



Instrumental & Vocal Teaching 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.

Multiple studies from all around the world have found only limited evidence of Covid-19 infection being passed on by children and usually where it has been thought to have happened, it was within the family home. A cup of tea in the staffroom may be more hazardous than teaching in class.

Guidance – Small Group & Individual Tuition

As far as possible, individual and small group lessons should be held in rooms that can be ventilated well. The 2m distance (preferably more for brass, woodwind and vocal tuition) should be maintained and therefore larger groups may have to be split up or lessons delivered in larger rooms. Some schools may request shorter, individual lessons rather than the usual group lessons.

Extended social distancing for these activities appears to have been lifted, although it continues to be recommended as a mitigation, particularly for singing and playing mouth-blown instruments.

Tutors 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.

Piano tutors need to see students' hands and maintain a 2m distance. Rooms may have to be rearranged to accommodate this. For the tutor to demonstrate, the student will need to move 2m away from the piano. Wiping 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 puppy pads should be provided for venting of water keys and students and staff 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. Staff may wish to consider a mask (although singers, woodwind and brass players will have to remove it to demonstrate). It will also be sensible to timetable additional breaks to ventilate rooms periodically.

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 for tutors' protection and groups may have to be split up to fit into the teaching room and to maintain bubbles. If the rooms schools have available don't have a working window, teaching must take place with the door open.

Social distancing may mean that one music stand will be needed per musician, particularly for non- class-based ensembles. Ideally, each player should keep their own music.

Schools will need to consider a process for prompting students if they have forgotten their lessons that avoids our teachers moving around the school unnecessarily. This could involve teachers phoning the school office from their allocated teaching room to request a student.

Drum sticks, plectrums and books should not be shared or handled by multiple students. It will be essential for children to bring their own items to each lesson.

Bell covers are recommended for woodwind and brass instruments to reduce aerosol release. These are not essential, but tutors may wish to advise parents to purchase these items. Tutors should teach proper cleaning of instruments and encourage this at the end of lessons.

It should hardly need saying that nobody should ever play anyone else's mouth-blown instrument. Tutors should also impress on students that they should not share instruments - even with family members.

A plexiglass screen (or similar) may be used, particularly for vulnerable staff. These should be used with some caution as they do carry additional risks. Screens will need to be placed in such a way that they do not interfere with ventilation. In a small room the screen itself becomes a risk and will need to be cleaned between each lesson.

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. 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.

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 Risk Assessment

Instrumental & Vocal Teaching

Owner:	Music Partnership North		
Version:	2		
Date of assessment:	3/9/2020	Review date (max 1 yr):	8/1/2021

Description of activity

Individual and small group instrumental and vocal lessons undertaken by MPN teaching staff in schools across Northumberland. As stated in the DfE guidance from 2nd July 2020 “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.”

Control measures

	Hazard	Who is at risk?	Control measure(s)	Who is responsible?
1	Airborne transmission	Everyone	<p>A 2 metre distance should be adhered to at all times with the following information per instrument taken into account:</p> <p>Woodwind instruments – 2m <u>minimum</u>, 3m to be safest. Be aware of flute aerosols being projected across the mouthpiece.</p> <p>Brass & saxophone instruments – 2m from bell, 3m to be safest.</p> <p>Singers – teacher to stand to the side of the student where possible with a 2m distance.</p> <p>All Students and tutor to be side by side wherever possible. When facing each other, at least 4m distance to be maintained.</p> <p>Social distancing within a class bubble is desirable, but not essential.</p>	MPN Tutor
2	Airborne transmission	MPN Tutor	Teacher to be at least 2m from the nearest pupil at all times and 3m when practical. Consider keeping to the side of your student.	MPN Tutor
3	Airborne transmission	Everyone	Ventilation is key. Keep the windows (or door) open even if you have to wear a coat. Ventilate the room frequently by having breaks.	MPN Tutor
	Airborne and surface transmission	MPN Tutor and students	If the teaching space is small, tutors will need to include 5 minute gaps between lessons so that students do not overlap.	MPN Tutor
4	Surface transmission via shared instruments	Everyone	Note: sharing instruments is not generally considered safe. See	MPN Tutor

			<p>above for further information on wiping down between students when sharing is necessary (for piano/keyboard/drum kit etc.)</p> <p>Tutors must not play on students' instruments, even to diagnose a problem.</p> <p>If a pupil's instrument needs attention, disposable gloves should be used whilst this takes place.</p> <p>Shared piano/keyboards should be wiped down between each player (including before and after teacher demonstrations)</p>	
5	Surface transmission via printed music	Pupils	<p>Pupils should have their own copies of all music/books. If tutors are using their own handout material these should be emailed to parents for printing at home. Pupils will be responsible for bringing their own copies to the lesson.</p>	MPN Tutor, Pupils and parents
6	Surface transmission via equipment used for playing backing tracks or accompanying	MPN Tutor	<p>Cleaning of PC/CD player/Amplifier for backing track or piano/keyboard.</p> <p>Please see above for advice on cleaning equipment.</p>	MPN Tutor
7	Surface transmission via practice diary	Everyone	<p>MPN staff to email lesson notes and practice notes to parents if they have an email address or through schools where appropriate.</p>	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. It is at the	Parent

			parent's discretion as to whether they are happy for their child to resume lessons in this manner or would prefer online lessons.	
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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: 3/9/2020, reviewed 21/10/20

Name: D Francis

Position: Acting Lead Officer