

Unspoken Assumptions between the Sending and Receiving Districts: A Friendly Debate

Scenario 1 – Late Guarantee Forms

You've Got Mail

Alphatoria YEOs receive an e-mail from a soon-to-be outbound student, saying that his counselor told him he needs the Guarantee Form before he can apply for his visa to go to Betavakia on exchange. But he still doesn't have it, and he's supposed to leave fairly soon.

Alphatoria YEOs discuss that they've gotten back the Guarantee Forms for all of their outbounds, except for the student they're sending to Betavakia.

“We've asked them several times.”

“They're always so slow.”

“It's just their culture – deadlines mean nothing to them.”

“Well, send them another e-mail.”

“OK, I'll try again.”

You've Got Mail

Betavakia YEOs receive a message from Alphatoria, asking about the Guarantee Form. They read the message, then talk about it.

“They're so impatient. Tell them to just relax. He'll get it eventually.”

“It's just their culture. They expect everything to be on time.”

“Let's just scribble something on the form. They won't be able to read it anyway.”

Scenario 2 – Dropped Exchanges

Betavakia YEOs are chatting about how smoothly everything is going, that all of their outbound students have been placed successfully, and how “we finally have this thing figured out.”

You’ve Got Mail

Betavakia YEOs receive an e-mail from Alphatoria, stating that the club that was supposed to host their student decided they don’t want to do that, so the student cannot go to Betavakia.

“They can’t do that. We have an agreement with them. He already has his plane tickets, and he’s been studying Alphatorian phrases and everything.”

“Where are we going to find another place for him at this late date?”

“Reply to them that they have to take him.”

You’ve Got Mail

Alphatoria YEOs receive the e-mail, where they are told that there was an agreement in place, and they really can’t drop the exchange at this point.

“Did we sign an agreement with Betavakia?”

“I didn’t sign anything. If I remember right, we told them at the RI Pre-Convention that we’d try to take a student from them, but there was no written agreement.”

“Yeah, when I got this application five months ago, I wondered about it.”

“Well, what should we do? Do you want this kid in your home?”

“No, how about you?”

“No, I can’t. Hey, don’t worry – our terms end in a few weeks anyway. We’ll let the next YEO handle it.”

Scenario 3 – Forced host families

You've Got Mail

Alphatoria YEOs receive an e-mail from a student in Betavakia, who complains that she feels really uncomfortable with her host family, and that they've told her that the only reason she's living there is that they were forced to take her so that their daughter could go abroad.

"I can't believe we have this situation again. I thought RI certification didn't allow requiring families of outbounds to host."

"Well, I guess they don't worry about the rules in Betavakia. They probably just copied someone else's certification documents. I wonder if they even bothered to change the country names in it."

"We'll have to be diplomatic when we bring this one to them."

You've Got Mail

Betavakia YEOs receive an e-mail that starts out, "What the hell are you guys doing over there?" The fail to see this as a problem.

"What's the big deal? She has a house and a bed and food. Why is she complaining?"

"You know how spoiled those Alphatorian kids can be."

"Is there someplace we can move her? It was hard enough finding one family to take a kid from that country. Now, we have to find a second?"

"How about if we just move her in with the other inbound?"

"They're good friends. They might have to share a bed. Do you think he'd mind?"

"Probably not a good idea. But we could just switch the two kids, and put him where she was and vice versa."

Scenario 4 – Poor Selection and Preparation

You've Got Mail

Betavakia YEOs read an e-mail from a hosting club, complaining that their inbound student is ignoring the rules, spends hours every night on the computer, is not doing well in school, and has no interest in learning the language.

“How can Alphatoria send us a kid like this? Do you think he wants to be here?”

“Well, as long as he can party all night, chat online with his friends back home, I suppose he thinks it's a fine experience.”

“But he's going to alienate the host family, the host club, the school. How can we get through to him?”

“Maybe his YEOs from back home might be able to get him to understand.”

“Yeah, good idea. Let's write to them.”

You've Got Mail

Alphatoria YEOs read an e-mail from Betavakia, listing all the complaints.

“This is a little surprising, isn't it? I mean, he did attend our comprehensive two-hour orientation meeting, didn't he?”

“Probably. I didn't take attendance, but I think he was there.”

“I don't understand them complaining about the language. I mean, the main reason we sent him to Betavakia is that everyone speaks English there, right? You didn't think he'd learn Betavakian, did you?”

“Well, what do we do now? It's not like we can threaten to bring him home. After all, he is the District Governor's son.”

Scenario 5 – Visit by Parents

You've Got Mail

Alphatoria YEOs receive a message from a host family that their student's parents are coming to visit at Christmas time, and they expect to stay with that family and spend the holidays there. The host family was planning on taking the student to visit their relatives, but now they feel they can't do that.

"Parents aren't supposed to visit until the end of the exchange. We'll have to tell them that they cannot come."

"OK, I'll send an e-mail to Betavakia right away."

You've Got Mail

Betavakia YEOs discuss the situation.

"Did you call them?"

"Yes. They already have their plane tickets. They said it's the only time they can go."

"Did you remind them of the rules that they signed?"

"That doesn't matter to them. Remember – he's not only the District Governor Elect, he's also a lawyer."

"So now what? They're going to go, right?"

"I guess so."

"Try to explain it to our Alphatoria colleagues."

You've Got Mail

Alphatoria YEOs discuss the e-mail.

"They're putting a stop to it, right?"

"No, not exactly. Sounds like they have a big political problem."

"Great, so we pay the price. OK, how about if we tell the student not to tell anyone else?"

"Have you seen how these kids communicate? They'll have pictures of the parents' visit on MySpace in two hours, and every other inbound in the district will want to know why we told them that their parents couldn't come until April."

Scenario 6 – Early Return by Student

You've Got Mail

Betavakia YEOs receive an e-mail from their outbound student in Alphatoria, who says that his host club, host family, and natural parents have all agreed that he can skip school for the last three months of his exchange and tour around the continent.

“There’s no way, of course. We’re still responsible for him, and so are our colleagues in Alphatoria.”

“Why would the host club agree to this kind of thing?”

“We should respond that either he stays where he is and completes his exchange, or we will ask for his immediate return home.”

“Let’s contact our friends in Alphatoria. I know they’ll take care of it the right way.”

You've Got Mail

Alphatoria YEOs get the e-mail, describing the situation above.

“Well, what are the Betavakians all upset about this time?”

“He hasn’t exactly been a star exchange student anyway, has he?”

“No. Maybe it would be good to get rid of him early. What do you think?”

“Sure. I heard the host family wanted to go away on a holiday anyway, so they’d probably prefer to have him leave.”

“Sounds like a perfect solution. But what do we tell Betavakia?”

“Tell them there’s a new Eurotour that has just been arranged. They won’t know the difference.”

Scenario 7 – Student Sent Home Without Notice

Alphatoria YEOs are talking about how well the exchange year has gone, how it's past the halfway point, and all the inbounds and outbounds seem happy.

“I think we finally have this program figured out.”

“Is it because we only sent our orphans this year?”

“No, that was just a joke. I just think we are really doing things right.”

You've Got Mail

A message arrives from Betavakia, stating that the Alpahtorian student is being sent home immediately, and will arrive tomorrow afternoon on Flight 1000.

“What? Why are they sending her home?”

“It says that she has been a problem since the very beginning, that she didn't get along with anyone, rarely went to school, hung out in bars every weekend, etc., etc.”

“They never said anything about this at all. Why didn't they tell us that there were these problems. We could have helped.”