

Dear Families,

February 29, 2020

In light of the ongoing concerns around the coronavirus, we want to update you on the situation, our communication with CISV International's Risk Management team, and our plans as we proceed with the upcoming program season. We understand your families' concerns and want to assure you that the health and safety of all CISVers is our top priority.

**Novel Coronavirus:**

Several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19 which was first reported from Wuhan, China, on 31 December 2019.

Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. ([WHO](#))

WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus, by following good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene.

**Update from CISV International Risk Management (Feb. 25):**

We understand that given the ongoing coverage of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) people have concerns about this year's programme season. Especially as National Associations are starting to send in their pre-camp information for the June – August programmes.

In CISV, safety is the number one priority for all programmes and events. We are taking the COVID-19 situation seriously. We are also mindful that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has labelled the overabundance of information an "*infodemic*", arguing it "*makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it.*" Therefore, we make sure that we get our information from [the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and other official and trustworthy sources, such as government health and foreign office departments.

The International Office is monitoring the ongoing situation and assessing any impact on international programmes, and supporting affected National Associations (NAs).

**We advise anyone invited to the Step Up in Hong Kong (C-2020-021) not to book their travel until after 31st March.**

The International Office, working with the host NAs, will assess the situation and decide whether these NAs will have to cancel, by 31st March. We will update invited NAs as soon as

possible after this. At this time, we are still very hopeful that the programmes will go ahead as planned.

If people do book their travel before 31st March, and these specific programmes are later cancelled for force majeure reasons, then the reimbursement policy (detailed in C-11 Programme Cancellation and Penalty Fees), will not apply. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to provide replacement places if programmes are cancelled.

We know that this can feel scary and is a challenging time for everyone. We are here alongside your regional and local teams to answer any questions you may have.

Everyone can play their part in helping to contain the spread of coronavirus and reducing stigma by following the latest [WHO advice](#)

WHO: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Best Regards,  
Anders Wulff, CISV International Risk Manager

#### **How We Proceed:**

We, the CISV Pittsburgh Board of Directors have full trust in CISV International to make the right decisions around programs that are scheduled in areas of concern. Decisions to cancel programs will be made by the local hosting chapter of each program, in concert with the CISV International Risk Management team. With 70 years of experience, CISV has navigated situations like these in the past (such as H1N1 flu in 2009).

We feel there is a lot of time for decisions to be made. Until we hear otherwise, we will move forward with preparations for our traveling delegations and for hosting our Step Up program this summer.

**Please know that should your child's program be canceled, your fees will be refunded and CISV's travel insurance will cover travel costs. Additionally, as an added precaution, we recommend that delegations not book flights until mid to late April, when we will have a better sense of the situation. We will provide updates to delegations by then. We ask that you do not book your travel before communication with the chapter.**

**We will be sending updates as we get them from CISV International. Please note that the U.S. State Department travel advisories change quickly. CISV International does not base decisions on these advisories. Delegations have gone to programs successfully to countries with Level 2 advisories, such as to Santiago, Chile for a Youth Meeting in January.**

Please rest assured that your children's safety is our top priority, and we will continue to update you as the situation unfolds. We appreciate your family's continued support of CISV Pittsburgh, and we look forward to a happy, healthy program season! Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Thank you,  
CISV Pittsburgh Board of Directors