

A brief overview of NZIIU Outbound Exchanges

Mostly for parents of NZ students
going on exchange with NZIIU



NZIIU

New Zealand

Institute for International Understanding

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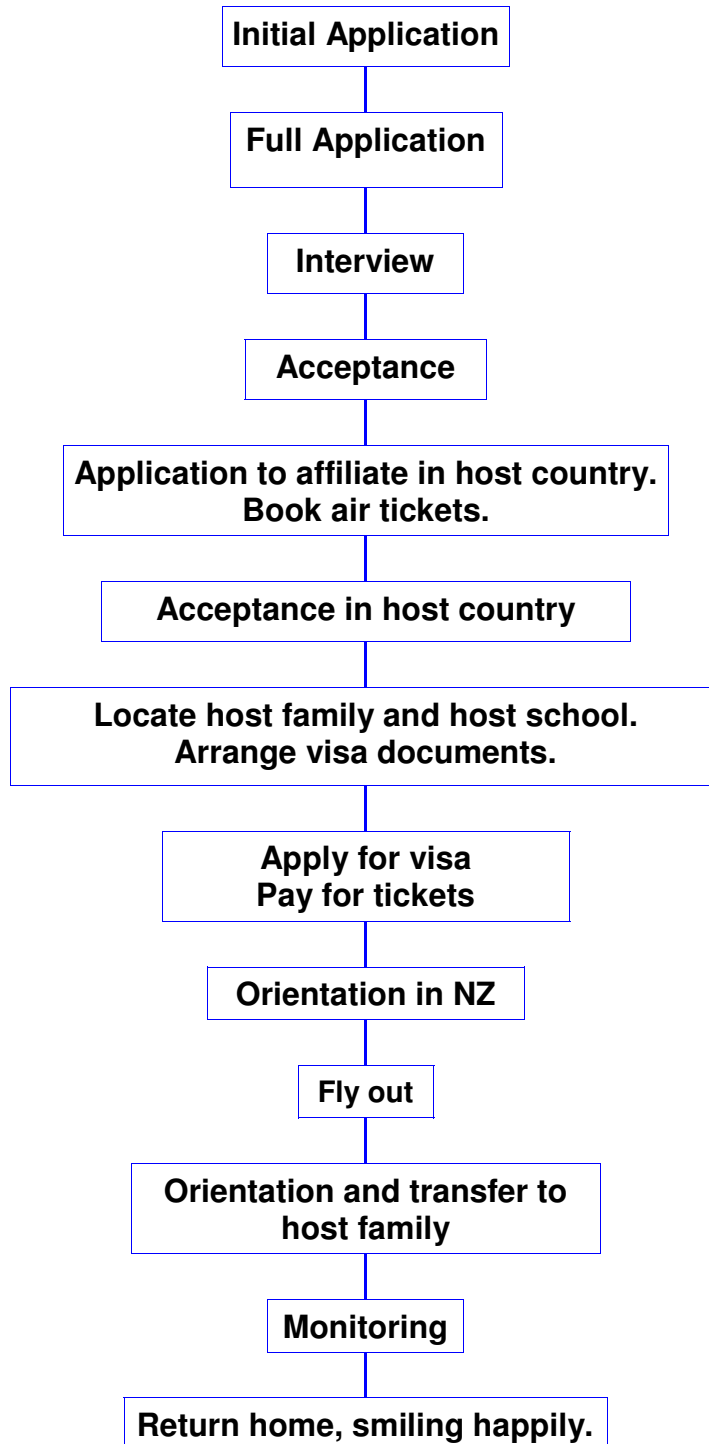
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The Exchange Process



NZIIU

We are a non-profit, charitable trust that has been arranging exchanges for 25 years. We are registered with the Ministry of Education as an approved provider.

Students nominate the country and the programme that they want and if they qualify, we will send them.

“Qualifying” means they have to fulfil the programme requirements and must convince us that they will cope. Each country has different requirements but in all countries students need to be:

- 15 when they leave NZ
- able to consistently score “Achieved” in tests
- have a suitable personality profile
- have the support of their school
- be fit and well
- be supported by parents or caregivers

Selecting students

We do not have quotas except in the USA.

We’re looking for socially competent, outgoing students with an interest in language and culture. They don’t have to be brilliant, just able to maintain results at an average or better level. We’re also looking for supportive parents who can be relied upon to understand what is involved in a student exchange.

Teachers understand the broad range of criteria within which we operate and they encourage and discourage students accordingly. They have no say in the selection process but they can be influential.

Partner organisations

NZIIU works in cooperation with partner organisations in other countries and contracts govern the process.

Host families

These are chosen by the affiliated organisation after a thorough application, interviewing and vetting process. They are volunteers.

Host schools

International exchanges are well understood in schools in all of our host countries. They treat exchange students as local students and do not charge additional fees. However, the usual school charges for trips, books and stationery apply in most cases. We rarely receive a negative report about a school.

Visas

Most countries require visas for exchanges lasting more than six weeks. The processing of a student's visa by the relevant embassy takes anything from one day to six weeks. We make the arrangements. The passport needs to be valid for at least three months beyond the end of the exchange.

Insurance

Insurance of a particular standard is required by NZIIU, by our affiliates and by the host country. This is bought by NZIIU at the same time as the air tickets.

Money in the host country

Banking practices vary widely and change all the time. It pays to consult your bank well in advance. Most countries offer good access to ATMs.

We give advice on spending money and other costs in each country which are based on what returning students tell us.

Orientation

All exchange students receive a short orientation from NZIIU a month before they leave. Parents are welcome to attend.

Orientation deals with two aspects:

- (1) Nuts and bolts about getting there, being there and coming back.
- (2) Reminders about how to have a successful exchange.

Orientation sessions in the host country can be brief or take a few days. Our students often make friends with exchange students from other countries.

Language study

Reasonable competence in the host country's language is required except for Netherlands, Brazil, Thailand, Germany and Italy. On the other hand it pays to study before travelling to these countries. The more language skills students have on arrival, the sooner they will settle into their schools and families, the more they will understand and the happier they will be.

"Reasonable competence" usually means at least two years of study and preferably NCEA Level one with acceptable grades.

Support

Students' first support is themselves. Much of the growth in exchanges takes place because students find that they can solve problems without anyone's help. Beyond themselves they have a host family, often a teacher and our affiliates appoint counsellors that students can call. If they are still unable to solve a problem, they can contact the affiliate's headquarters and if that doesn't work, NZIIU can become involved.

We encourage students **not** to rely on their NZ families for support in the first instance. If there is a serious problem, it is most likely to be quickly resolved without any initial involvement of NZ parents. The fewer people involved, the clearer the problem will seem. We always contact parents when there is a significant problem and involve them if it is necessary.

Getting there and back

We book the flights. Students pay what we pay. They usually have to arrive in a specific time frame.

We look for a balance among economy, safety, comfort, good stopovers and reputable airlines. Getting to most destinations is reasonably straightforward, sometimes with a choice of routes. But bookings often have to be made early.

We arrange and purchase insurance at the same time as the tickets. We give students lots of tips about travel.

We strongly discourage visits to your son/daughter while they're away

Seeing anyone from home can be profoundly unsettling for students.

Homesickness can be a problem and we suggest strategies to students for dealing with it. One is to restrict contact of all kinds with anyone in NZ.

Sometimes visits can be arranged for special reasons but we need to know about them. Parents sometimes join their offspring at the end of their exchange and travel together. We need to know about this well in advance for ticketing and insurance reasons.

No surprises

Part of the application process involves medical certification. It is important at this stage that any problems or potential problems are revealed so that they can be properly discussed and assessed. Medical and psychological difficulties do not generally improve on an exchange.

It is very rare for a student to be removed from NZIIU programmes when they are overseas. This is mostly because we are careful with our screening and orientation processes.

What goes wrong

The exchange process is a complex adventure and sometimes there are hiccups which need to be dealt with. Sometimes things go wrong in host families as they do in the best-ordered NZ families. We help students to be aware of their role in these situations and if necessary will move them. This sometimes requires patience.

Understanding the Fees

*NZIIU is a registered non-profit, charitable trust.
The charitable part of our operation includes
supporting NZ students who want to have a cultural adventure
through a school and family-based exchange.*

The way we do this is by:

- (1) providing scholarships to help suitable students who need financial assistance;
- (2) charging for actual airfares separately from the fee;
- (3) charging the fees in the currency in the country of choice;
- (4) keeping costs low by charging only for out-of-pocket expenses and not charging overheads.

This means that every exchange is subsidized by around \$2000 and some by \$6000.

The fee charged by our affiliate, insurance and the airfare form the bulk of what we charge for exchanges.

Airfare

This is a normal airfare and is much more expensive than the kinds of low-season or shoulder-season airfares offered as discounted specials by travel agents. It is charged separately and at cost.

Affiliate fee

This covers their charges to find and check-out a host family, arrange a host school, provide visa documents, meet, greet, orient and transfer our students and to support them during their stay. The extent, cost and difficulty of these requirements vary markedly between countries.

After the interview

After the interview it seems as though nothing much is happening. In fact, a great deal of activity occurs within NZIIU and within our affiliated organisation. Almost all students receive their placement details within four weeks of departure. The orientation occurs around four weeks before departure. We're at the airport on the day to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Payment

We require the whole fee to be paid before departure because we will have paid it by then. We start with a deposit to cover us if a student changes their mind and then split the rest up into installments.

Why choose to send your young adult overseas with NZIIU?

We know what we're doing. We've had more 25 years of experience.

We're home grown. We're a NZ non-profit charitable trust.

We look after them well. We pride ourselves on a high standard of pastoral care and individual attention.

We always give students their choice of country.

We have 14 countries to choose from.

Our affiliates are the best. NZIIU contracts overseas organisations that provide the best care and service for our students.

They're not a number. By the time students leave, we know each other well. NZIIU has a genuine concern for their welfare.

We do it all We provide a complete package, arranging homestay, visa applications, transport and accommodation arrangements (including transfers), insurance and orientation prior to departure.

For more information:

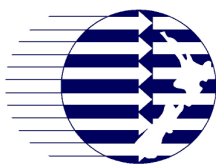
Check out our website

www.student-exchange.co.nz

for stacks of specific, current information.

You'll find photo libraries and some information about students on our Facebook pages

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