursuit of Dangerous Activities; the student and the natural family are responsible for finding out whether their private insurance coverage applies. For more information on insurance coverage refer to the YFU website at www.yfu-usa.org.

A. Dangerous Activities Requiring Permission Form and Guidelines

Climbing and Rappelling Walls in Controlled Settings

Students must complete appropriate training, use prescribed safety gear, and be supervised by a host parent or responsible adult.

Driving Farm Tractors

Students are permitted to drive standard farm tractors on private property. Instruction and supervision by a host parent or responsible adult are required. Driving tractors or other farm equipment must be in the context of helping out with chores and not a recreational activity. For students covered under the YFU USA insurance plan, driving a tractor is an exception to the motor vehicle exclusion in the medical portion of the policy and it is ultimately up to the insurance company to decide what constitutes a "standard farm tractor" should a claim arise.

Driving Ride-on Lawn Mowers

Students are permitted to drive standard ride-on mowers on private property. Instruction and supervision by a responsible adult are required. Use of ride-on mowers must be in the context of helping out with chores and not a recreational activity. For students covered under the YFU USA insurance plan, driving a ride-on mower is an exception to the motor vehicle exclusion in the medical portion of the policy and it is ultimately up to the insurance company to decide what constitutes a "standard ride-on mower" should a claim arise.

Horse Jumping

Students must be trained and supervised by a qualified instructor. Students must follow safety guidelines and utilize prescribed protective gear. Any injuries sustained during horse *racing* are excluded from Nationwide Medical coverage.

Hunting and Other Use of Firearms

Students must complete a certified training course in the use of firearms or other weapons used. Students must be properly licensed for both the type of game (animals) sought and the weapon used (including air/spring powered guns and bows and arrows). Students must follow safety guidelines, utilize prescribed protective gear, and follow all local laws. The hunting activity must be supervised by host parent(s) or a responsible adult.

Paint Ball and Archery

Students must complete appropriate training, follow safety guidelines, use prescribed safety gear, and be supervised by a host parent/responsible adult.

Scuba Diving

Students must complete PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) or NAUI (National Association of Underwater Instructors) certified training course and be accompanied by a certified guide. (If student has already completed training course, he/she must provide proof of current certification and be accompanied by a responsible adult.) Students must follow safety guidelines and utilize prescribed protective gear.

Skiing/Snowboarding Outside Ski Resort Maintained Trails/Slopes

Students must complete appropriate training, use prescribed safety gear, follow advisory precautions on local conditions, and be supervised by host parent or a responsible adult.

White Water Rafting

Students must be trained and accompanied by a certified guide, follow safety guidelines, and wear prescribed protective gear, including a life jacket.

B. Dangerous Activities Requiring Supplemental Medical Insurance, Permission Form, and Guidelines

Rappelling and Rock Climbing on Natural Formations

For all rappelling, rock climbing, and technical climbing, students must complete a training course and be accompanied by a certified instructor (if student has already completed a training course, he or she must provide proof of current certification and must be accompanied by a responsible adult). Students must follow safety guidelines and utilize prescribed protective gear.

Spelunking

Students must be trained and accompanied by a certified guide, follow safety guidelines, and utilize prescribed protective gear.

Riding in a Private Plane/Vehicle/Device for Aerial Navigation

The pilot must be properly licensed, local laws followed, and all prescribed safety measures in place. ***Natural parents must provide proof of medical insurance coverage.***

C. Prohibited Dangerous Activities

Bungee jumping

Parachute jumping

Piloting a private plane

Hang gliding

Parasailing

Mountaineering

Driving

PROHIBITED (even on private property): operation of vehicles including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), automobiles, snowmobiles, trucks, motorized trail bikes, go-carts, personal watercrafts, mopeds, motorcycles or snowmobiles.

Students are permitted to ride as passengers on the above vehicles provided they follow all local laws and safety precautions, BUT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THEY PERMITTED TO DRIVE. Students are **not** covered for injuries/death to themselves or others for accidents when they are driving a vehicle.

Dangerous Activity Permission to Participate



Intercultural Exchange Program

This completed Permission to Participate Form with all required signatures must be on file at the YFU District Office before the activity begins. If you are unable to get the form to your natural parents for their signature(s), they can write a letter which states that they “release Youth For Understanding and the host family from all responsibility during the time our son/daughter is engaged in that activity.” This letter must include their signature(s) and the date permission was given.

Permission to engage in a dangerous activity does not imply that the approved activity is covered by the insurance policy of the student. Host parents, natural parents, and students are responsible for reviewing the student insurance policy before engaging in any approved dangerous activities.

For each activity requiring permission, provide a rationale for why permission should be granted, including: prior or current training, experience, use of proper equipment, qualified supervision, etc. Dates can be specific or cover the entire YFU program period. A copy of this form will be returned to the student when approval is granted. Please make additional requests on separate forms.

DANGEROUS ACTIVITY AND PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

YFU Student Name

YFU Student Home Country

YFU Student Date of Birth

Student's Age

Description of Activity

Date(s) Activity is Planned

Reason for Participating

MEDICAL INSURANCE CONFIRMATION – *To participate in any activity under Section B: Dangerous Activities Requiring Supplemental Medical Insurance, Permission Form, and Guidelines, confirm supplemental medical insurance here:*

This student is covered by the following medical policy held by natural parents, and this policy includes repatriation of remains benefit (insurance information is required for approval):

Insurer's Name: _____

Policy Number: _____

Policy Effective Dates: _____

RELEASE

In consideration of participating in the Activity listed above, I represent, that I understand the nature of this Activity and that I am qualified, in good health, and in proper physical condition to participate in such Activity. I acknowledge that if I believe event conditions are unsafe, I will immediately discontinue participating in the Activity. I fully understand that this Activity involves risks of serious bodily injury, including permanent disability, paralysis and death, which may be caused by my own actions, or inactions, those of others participating in the event, the conditions in which the event takes place, or the negligence of YFU and the host family; and that there may be other risks either not known to me or not readily foreseeable at this time; and I fully accept and assume all such risks and all responsibility for losses, costs, and damages I incur as a result of my participation in the Activity, during the time I am engaged in the activity(ies) described on this form. I hereby release and discharge YFU and the host family from all responsibility from all liability, claims, demands, losses, or damages on my account caused or alleged to be caused in whole or in part by the negligence of YFU and the host family, including negligent rescue operations; and I further agree that if, despite this release, waiver of liability, and assumption of risk I, or anyone on my behalf, makes a claim against YFU and the host family, I will indemnify, save, and hold harmless YFU and the host family from any loss, liability, damage, or cost which anyone may incur as the result of such claim. I have read this RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY, ASSUMPTION OF RISK, AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT, understand that I have given up substantial rights by signing it and have signed it freely and without any inducement and assurance of any nature and intend it be a complete and unconditional release of all liability to the greatest extent allowed by law and agree that if any portion of this agreement is held to be invalid the balance, notwithstanding, shall continue in full force and effect.

NATURAL PARENT CONSENT

I, the minor's parent and/or legal guardian, understand the nature of the above referenced activities and the minor's experience and capabilities and believe the minor to be qualified to participate in such activity. During the time my (our) son or daughter is engaged in the activity(ies) described on this form I (we) hereby release, discharge, YFU and the host family from all responsibility from all liability, claims, demands, losses, or damages and covenant not to sue and AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND SAVE AND HOLD HARMLESS YFU and the host family from all liability, claims, demands, losses, or damages on the minor's account caused or alleged to have been caused in whole or in part by the negligence of YFU and the host family or otherwise, including negligent rescue operations, and further agree that if, despite this release, anyone on the minor's behalf makes a claim against YFU and the host family, I WILL INDEMNIFY, SAVE AND HOLD HARMLESS YFU and the host family from any litigation expenses, attorney fees, loss liability, damage, or cost may incur as the result of any such claim.

SIGNATURES FOR APPROVAL

Student Signature

Date

Natural Parent Signature

Date

Host Parent Signature

Date

Area Representative Signature

Date

Support Services Manager or District Director Signature

Date

Permission to Travel Policy



Youth For Understanding USA has a responsibility to assure student safety to the greatest extent possible; have knowledge of a student's location; and ensure that students participate in host family activities and school programs. Any travel that might have an impact on any of these factors requires advance approval from YFU. YFU USA has the final say in approving travel. Unauthorized travel may be cause for Early Return of the student.

Travel that is permitted includes: travel with the host family; travel accompanied by another adult authorized by YFU; independent travel to visit an appropriate adult or host authorized by YFU; trips sponsored by the high school, or religious or youth organizations if YFU determines there is appropriate adult supervision and the cost is appropriate; YFU sponsored trips.

Travel that is NOT permitted includes: independent travel by the student; trips sponsored by another exchange program, travel agent, community member; etc.

Prior YFU approval is not required for travel with the host family within the US that does not interrupt school attendance AND any costs to be paid by the student amount to under \$150. However, to ensure that YFU personnel are able to reach students quickly in the case of accident, illness in the student's natural family, or a natural or man-made disaster, a completed Permission to Travel Form must be submitted to YFU USA.

Prior YFU approval is required for travel outside of the USA or if the host family is asking the student to pay \$150 or more to go on a family trip. In such cases, the YFU national office and natural parents must sign specific documents.

Following are steps that must be taken prior to student travel:

- A completed *Permission to Travel Form* must be submitted to YFU USA by the host family for any trips away from the host family home lasting more than two days.
- Students or hosts should not purchase any airline, bus, or train tickets prior to receiving YFU approval, as many tickets are non-refundable. YFU USA will not reimburse, nor accept any responsibility for financial loss incurred by purchasing tickets or paying deposits prior to obtaining approval from the YFU district office for such activities. Special note: Travel as a passenger or otherwise in any private plane, vehicle, or device for aerial navigation is not covered by YFU USA medical insurance. Such travel requires separate approval and insurance – contact the district office.
- For the following cases, the *Permission to Travel Form* and other supporting documents are required to be submitted to the district office, and YFU USA approval granted, before travel can commence:
 - travel with the host family outside of the United States
 - travel that interferes with school attendance
 - independent travel to visit an authorized "host"
 - accompanied travel without host parents
 - travel that requires the student to pay \$150 or more
 - sponsored trips

Permission to Travel Procedures

1. Complete all applicable sections of the Permission to Travel Form. Forms can be obtained from your YFU Area Representative, online at www.yfu-usa.org or by calling the District Office at 1.866.4.YFU.USA (1.866.493.8872).
2. Attach any additional paperwork required (invitations, natural parent permission).
3. Get required signatures (school principal, host parents, responsible officer).
4. Forward the paperwork to your District Office and notify your Area Representative.
5. YFU will contact you to let you know if your trip is approved.

The YFU District Director has final authority to grant or deny permission to travel. Unauthorized travel may constitute going Off Program and result in dismissal of student and termination of visa status.

Please review the following definitions and policies prior to completing the Permission to Travel Form.

School Attendance. YFU USA does not allow travel to interfere with school attendance. Students may not travel during school days unless they have the permission of the school principal (or someone authorized to give this permission) and the permission of their District Director. The District Director has final authority, and may deny permission even if the school grants permission to be absent. YFU USA will not consider requests to miss school when the travel is to accompany visiting natural parents or friends from the native country or if the travel is independent travel.

Travel Outside the US. Travel to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean with the host family will usually be allowed. Other travel outside the United States is normally not allowed. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis. All such travel must be approved by the District Office in advance of arrangements being made.

Most countries have additional visa requirements for entry and many of our students do not meet these requirements without completing an application for a visa. To check these requirements, visit the website of the country's consulate. A student must have a multiple entry visa to re-enter the US, and must also get the "**Certificate of Eligibility, Form DS-2019**" signed by the YFU responsible officer prior to any travel outside the US **or the student will be denied re-entry at the border. This is a Department of Homeland Security requirement.** Travel validation, once secured, is valid for up to one year.

To secure the required responsible officer signature, send the "Certificate of Eligibility, Form DS-2019", which should be located with the student's passport, by a traceable method to: **Responsible Officer, Youth For Understanding USA, 6400 Goldsboro Road, Suite 100, Bethesda, MD 20817.** Do not send your passport, just the certificate. Please include a check or money order payable to YFU USA for \$10 to cover return of the documents by express service. You may also enclose pre-paid return postage for a traceable method. This process must be initiated no later than two weeks prior to the departure from the USA to ensure documents are received on time.

Means of Travel for Independent Travel. For independent travel of a student, commercial air travel is usually acceptable. Travel by train is approved on a case by case basis. Travel by commercial bus is rarely allowed. Students must travel directly point to point; touring the US en-route is not permitted. The student's natural family must give written permission and relieve YFU of any responsibility for student safety during the trip.

Authorized Hosts and Responsible Adults/ Accommodation. An authorized host for independent travel or a responsible adult for accompanied travel is defined as an adult age 25 years or older who has a strong relationship (friend or relative) with the host or natural family. Overnight (or longer) visits to stay with anyone who is not an adult age 25 years or older is not allowed. Visits to stay in hostels, college dormitories or hotels without an authorized adult or host parent will not be permitted. Under no circumstances may a student miss school to undertake such travel.

Sponsored Trips. Trips sponsored by the high school, or religious or youth organizations, will usually be permitted. YFU will determine if there is appropriate adult supervision, that the trip is fully sponsored by the organization or school, and that the cost seems reasonable. The student's natural family must give written permission and relieve YFU of any responsibility for student safety during the trip. For safety and legal reasons, approval will not be given for students to travel with other groups and/or organizations. If a trip requires the student to pay by check, YFU urges the student to get a cashiers check or money order to pay for the cost. The student should not give money to the host family in exchange for a host family check.

Travel with Student's Natural Family. Such visits and/or travel are strongly discouraged by YFU. If a student and his or her natural family are considering traveling together, the approval process for Accompanied Travel must be followed. It is important to remember that such visits or travel may cause adjustment problems so serious that YFU may have to consider an Early Return of the student. Under no circumstances may a student miss school to undertake such travel.

Youth For Understanding USA Trips. YFU Area Representatives are permitted to arrange trips for students that cost less than \$300 per student. Any trips that will cost more than that amount, according to YFU policy, must be operated by a YFU-approved tour operator, and announcement of such trips will be made by mail from the District Office. Students must contact the district office at 1.866.4.YFU.USA for clarification on any trips that do not follow this policy.

Trips with Host Family which require student to pay. If a host family trip requires the student to pay \$150 or more of the necessary cost, the host family and student must write an agreement which includes: the date, the specific cost, what the cost covers, by when the student needs to pay the host family, and signatures from both the student and host family. This travel must also be approved by YFU USA.

YFU USA must know student whereabouts at all times, and must approve most travel prior to finalizing plans. Failure to obtain approval from YFU USA may result in forfeiting any monies paid if permission to travel is denied. Your District Office has the final authority to give or deny permission for travel. Unauthorized travel may result in a YFU determination that the student has taken him or herself Off Program.

Complete all sections of this form that apply to your proposed travel and return it to your YFU District Office at least **two weeks** prior to travel.

Student/Host Family Information

Student Name: _____

Host Family Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email address (for trip approval notification): _____

Proposed Travel Information (*Attach Planned Itinerary*)

Departure Date: _____ Return Date: _____

Where are you staying? Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

(If lodging at more than one location, attach an additional sheet detailing above information for each.)

Traveling by: Commercial Airline (attach planned itinerary) Train (attach planned itinerary)
 Private Auto (complete details below) Other

Vehicle make, model, license #: _____ Name(s) of Adult Driver(s): _____

Name of Auto Insurance Provider and Policy Number: _____

What Type of Travel is This? (*Check appropriate boxes*)

A. Travel with Host Family, and:

- The trip is longer than 2 days (if this is the only box checked, this form must still be submitted, but YFU approval is not required)
- The student, if asked to contribute financially, will contribute more than \$150 (complete section C)
- Student will travel outside the USA (complete section E)
- Student will miss school (complete section F)

B. Accompanied Travel without Host Parents:

Accompanying Adult: _____ Date of Birth (must be 25 or older): _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Relationship to host family or student: _____

- Written natural parent permission is attached (or will be faxed to District Office).

C. Fee-Based Trips (school, church, or host family)

Please complete the following information for ALL Fee-Based Trips:

Fee paid by student is \$ _____ which includes: Transportation Food Lodging Other _____

Please confirm that:

- Other vehicle drivers are age 21+ and have \$300,000 combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage auto insurance.
- Written natural parent permission is attached (or will be faxed to District Office).

Please complete the following information for Fee-Based Trips with a School or Church:

Sponsoring School or Church: _____

Name of Adult in Charge: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Cell Phone numbers during trip: _____

Student or host family is a member of sponsoring group: Yes No

Please confirm that: Bus, if used, is a fully insured commercial carrier with professional driver.

- Additional page with sponsor trip information and itinerary is attached.

D. "Independent" Travel Out-of-Town

Receiving Family's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Relationship to host family or student: _____

- Written natural parent permission is attached (or will be faxed to District Office).
- Letter of invitation from receiving family, accepting YFU policies, is attached. If traveling further with receiving family, attach additional page with itinerary and information on where student can be reached.

E. Travel Outside the United States

What country will the exchange student be travelling to? _____

On what date does the student's passport expire? _____

Confirm that these visa requirements are in the passport: Certificate of Eligibility (DS-2019 Form) CBP Stamp (formerly, I-94 paper insert)

- US Visa is "Multiple Entry" and valid until: _____

Does country being visited admit persons from student's home country? Yes No

Does country being visited require a visa for student to enter? Yes No

(Note: The answer to this question may be different for non-US citizens. Student is responsible for all visa application requirements.)

- Written natural parent permission is attached (or will be faxed to District Office).
- Certificate of Eligibility DS-2019 mailed to YFU USA national office with a \$10.00 check for travel validation.

F. School Absence

The student will miss _____ days of school for this trip.

Does country being visited admit persons from student's home country? Yes No

Has the exchange student missed school before to travel? Yes No If yes, how many days? _____

School Authority grants permission for the student to be absent from school. Yes No

School Authority's Signature: _____

Print Name and Title: _____ Telephone: _____

YFU Area Representative was notified by host parent on (date): _____

Host Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Host Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

YFU District Director Approval: _____ Date: _____