YOUTH FOR UNDERSTANDING
Intercultural Exchange Programs

PERMISSION TO TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

YFU 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 & school programs. Any travel that might have an impact on these factors requires advance approval from YFU. The Support Services Manager has final authority to grant or deny permission to travel. Unauthorized travel places the student in Off Program status and may result in dismissal of the student and termination of visa status.

No International Travel can be approved / allowed for any student on a CBYX scholarship during the 2026-27 program year. The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs holds the visas for these students and has indicated they will not permit CBYX students to travel internationally during their program year. If a host family plans to leave the US during their CBYX student's exchange, YFU USA must identify a temporary, vetted host family for that student for the duration of the host family's trip.

Students who are not on a CBYX scholarship *may* be allowed to travel internationally; however, this is entirely dependent on the status of their visa. **The student must carry a "multiple entry" visa in order for YFU USA to consider an international travel request.** See page 2, under "Travel Outside the US" for more info.

Permission to Travel Form, Supplemental Documentation, & YFU USA approval is required for the following types of trips:

* International Travel (not permitted for CBYX students)
* Trip requires student to miss 5 or more days of school
* Trip requires student to contribute $300 or more of their own money
* Trip with another family or authorized host (must be 25 or older)
* School sponsored trip
* Trip sponsored by religious, community, or youth organization
* Independent travel to visit an authorized adult (must be 25 or older)
* Trip planned with natural family at the end of the exchange year

Student travel with the host family that does not require $300 or more of the student's money, student does not miss 5 or more days of school, and travel remains inside the US does not require a Permission to Travel Form or YFU approval.

YFU USA will consider travel factors such as cost / length / supervising adult, and other trip information. Please note the coding below for your type of travel and submit all additional documentation required for permission. Please note that some travel may fall under more than one category of documents needing to be submitted. Travel will not be approved unless all required documentation is submitted.

Coding:

I	Detailed itinerary
INV	Invitation from inviting adult
NPP	Written natural parent permission
SP	Written school permission
VR	Visa requirement check
DS-2019	Must be submitted to YFU USA for signature by Alternative Responsible Officer

(See table on page 2)

Types of Trips	Required Documentation
Trips that cost student $300 or more	NPP
Trips that cause student to miss 5 or more days of school	SP
School sponsored trips	NPP, I
Trips with another family or authorized host (adult must be 25 or older)	NPP, I
Trip sponsored by religious, community, or youth organization	NPP, I
Independent travel to visit an authorized adult (adult must be 25 or older)	NPP, I, INV
Trips planned with natural family at the **end** of the exchange program	NPP, I
International trips / trips outside of the USA **DS-2019 must be submitted to YFU USA for authorized signature**	NPP, I, VR

Steps to Gain Trip Approval:

-Complete all applicable sections of the online Permission to Travel Form (found in host family account).
-Gather required supplemental documentation.
-Upload all documents to the online Permission to Travel Form.
-Wait for YFU approval, denial, or a request for more information. You will receive an email from "Web Master."

Travel Policies

School Attendance: YFU does not allow travel to interfere with school attendance beyond the school's policy. Students may not travel during school days unless they have the permission of the school principal (or someone authorized to give permission). The SSM has final authority, and may deny permission even if the school grants permission to be absent. YFU does not allow travel with natural family or friends from the native country during school time.

Travel Outside the US: Travel to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean with the host family will usually be allowed. Exceptions for travel with the host family to another foreign country may be made on a case-by-case basis. All such travel must be approved by YFU USA *prior to* arrangements being made. **Please note that CBYX students are not permitted to travel outside of the US during program year 2026-27.**

Before YFU USA can consider travel that requires a student to leave the US, YFU staff must confirm that the student has a multiple entry visa. If the student does not have a visa that grants multiple entries, the student may not leave the US during their program year; as they will not be permitted to re-enter the US. Please check your student's visa, to the right of their photo, under "Entries." If an "M" appears - for multiple entries - a travel request may be submitted. If an "S" appears - for single entry - this means the student cannot leave the US and re-enter.

Please note that most countries have additional visa requirements for entry, and many 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. Several countries recommend all minors traveling without both natural parents carry a notarized consent letter at all times, in the event immigration officials request one. This is a measure to prevent human trafficking.

The student must have their **"Certificate of Eligibility, Form DS-2019"** signed by the YFU Alternate Responsible Officer prior to any travel outside the US. If the student does not have this document with the required YFU signature, the student will be denied re-entry at the border (even with a multiple entry visa). This is a Department of State requirement.

To secure the required signature, the student / host family should email a clear, complete photo, or scanned copy, of their DS-2019, to their Support Services Manager. YFU will electronically sign the DS-2019 and email the signed copy back to the student & host family. Please print out the signed DS-2019 and take it, along with the student's original DS-2019, on the trip. A Permission to Travel request must be submitted, along with all required documentation, prior to YFU signing the DS-2019. **Please allow at least three weeks for approval of any international trip.**

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. YFU USA does not generally approve for students to travel with another exchange organization.

Student 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 only. Travel by commercial bus is rarely allowed. Students must travel directly from point to point; touring the USA en-route is not permitted. The student's natural family must give permission and relieve YFU of any responsibility for student safety during the trip. Trip itinerary and a letter of invitation from the receiving host must be submitted.

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 family or natural family. Overnight (or longer) visits to stay with anyone who is not an adult age 25 years or older are 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.

Trips with the Student's Natural Family: Such visits and/or travel are strongly discouraged by YFU. If a student and his/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. Therefore, YFU will only consider such travel requests toward the end of the exchange. Under no circumstances may a student miss school to undertake such travel.

BELO Trips: These trips are offered to all YFU students. YFU contracts with a travel agency called BELO to provide opportunities for students to see more of the US while they are on program. YFU staff will provide students and host families with BELO trip information at the beginning of the exchange year. **A YFU Permission to Travel form is not required for these trips.** BELO staff will keep YFU informed of who will be on the trips. YFU reserves the right to remove a student from any BELO trip for academic or behavioral problems that may occur.

Trips with Host Family Which Require Student to Pay: If a host family trip costs the student $300 or more, YFU requires written permission from the natural parents acknowledging the cost. YFU recommends that the host family and student write an agreement which includes the date, the cost, what the cost covers, when the student needs to pay the host family back (if applicable), and signatures from the student, host family, and natural family.

Host Family Trips Without the Student: Occasionally, host families must travel without taking their student along. When this occurs, students are permitted to stay with another YFU host family, or with a family that is known to and designated by their current host family. Students may stay with the temporary family for up to **6 nights**; either in the host family home or the temporary family's home (if a CBYX student stays with an interim host family for **3 nights** or more, the interim family must complete the entire vetting process). Host family must inform LC and / or Community Manager prior to the trip.

If an authorized adult stays with the student in the host family's home, the host family must add the authorized adult to their application. If the student stays in the temporary family's home, the temporary family must complete the YFU host family application and submit criminal background checks. If the student stays with a temporary family for 7 nights or more, the interim family must complete the entire YFU application process.

Travel That Is Not Allowed

- Natural family visits during the program year
- Independent travel to visit someone younger than 25
- Trips where a student misses more days of school than school policy allows
- Trips sponsored by another exchange program or travel agency

Additional Comments

- Host family / student must notify the Support Services Manager if trip details change or if the trip is cancelled.
- **Do not purchase airline, bus, or train tickets prior to receiving YFU approval as many tickets are non-refundable.** YFU will not reimburse, nor accept any responsibility for financial loss incurred by purchasing tickets or paying deposits prior to obtaining approval from the SSM.
- Students who choose to go on a trip that has been denied by YFU risk being placed on Warning or Probation.
- YFU USA reserves the right to change this policy due to Department of State or Homeland Security guidance or procedures.