



**REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY**

**PRESS RELEASE**

March 19, 2020

**Marshallese students in quarantine**

GRMI's current Travel Advisory #10 restricts any international arrivals into the country. However, on 16 March 2020, United Airlines flight arriving in Majuro brought in the first group of people to be quarantined at the CMI Arrak Campus. This group in particular consists of all the 19 Marshallese students studying at Xavier High School in Weno, Chuuk. The Office of the Chief Secretary (OCS) was first alerted by H.E. President Kabua Friday evening of 13 March with instructions to coordinate the students return. OCS also received a request from concerned parents for government assistance due to the suspension of international arrivals into the RMI.

According to Rev. Dennis M. Baker, S.J., of Xavier High School, Weno is suffering a serious drought and the growing global COVID-19 pandemic "has produced an unpredictable situation." The remainder of the school year has been cancelled and parents were requested to arrange for their children to depart Chuuk no later than Wednesday, 18 March 2020. The RMI students are from both Majuro and Ebeye, though all of them will be quarantined on Majuro.

The National Disaster Committee met Saturday afternoon and well into the evening to discuss logistical arrangements and the quarantine process with all of the concerned parents of the students. Due to the students flying in with passengers who boarded from Guam, which has confirmed cases of COVID 19, NDC decided it was best to quarantine as a precautionary measure to protect the community. The meeting covered topics such as what the 14 day quarantine would entail for their children, where it would take place, who will be there with the students, but most importantly, why the 14 day quarantine period is critical and mandatory during this current State of Health Emergency.

The Secretary of Health Jack Niedenthal and the Public Health team reassured the parents that strict protocols will be followed and that the students would also receive a briefing upon arrival so they fully understand the process as well. He added, "We really admire the parents of these kids for understanding the situation, we know how unusual these times are, but all of us have to work together and cooperate to protect our country." Parents were also informed that the CMI Arrak Campus has internet /wifi connection and therefore the students can video chat with their parents and families anytime during the quarantine.

The traditional landowners of Arrak, where the CMI campus is situated in, have also been briefed on the first quarantine process taking place on the campus grounds. The quarantine for the students started immediately upon their arrival, 16 March 2020, and will end on 31 March 2020.