

13, March 2020

### COVID-19 Policy Updates (Part 3)

RIJYEM, Japan Rotary youth Exchange

The basic guidelines regarding the COVID-19 virus has been dispatched on the 25th of February. On the 9th of March, the follow up version (Part 2) has been sent out, outlining the latest fundamental principle of RIJYEM, to send back all foreign students in Japan to their home countries as soon as possible. Part 3 outlines the current fundamental principle of RIJYEM regarding the Japanese students abroad, that they are to be returned to Japan as soon as possible.

On the 12th of February, US President Donald Trump has spoken to the Americans and announced travel restrictions from Europe to US in a bid to combat the spread of the coronavirus. (12th March, 11.45am, NHK news)

World Health Organization, the Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, acknowledged the new coronavirus outbreak as global crisis and declared it a global pandemic, and pleaded world leaders to act quickly and drastically to contain the spread. (12th March, 11.45am, NHK news)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued special guidance that colleges and universities should consider asking students studying abroad to return to the United States. (9th March, Reuters)

AFS Intercultural Programs (an international organization specialized in intercultural exchange) has decided as follows: the AFS international Office and AFS Italia have decided to suspend all programs in Italy, in response to the raised risk level by the CDC, the restriction of the movement of 16 million people which amounts to a quarter of population, the possibility that the restricted areas are bound to be expanded in the future, and also because of the possibility of prolonged school closures. There are 29 senior high school students in Italy for the year-long exchange, but as soon as their return flights etc. are secured, they are to be returned to Japan. (2020.3.12, AFS Japan website)

In this current global climate, it is understandable that RIJYEM is to fulfil the social obligation as the members of Rotary International, and hence the fundamental policy has been decided to bring back all Japanese students participating in the Rotary Youth Exchange Programs abroad as soon as possible.

Your thoughtful cooperation regarding this matter would be much appreciated.

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## RIJYEM District Risk Management Advisory Committee Basic Guidelines Part 3 (12th March 2020)

Rotary International Districts of Japan Youth  
Exchange Multidistrict Organization  
Takao Suzuki  
Chairman, RIJYEM

1. In line with the basic guidelines agreed on the 25th of February, the fundamental principle of RIJYEM is to bring back all Japanese students abroad to Japan as soon as possible.
2. In line with this policy, it is advised that the parents and sponsoring districts/clubs in Japan are to come together to reach an agreement, thereby respecting the opinions of the host families and parents as much as possible, discussing thoroughly with the district members of the country where the student is located.  
  
A swift and concrete agreement on the matter of how to get the student back to Japan is vital, and this is only to be done together with the help of the district, rotary club and Rotarians of the country where the student is placed.
3. Regarding the possible return journey options, do contact the Japanese Embassy or Japanese Consulate nearest to the location of the host family, for advice and support (for safe passage to the airport especially in areas of quarantine).

Additionally, it is advisable to get in touch with the Embassy or Consulate of the country concerned in Japan, to get the latest information regarding the situation of the country where the student is staying.

4. The executive responsibility of the Youth Exchange Programs lies in the hands of governors of each district, and the governor is to finalize the decision.

### Postscript:

The principle policy has been outlined as above, but the practical application should be based upon discussions of what would be the most suitable for the welfare of the student concerned. As in Italy, some countries may already find organizing travel a huge struggle. Basic guidelines are to be the foundation, yet it is strongly advised that the implementable practicable solution is to be found through thorough discussions among the families, parents and sponsoring clubs of Japan, together with the host families, host club/districts of the country where the student is located.