



Covid Planning & Contingency

Last Updated: 20 March 2023



Our Approach To Health & Safety

Purpose

To ensure that comprehensive planning is in place to meet Fiji's Covid requirements and provide support and contingencies, should a student test positive for COVID before, during or upon departure from their project in Fiji.

Think Pacific: Background Health and Safety Measures

Think Pacific takes a highly personal approach to international students' health, safety and support. By the very nature of its projects, international students are guided to rural locations to live in very back-to-basic conditions. The responsibility for the health and safety of its international students is of the highest priority for Think Pacific. Think Pacific focuses exclusively on Fiji as it is the only country in which it operates, and takes a personalized approach, where students feel welcomed to Fiji and supported like a member of the Think Pacific family. Each village project is capped at a number of students that allows for Think Pacific to maintain this personal approach. As Fiji is the only country where Think Pacific operates, Think Pacific views it as their home.

Think Pacific has an extensive staff team based in-country to offer support, guidance, and supervision of international students engaged in Think Pacific projects. Before students arrive on site in a village, Think Pacific has conducted village checks, arranged accommodation for students and briefed village homestay families, planned medical support, briefed teachers and local community representatives, planned logistics, and conducted risk assessments. Think Pacific undertakes risk assessments for all projects involving international students. These are updated and monitored regularly to ensure that students are fully supported from arrival until departure in the Fiji Islands. During orientation, students are encouraged to play an active part in assessing potential risks and

understand why prevention measures are taken. Think Pacific adopts the highest standards of Industry practice using the BSI 8848 code of regulations for leading these type of student experiences/activities and fieldwork outside of the UK. Copies of Think Pacific risk assessments and formal processes are available to view upon request.

Think Pacific advocates that a Think Pacific experience is not for everyone. Students are challenged to get themselves out of their comfort zone, embrace a new culture and immerse themselves into daily Fijian life. This has been reinforced when students are interviewed for a Fiji program and within the preparation course that students are enrolled in. It is critical that expectations are shaped for what this experience is all about and that students must be up to the rigors that village life will impose.

Think Pacific provides comprehensive pre-departure support that includes an online information portal, student handbook, information about Fiji's culture and village life, health, safety, logistics and a check-list for departure, as well as ideas to plan and prepare for working in the village setting and with youth. Online sessions allow for students, and their families, to be briefed and prepared as Think Pacific staff presents live from their office. Think Pacific is prepared to help students prepare at every step of the way.

Every project begins with a comprehensive briefing in Fiji. Health and safety issues is a major topic of the briefing, as is cultural awareness, local language, local orientation, and skills workshops to help ready students for the projects they will soon be engaging in. Students meet staff and often government partners.

Each project is led by at least two Think Pacific Leaders to ensure that projects have constant personal support and direction. Most of these leaders are students that have completed a previous Think Pacific program. These leaders live alongside the international students throughout the experience; from staying at the resorts to living with local families in the students' Fijian village. The leaders

work with locals to ensure that project objectives are met and they lead daily briefings with the students.

The Think Pacific team members are accessible 24 hours a day during every project, to provide constant back-up for students and peace of mind to family back home. The management team in Fiji is available as a constant back up and provides assistance with any issue or emergency. The management team keeps accessible records of the students including flight details, insurance policies, medical conditions, and family contact information. Think Pacific officers and team members located in the U.K. keep in close contact with Think Pacific staff and team members in Fiji with daily updates.

Think Pacific is committed to responsible travel and a code of conduct for all students that contributes to achieving project aims in Fiji in a safe manner. Students must understand that participation in a Think Pacific project means that they are not only representing Think Pacific, but they are seen as a representative of local partners at the Fijian Ministry. A code of conduct is provided to each participant during pre-departure training.

Think Pacific has comprehensive plans for student safety for extreme situations, which have been designed by the in-country management team, approved to national standards and updated regularly, with staff being briefed for such scenarios. Think Pacific provides health advice and information before departure and ensures that volunteers are briefed for living in rural villages with basic sanitation facilities, drinking rain water, and challenges of the heat and humidity of the tropics. Leaders are available 24/7 to discuss any medical complaint, are equipped with reliable communication, and carry extensive first aid supplies. Projects are usually less than 1 hour from the nearest medical facility and Think Pacific staff are on hand to arrange road or boat transportation if required. Think Pacific has excellent knowledge of local medical practitioners across Fiji – from clinics, local doctors, dentists, and personal contacts with the best hospital in Fiji, who can arrange helicopter emergency response for serious conditions. For any

cases of illness, however small, Think Pacific personnel provide personal guidance and will be with an ill or injured student.

Meeting Fiji's COVID Guidelines

Planning with Fijian Partners

Think Pacific works in partnership with Tourism Fiji and The Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport and maintains regular communication to ensure programs follow all necessary guidelines. This includes the Care Fiji Commitment (CFC). <https://www.fiji.travel/saferthanever>

Fiji has been reopened for international tourism since 1 December 2021, with the USA being one of Fiji's major travel partner countries. Fiji has had a very good vaccination program, with 92% of Fiji's adult population now fully vaccinated according to the latest government advice.

All Think Pacific program itineraries meet (or exceed) Fiji's COVID guidelines easily and simply under latest covid rules by the Fijian Government.

Vaccinations & Protocol in Fiji

- Vaccinations for COVID are **not** currently required, however, Think Pacific recommends all participants are fully vaccinated.
- Think Pacific Senior Management follow local regulations and government guidelines closely and advises participants of any changes.
- Think Pacific chose CFC approved resorts for project accommodation.
- Think Pacific monitors the COVID situation and updates COVID policy on all risk assessments.

Contingencies For COVID Scenarios

Below are the answers to frequently asked questions regarding COVID in Fiji and Think Pacific's planned response:

How will students meet entry requirements for Fiji related to COVID-19?

- *Students travelling to Fiji do not require vaccinations for COVID to enter Fiji.*

What must students agree to before travelling to Fiji?

- *Students participating in the program must ensure they have arranged travel insurance that covers for COVID related illness.*

What happens if a student tests positive for Covid shortly before the start of the programme, and therefore can't travel?

- *In the first instance, we will work with the student and their university to see if there are opportunities to join a later project date that summer, once the student has been cleared to fly. We have 35 x projects taking place between May and August and may have availability to join a later date.*
- ***Where this is not possible:***
- *The student would be able to transfer their place in full to the following year, paying only the difference that may exist in project cost (if applicable)*
- *If the student cannot commit to travel the following summer and would like a refund, we shall reimburse **50% of their total fee.***

What happens if a student tests positive for Covid during the programme?

- *There is no mandatory testing in Fiji, however, if a participant is feeling unwell, tests are widely available to purchase from medical centres and shops.*
- *If the student tests positive during their time in Fiji they will need to be isolated within their hotel/ accommodation/ homestay.*
- *Where required to upgrade to a private room, the student would be required to pay for this additional cost, or use insurance to cover (unless a separate arrangement is in place with their university)*
- *Think Pacific provides 24/7 support, including team leaders, Senior Management and a dedicated Covid health coordinator to oversee and support students.*
- *Think Pacific can coordinate all arrangements for hotel bookings for students, with protocols for this already in place with a range of suppliers.*
- *The individual in isolation should closely monitor their symptoms, perform temperature checks daily, and immediately report any changes to the Think Pacific local team. They will remain in the isolation location until they meet the criteria to end isolation. Following local guidelines, participants in close contact with a COVID-19 positive case will be asked to get tested 3-5 days after exposure but do not need to quarantine.*
- *If a student requires medical care or treatment for COVID, Think Pacific will coordinate that students obtain care from their recommended providers and facilities at the students' cost or insurance cost.*
- *A PCR test can be requested to verify the result if required by your insurance company.*
- *Following 5 days of isolation, a "fit to fly" certificate will be issued.*

Returning Home after Isolation

- *To re-enter your home country, you may need to comply with your country's testing requirements to confirm that you are negative or no longer infectious.*

- *If you continue to test positive after a 5-day isolation, a medical certificate will be provided by Fiji health officers confirming that you are no longer infectious – this is known as a Fit to Fly certificate*
- *If you have travel insurance, please ensure that it is adequate to cover any unexpected extra days in Fiji due to a positive case.*

Costs, Cancellations & Refunds

Who will pay for COVID testing, treatment or isolation?

Think Pacific does not cover the cost of testing, treatment, or isolation including meals, well-checks, nursing care, or any additional expense related to COVID-19. The student would be required to cover the cost of all related costs, and all students should have comprehensive travel insurance for such instances. Think Pacific staff will support the student to open insurance case files and help with any requirement from insurance companies. Yet, students should be prepared to pay for all related costs upfront while expecting that these costs will be reimbursed through the coverage that they have through the traveller's insurance policy. Students will be responsible for paying for any required COVID testing that may be required in Fiji and for travelling to Fiji.

What happens if a project is cancelled by Think Pacific due to COVID or other reasons?

If the programme is cancelled by Think Pacific, full refunds will be provided (or students can choose to fully transfer to any future project date)

What is Think Pacific's refund/cancellation policy if a student or university cancels a project?

If the programme is cancelled by the student, the following cancellation policy will be applied:

- *If the student wishes to cancel a Project, they must do so in writing by email to Think Pacific and they may do so at any time. Cancellation takes effect when Think Pacific receives the written notice of cancellation from the student. Since Think Pacific incur costs in cancelling Projects, the student will have to pay cancellation charges to Think Pacific as follows:*
 - **More than 42 days** **Registration Fee Only.**
 - **Less than 42 days** **50% of the Total Project cost.**

Further Information

Official Guidelines

- *For the latest information from the Fijian Ministry please visit [Tourism Fiji](#)*

*If you require any further information for the above, or you would like to arrange a call to discuss, do not hesitate to contact the Think Pacific team
info@thinkpacific.com*