

WAGGGS STATEMENT ON COVID-19

UPDATED 18 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.

WAGGGS STAFF AND WORLD CENTRES

The health and wellbeing of all of our staff is our priority. Following the advice of the World Health Organization, and guidance by the UK governments, staff from the World Bureau in London will be working remotely for a minimum of eight weeks as a contingency method. Brussels staff are already working from home for the safety and security of staff based there.

International and office-based staff are being supported to ensure they have a safe and practical space at home to work. All the usual lines of regular communication from staff - phone, email, website, social media - remain open and monitored during working hours.

World Centres will close on 23 March for a minimum period of two months. We are working with World Centre staff and volunteers to put in place adequate measures to support them, including practical arrangements for volunteers to return home if necessary. We will communicate directly with the MOs concerned where this impacts volunteers in your territories.

WAGGGS EVENTS AND PROGRAMMES

All WAGGGS events, face-to-face meetings, activities and travel for staff and volunteers are cancelled until the end of May. We are reviewing our programme delivery on a programme-to-programme basis and will continue transparent communication with all MOs affected by any changes to delivery.

As advised in an earlier message, we will communicate a final decision about the World Conference by the week commencing 6 April. In the meantime, the Planning Team advise participants not to book travel or accommodation as we continue to monitor developments. The European Jamboree team will communicate their decision by the end of April.

GIRL GUIDING AND GIRL SCOUTING DURING THIS TIME

We recognise that many Member Organisations have already made the difficult decision to suspend Guiding and Scouting following advice and policies implemented by their local governments. As Member Organisations, each of you know your territory and members best and make decisions to best ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts within your jurisdiction.

It is in these times that we see the very best of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting. Over the past few weeks, we have been inspired by the young people mobilising efforts in their communities and worldwide to share important messages and offer solutions to potential isolation in many countries. We have seen worldwide stay-at-home challenges, virtual campfires, new badges and an outpouring of support and kindness from Girl Guides and Girl Scouts everywhere.



CONTACT

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

Magdalene.Thomas@waggs.org

☎ +44 2074 336 488