



APIE Briefing – Coronavirus pandemic

Last updated: 19 May 2020 – please refer to the webpages indicated below for the latest Government advice in rapidly developing circumstances.

As an international charity with staff and volunteers in the US, the UK and Rwanda, the Board of Trustees of APIE recognises that there are concerns amongst staff at Umubano Academy and APIE and among supporters, including the US Friends of APIE and other volunteers, about the impact of coronavirus.

Cases of COVID-19 continue to rise across the world, including in Rwanda, the UK and the US. Globally, there are now almost 5 million cases of COVID-19 and there have been over 320,000 deaths worldwide from the virus. APIE staff, trustees and volunteers are asked to note the 5 key points below and to follow the advice from the Government in their country of residence and the Government of their home country:

1. Government advice

The APIE Board of Trustees notes the following current Government advice in Rwanda, the UK and the US, and asks all staff, trustees and volunteers to follow this advice and to keep abreast of changes in advice in a rapidly developing situation:

- **Rwanda:** *The Rwandan Government advised on 30 April 2020 that schools would remain closed until September. An 8pm to 5am curfew has been imposed and masks must be worn in public at all times. Selected businesses are now able to operate under specified conditions related to number of employees, opening hours etc. Meetings in public spaces are prohibited and borders remain closed. The latest Rwanda Government advice can be found at: <https://www.gov.rw/> and <https://moh.gov.rw/index.php?id=575>. The UK Government has temporarily withdrawn some UK staff and their dependents from the British High Commission in Rwanda. The High Commission will continue to provide 24-hour consular assistance and support to British people in Rwanda – see <https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-kigali>. Advice for UK citizens travelling and living abroad can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>*
- **UK:** *The UK Government has advised that people should only leave their homes to shop for basic necessities, for one form of exercise a day, for a medical need and to work if this is not possible to do from home. Pregnant women, people over the age of 70 and those with certain health conditions should consider the advice particularly important. Anyone with symptoms of coronavirus and all other members of their household should self-isolate. Schools have been closed “indefinitely” from 20 March. The Foreign Office has warned against all non-essential travel overseas. The latest UK Government advice can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>*

- **US:** *The US government has advised against all non-essential international travel. The current response to the virus varies on a state-by state basis. The CDC has urged residents of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut to refrain from non-essential domestic travel. The latest US Government advice can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>*

2. Managing sickness and workload

Staff, trustees and volunteers with symptoms of coronavirus should self-isolate and follow Government advice in their country of residence. The APIE Board of Trustees recognises that staff, trustees and volunteers with caring responsibilities may be obliged to take time off to care for children and grandchildren. Schools and pre-schools are currently closed in Rwanda and in the UK, and APIE recognises the additional pressure this places on staff with pre-schoolers and school-age children. Staff should liaise with their line-manager about how best to manage this. APIE will keep its priorities under regular review and may need to delay deadlines for delivery of certain key milestones. APIE is liaising with funders and partners regarding any difficulties with meeting deadlines, targets and other deliverables due to the coronavirus pandemic. Staff should advise their line manager if they have a confirmed case of coronavirus.

3. Protecting staff, trustees, volunteers, students, colleagues and stakeholders

APIE works in the field of education, and as such has a responsibility to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission at Umubano Academy and at other schools with whom we network both in the UK and Rwanda. APIE will follow Government advice to reduce the risk of children and their families contracting coronavirus, and will keep policies and procedures under constant review to prioritise the health of staff and students. Staff and volunteers should defer to the advice issued by individual schools and organisations and to Government guidelines. APIE will keep the developing situation under constant review and will make decisions about forthcoming events and meetings on a case-by-case basis, based on the latest Government advice to keep staff, trustees, volunteers, stakeholders and the wider community safe.

4. International travel

The APIE Board of Trustees advises those who are considering international travel, including volunteers and supporters, to seek the latest advice from the relevant authorities in their home country and elsewhere, before booking flights. No travel arrangements related to the work of APIE should be made until further notice.

5. In-country travel and meetings

All meetings should be carried out by phone or video conferencing for the foreseeable future. Although the lockdown has now been eased slightly in Rwanda, staff should continue to avoid meeting in person and the use of crowded public transport.

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