



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 authority to grant or deny permission to travel. Unauthorized travel places the student in Off Program status and may result in dismissal of student and termination of visa status.

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

- * International Travel
- * Trip requires student to miss 5 or more days of school
- * Trip requires student to contribute \$300 or more of their own money
- * Trips with another family or authorized host (must be 25 or older)
- * School sponsored trips
- * 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 approval 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. 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	<u>Written</u> natural parent permission
SP	<u>Written</u> school permission
ATI	Additional traveler's insurance
VR	Visa requirement check
DS-2019	Must be submitted to YFU USA for signature by Alternative Responsible Officer

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	NPP, I, VR (all students)
DS-2019 must be submitted to YFU USA for authorized signature	ATI (CBYX, FLEX, & YES students)

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 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 *prior to* 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. 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.

A student must have a multiple entry visa to re-enter the US, and must have the "**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. This is a Department of State requirement.

To secure the required Alternate Responsible Officer's signature, send the original DS-2019; which should be located with the student's passport, by a trackable method (we recommend UPS or Fed Ex) to: **Youth for Understanding USA, ATTN: Support Services, 3995 Fashion Square Blvd, Suite 2, Saginaw, MI 48603**. Do not send the student's passport; only send the DS-2019. Please include a check or money order, payable to YFU USA, for \$30. This fee covers return of the document by traceable express service. Please send the DS-2019 to MI at least three weeks prior to the planned trip departure date.

A Permission to Travel Form must be submitted in the online system before the DS-2019 will be signed. In exceptional cases where the document is needed in a shorter time frame, the student may request rush processing where the document is returned as overnight delivery. The cost for this sending method is \$75.00.

Important Note: CBYX, YES, and FLEX scholarship students who are traveling outside the USA must submit one additional document: proof of additional insurance. Additionally, the Permission to Travel form and all supplemental documentation (including the DS-2019) must be submitted at least one month prior to departure. The Department of State provides final approval for scholarship students taking international trips and all documentation is forwarded to DOS by YFU. This causes a longer trip approval time.

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.* Trips sponsored by another exchange program, travel agency, or community member are not allowed.

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 only. Travel by commercial bus is rarely allowed. Students must travel directly 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. The tour operator 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 the 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 specific cost, what the cost covers, by when the student needs to pay the host family, and signatures from the student, host family, and natural family. This travel must be approved by YFU.

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. The host family must inform their 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.

If a YES, FLEX, or CBYX scholarship student stays with an interim host family for 3 nights or more, the interim host family must complete the entire YFU application process.

TRAVEL 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 and student must notify the Support Services Manager (SSM) 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 potential COVID restrictions and / or Department of State guidance.