

TBMH's analysis of how to respond to this to teach music in schools

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

1. All pupils should receive an ambitious broad and balanced curriculum covering all subjects. Therefore, music should be taught to all pupils, 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 gives freedom to bring pupils together for music rehearsals, each school should judge this accordingly.
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 2-metre physical distancing where possible and cleaning in-between lessons).
4. *“Groups should be kept apart, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group”*. Large gatherings for collective worship should not happen. Singing assemblies therefore cannot happen in a physical large space; however, singing assemblies could be prepared and shared virtually direct into classrooms, or with groups in a bubble.
5. Peripatetic staff (visiting music teachers) can move between schools. This can 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.
6. *“Individual lessons in music, dance and drama can resume in schools, FE colleges and organisations providing out of school childcare. This may mean teachers interacting with pupils from multiple groups, so you will need to take particular care, in line with the measures set out above on peripatetic teachers.”* Pupils can take part in individual lessons. They should bring their instrument to school, store it securely and safely, no one else should touch their instrument or case. Treat the instrument like a school bag.
7. Instrumental Music lessons can be taught by visiting music teachers and/or class teachers with all appropriate safety precautions in place and cleaning routines. This would support first-access learning. The choice of instruments learnt may need reviewing.
8. *“When planning music provision for the next academic year, 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”*. The science behind 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. *“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”*. Try to keep as much physical distance as possible between pupils/teachers. Actively use body percussion as this can engage the whole body in a musical manner.

- b. *“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.”* Keep singing to a soft dynamic. Avoid chanting loudly or using repertoire/activities that contain plosive consonants (<https://thesoundofenglish.org/plosives/>).
 - c. *“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.”* 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.
 - d. *“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.”* Position pupils back-to-back or side-to-side (to encourage active listening). Do not share instruments between pupils and clean them between classes.
 - e. *“Use microphones where possible or encourage singing quietly.”* Actively encourage listening tasks using quality recordings or films.
 - f. *“Playing instruments and singing in groups should take place outdoors wherever possible. If indoors, consider limiting the numbers in relation to the space.”* Deliver music sessions outside (in fresh air), where possible and appropriate.
9. Before-school and after-school clubs to provide enrichment activities can take place. Music groups/lessons/activities could be delivered providing all relevant safety precautions are met.
10. 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. The [music recovery curriculum](#) would apply here.

Air Flow and Ventilation - Delivering Music in schools

Some concerns have come from this statement in the DfE guidance:

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.

However, after having consulted LA Health & Safety Officers, our recommendation is that music curriculum lessons, choirs, and ensembles should happen in a large, well ventilated room. These sessions should be 45 mins as a maximum and this must be followed by a minimum of 15 mins ventilation with all occupants having left the room.

Further information:

- This [link](#) ‘Intermittent occupancy combined with ventilation: An efficient strategy for the reduction of airborne transmission indoors’ contains useful tables with figures that explains air flow.
- Schools could also consider using CO2 monitors with traffic light indicators in rooms that will be used for music delivery.