



Small Ensembles in Schools Covid-19 Guidance & Risk Assessment

Introduction

Because of the wide-ranging benefits that music education provides, we are keen to resume as many activities as possible from September 2020. We do however have a duty to ensure the safety of both children & young people and our staff. This guidance and risk assessment is intended to support schools and MPN staff to ensure that we can safely resume face-to-face learning where appropriate from September 2020. This guide presupposes that schools and providers are already complying with:

- pupil bubbles and social distancing of adults;
- improved hand hygiene;
- enhanced cleaning of school building and other settings;
- normal considerations regarding noise levels;
- maintaining vocal health i.e. singing safely;
- lifting (manual handling) and posture.

This document is not intended to cover all risks associated with any activity: it looks only at additional measures to minimise transmission Covid-19. Existing risk assessments still apply.

Ensemble Rehearsals

Visiting teachers can be welcomed into schools; they can teach in multiple schools and across bubbles with mitigations.

Visiting teachers should ensure that they social distance as much as possible from other adults and from older students. Social distancing of pupils within bubbles will not be effective and may be deprioritised unless the school's risk assessment says otherwise, e.g. because of a vulnerable member of class.

Sharing of equipment must still be minimised and appropriate cleaning carried out between users. We continue to recommend distancing for singing and playing of woodwind and brass instruments because of the risk from large water droplets.

In extra-curricular activities and/or teaching children across bubbles groups should be no larger than 15.

For ensembles or classes that do not include mouth-blown instruments, normal social distancing and resource use (books, stands, pencils) will suffice.

For safety, brass and woodwind should be given more space, observing 3m distancing.

Players should be discouraged from lifting the bells of instruments 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. Newspaper, paper towels or anti-bacterial paper should be provided to soak up water and players should clear up their own. Alternatively, a small pot containing detergent would also be effective.

Conductors/musical directors 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.

Choirs can take place in a well-ventilated room but 2m distancing must be respected. Note that the area of the room is critical here: a higher ceiling does not mean singers are safe to stand closer together. The DfE guidance states a minimum ventilation of 10l per second per person but it is unclear how this could be verified or assured in most schools. A more practical approach is to limit rehearsal to a maximum of 40 minutes and then ventilate the empty room for at least 15 minutes.

Cleaning Instruments

If instruments are used by more than one person, meticulous cleaning is called for.

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.

Knobs, buttons, sliders etc on digital drum kits, amplifiers, 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. Always unplug electrical items from the mains before cleaning.

More advice on the cleaning of different instruments is available [here](#).

Good hand hygiene and wiping handling surfaces when changing players controls risks for most keyboard, percussion and string instruments.

Guidelines –MPN Teaching Staff

Our teaching staff will all be given refreshed guidance and training at CPD days at the start of September. They will be informed of the following expectations surrounding their work in schools:

1. Do not attend school if you suspect that you (or anyone you live with) may be coming down with Coronavirus symptoms: follow the current self-isolation procedures
2. Keep an eye on the school's website, news links, diary and newsletters to anticipate disruptions to your teaching programme. It may save you a journey and unnecessary risk.
3. Sign in at the school reception on arrival and immediately wash your hands thoroughly before going to the teaching room.

4. Remember that this way of working is as new to school staff and pupils as it is to you. Accept that there will be slips and honest mistakes on both sides and take the opportunity to learn from them.
5. Ask for the school's risk assessments for COVID-19 and for music teaching; ask about anything you do not understand and abide by the control measures specified.
6. Find out what the school's infection control procedures are; follow them and make use of anything the school is good enough to provide for your safety.
7. Find out, before you need to know, what to do if you or pupils fall ill.
8. If you think that a child may be showing symptoms of Coronavirus, stop the lesson and report your concerns to the school immediately.
9. Teach outside if it is practical and weather permits.
10. Observe current social distancing guidelines at all times (but don't use your instrument cases to enforce this in narrow corridors!). You may wish to consider wearing a mask when moving around the school.
11. If you can control layout and ventilation in the teaching room, set it up to direct airflow away from both you and the pupil(s) but not at the expense of normal safeguarding or health and safety considerations: e.g. do not move heavy furniture or equipment.
12. If the teaching room does not allow for sufficient distancing, explain this to the school. If no reasonable alternative is offered, politely decline to teach that session for the benefit of both you and pupils. If you have one, raise the issue with your manager or equivalent immediately.
13. You may consider wearing a face mask while you are teaching (of course singing, woodwind and brass teachers will need to remove theirs to demonstrate).
14. Avoid touching pupils' instruments, particularly mouthpieces. Carry disposable gloves and hand sanitiser in case you absolutely have to touch a mouthpiece or instrument, e.g. to set a reed to to fix a stuck valve.
15. Never play on a pupil's mouthpiece or allow them to play on yours.
16. Stick to the agreed timetable as closely as you reasonably can but understand if it has to change at short notice.
17. Wash your hands thoroughly before leaving the school, preferably as the last thing you do before signing out.

Covid-19 Supplementary Risk Assessment

Whole-Class Ensemble Tuition (non-blown instruments)

Owner:	Music Partnership North		
Version:	2		
Date of assessment:	4/9/2020	Review date (max 1 yr):	30/10/2020

Description of activity

Small ensemble rehearsals – taught in groups of up to 15 pupils, led by a MPN tutor.

	Hazard	Who is at risk?	Control measure(s)	Who is responsible?
1	Airborne transmission	Everyone	Minimum 2m distancing observed by everyone. 3m for woodwind/brass	MPN tutor
2	Airborne transmission	Teacher/leader	Teacher stands at least 3m from the nearest player. More vulnerable people may consider a mask or screen.	MPN tutor
3	Surface transmission	Pupils	Players must be one to a stand. If physical resources (printed music sheets or books for example) these should not be shared. Each pupil should have their own copy for the duration of the programme.	MPN tutor, pupils and parents
4	Surface transmission	Pupils	Sharing instruments is not generally considered safe. See above for further information on wiping down between students when sharing is necessary (for piano/keyboard/drum kit etc.) Tutors must not play on students' blown instruments, even to diagnose a problem. Tutors should carry disposable gloves and hand sanitiser in case they have to touch a mouthpiece or instrument, e.g. to set a reed to to fix a stuck valve.	MPN tutor

Additional control measures

	Hazard	Who is at risk?	Control measure(s)	Who is responsible?
1	Airborne transmission	MPN Tutor	The use of masks is advisable to ensure the safety of staff.	MPN Tutor
2	Airborne transmission (vulnerable teacher)	MPN Tutor	Where MPN staff have informed us that they are vulnerable. They will need to work in line with their personalised risk assessment. We may look into offering online tuition or sending an alternative member of staff to school.	MPN
3	Airborne transmission (vulnerable pupils)	Pupil or pupils	Precautionary measures will be taken as per the above however it is at the parent's discretion as to whether they are happy for their child to participate in the activity.	Parent

Risk

Covid-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called Coronavirus. Symptoms can be mild, moderate, severe or fatal. We are heavily minimising the risk of transmission of the virus, both airborne and surface, by adhering to the guidance above and in the Risk Assessment. Government guidance will be followed at all times and the above reviewed where required with an initial review date in October.

Date communicated to staff: 7/9/2020

Signed: *D Francis*

Date: 4/9/20

Name: D Francis

Position: Acting Lead Officer