



Swindon Music Service

Not-for Profit Charity

## Swindon Music Service: A proposal for how to approach teaching music in school for the Autumn term 2020

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July the Secretary of State Education provided further information titled **Guidance for full opening – schools**. This can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

### Impact on Music Education

The update has over 18,000 words and equates to 38 pages of Word, in Font size 12, in Times New Roman. In pages 1-5 of this document I have pulled out the key pieces of text that are relevant to the delivery of music education in schools. Text in purple is key to note, and text that is highlighted is significant for music education. Page 6 onwards is a proposal for the way forward and how to respond to this.

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### Purpose of this guidance

There cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach where the system of controls describes every scenario. School leaders will be best placed to understand the needs of their schools and communities, and to make informed judgments about how to balance delivering a broad and balanced curriculum with the measures needed to manage risk. The system of controls provides a set of principles to help them do this and, if schools follow this advice, they will effectively minimise risks.

### Risk assessment

Employers must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect staff, pupils and others from coronavirus (COVID-19) within the education setting.

Schools have remained open to some pupils since 20 March, welcoming more pupils back from 1 June. Schools should therefore have already assessed the risks and implemented proportionate control measures to limit the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) for a limited number of pupils.

As part of planning for full return in the autumn term, it is a legal requirement that schools should revisit and update their risk assessments (building on the learning to date and the practices they have already developed), to consider the additional risks and control measures to enable a return to full capacity in the autumn term. Settings should also review and update their wider risk assessments and consider the need for relevant revised controls in respect of their conventional risk profile considering the implications of coronavirus (COVID-19). Schools should ensure that they implement sensible and proportionate control measures which follow the health and safety hierarchy of control to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

### Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and schools must consider how to implement this. Schools must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.



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### How to group children

Both the approaches of separating groups and maintaining distance are not 'all-or-nothing' options and will still bring benefits even if implemented partially. Some schools may keep children in their class groups for the majority of the classroom time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching, wraparound care and transport, or for boarding pupils in one group residentially and another during the school day. Siblings may also be in different groups. Endeavouring to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between children will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission.

All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable. This will be particularly important for secondary schools. Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2 metres from other adults. Again, we recognise this is not likely to be possible with younger children and teachers in primary schools can still work across groups if that is needed to enable a full educational offer.

### Measures within the classroom

Maintaining a distance between people whilst inside and reducing the amount of time they are in face to face to contact lowers the risk of transmission. It is strong public health advice that staff in secondary schools maintain distance from their pupils, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain 2 metre distance from each other, and from children. We know that this is not always possible, particularly when working with younger children, but if adults can do this when circumstances allow that will help. In particular, they should avoid close face to face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone. Similarly, it will not be possible when working with many pupils who have complex needs or who need close contact care. These pupils' educational and care support should be provided as normal.

For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible. This will not be possible for the youngest children and some children with complex needs and it is not feasible in some schools where space does not allow. Schools doing this where they can, and even doing this some of the time, will help.

When staff or children cannot maintain distancing, particularly with younger children in primary schools, the risk can also be reduced by keeping pupils in the smaller, class-sized groups described above.

Schools should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating pupils side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

### Measures elsewhere

Groups should be kept apart, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.



When timetabling, groups should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. While passing briefly in the corridor or playground is low risk, schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits. Schools should also consider staggered break times and lunch times (and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups).

Schools should also plan how shared staff spaces are set up and used to help staff to distance from each other. **Use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.**

### **Other considerations**

Some pupils with SEND (whether with education, health and care plans or on SEN support) will need specific help and preparation for the changes to routine that this will involve, so teachers and special educational needs coordinators should plan to meet these needs, for example **using social stories**.

Supply teachers, **peripatetic teachers and/or other temporary staff can move between schools**. They should ensure they minimise contact and maintain as much distance as possible from other staff. Specialists, therapists, clinicians and other support staff for pupils with SEND should provide interventions as usual. Schools should consider how to manage other visitors to the site, such as contractors, and ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is **explained to visitors on or before arrival**. **Where visits can happen outside of school hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors.**

### **Supply teachers and other temporary or peripatetic teachers**

**Schools can continue to engage supply teachers and other supply staff during this period.** We recommend that schools consider using DfE's and Crown Commercial Service's agency supply deal when hiring agency workers, as this offers a list of preferred suppliers that must be transparent about the rates they charge.

**Supply staff and other temporary workers can move between schools**, but school leaders will want to consider how to minimise the number of visitors to the school where possible. Where it is necessary to use supply staff and to welcome visitors to the school such as **peripatetic teachers**, **those individuals will be expected to comply with the school's arrangements for managing and minimising risk, including taking particular care to maintain distance from other staff and pupils.** To minimise the numbers of temporary staff entering the school premises, and secure best value, schools may wish to use longer assignments with supply teachers and agree a minimum number of hours across the academic year. This advice for supply teachers also applies to other temporary staff working in schools such as support staff working on a supply basis, peripatetic teachers such as sports coaches, and those engaged to deliver before and after school clubs.

### **Extra-curricular provision**

**Schools should consider resuming any breakfast and after-school provision**, where possible, from the start of the autumn term. We recognise that schools may need to respond flexibly and build this up over time. **Such provision will help** ensure pupils have opportunities to re-engage with their peers and with the school, ensure vulnerable children have a healthy breakfast and are ready to focus on their lessons, **provide enrichment activities**, and also support working parents.



We recognise that this will be logistically challenging for schools, particularly for clubs that would normally offer support across year groups, where parents are using multiple providers, or where childminders are picking up/dropping off pupils. Schools should carefully consider how they can make such provision work alongside their wider protective measures, including [keeping children within their year groups or bubbles where possible](#). If it is not possible to maintain bubbles being used during the school day then schools should use small, consistent groups.

Schools can consult the guidance produced for summer holiday childcare, available at [Protective measures for out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) as much of this will be useful in planning extra-curricular provision. This includes schools advising parents to limit the number of different wraparound providers they access, as far as possible. Where parents use childcare providers or out of school activities for their children, schools should encourage them to seek assurance that the providers are carefully considering their own protective measures, and only use those providers that can demonstrate this. As with physical activity during the school day, contact sports should not take place.

### Curriculum expectations

This section sets out some key principles and expectations for curriculum planning in school based nursery, mainstream and special schools, and alternative provision (AP), so that all pupils – particularly disadvantaged, SEND and vulnerable pupils – are given the catch-up support needed to make substantial progress by the end of the academic year.

The key principles that underpin our advice on curriculum planning are:

- education is not optional: all pupils receive a high-quality education that promotes their development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.
- **the curriculum remains broad and ambitious: all pupils continue to be taught a wide range of subjects, maintaining their choices for further study and employment.**
- remote education, where needed, is high quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision: schools and other settings continue to build their capability to educate pupils remotely, where this is needed.

Informed by these principles, DfE asks that schools and other settings meet the following key expectations if considering revisions to their school curriculum for academic year 2020 to 2021:

**Teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, but make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content.**

### Specific points for early years foundation stage (EYFS) to key stage 3

For children in nursery settings, teachers should focus on the prime areas of learning, including: communication and language, **personal, social and emotional development** (PSED) and physical development. For pupils in Reception Year, teachers should also assess and address gaps in language, early reading and mathematics, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary. Settings should follow updates to the [EYFS disapplication guidance](#). For nursery settings and Reception, consider how all groups of children can be given equal opportunities for outdoor learning.



For pupils in key stages 1 and 2, school leaders are expected to prioritise identifying gaps and re-establish good progress in the essentials (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and mathematics), identifying opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely, and developing their knowledge and vocabulary. The curriculum should remain broad, so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including sciences, humanities, the arts, PE/sport, RE and RHE.

For pupils in key stage 3, the curriculum should also remain broad from year 7 to year 9 so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year, including sciences, languages, humanities, the arts, PE/sport, RE and RSHE. For pupils in year 7, it may be necessary to address gaps in English and maths by teaching essential knowledge and skills from the key stage 2 curriculum.

Schools should note that there may be an additional risk of infection in environments where you or others are singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments or shouting. This applies even if individuals are at a distance. Schools should consider how to reduce the risk, particularly when pupils are playing instruments or singing in small groups such as in music lessons by, for example, physical distancing and playing outside wherever possible, limiting group sizes to no more than 15, positioning pupils back-to-back or side-to-side, avoiding sharing of instruments, and ensuring good ventilation. Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as school choirs and ensembles, or school assemblies. Furthermore, detailed DfE guidance will be published shortly.

### **Pupil wellbeing and support**

Pupils may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust to school; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return; a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school.





## How to respond to this to teach music in schools

Based on the guidance:

1. All pupils should receive a broad and balanced curriculum covering all subjects and including the arts, which is ambitious. Therefore, music should be taught, and from the start of the Autumn term.
2. Some schools may keep children in their class groups for the majority of the classroom time, but also allow mixing into wider groups for specialist teaching. This could give freedom to bring pupils together for music rehearsals.
3. Teachers can move between Year groups. This means a music specialist curriculum teacher can teach all year groups, providing sensible precautions are followed (maintain physical distancing where possible and cleaning in-between lessons).
4. Large gatherings for collective worship should be avoided. Singing assemblies therefore cannot happen in a physical large space; however, singing assemblies could be prepared and shared virtually direct into classrooms.
5. Peripatetic staff (visiting music teachers) can move between schools. This would allow visiting music teachers to deliver 1:1 lessons (and/or small group lessons) if the school can provide a large teaching space which is well ventilated. Importantly, small practice rooms would not be suitable.
6. Instrumental Music lessons could be taught by visiting music teachers and/or class teachers in groups of up to 15, with all appropriate safety precautions in place and cleaning routines. This would support first-access learning.
7. Before-school and after-school clubs to provide enrichment, activities could take place. Music groups/lessons/activities could be delivered providing all relevant safety precautions are met.
8. Pupils should engage in activity that positively meets their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils may need support to help them respond to their emotional experiences. Music activities will meet this requirement. [Music recovery curriculum](#) would apply here.
9. The science behind not playing specific instruments and/or singing loudly is still subject to peer review. However, it is prudent to follow sensible precautions. Therefore, in music lessons, and musical activities:
  - a. Keep singing to a soft dynamic. Avoid chanting loudly or using repertoire/activities that contain plosive consonants (<https://thesoundofenglish.org/plosives/>). When doing these activities, try to keep as much physical distance as possible between pupils/teachers. Actively use humming and vowel sounds as ways of pitching/singing.
  - b. When using instruments, try to keep as much physical distance as possible between pupils/teachers. If appropriate, position pupils back-to-back or side-to-side (to encourage active listening). Do not share instruments between pupils and clean them between classes.
  - c. Actively use body percussion as this can engage the whole body in a musical manner.
  - d. Actively encourage listening tasks using quality recordings or films
  - e. Deliver music sessions outside where possible and appropriate



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### Summary

Music education should be taught in schools from September and can be delivered by class teachers and visiting music teachers. The caveat is that everything needs to be clearly risk assessed with mitigating and practical measures in place. Each school will take decisions that are best suited to their physical buildings, their pupils and their community. The Music Service will be a supportive partner in helping shape any return to in-person delivery and actively encourage discussions with us about music education delivery. Music Education will look and sound different, but everything is achievable.