

## ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

6.3,2020

Dear Youth Exchange Leaders,

We continue to monitor the ongoing global outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) closely, and assess the impact this dynamic and uncertain situation may have on participants, families, and volunteers of the Rotary Youth Exchange program.

Nothing is more important to us than the safety and well-being of our youth. Please remember that the decision to continue, end, or postpone an exchange is ultimately that of the student and their family. We encourage everyone to regularly review updates from the [World Health Organization](#), and to consult the guidelines and travel advisories issued by your consulates, embassies, and national and local public health agencies for the most applicable and updated information to help with these decisions.

To help you navigate this rapidly changing situation, please consider the following as you work with students and their families to determine the most appropriate course of action:

- **Develop a plan.** If you have a crisis management plan, review and update it to ensure that it specifically addresses how to respond to outbreaks such as COVID-19. Ideally, this plan should emphasize preventative, responsive, and communicative procedures (including how and when to communicate with students, volunteers, sponsor districts and natural parents). Consult local health authorities, the World Health Organization, and other experts.
- **Confirm access to health care.** Consider the specific health care needs of your students, including whether they may be considered part of an “at-risk” population that is more susceptible to contracting COVID-19. Determine whether students will have access to health care that meets their unique needs, and consult with students’ travel insurers to understand policy coverage.
- **Avoid non-essential travel.** Host districts should consider whether student excursions, trips or local activities could expose students to an increased risk or challenges returning home if they have travelled to an impacted country or region. Consider cancelling or postponing non-essential travel until a later date.
- **Stay informed.** Many countries have issued special guidance and undertaken efforts to prevent potential spread of COVID-19, such as temporarily restricting or suspending entry or exit. Be aware that students may face challenges in returning

home as the situation changes.

- **Support students.** Some countries have taken preventative measures by closing school or delaying the start of a school time for an extended period of time. Discuss how this may impact a student, including whether they will receive the credit needed to fulfill educational requirements and how they will stay engaged – and safe – until school resumes.
- **Work together.** Continue to collaborate, and regularly share timely and factual information with district partners, students, and families. Helping all parties make informed decisions based on accurate information may not only help minimize health risks, but it can also minimize the potential for stigma and discrimination which can occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a specific population or nationality.

Thank you for your helping manage this very challenging and rapidly changing situation to keep Rotary Youth Exchange students safe.

Sincerely,

Rotary Youth Exchange

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