

Swindon
MUSIC
Service



GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

MUSICAL LEARNING REINVENTED

MUSIC IN THE CURRICULUM

INSTRUMENTAL AND VOCAL TUITION

MAKING MUSIC SAFELY IN SCHOOLS

SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING

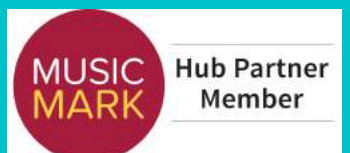
GUIDANCE ON CLEANING INSTRUMENTS



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Musical Learning Revisited

Since schools closed on 20th March 2020, music services and other music education providers have learnt to deliver many of their tuition and support services online. While nearly all cultural organisations have shared content with their audiences, the music education sector has become a leader in providing meaningful, two-way engagement with schools, students and parents. The longer that the lockdown has continued, the more sophisticated music education providers' online delivery and resources have become. A very small number of services have found ways for groups of musicians to make music simultaneously online in a limited way but the holy grail of running full rehearsals and performances from multiple locations is still elusive.

Nevertheless, many services have found innovative ways to continue supporting whole class and group learning. **Streamed singing assemblies, virtual choirs and ensembles, virtual big sings and even whole virtual festivals are springing up countrywide.** Nobody thinks virtual is best. Nobody sees online as the only way that music education providers will deliver when schools fully reopen, but it will be a permanent feature of most offers going forward. Whatever strains schools have been under and will return under, once full classes are back in, the old routines are likely to largely fall back into place: however music education provision will be considerably different and ever better for what has happened.

Music in the curriculum

We recognise that it may not be possible to return for some while to delivering the full range of programmes schools we previously offered. However, as your local Music Service we stand ready to work with you, to support you and your teachers to find the best ways for music to be a central part of your recovery curriculum. If your school buys (or is allocated) time for whole-class, curriculum, ensemble or choir work, talk to us about what support we can provide to your subject leads as they look to create schemes of work and resources that:

- are musically sound, progressive and academically valuable;
- link to learning in other core subjects;
- address pupils' well being and PHSE needs;
- empower pupils to express themselves freely;
- help pupils to feel valued and that their voices are heard. You can speak to us about the possibility of flexible delivery. We recognise the ongoing restrictions, and the likelihood that many schools will want to limit visiting teachers initially, we are prepared for a blended offer of face-to-face and online provision and are expecting this to persist for some time. As well as live teaching which could continue over video-conference, we have created pre-recorded tutorials, 'how-to' videos and other resources. To help with music making in schools – delivered by your teachers or, where possible, visiting staff - This document provides guidance on singing and using musical instruments safely in the classroom, which is based on recent and emerging specialist research. We are able to advise and support your staff and pupils on a more practical level, but the guidance can be found here and the research from which it has been developed is here. **Under no circumstances should wind and brass instruments be shared** and, in addition to the general social distancing procedures you are putting in place for staff and pupils, there are some musical activities for which teachers will need to consider further measures.

Instrumental and vocal tuition

The DfE's guidance, published on 2nd July 2020, states that **peripatetic teachers may return to schools** from September and, subject to robust safety measures, both tutors and pupils will be keen to return to face-to-face tuition. However, to accommodate local circumstances, a flexible approach may be needed. In some parts of the country, children have been taught online since before Easter 2020 and policies and protocols to address safeguarding concerns have been developed following national guidance and locally in consultation with Local Authority Safeguarding officers. Whilst nothing can replace the invaluable face to face experience, many music education providers will be in a position to discuss alternative methods of delivery, including fully and partially online options.

Making music safely in school

COVID-19 research is ongoing but at the time of writing, there is no change to the science as it relates to making music in schools. We will be making our own risk assessments, potentially for each setting in which we work. This information will provide some scientific basis, but risk assessments will need to take account of specific local context and be kept under review. *(we are providing school Risk Assessment templates for you. Click on the picture to access the templates). You can also view SMS' Risk Assessments for school activities*



The remaining sections of this document:

Section One:

Information about the current [scientific understanding](#) of the new health risks of music-making and how you can make music as safely as possible.

Section Two:

Links to reliable [guidance on cleaning instruments](#).

Section One - The science and what to do about it

How people catch COVID-19

COVID-19 is transmitted through water droplets which contain the virus. Approximately 1,000 virus particles are needed to start an infection. A sneeze can release 200 million particles, albeit a good proportion of these will not be viable. There are thought to be two routes to infection (vectors) and both are significant in schools:

- Airborne water droplets (aerosol transmission);
- Contact with contaminated surfaces (fomite transmission).

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health say that children are 59% less likely to contract COVID-19 than adults. Furthermore, at the time of writing, there is very little evidence of transmission from children to adults. COVID-19 has a relatively long incubation period, with 97.5% of people showing symptoms by day 12.

It is contagious before symptoms show, although incubation varies from person to person and it is unclear when it becomes contagious. Inevitably, in countries where schools have already re-opened, there have been new cases. It is thought that a proportion of children and working age adults who contract COVID-19 are either asymptomatic or experience only mild symptoms. Deaths among children and working age people are rarer, although they increase from about age 45. Around 90% of people who have died already had serious underlying health conditions.

It is important to understand that you cannot completely eliminate the risks of COVID-19 transmission for anyone but there are reasonable measures that can be taken.

Singing and choirs

For singing activity, including class work (and assemblies, when allowed), 2m distancing is necessary. Singing releases potentially hazardous bioaerosols in proportion to volume: the louder the singing, the more aerosols are released (this is also the case when talking loudly or breathing more heavily). Measurements taken with university-level students and professionals suggest that there is minimal air movement much over 0.5m from a singer but this does not take account of the spread of aerosols on air currents.

There have been reports of choirs falling ill en masse but it is worth stating that these occurred before social distancing and entailed several hours of singing in close company. Assemblies, singing lessons and even lunchtime choirs do not last anything like as long. A well-ventilated room, large enough to maintain 2m distancing, will usually suffice, although note that the current government advice is that singing should not take place in groups above 15 in number. Note that the area of the room is critical here: a higher ceiling does not mean singers are safe to stand closer together.

Consider singing outdoors if you can. The risk of airborne transmission is thought to be significantly lower in the open air but be aware of wind direction for both the singers and the leader.

There are no safe face coverings for singing: all fabric masks leak air and bioaerosols around the sides and bottom.

In class, particularly at primary level where the teacher is present with the class all week, they should remain at least 2m from the nearest singer. For any other singing, particularly where it is led by an external tutor, the person leading the singing and any accompanist should be 3-5m from the front row as they will of course be facing the singers. They may want to consider a plexiglass screen.

Each singer should have their own music and should ideally keep it between rehearsals. If words or music are projected, that is ideal.

Instrumental ensembles

For ensembles or classes that do not include mouth-blown instruments, normal social distancing and resource use (books, stands, pencils) will suffice. For woodwind and brass ensembles, including class work, 2m distancing should continue to be observed. Measurements of air turbulence by the Freiburg Institute for Musicians' Medicine suggest that air is not disturbed beyond the following distances:

Flutes	1.5m front of the player 0.8m from the end of the flute
Other woodwind except saxes	1.5m
Brass and saxophones	2m from the bell

For most woodwind instruments therefore, 2m distancing should be observed. Air blown across flute mouthpieces is particularly laden with aerosols and 2m must be regarded as a minimum. For safety, brass and saxophones should be given more space, perhaps 3m. Bass clarinets should be treated similarly, owing to their upward-facing bell. Plexiglass screens would provide additional protection to players in front of them. Most woodwind instruments point downwards, so bioaerosols will largely fall to the floor. Brass instruments expel air either forwards or upwards: again, larger aerosols will fall under gravity but those below ten microns will remain airborne. Good ventilation, ideally overhead extraction, will help to disperse and remove these.

Much has been made of demonstrations that air from a trumpet does not blow out a candle. This is because the flare of the bell slows the airflow down and spreads it out as it leaves the instrument. The issue however is still that the smallest aerosols in that airflow will remain airborne and circulate on air currents within the room, hence the emphasis on ventilation.

A report for the German Orchestral Association recommends stretching fabric over the bells of instruments to filter aerosols from the airstream. Research into fabric for face masks shows that cotton with a high thread count combined with a layer of silk is fairly effective. Another authority has suggested using a popscreen 0.1m to 0.2m from the end of the instrument, which will catch a quantity of the aerosols without affected blowing characteristics or sound.

Players should be discouraged from lifting their bells high, as contaminated water in the instrument can run back into the player's mouth.

Water keys should not be vented directly onto the floor. Two American studies cultured a surprising variety of bacteria from both woodwind and brass instruments. Newspaper or paper towels should be provided to soak up water (in Norway, anti-bacterial paper is recommended) and players should clear up their own. Alternatively, a small pot containing detergent would also be effective.

The backline of rock groups should be able to observe current recommended social distancing. They should minimise moving and should mostly face forwards. Singers should face forwards; tutors should stay at least 2m distant and not move in front of them while they are singing.

Views vary widely on distancing for brass. Some point out that air from brass instruments moves quite slowly and from larger instruments, e.g. euphonium, barely at all. Others suggest allowing even as much as 12m.

Smaller brass instruments and all woodwind instruments harboured oral bacteria. Larger brass instruments were found to harbour fewer oral bacteria but "all [brass] instruments have *Alcaligenes faecalis*." (Mobley & Bridges, Sinton and Corpus Christi TX, 2015). This strain was also found in one clarinet.

Conductors should stand 3-5m beyond the front row of wind or brass and may wish to consider a plexiglass screen or similar. For strings and orchestras, 2m will suffice. Social distancing means that each player will require their own music stand. Ideally, each player should keep their own music. Photocopies of most music can be made under the [Schools' Printed Music Licence](#) and the [Music Service Printed Music Licence](#). N.B the schools' licence does not cover peripatetic instrumental and vocal lessons; and hub partners and commissioned organisations will not be covered by these licences.

Peripatetic instrumental and vocal lessons

As far as possible, individual and small group lessons should be held in rooms that can be ventilated well. Minimum recommended social distancing (or 2m distancing for brass, flute and saxophone) must be maintained and groups may have to be split up. If piano tutors cannot maintain current recommended social distancing and see students' hands, they may need to ask the school to rearrange the room but they should not move pianos or other furniture on their own initiative. For the tutor to demonstrate, the student will need to move at least 1m away from the piano. Cleaning keys before and after each change of player is recommended. Woodwind and brass tutors should insist on proper cleaning and drying of instruments at the end of lessons but should not allow students to blow or tip water out of instruments in the teaching room. Newspaper, paper towels (or anti-bacterial paper) or pots containing detergent should be provided for venting of water keys and players should remove and dispose of their own at the end of the lesson. Students come and go but tutors are often in the teaching room for extended periods. Their exposure to multiple people and to the same air possibly for some hours puts them at greater risk. A plexiglass screen may help and they may wish to consider a mask (albeit singers, woodwind and brass players will have to remove it to demonstrate). It may also be sensible to timetable additional breaks to ventilate rooms periodically. It should hardly need saying that nobody should ever play anyone else's mouth-blown instrument.

Section Two - Advice on cleaning instruments

Cleaning instruments

All instruments present a risk of contact transmission. This is similar to the risk of transmission via door handles, handrails etc around the school. Instruments that are only used by one person should be cleaned as usual but with additional care. If instruments are used by more than one person (e.g. classroom percussion), or taken in and reallocated (e.g. at the end of a whole-class programme or hire period), meticulous cleaning is called for.

This advice is being shared with schools and can be contextualised as needed. Some processes are not intended to be taught to or carried out by pupils. Not all will be practical or even desirable every time an instrument is played.

The guidance is written with normal school and student instruments in mind. It is not intended for higher quality or antique instruments.

COVID-19 virus particles are believed to survive for two to five days on hard surfaces. Disinfectant wipes and/or sprays are effective but bear in mind that most instruments contain multiple materials. Some disinfectant products will damage the pads of woodwind instruments and varnished or polished finishes.

Hot, soapy water is just as effective as disinfectant wipes. Instruments or parts of instruments made entirely from plastic may be submerged. The same applies to brass instruments but take the valves out first and set them aside. Recorders can even be dishwasher in the top rack.

Do not immerse or soak woodwind instruments with cork joints or with keywork as it may damage pads: this includes flute headjoints, as it will damage the headcork.

After playing, woodwind instruments should at minimum be dried in and out with swabs or pull-throughs to limit microbial growth. Fully drying even small brass instruments is not practical but it is extremely important to clean the mouthpiece using an appropriately sized mouthpiece brush, to ensure that all dirt and debris are removed.

Plastic piano and electronic keyboards can be sanitised with disinfectant wipes (unplug electronic equipment first). Do not spray them as residues may harm key mechanisms. It is a good idea to dry keys off afterwards. Ivory keys will be damaged by most disinfectant products. Clean them with a cloth dipped in soapy water and wrung out; leave the residue on for thirty seconds and wipe with a dry cloth.

Handles and straps of percussion instruments and beaters should be wiped similarly.

Primary school percussion trolleys may not be practical for now unless all instruments and the trolley can be cleaned after each use. Instruments might be allocated to classes or set aside for 72 hours between uses to avoid cross-contamination. Schools will need to respond according to their stocks, circumstances and needs.

For wooden instruments, follow manufacturers' instructions or test your cleaning product on an inconspicuous surface. You may want to wipe the chinrests of violins or violas but it probably is not necessary (pure sweat is not thought to carry viruses). The neck and fingerboard and the lower end of the bow of all bowed strings may also be wiped.

Knobs, buttons, sliders etc on ICT equipment, amplifiers, backlines, CD/MP3 players and so forth should be wiped with antiseptic wipes. Do not use sprays or soaked cloths, to avoid liquids getting inside equipment. Areas such as the home button on iPads and the mesh of microphones are particularly bad for harbouring microbes. As prevention is better than cure, using a popscreen with microphones will reduce contamination. Always unplug equipment from the mains before cleaning.

After five days of not being played, normal cleaning of any equipment will suffice.

Sharing instruments

Good hand hygiene and wiping handling surfaces when changing players controls risks for most keyboard, percussion and string instruments. Sharing mouth-blown instruments is not considered safe. Risks may be mitigated if the following points can be fully and consistently applied every time:

- every brass and woodwind pupil should have their own mouthpiece;
- reeds must never be shared;
- mouthpieces and upper tubing, crooks or headjoints must be thoroughly washed before and after playing and dried before putting back in the case. However Music Mark does not recommend these measures and we repeat for clarity that sharing mouth-blown instruments is not considered safe. Tutors should also impress on students that they should not share instruments even with family members.

If practical music making really is not safe

There will sometimes be good reasons why playing or singing is not safe in particular schools and special circumstances. One school consulted for these guides is planning to change emphasis to music appreciation and music theory until they are able to restart practical classroom music. You can point schools to a plethora of online resources and courses to enliven this learning including resources collated by Music Mark here.

Considerations for music services and other music education providers working with schools

Our guidance to schools lays out a number of things that schools should consider as they look to welcome our tutors back into their buildings. Tutors may wish to refer to this guidance in agreeing protocols with their schools. However, in addition to that guidance and the following suggested code of practice, it is more important than ever to be aware of and respect each school's individual arrangements and risk assessment for safeguarding pupils and visitors.

Cleaning guidance videos will be produced for schools

The music service will provide short videos showing schools how they can clean the instruments.

More advice on cleaning different instruments is available from this American website: <https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812235/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines.pdf>

In the UK, the Music Industries Association is gathering relevant information on its website: <https://www.mia.org.uk/covid-19/>.

SMS Cleaning Guidance

You can view our instrument cleaning guidance by clicking on the picture

