



Rotary Youth Exchange -- District 6250 Computer Use, E-Mail, and Instant Messaging

Exchange Guidelines

Most former RYE students would advise you to limit how often you e-mail and chat online with friends and family at home, especially during the first few months of your exchange. Emailing can limit your involvement in your exchange—meeting other persons in person. We agree, and ask you to **limit the amount of personal computer time use to ONE (1) hour per day.**

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. Please attempt to discover what they expect in order to avoid any problems.

1. If you do not already have one, establish a free email account (e.g. Gmail or Hotmail) which will be accessible from anywhere in the world.
 - a. **Required Communication:** Inbound students are required to submit monthly reports using the form on the District 6250 web site (Monthly Reports) or via e-mail. They are also required to communicate their address change when they move from one host family to another.
 - b. **Peer Communication:** We encourage the students to stay in touch with their peers during their exchange. This is important as they are all experiencing similar feelings, struggles, and anxieties. Peer communication has 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.
 - i. *Peers are American Friends and other Exchange Students*
2. We strongly recommend that you limit e-mail to family and friends during the first 3 months of your exchange, as this is a common cause of cultural adjustment problems.
3. Do not use the computer during prime family time. 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.
4. The “**Host Family First Night Questionnaire**” handout contains several questions regarding computer usage. Please be sure and review these with your host family before you begin using the computer.
5. Your host family has the final word on what is and is not permissible; therefore, they may restrict you to less than the one (1) hour per day that District 6250 allows.
6. Assume that you are not permitted to download or change computer settings unless you have discussed computer usage with your host family. Computer usage is a privilege that should be managed responsibly.
7. If you have your **own computer laptop**, please follow the family guidelines about computer time. If you abuse the family rules, your host family can take your computer away for a period of time. Do not stay up late in your room with your computer. It will make it harder for you to wake up for school the next morning.
8. **Cell phones** – if your club gives you a cell phone, please follow their rules. There may be rules on how many text messages and minutes you have each month. If you break the rules, your phone may be taken away from you. In the USA, cell phones are essential for connecting with other American students. You don't want to lose your phone privileges.
9. 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.