

# Guidance for peripatetic music teachers visiting schools and COVID-19



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## **Journey to our new normal**

In the last months we have all risen to the challenges that COVID-19 has presented us, and we will continue to do all we can to battle this pandemic. Things will continue to change, but we are going to work through them together.

As we approach this next phase, one thing remains unchanged. The health, safety and wellbeing of our staff, pupils and their families is paramount.

### ***Keeping everyone safe is our top priority.***

So, as we begin to reopen some of our musical activities across the Borough, we do so with utmost caution.

To remain safe, we need to continue to take ownership and mutual accountability of our own personal readiness. This means continued vigilance, i.e., staying home if you or your family have underlying health conditions, are vulnerable or showing symptoms, washing hands frequently and maintaining social distancing measures will all play a key role in our continued fight.

Returning to face to face musical activities needs to be a gradual structured and phased process, whilst making sure all local legislation/guidelines are always adhered to.

Please make sure you read and understand this guidance document, particularly the code of practice. It is aimed to ensure your safety. The sustained effort from everyone at Bury Music Service (BMS) to do the right thing always, alongside the advice in this guidance, gives us the best opportunity to safely traverse to our new normal.

Thank you from all at BMS to our amazing team, who are dedicated and enthusiastic to provide musical experiences to our pupils.

Stay safe, stay healthy and take care.

Gemma Price  
Head of Bury Music Service  
7<sup>th</sup> September 2020

## Introduction

This document sets out guidance for peripatetic staff working for Bury Music Service to provide musical activity in schools, when re- opened, to keep staff and pupils safe.

The science of Covid-19 is in its infancy and new discoveries are being made all the time. The guidance has been drawn up considering government advice and consultation with experts. Please note that BMS will revisit and update this guidance from time to time in the accordance with the latest scientific understanding.

This guide presupposes that schools and providers are already complying with:

- social distancing and formal consideration of how to reduce contacts, maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Pupil bubbles
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene
- enhanced cleaning of school buildings and other settings
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace
- normal considerations regarding noise levels
- lifting (manual handling).

### Transmission of 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, and both are significant in schools:

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

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.

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. Even if there is an asymptomatic child in a bubble, the infection is only likely to be passed on by prolonged, direct exposure, so distancing from pupils and other adults as best as possible will offer protection, as the relatively low concentrations of airborne virus will be dispersed through the room (and remember that children are unlikely to be passing the infection wholesale to their classmates).

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.

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## **Code of practice for peripatetic music teachers in schools**

1. Do not attend school if you suspect that you (or any of those you live with) develops COVID-19 symptoms or you have been contacted by NHS 'Track and Trace' (i.e., you may have been in contact with an infected person). Common symptoms are as follows:
  - high temperature
  - new continuous cough
  - changes to (or loss of) sense of smell or tasteRemember, not everyone gets all of them.

If any of the above, please follow self-isolation procedures. In addition:

- Inform the Head of BMS and the BMS office
  - Inform your first school of the day.
  - Obtain a COVID-19 test.
2. Carry a supply of anti-bacterial hand gel, anti-bacterial wipes<sup>1</sup>, disposable gloves, paper towels and waste disposal bags in your car and bag. Take a supply with you into each school. These are all available to you at the Music Centre.
  3. Regularly check each of your schools' websites, news links, diary, and newsletters to anticipate disruptions to your teaching programme. It may save you a journey and unnecessary risk.
  4. Sign in at the school reception on arrival and immediately wash your hands thoroughly before going to the teaching room. If there are no handwashing facilities available to you use your anti-bacterial hand gel as an alternative. You may need to wear a face mask in some schools.
  5. 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).
  6. On your first visit to a school complete a risk assessment for an activity.
  7. On or before the first visit ascertain and familiarise yourself with the following:
    - the school's risk assessments for COVID-19 and for music teaching
    - the school's infection control procedures: follow them and make use of anything the school is good enough to provide for your safety.
    - what to do if you or pupils fall ill. If you think that a child may be showing symptoms of COVID-19, stop the lesson and report your concerns to the school immediately.
  8. Do not use the School Staffroom to socialise or during breaks where possible. If this room has been allocated as a teaching space, the outlined procedures apply and a risk assessment should be undertaken.
  9. Consider teaching outside if it is practical and weather permits. Always seek permission from the school first.
  10. Adhere, as reasonably practical to do so, to the agreed timetable but practice patience and understanding if this has to be changed at short notice.



11. When planning your timetable and groupings of students, ensure students remain in their own bubbles. You cannot teach children in small groups in different bubbles. Organise your students by bubble rather than standard (This is commonly by year group or Key Stage).
12. Try to social distance as much as possible from other adults and from older students. Social distancing of pupils within bubbles will not be effective unless the school's RA says otherwise, e.g. because of a vulnerable member of class. Distancing of 2 Metres is still our recommendation for singing and playing of woodwind and brass instruments.
13. 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. Inform the Head of BMS as soon as possible.
14. Do not allow children to collect other children for their lesson. Teachers must collect pupils themselves.
15. Pupils should wash their hands before their lesson.
16. 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, i.e., do not move heavy furniture.
  - If there is no ventilation in the room, i.e. you are allocated a room without a window, you should assess if you feel it is safe to teach for you and the pupil. Raise your concerns with the head teacher and Head of Bury Music Service. Yours and the pupil's safety are of paramount importance.
17. If a pupil has underlying health matters such as asthma, inform the Head of BMS and head teacher. The parents will be advised to speak to the child's GP as to the safety of the child partaking in musical activities, particularly singing ensembles. Action will be dependent on this advice. The child could be advised to wear a Perspex shield and stand 3m from the nearest pupil.
18. Ensure each pupil has their own copy of the music for the duration of the activity or as an alternative project the music onto a screen if applicable. Try to have your own copy of the music the pupil is playing to avoid getting too close in order to be able to read their music.
19. Pupils should mark in their own music, using their own pencil, and complete their own notebook at the end of their lesson.
20. Each pupil should use an individual music stand. Stands will be wiped after the activity is completed with anti -bacterial wipes.
  - In addition, if transporting stands from school to school, ensure they are thoroughly wiped down with an anti-bacterial wipe after leaving each school.
21. Avoid touching pupils' instruments, particularly mouthpieces. If you absolutely must touch a mouthpiece, e.g., to set a reed, please use your disposable gloves and hand sanitiser.
22. DO NOT use a pupil's mouthpiece or allow her/him to play on your mouthpiece.



23. DO NOT share instruments amongst pupils or allow any pupils to share instruments amongst themselves. A pupil should always use their own instrument. If a pupil forgets their instrument, send them back to class and inform the parents at the end of the day. Parents will be informed of this policy through our newsletter.
24. Bell covers (or pop screens) are strongly recommended for woodwind and brass instruments to reduce aerosol release.
25. Do not allow pupils to blow or tip water out of brass/wind instruments onto the floor of the teaching room. Use paper towels for venting of water keys and dispose of same into waste bin bags. At the end of the activity double wrap the bag and dispose into the school's household waste bin.
26. Wash your hands thoroughly before leaving the school, preferably as the last thing you do before signing out.
27. Dispose of any anti-bacterial wipes and disposable gloves in waste bin liners, double bag and discard the bag into your household waste dustbin.
28. If teachers are in the teaching room for extended periods your exposure to multiple people and to the same air possibly for some hours puts you at greater risk. A plexiglass screen may help and you may wish to consider a mask (albeit singers, woodwind and brass players will have to remove it to demonstrate). It would also be sensible to timetable additional breaks to ventilate rooms periodically.
29. If the staff member is over the age of 70 and/or has underlying health matters, further consideration will be sought from the Head of BMS and advice from the staff member's own General Practitioner.

Following advice further control measure will be put in place such as:

Wearing of a face mask, shield, and/or

Perspex screen for the teacher to stand behind as a shield between pupils and staff.



## **Peripatetic instrumental and vocal lessons**

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, flute, and saxophone) must be maintained and groups may have to be split up.

If piano tutors cannot see students' hands and maintain a 2m distance, 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 2m away from the piano. Keys should be wiped with an anti-bacterial wipe, before and after each change of player.

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 onto the floor of the teaching room. Newspaper or paper towels should be provided for venting of water keys and these should be disposed of into waste bin bags. At the end of all lessons double wrap the waste bags and dispose into the school's household waste bin.

**NB: You, or any other pupil, should never play anyone else's mouth-blown instrument. Do not allow sharing of instruments.**

## **Singing and choirs**

Singing releases potentially hazardous bioaerosols in proportion to volume: the louder the singing, the more aerosols are released. Decibel for decibel, aerosol release is comparable whether singing or speaking, so prioritising quiet singing, a beautiful sound and good technique will help control this. Certain consonants further increase aerosol release, so not insisting on musical theatre levels of diction will also help. Humming is safe.

Singing activities should take place in a well-ventilated room, large enough to maintain the usual 2m social distancing guideline, regardless of ceiling height of the room.

For singing activity within a class bubble, the DfE no longer recommends limiting group sizes to 15. Social distancing of children is not necessary within bubbles however Bury Music Service still recommends some distancing (as the room allows) and not singing face-to-face, to control the risk from large water droplets.

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.

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.

The teacher leading the singing and the accompanist, if any, should be 3-5m from the front row as they will be facing the singers. They may want to consider a plexiglass screen.

Ideally words or music should be projected. However, if not possible, each singer should have their own music and should keep it between rehearsals.

### **Instrumental ensembles and Whole Class Instrumental Teaching in Schools**

For whole Class Instrumental Teaching, string guitar and percussion lessons can be taught in the classroom, as long as there is good ventilation and the teacher can stand 2 Metres away from the pupils, or to the side.

For Woodwind and Brass programmes, instruments can only be used if there is sufficient space for pupils to be 2 metres apart, there is good ventilation and the teacher keeps a minimum of 3 metres away, or 2 metres standing to the side. Playing should be kept to short bursts and pupils should be encouraged to play quietly.

Singing is permitted in Whole Class Instrumental Teaching if there is sufficient ventilation and distancing available.

For most instrumental ensembles, the 2 m social distancing should be implemented.

Ideally the room should have good ventilation.

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. Newspaper or paper towels should be provided to soak up water and players should clear up their own and place in waste bin bags.

Conductors should stand 3-5m beyond the front row of wind or brass. For strings and orchestras, 2m will suffice.

Social distancing means that each player (including strings) 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. If there is any concern, please contact the Head of BMS for guidance.

## **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. This is the responsibility of the pupil and parents will be provided with advice re cleaning of instruments.

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.

COVID-19 virus particles are believed to survive for two to five days on hard surfaces. Anti-bacterial 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 wipes and instruments or parts of instruments made entirely from plastic may be submersed.

The same applies to brass instruments but take the valves out first and set them aside.

Recorders can be dish washed 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 head joints, as it will damage the head cork.

Copper-zinc alloys (i.e., brass) have good viricidal properties and can kill COVID-19 in four hours but lacquers may interfere with this process. In any case, student instruments are often made of other alloys for reasons of economy and weight, and these may be less effective than brass. Silver needs a wet environment for its antimicrobial properties to work, so silver-plated instrument bodies and keywork still need cleaning.

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 anti-bacterial wipes (unplug electronic equipment first). Do not spray them as residues may harm key mechanisms. Ivory keys will be damaged by most disinfectant products. Clean them with a cloth dipped in soapy water and rung 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.

For wooden instruments, follow manufacturers' instructions or test your cleaning product on an inconspicuous surface.

Wipe the chinrests of violins or violas with anti-bacterial wipes. 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, CD/MP3 players and so forth should be wiped with anti-bacterial wipes. Do not use sprays or soaked cloths, to avoid liquids getting



inside equipment. Always unplug 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 safe.

Teachers should impress on pupils that they should NOT share instruments even with family members.

## Summary

Even after assessing and controlling for foreseeable risks, it is not possible to eliminate all possibility of COVID-19 transmission. Recommended distancing for singing and various instruments is likely to come under review as more data emerge and are analysed. Understanding of fomite transmission (how and even if the virus is transferred by surface contact) and more real-world measurement of the effect of moisture evaporation on transmissibility may change the advice we have given here.

## References

1. American Journal of Infection Control, *Microbicidal Actives with Virucidal Efficacy against SARS-CoV-2 (May 2020)*  
<https://www.rb.com/media/news/2020/may/first-published-scientific-data-confirms-that-leading-hygiene-products-are-99-9-effective-against-sars-cov-2-virus-covid-19/>
2. Department of Health, *Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings (June 2020)*  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

## Advice on cleaning of instruments

How to clean a trumpet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBPntaUJLFI>

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/>