**Request for Waiver**

**Direct or Traditional Telebridge ARISS Contact**

**Rev 5, Feb 21, 2022**

The worldwide situation with COVID-19 has forced the ARISS program to make some changes in operations to ensure the safety of all participants in an ARISS contact. Additionally these changes are required to ensure the integrity of the ARISS schedule as it relates to volunteer astronaut time on the International Space Station.

**Until Dec 31, 2022, all requests for either a Direct or a Traditional Telebridge contact will require an approved waiver from the ARISS International Senior Officers. Depending on the status of the COVID-19 situation, this period may be extended at the sole discretion of the ARISS International Senior Officers.**

**Clarification of Terms:**

**Direct contact:** A Direct contact involves the establishment of a ground station on the premises of the organization hosting the contact. ***At present time, this type of contact does require a waiver approved by the ARISS International Senior Officers.***

**Traditional Telebridge contact:** A Traditional Telebridge contact utilizes the services of one of the twelve certified ARISS ground stations located around the world. Students asking questions and the audience are gathered in a single location. The implementation of COVID rules is the responsibility of the local team. ***At present time, this type of contact does require a waiver approved by the ARISS International Senior Officers.***

**Multipoint Telebridge contact:** A Multipoint Telebridge contact nominally utilizes the services of one of the twelve certified ARISS ground stations located around the world. As opposed to the Traditional Telebridge all individuals involved in the contact, including the audience, are remotely located as they shelter in place. If in school, they are meeting under altered operational rules as directed by local, regional or governmental authorities. Under no circumstances will there be gatherings of people in excess of those allowed by local COVID-19 regulations. ***At the present time, a Multipoint Telebridge contact using one of the ARISS certified telebridge ground stations does not require a waiver approved by ARISS International Senior Officers.***

**Requirements for a Successful Waiver Application:**

Successful waiver applications are difficult to obtain. To be granted a waiver the requesting school or organization must demonstrate to the satisfaction of ARISS International Senior Officers that two criteria have been met:

1. That the proposed Direct or Traditional Telebridge contact can be accomplished while maintaining the safety of all involved, i.e., students asking questions, teachers, audience (if any) and supporting amateur radio and other technical personnel.
2. In the event of a last-minute change in school operations (school unexpectedly closed due to change in the COVID-19 status) a tested mechanism exists to convert either the Traditional Telebridge contact or the Direct contact to a Multipoint Telebridge contact.

ARISS Senior Officers reserve the right to submit clarifying questions to better understand the local contact situation. As such, the host organization should submit their waiver request as early in the process as possible to their assigned ARISS mentors.

**General Information:**

1. Name of the Organization or School (with Country/ State / Province / City)

<Your School Name etc.>

1. Calendar week in which the contact is currently scheduled

<Calendar Week>

1. Desired contact type (Direct or Traditional Telebridge)

Direct, classical Telebridge or Multi-point Telebridge

1. A dated and signed letter requesting the waiver and agreeing to abide by the outcome of the application for waiver process signed by a senior official of the requesting organization (printed name, organization, position)

Please add as separate signed & scanned letter or place it in as an attachment to this waiver

1. A statement as to why the institution desires a Direct or Traditional Telebridge contact.   
   Note: For example, having spent a lot of money on ham radio equipment will *not* be considered a valid justification for a Direct contact in current COVID-19 situation.

Please add your statement …

**Documentation of Safety**

1. Is the school back in session for in person learning?

Select: Yes / No

1. If the school is back in session for in person learning the date of return to in person learning

If applicable, add statement …

1. Documentation of the local rules surrounding in person learning:
   1. Are masks required? Yes/No
   2. If social distancing is a requirement, the minimum distance required (feet or meters) per local regulation \_\_\_ feet/meters
   3. Are physical barriers such as Plexiglas or acrylic shields required and if so under what circumstances? Yes / No, if yes: size of shields and arrangement/distances
   4. Are there restrictions as to the number of students and faculty that can be together at the same time? Yes / No
   5. Are students placed into pods or bubbles and, if so, are there any restriction**s** on their ability to move about? Yes / No; if yes: describe restrictions
   6. On the day of the contact**,** will the students asking questions be brought together? If so, how many individuals, students plus teachers**,** will be involved? If students are in pods or bubbles, will the creation of this “ad hoc bubble” cause any problems as far as compliance with local COVID-19 regulations? Have “ad hoc bubbles” been used in other situations? If so, please describe.

Yes / No, if yes, please shortly describe the points as listed before ….

* 1. If there will be audience, please provide the number of individuals in the audience and their location. If the students and faculty not asking questions will be in their classrooms please so state.

Please provide insight into your planning and describe …

* 1. Please provide a detailed description of the physical layout of the area in which the contact will be conducted

***Important note: Please provide drawings of the used rooms with dimensions! Show the position of the persons and document that the “social” distances in your local protocols are kept. Photos are welcome!***

* + 1. Will students asking questions and the radio operations (if Direct contact) be in the same or different rooms**?**  Please provide a drawing with dimensions of all rooms involved and an accurate count of the number of individuals in each room**.**

…

* + 1. Please provide the seating density for each room. If chairs, the number of chairs involved. If bleachers, the dimensions of the bleachers and the seating density that will be used

…

* + 1. Please describe the ventilation of all involved rooms, i.e., open doors and windows, in house air handling equipment, etc.

…

* + 1. If there will be an audience, please specify their location with number of individuals, room dimensions, seating density and ventilation as noted above.

…

* + 1. Please show how each group (students, teachers, ham team, VIPs, public, press, etc) will enter the room and if there is a timing sequence for each group entering the room.

…

* 1. ARISS events can draw unexpectedly large numbers of people. Should unanticipated individuals show up to observe the contact, please document how that situation will be handled and how you will limit attendance to not exceed your local COVID protocols.

… your statement (e.g. use of invited guest list, tickets, entry control, ….)

* 1. Please provide a copy (link to a website/PDF) of the current local guidelines for in person learning and documentation as to plans to achieve compliance if not already documented elsewhere

<Please provide a web link here>

* 1. Please document the COVID-19 positive test rate at the time of application for waiver with supplemental status reports at 6 weeks, 3 weeks and 1 week prior to the contact.

<Please provide a web link here>

Note: The reports for Contact – 6wks, C-3wks and C-1wk can be provided as emails

* 1. Please provide an Internet link to a governmental COVID-tracking site providing the actual incidence values of the event city.

<Please provide a web link here>

* 1. Please provide within the confines of applicable federal regulations a statement as to the immunization status of directly involved individuals including the radio team. If you are not comfortable providing this information, please so state.

<Please provide a web link here>

**Documentation of Preservation of Scheduled Contact**

Astronaut time in support of an ARISS contact is a voluntary activity on the part of the astronaut. As such it is a precious commodity and very difficult to obtain. Once scheduled it is of utmost importance that the contact occurs. Once lost, that time can never be recovered.

**To ensure preservation of an already scheduled contact, the organization requesting a waiver must document an established and tested system to convert on a notice as short as 24 – 48 hours to a Multipoint Telebridge contact.**

**The triggering event for this conversion is the closure or partial closure of the school or organization to in person learning or other activities by local, state for Federal authorities effective immediately with the announced date of closure.**

**In the case of a Traditional Telebridge**

1. Documentation that the school or organization understands and agrees to the conversion to a Multipoint Telebridge contact should a triggering event occur as noted above.

<Your statement>

1. The school or organization agrees to notify ARISS International Senior Officers through their mentor *immediately* should a triggering event occur

<Your statement>

1. A documented and pre-tested method of connecting students at home with the ARISS ground station, e.g.,
   1. If using a distance learning tool such as Zoom or Google Meets, provision of the in-country telephone number relevant to the ARISS ground station involved in the contact.

<Your statement>

* 1. Working with the Technical Mentor, documentation of a successful test of this capability.

<Your statement>

* 1. Submit documentation of a plan to test this capability with the involved ARISS ground station not less than one week prior to the contact if the situation allows for such testing

<Your statement>

* 1. If the ARISS ground station can support Zoom, Google Meets, etc., directly, a direct connection to Zoom, Google Meets may be substituted for the telephone connection subject to the documentation and testing requirements noted above.

<Your statement>

* 1. If the organization does not have access to distance learning tools as noted above, documentation that the school has collected and tested telephone numbers with names for all students and teachers involved in asking questions. It must be further documented that the school or organization is prepared to provide these telephone numbers to the Mentor who will forward them immediately to ARISS Operations (John Kludt, Chair ARISS-I Operations) and Payload Planning (Kenneth Ransom, Payload Planning Coordinator) as well as ARISS International Senior Officers on 24-hour notice. The order of these telephone numbers must match the order in which questions will be asked of the astronaut.

<Your statement>

**In the case of a Direct Contact**

1. Document that the school or organization understands, is prepared and agrees to the immediate conversion to a Multipoint Telebridge contact should a triggering event occur as noted above.

<Your statement> - may be part of the confirmation letter

1. The school or organizations agrees to notify ARISS International Senior Officers through their mentor *immediately* should a triggering event occur.

<Your statement> - may be part of the confirmation letter

1. Document that the school or organization understands that the on-site amateur radio station will serve as the ground station for the Multipoint Telebridge contact if the triggering event happens less than four weeks prior to the scheduled contact.
   1. Submit documentation that on-site amateur radio station will be accessible should triggering event occur

<Your statement>

* 1. If not readily accessible, documentation that either there will be enough access to move the radio to predetermined and tested location or that another tested system will be available on very short notice

<Your statement>

1. Documentation that a methodology for connecting with the students asking questions at home has been tested end-to-end (simulated astronaut asking questions to all students on-line and communicating to the simulated astronaut) at least 1 week before the scheduled event.
   1. If using traditional telephone lines that could be as simple as a phone patch

<Your statement>

* 1. If using other distance learning tools, Zoom Google meets, etc., a method exists to connect the distance learning tool to the ground station radio

<Your statement>

1. Documentation that the school or organization understands if the triggering event occurs more than four weeks prior to the contact that the possibility of using a ARISS ground station exists in which case the requirements applicable to a Traditional Telebridge (above) apply.

<Your confirmation> - may be part of the confirmation letter