

COVID-19 POLICY: AWARENESS, PREVENTION & ACTION PLANNING

ORGANISATION:	Kokoda Track Foundation
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INTRODUCTION:

Kokoda Track Foundation (KTF) is an Australian development organisation implementing programs in Papua New Guinea aimed at helping to improve the lives and futures of communities. The recent outbreak of COVID-19, more commonly known as Coronavirus is rapidly spreading throughout the globe with a growing number of outbreak hubs. Whilst at the time of writing there are no confirmed cases of the virus in Papua New Guinea, the virus poses a very real threat to the health systems and welfare of people across Papua New Guinea including KTF staff, volunteers, and project beneficiaries.

KTF has determined three levels of threat and response based on the advancement of COVID-19 in PNG and will implement an immediate response to each level of threat as per the policy outlined below.

LATEST UPDATE (as of 12 October 2021):

WE ARE OPERATING AT THREAT LEVEL 1 WITH EMERGENCY WARNING

Threat Level 1 with emergency warning is the highest level of threat posed by COVID-19 in Papua New Guinea. Threat Level 1 with emergency warning indicates extremely high levels of community transmission of the virus in both Port Moresby as well as the rural and remote areas of PNG including key KTF locations of Oro, Central and Western Provinces.

Our current response to the current threat of COVID-19 is outlined below:

- All KTF schools continue to operate under COVID-19 restrictions.
- All colleges will only operate for essential exams with strict COVID-19 prevention protocols in place.
- All domestic travel and staff movement between provinces for the delivery of projects **is currently on hold** and will only be approved via special approval from CEO or COO for those who are fully **vaccinated**.
- All international travel remains **suspended** indefinitely.
- KTF's health facilities remain **open** to respond to the COVID-19 crisis with strict COVID-19 prevention protocols in place. Outside triage has commenced.
- Project Airborne Operation Delta is delivering a new provision of personal protective equipment and WASH supplies including face masks, face shields, medical gowns, hand sanitisers, soaps, tippy taps and tanks to all staff, students, schools, aid posts and colleges supported by KTF.
- The Port Moresby office remains **open** with all vaccinated staff now allowed to access the office. Staff must be fully vaccinated to access the POM office. No visitors are allowed to access the POM office at this stage.
- All logistics runs in Oro Province must be approved by CEO or COO and can only continue under COVID-19 regulations.
- A new vaccination patrol program is being considered by KTF in Oro Province.
- All public gatherings remain restricted to 20 people
- The KTF Head Office in Balmain will reopen on 25 October for vaccinated staff in line with NSW Health regulations.

Existing restrictions implemented by KTF as part of Project Airborne – Operation Delta continue.

POM OFFICE

- All staff must be temperature checked on the way into the office each morning. Staff with a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or higher will be asked to work from home and seek medical advice if other symptoms occur.
- All staff MUST get a COVID-19 test should they exhibit any cold and flu symptoms and remain isolated until test results are received. You are NOT to attend the office with cold or flu symptoms.
- Any staff that access the inside of the office at this stage must be partially or fully vaccinated.
- Face masks must be worn at all times indoors and whilst traveling to and from the office, including when out on logistics runs.
- No visitors are permitted in the POM office currently.
- Social distancing must always apply.

COLLEGES

- All staff and students must be temperature checked each morning. Staff with a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or higher will be asked to remain in their accommodation and seek medical advice if other symptoms occur. Students with a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or higher will be asked to remain off campus whilst the Head of Education is alerted for decision making to occur with the COO.
- Staff and students are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible.
- No visitors are permitted onsite at colleges until further notice. Only staff, students and contractors are permitted.
- Face masks must be worn INSIDE and OUTSIDE at all college campuses until further notice.
- Social distancing must always apply.

HEALTH CENTRES & AID POSTS

- All health workers must wear N95 masks when treating patients. Masks are provided by KTF.
- All patients attending KTF health facilities must wear a face mask covering their nose and mouth.
- Only patients and one parent of child patients are permitted inside the aid post.
- All patients are to wait outside and socially distanced wearing face masks until called.
- CHWs to triage patients outside bringing only essential need and non-COVID-19 patients inside.
- Widescale awareness campaigns on COVID-19 prevention and protection to be run weekly
- All patients are to be temperature checked prior to entry. If a patient records a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or above, they must be treated outside and asked to isolate when returning home.
- Social distancing must always apply.

BALMAIN OFFICE

- Due to open on 25 October 2021.
- Staff must check in using the NSW QR code each day.
- Face masks must be worn inside when there are more than one staff member in the office. This is until NSW Health advice changes.
- All staff must be temperature checked on the way into the office each morning. Staff with a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or higher will be asked to work from home and seek medical advice if other symptoms occur.
- Social distancing must always apply.

New restrictions implemented by the COVID-19 State of Emergency Controller in PNG as of 15 September 2021 remain in place.

Restrictions will be based on whether a province is High or Medium Risk.

For high-risk provinces the following will apply:

- Gatherings of only 20 people allowed;
- All persons leaving a high-risk province must undertake a rapid antigen test prior to departure;
- Night clubs, pubs and similar venues must be closed; and
- No sporting activities over 4 persons are allowed.

For medium risk provinces, gatherings of only 100 people are allowed.

Other domestic restrictions continue to apply, including;

(a) No person may fly if they are symptomatic for COVID-19, and

(b) All travellers must have their temperature checked by airline staff and no person may travel if their temperature registers at or over 37.5C (except for medivac and emergency flights).

Currently, **WESTERN PROVINCE & WEST SEPIK PROVINCE** are classified as **HIGH RISK**.

POLICY:

The Kokoda Track Foundation and all its personnel and representatives will be required to implement an emergency response to the COVID-19 outbreak in PNG:

Threat Level 3: No confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in Papua New Guinea.

Threat Level 2: Limited confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in Port Moresby or other major cities and towns within Papua New Guinea.

Threat Level 1: Confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in rural and remote locations including those where KTF has active projects. Widespread rates of community transmission.

Threat Level 1 with Emergency Warning: Highest threat level posed by COVID-19 in PNG and/or Australia. This involves widespread community transmission in one or more locations. Extremely high rates of people testing positive which can lead to overwhelmed hospitals and the failure of public health systems.

The following implementation plans for each level of threat address the response KTF must take at all levels throughout the organisation including at each individual project level.

ACTION PLANNING:

Threat Level 3

International travel between Australia and PNG: can continue if approved by the CEO. CEO, management and staff to continue monitoring the situation including regular correspondence with KTF's health professionals and regular review of DFAT's travel advise warning or travel to PNG. Travel to be approved as "essential" during this time.

Domestic travel within PNG: can continue if approved by the CEO.

Domestic travel within Australia: can continue if approved by the CEO.

Threat Level 2

International travel between Australia and PNG: will cease immediately. The ongoing situation will be closely monitored to determine the health authorities' ability to respond to an outbreak of COVID-19 in PNG; and to determine when travel can re-commence.

Domestic travel within PNG: will cease immediately to regional locations where an outbreak has been confirmed. All other domestic travel must be approved by the CEO.

Domestic travel within Australia: can continue as normal with regular review of current situation within Australia. Advice from health authorities will be adhered to and should the recommendation be to cease domestic travel, KTF will cease all domestic travel within Australia.

Threat Level 1

Response to travel as outlined in threat level 2.

Should an outbreak occur in or near a village with an active KTF project site, the project will be shut down temporarily and advice from the local and provincial health authorities adhered to.

Should an emergency level outbreak in Port Moresby be declared, all KTF staff will be instructed to work from home. Motu Koita College will be closed immediately. Working from home arrangements have been established for critical staff. Advice from the relevant health authorities in PNG and Australia will be adhered to.

Threat Level 1 with EMERGENCY WARNING

Should an emergency level be declared in Port Moresby or nationally, all KTF staff may be instructed to remain at home and work remotely where possible. All educational facilities including schools and colleges may be closed to prevent community transmission and keep staff as safe as possible.

Should an emergency level warning be declared by authorities or by KTF Executives, a new Project Airborne distribution of PPE and WASH will be initiated to help keep staff safe.

This threat level will cause great impact on KTF activities and each project will be affected differently. Follow the project considerations below.

PROJECT IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS (relevant at the time of writing):

HEALTH

Healthy Communities – All KTF's supported health facilities remain OPEN. Facilities are to operate under strict COVID-19 protocols including

- temperature checking of all staff at the start of each day;
- temperature checking of all patients prior to entry (people recording a temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or above must not be admitted inside the aid post. The CHW is able to treat the patient outside their house in full protective equipment.)
- gloves must be worn when treating patients
- medical masks must be worn at all times
- regular and thorough hand washing must occur
- all patients entering the facility must wash their hands and wear a mask

Project Airborne Oro & Central - a new order of PPE and WASH resources is to proceed from mid Oct (Operation Delta 2.0). All staff involved with direct delivery of items must follow strict COVID-19 protocols including:

- wear a N95 (or medical) mask at all times – these are to be replaced each day
- regular and thorough hand washing using soap and water and/or hand sanitizer provided.
- all travel to occur in taxis or private transport (PMV travel banned).

Project Airborne New Ireland - Project delivery will continue with local contacts on the ground in NIP and via remote learning with technology. All movement of local contacts for delivery of resources are to adhere to COVID-19 protocols listed above.

Eye See PNG & Sight for PNG – Project SUSPENDED until further notice.

Bebi na Mama – Project SUSPENDED until further notice.

EDUCATION

Kokoda College – operations are currently SUSPENDED with staff to remain isolated. 1 on 1 student support and mentoring in preparation for exams is permitted only once approved by Head of Education, CEO or COO. Exams for grades 10 and 12 will continue under strict COVID-19 protocols: Staff and students to observe strict social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing processes. Any student or staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 must isolate immediately. Other grade exams will only go ahead if permitted by government.

Balimo College operations are currently SUSPENDED with staff to remain isolated. 1 on 1 student support and mentoring in preparation for exams is permitted only once approved by Head of Education, CEO or COO. Exams for grades 10 and 12 will continue under strict COVID-19 protocols: Staff and students to observe strict social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing processes. Any student or staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 must isolate

immediately. Other grade exams will only go ahead if permitted by government. Province has been deemed high risk location and management is monitoring closely.

Morehead Satellite FODE Centre - operations are currently SUSPENDED with staff to remain isolated. 1 on 1 student support and mentoring in preparation for exams is permitted only once approved by Head of Education, CEO or COO. Exams for grades 10 and 12 will continue under strict COVID-19 protocols: Staff and students to observe strict social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing processes. Any student or staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 must isolate immediately. Other grade exams will only go ahead if permitted by government. Province has been deemed high risk location and management is monitoring closely.

St Gabriels Satellite FODE Centre - operations are currently SUSPENDED with staff to remain isolated. 1 on 1 student support and mentoring in preparation for exams is permitted only once approved by Head of Education, CEO or COO. Exams for grades 10 and 12 will continue under strict COVID-19 protocols: Staff and students to observe strict social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing processes. Any student or staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 must isolate immediately. Other grade exams will only go ahead if permitted by government. Province has been deemed high risk location and management is monitoring closely.

Motu Koita FODE Centre - operations are currently SUSPENDED with staff to remain isolated. 1 on 1 student support and mentoring in preparation for exams is permitted only once approved by Head of Education, CEO or COO. Exams for grades 10 and 12 will continue under strict COVID-19 protocols: Staff and students to observe strict social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing processes. Any student or staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 must isolate immediately. Other grade exams will only go ahead if permitted by government. Province on verge of being classified as high risk.

PNG Schools Project - all schools in low & medium risk provinces are currently OPERATING based on National Government advice. KTF supported teachers have been supplied with PPE. Schools in High Risk provinces are closed as of 13 October 2021.

Balimo Schools Project - all schools are currently CLOSED based on National Government advice. KTF supported teachers have been supplied with PPE. Province has been deemed high risk location and all KTF staff have been asked to isolate.

Teach for Tomorrow: The Early Years - project is currently suspended.

Light up PNG - all solar light distributions have been SUSPENDED at this threat level.

Light for Learning - project to continue only with fully vaccinated staff.

Light for Life - project installations to continue with fully vaccinated staff only.

EQUALITY

Strongim Meri Bisnis - women's groups in remote areas can continue operating in no more than groups of 4. They must wear masks and remain 1.5 meters apart at all times. No large gatherings permitted. Travel into Port Moresby (for Gabba Gabba is SUSPENDED).

Project Zero - Operations and support of the Safe Haus will continue as normal with social distancing, mask wearing and support from Project Airborne. All other activities are currently SUSPENDED.

LEADERSHIP

Archer Leaders - Unvaccinated Archers will be unable to participate in the Kokoda Trek later this year. The trek itself is at risk of being cancelled.

Archer Reignite - 2021 grant project will continue as planned. Conference may be postponed pending the situation in December.

GENERAL STAFF PROCESSES

UNDER THREAT LEVEL 1 WITH EMERGENCY WARNING

All KTF staff must adhere to the following COVID-19 processes. This is to keep you, your families and your communities safe.

Any staff member with ANY COVID-19 symptoms (Listed below) must:

1. Immediately isolate from other staff. If you are unsure of your symptoms, contact KTF's COO.
2. A) Where testing is available (Port Moresby, Popondetta) take a taxi to your nearest testing clinic and get a COVID-19 test. Wear an N95 or medical mask when traveling to and from the testing location. KTF will reimburse you for taxi fares.

B) Where testing is unavailable (Balimo, Kokoda) proceed to step 3.
3. Remain at home in ISOLATION for a period of 14 days. Please note:
 - even if you return a negative test result, this does not mean you are negative. The incubation period for COVID-19 is 14 days.
 - isolation means ALONE. Please try and find a suitable location in your home where you can be left alone as much as possible. Arrange for food to be brought to you. Wear a mask when going outside for fresh air or to the toilet. Remain away from family and friends as much as possible.
 - where isolation is at your home at college locations. Arrange for staff to deliver meals to your front door three times a day. Ensure no exposure can occur between staff.
 - if feeling well enough to work, you may work from home whilst in isolation.
 - if feeling sick, please seek medical advice.
4. After 14 days of isolation and if symptoms have subsided, you may return to work on the 14th day.

COVID-19 Symptoms:

Most common symptoms:

- fever
- Temperature of 37.5 degrees Celsius or above.
- dry cough
- severe tiredness

Less common symptoms:

- body aches and pains
- sore throat
- diarrhoea
- conjunctivitis
- headache
- loss of taste or smell
- a rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes

Serious symptoms:

- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- chest pain or pressure

- loss of speech or movement

If this eventuates, the staff member must have a planning discussion with the COO to determine a plan for managing workload during this period. If the staff member is in self-isolation at home and is well enough to work, they should do so remotely. If the staff member is unwell, they should seek medical advice and take their sick leave. Additional paid sick leave will be provided at the discretion of the CEO.

All staff must wash their hands on their way into and out of the office (Sydney and Port Moresby) and regularly throughout the day.

Hand sanitizer, soap and hand washing materials will be provided in Sydney, Port Moresby and at the Colleges.

END