

Covid-19: Guidance for LMEP Partners and Music Network members.

03/09/20 Update – this includes the key elements of the latest DfE guidance (from 28/8) but please note that, as subsequent guidance is issued, it is likely that this document will be updated again. The latest version will be always be available at:

<https://artformsleeds.co.uk/music>

1. Introductory Comments

As schools reopen, and as all children and young people return to education from September onwards, “all pupils should have access to a quality arts education. Music, dance and drama build confidence and help children live happier, more enriched lives, and discover the joy of expressing themselves. There may, however, be an additional risk of infection in environments where singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments, dance and drama takes place”. (DfE 28/08/20)

There has been a great deal of information circulated in recent months concerning music education in the context of the current Covid-19 situation: perhaps too much to be easily assimilated. The purpose of this document is to collate the key messages from the current regulations (particularly from the DfE), together with some information as to how this can be interpreted and implemented most effectively in schools and elsewhere. There are many pieces of research into the safety of various musical activities, but this document confines itself to the regulations currently in force in England.

LMEP takes the safety of learners, of staff and of the community very seriously, and is taking all appropriate steps to manage the risks of Covid-19 in a music education context.

2. Working with visiting tutors

The DfE’s guidance is clear that schools can continue to engage peripatetic teachers during this period and this would include staff from LMEP partners. Partner organisations should ensure that their staff receive guidance concerning safe practice. Face-to-face tuition (with necessary safeguards) is the most effective means of teaching and learning, but where this is not possible online tuition alternatives should be offered.

All teachers and other staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable, but schools are advised that they must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing. The overarching objective should be to reduce the number of contacts between pupils/students and staff whilst also offering a broad curriculum.

Within this context, all LMEP staff should comply with the school’s arrangements for managing and minimising risk, including taking particular care to maintain distance from other staff and pupils. If a school has any specific policy requirements for LMEP staff which differ from those set out in this document, they should advise the Artforms office via educ.artforms@leeds.gov.uk

Whole class music

LMEP stands ready to work with schools, to support school leaders and teachers in order to find the best ways for music to be a central part of the recovery curriculum.

Groups of pupils should be kept apart, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group. Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as school choirs and ensembles, or school assemblies.

Schools should consider how to reduce the risk, particularly when pupils are playing woodwind or brass instruments or singing. Whilst there is now no maximum number stated in the guidance and a whole class bubble of 30 pupils can participate in whole class music (including singing), it is still important to ensure tutors are at least two metres away from the front row of the class (in order to protect the class bubble and the staff member). In addition, risks are further reduced by positioning pupils back-to-back or side-to-side, avoiding sharing of instruments, and ensuring good ventilation. In some situations, therefore, it may still be necessary to split a class into two smaller groups to enable all pupils to benefit from this tuition.

Additionally, you should keep any background or accompanying music to levels which do not encourage teachers or other participants to raise their voices unduly. If possible, use microphones to reduce the need for shouting or prolonged periods of loud speaking or singing. If possible, do not share microphones. If they are shared, follow the government guidance on [handling equipment](#).

3. Small group and individual learning

When learning in small groups and individually, lessons should involve physical distancing (and playing outside wherever possible). Group sizes should be proportionate to social distancing guidance within the space available. Pupils should be positioned back-to-back or side-to-side. Measures should include specific social distancing between pupil and teacher (current guidance is that if the activity is face-to-face and without mitigations, 2 metres is appropriate), accounting for ventilation of the space being used. Pupil and teacher should be positioned side by side if possible.

This may limit group activity in these subjects in terms of numbers in each group. It will also prevent physical correction by teachers and contact between pupils.

4. Specific issues – mainly concerning singing, and playing woodwind and brass instruments

When planning music provision, schools should consider additional specific safety measures. Although singing and playing wind and brass instruments do not currently appear to represent a significantly higher risk than routine speaking and breathing at the same volume, there is now some evidence that additional risk can build from aerosol transmission with volume and with the combined numbers of individuals within a confined space. This is particularly evident for singing and shouting, but with appropriate safety mitigation and consideration, singing, wind and brass teaching can still take place. Measures to take follow in the next sections:

Playing outdoors

Playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors wherever possible.

Playing indoors

If indoors, use a room with as much space as possible, for example, larger rooms; rooms with high ceilings are expected to enable dilution of aerosol transmission. If playing indoors, limiting the numbers to account for ventilation of the space and the ability to social distance. It is important to ensure good ventilation. Advice on this can be found in Health and Safety Executive guidance on [air conditioning and ventilation during the coronavirus outbreak](#).

Singing, wind and brass playing

Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as choirs and ensembles, or assemblies unless significant space, natural airflow (at least 10l/s/person for all present, including audiences) and strict social distancing and mitigation as described below can be maintained.

Social distancing

In the smaller groups where these activities can take place, schools should observe strict social distancing between each singer and player, and between singers and players, and any other people such as conductors, other musicians, or accompanists. Current guidance is that if the activity is face-to-face and without mitigating actions, 2 metres is appropriate.

Seating positions

Pupils should be positioned back-to-back or side-to-side when playing or singing (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible. Position wind and brass players so that the air from their instrument does not blow into another player.

Microphones

Use microphones where possible or encourage singing quietly.

By considering and adopting these cumulative risk mitigation measures, the overall risk will be reduced.

5. Resources – making music rooms and instruments safe

Hand washing. Staff should use hand sanitiser before and after each teaching group.

Face Masks: Bearing in mind the latest DfE guidance which gives schools a high degree of discretion about the wearing of face masks, staff will need to ensure they are aware of the requirements of each individual school and adhere to that. In general, however, the recommendation would be that face masks should be worn in communal areas in schools and music centres (where social distancing is more difficult to maintain) but, in most cases, this would not be applicable or feasible in a lesson/class situation.

Ventilation: In line with all national advice, teaching areas should be kept as well ventilated as possible

Woodwind, brass and string instruments must not be shared. If a member of staff needs to handle a child's instrument (to tune it, oil valves or perform simple maintenance), the staff member will use hand-sanitiser before and after or, where appropriate, wear gloves, which will be disposed of after use.

Woodwind and brass instruments produce condensation. This should not be allowed to drip on to the floor, but should be collected on disposable paper towels or "puppy pads" and disposed of by the student in a way agreed with the school.

Instruments such as **classroom percussion, keyboards and other instruments normally shared** may continue to be shared, but should be disinfected/wiped down between uses. (This also applies to drumsticks and beaters). Recorders will need to be fully disinfected between uses. Where these instruments are currently associated with National Curriculum teaching, you may wish to consider not using such instruments for the time being - but if they are used, they should not be passed between children without being wiped down/disinfected first.

Specialist rooms (including studio spaces and practice rooms) may be used either with equipment being cleaned between each 'bubble' of pupils or left unused for up to 72 hours.

Staff should ensure that frequently touched surfaces are wiped down between teaching groups. (This will include, but is not limited to, door handles, handrails, table tops, music stands etc.)

Handling scores, parts and scripts: limit handling of music scores and parts to the individual using them –everyone should have their **own copies of music** which they keep from week to week – ideally printing their own copies off rather than handing out but this may not always be possible. In addition, learners should not share **music stands**

Staff may need to build in additional time in schools to enable these precautions to be taken while the current situation persists, whilst also aiming to minimise the amount of time out of teaching and learning. This is something that will need to be built into timetabling/scheduling.

6. Ensembles and groups

Extra-curricular activities are an important way for pupils to re-connect with each other. They should be kept within year groups or other 'bubbles' wherever possible and if not, take place in small consistent groups.

Singing, wind and brass playing should not take place in larger groups such as school choirs and ensembles, or school assemblies.

If planning an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance in front of a live audience, schools should follow the latest advice in the DCMS [performing arts](#) guidance, implementing events in the lowest risk order as described. If planning an outdoor performance they should also give particular consideration to the guidance on delivering [outdoor events](#).

7. Risk Assessments

Such is the complexity of the music services provided by LMEP partners and network members, with their huge range of different activities/provision, that it is difficult to create one single risk assessment that would adequately cover all aspects of provision – although, in many respects the key purpose of this guidance document is to mitigate against the overall risks that we as a whole will face from September onwards.

Therefore, please note the following:

- All the schools will have their own risk assessments in place which address the additional risks associated with Covid-19. It will therefore be necessary for visiting music providers to familiarise themselves with the risk assessment documentation for the schools they work with and consider this alongside the guidance in this document.
- Music Mark has provided all music services/music hub members with a wide range of risk assessment templates to support services with the safe return to Music Teaching in schools. These can be adapted as an additional level of assessment for use by staff as needed – indeed, many schools may find these useful documents to supplement their own risk assessments. These risk assessment cover the following areas:
 - Class Singing
 - Whole class (blown and non-blown instruments)
 - Small ensembles
 - Music technology
 - Instrument changeovers
 - SEND
 - Rock/Pop
 - Peripatetic Tuitions (all)

These are available through the links below for Music Mark members – the templates can be also be shared if needed.

8. Concluding Comments

We all know that these are difficult times for all in education. The government aspiration is that: ‘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.’ Music can and should be part of this. We may have to find different ways of doing this in the future: LMEP will look for the best ways to give the best to learners, working in partnership with schools and families

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Appendix 1

Useful links to current guidance and other relevant documents

https://www.musicmark.org.uk/news/teaching-music-in-schools/?utm_source=Master+Audience+List&utm_campaign=6f2c89d60b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_02_26_11_49_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_acb48a8f0a-6f2c89d60b-451791661&mc_cid=6f2c89d60b&mc_eid=461059e8ff

<https://www.candomusic.org/>

<https://www.musicmark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Guidance-for-Providers-August-2020.pdf>

<https://www.musicmark.org.uk/resources/music-unlocked-guidance-for-schools-and-music-providers/>

https://www.ism.org/images/files/ISM-Literature-Review_July-2020_FINAL.pdf

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care/safe-working-in-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings-including-the-use-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

<https://www.ism.org/advice/instrument-hygiene-preventing-the-spread-of-covid-19-when-performing-or-teaching>

<https://www.ism.org/images/files/COVID-19-Advice-on-cleaning-keyboards-from-the-RCO.pdf>
<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41407-020-0313-1>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools#music-dance-and-drama-in-school>