

WAGGGS STATEMENT ON COVID-19

Updated 12 March 2020

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus, the family of viruses known to cause respiratory infections. Most people who become infected experience mild illness and recover, but it can be more severe for others. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.

World Health Organization (WHO) has been assessing this outbreak and has made the declaration this week that COVID-19 can be characterised as a pandemic. WHO is working with global experts, governments and partners to provide advice to countries and individuals on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak. WHO emphasises that all must protect themselves from COVID-19 in order to protect others.

On 10 March, the IFRC, UNICEF and WHO issued a new guidance to help protect children and schools from transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

More information:

Guidance on protecting children and schools: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/10-03-2020-covid-19-ifrc-unicef-and-who-issue-guidance-to-protect-children-and-support-safe-school-operations>

WHO Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

WAGGGS POSITION

WAGGGS takes the safety and wellbeing of its staff, volunteers and members extremely seriously and we have been monitoring the situation on the COVID-19 outbreak closely. As an organisation, we are following the advice provided by the World Health Organization, our insurers and guidance by local governments and we are confident that we have the right measures in place. This currently includes travel restrictions to mainland China, Iran and some parts of South Korea and Italy.

We also encourage all our Member Organisations to monitor updates from the World Health Organization ([situation reports](#)), and follow local government travel advice and guidance from insurers when organising events where international or large-scale national travel is required.

37TH WAGGGS WORLD CONFERENCE

The Uganda government Ministry of Health has issued a [press statement](#), which announced a temporary restriction on international conferences and the introduction of mandatory quarantines for visitors from certain countries. The Conference Planning Team therefore expect that postponement of the World Conference is a strong possibility. We continue to monitor this situation closely with the Uganda Girl Guides Association.

Based on thorough risk assessment, the World Board will make a decision at the latest in the first weekend of April as to whether World Conference goes ahead as planned or move to a contingency. **Week commencing 6 April 2020**, a communication will be published to announce this decision, providing three months' notice before the start of Conference. In the meantime, the Planning Team advise participants NOT to book travel or accommodation as we continue to monitor developments.

CONTACT

For general concerns or questions relating to COVID-19, please contact Magdalene Thomas, WAGGGS Head of International Operations.

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