



KMEA Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for the Music Classroom¹

Guidance in this document is based on information available as of July 3, 2020. KMEA awaits the results from a scientific study on the distribution of aerosol disbursement in a performing arts setting.² Endorsed by a coalition of over 100 music organizations, this study is systematically examining the distribution of aerosols to potentially reduce the risk of infection during music making. The study seeks to do so by scientifically determining valid approaches of mitigating risk towards a safe return to the music classroom.

Preliminary results for woodwinds and brass are scheduled for July 10 while preliminary results for singing and theatre are expected by July 25. Guidance based on these results is to be available shortly afterwards, which may increase or decrease restrictions recommended in this document.

*KMEA believes that it is critical to reinforce the continuation of music education as a vital and essential area of study for all children. **KMEA believes strongly in maintaining and fostering band, chorus, orchestra, and all types of music education programs in schools.** As a result, KMEA endorses the [Arts Education Is Essential Statement³](#), available for sharing with school administrators.*

*There are many scheduling models being developed across the nation (e.g., block scheduling, flipped classrooms, small group pull-outs, and staggered scheduling). **Music education can and should occur in all scheduling models.** Examples are provided for various models in the [NAfME/NFHS document referenced below](#).*

Critical information for administrators: If, for the near term, singing or playing woodwind and brass instruments is shown to be unsafe as an indoor practice, there are numerous other music education/performance preparation practices, procedures, and instructional activities that a music teacher may provide for music students that will sustain students' skill development, aesthetic sensibilities, and social/emotional well-being. Decision-makers should keep in mind that if students are prohibited from singing or playing woodwind and brass instruments in class, they still may do so at home. **Music education provides for the whole child even if it is provided in an altered way. Also, it is difficult or impossible to reconstitute a music program that has been rendered non-existent for a year.**

¹ In compliance with *Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools (K-12), Interim Guidance as of June 2020*, https://education.ky.gov/comm/Documents/Safety%20Expectations_FINAL%20DOC.pdf, accessed on June 26, 2020

² COVID-19 aerosol research study, <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>, accessed June 26, 2020

³ Arts Education is Essential, https://nafme.org/wp-content/files/2020/05/Arts_Education_Is_Essential-unified-statement-2.pdf, accessed on June 27, 2020

*When it comes to music education, including large group rehearsals, safety for **students and educators is our top priority.***

- *Based upon CDC recommendations regarding group singing, KMEA strongly advocates for the safety of students, music teachers, families, and communities. However, there isn't enough valid and qualified research to give guidance on how to return safely to face-to-face full ensemble rehearsals.*
- *When it comes to singing, specifically, there have been several well-documented events, including in [the U.S., England, Germany, Austria, and South Korea](#), that appear to show an increased risk of viral spread via indoor singing activities to a greater extent than other music activities.*
- *Therefore, the following guidance focuses on known safety precautions implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while researchers continue to identify more definitive solutions.*

Specifics related to the music classroom Grades K–12 (for planning purposes, and subject to change):

1. **Recommended reference:** *The National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) in partnership with the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) have issued a "[Fall 2020 Guidance for Music Education](#)."⁴ In response to questions about their safety guidance regarding singing, they have issued further background and clarification as found in Appendix A of this document.*
2. Students should wear masks when entering, leaving, or moving within the music room. Masks should cover both nose and mouth. Once a student is in place, they should remain in place for the duration of the rehearsal or class.
3. Maintain a social distance of 6 feet in common areas such as instrument rooms. Do not place music folders in a common storage area. This is to reduce potential aerosol or contact contamination, and so that students do not congregate in the area at the beginning or end of class.
4. The spacing between percussionists, orchestral string students, guitarists, pianists, and others who make music in ways that do not employ the use of breath should be 6 feet or greater, at which distance they may remove their masks. If physical space in the music room does not allow for spacing students 6 feet apart, space them as far away as possible and require them to wear masks at all times, even when playing. Masks should cover both nose and mouth. All students should face the same direction.
5. It is not possible to wear a mask while playing a recorder, or a woodwind or brass instrument, so spacing between students should be 6 feet or greater. Students should wear masks at all times except when playing. There is no safe option for spacing players of wind instruments (band

⁴ Fall 2020 Guidance for Music Education, https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812373/nafme_nfhs-Guidance-For-fall-2020-review-june-19-2020-final.pdf, accessed June 29, 2020

instruments and/or recorder) at distances less than 6 feet during rehearsals or class, because masks cannot be worn while playing. All students should face the same direction.

6. The spacing between singers should be 6 feet or greater. Until guidance is available to the contrary, students should wear masks at all times, even when singing. Masks should cover both nose and mouth. All students should face the same direction.
7. The National Federation of High School Associations, the National Association for Music Education, and the National Association of Music Merchants has issued instrument cleaning guidelines.⁵
8. Because using recorders, or woodwind or brass instruments involves contact with the mouth, students should not share these instruments.
9. Individual percussionists (band, orchestra, or the elementary music classroom) should have their own drumsticks. Because the mallets used to play keyboard percussion, bass drum, and gong are typically owned by the school; a systematic and thorough procedure should be implemented and enforced to disinfect these items between users and/or between classes. The same should be implemented for handheld percussion items such as tambourine, triangle, Latin percussion instruments, and so forth.⁶ Possible disinfectants:
 - Sterisol Germicide Solution can be safely used on plastics, hard rubbers, and metals.
 - Isopropyl alcohol wipes are safe for most materials.
 - A solution made with 50% water and 50% white vinegar or 50% water and 50% hydrogen peroxide can be safely used on plastics, hard rubbers, and metals.
 - Rosewood instruments, such as marimbas and xylophones, are easily damaged if not maintained properly. The use of UVC lighting to disinfect rosewood and paduk is the only safe and practical method at this time.
10. Because playing digital or acoustic pianos involves contact with the hands, they should be disinfected using products recommended by instrument manufacturers.⁷
11. Because using string instruments involves contact with the hands, any that must be shared by multiple students should be disinfected between uses.⁸

⁵ NFHS, NAFME, and the NAMM Foundation, COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines, accessed July 3, 2020 <https://nafme.org/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines/>

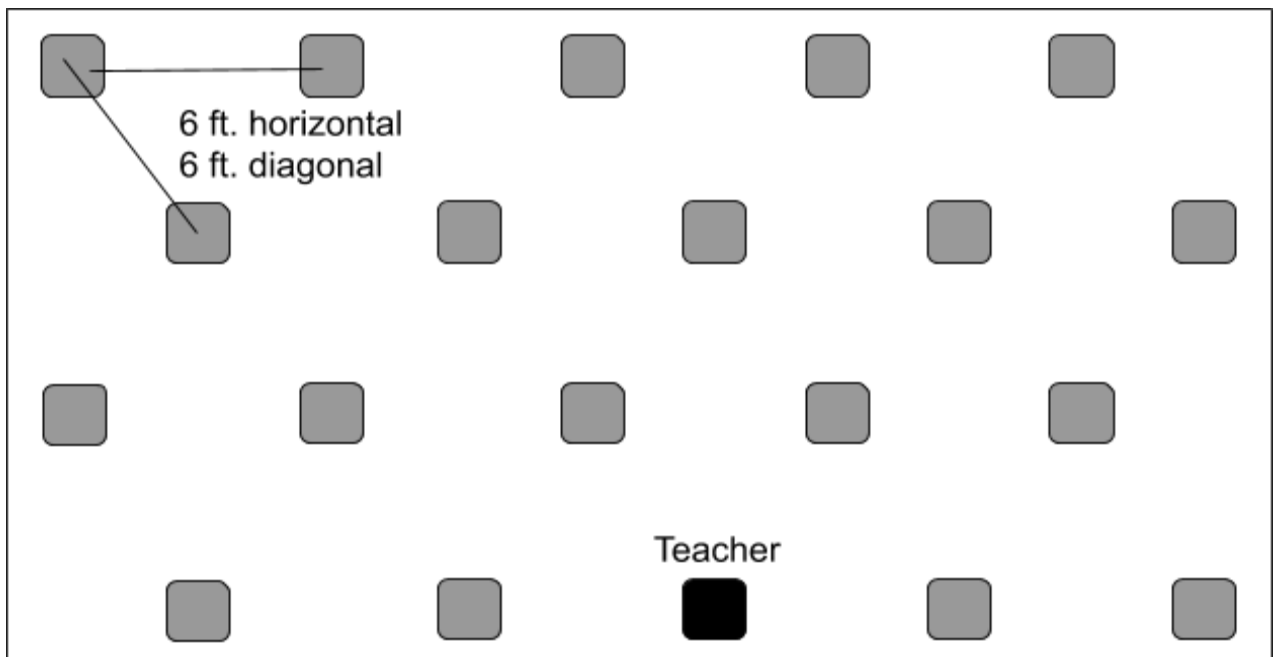
⁶ Percussive Arts Society, Managing Covid-19 Protocols in Administering Percussion Curriculum <https://www.pas.org/docs/default-source/2020-files/managing-covid-19-protocols-in-administering-percussion-performance-curriculum.pdf>

⁷ Yamaha Corporation Product Disinfection Guide Digital Pianos: https://www.yamaha.com/yamahavn/Documents/disinfection/DisinfectionGuide-Digital-Pianos.pdf?_ga=2.156413816.2105006871.1593795591-493684865.1593795591

Yamaha Corporation Product Disinfection Guide Digital Pianos: https://www.yamaha.com/yamahavn/Documents/disinfection/DisinfectionGuide-Pianos.pdf?_ga=2.93489758.2105006871.1593795591-493684865.1593795591

⁸ American String Teachers Association Instrument Cleaning Tips, accessed July 3, 2020. https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Instrument_Cleaning_Tips.aspx

- Avoid sharing instruments. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after handling your instrument. Regarding sanitizing and disinfecting your instrument: You can safely use a dab of rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab or tiny piece of cloth to wipe **ONLY** the strings and fingerboard of your instrument.
 - **Do not touch any other parts with alcohol.**
 - **Never use alcohol or solvent-based products. Alcohol, solvent, and hand sanitizer will damage the varnish on your instrument.**
 - The inside of cases can be sprayed with an aerosol disinfectant such as Lysol. Remove the instrument, lightly spray the inside surface of the case, and let the case sit open until the surface is dry before placing the instrument back into it.
12. School-supplied buckets should be available for emptying condensation from brass instruments. Buckets are to be sanitized after each rehearsal. Alternatively, disposable absorptive cloths may be supplied to brass players, and following the rehearsal the cloth should be placed in a waste receptacle by the student who uses it.
13. Student musicians may stand or sit during rehearsals, or they may alternate as directed by their teacher. When transitioning from sitting to standing they should stand by the chair in which they were sitting.
14. Teachers should place markings on the floor as a reminder of positions that are 6 feet apart. To maximize the use of floor space while maintaining the recommended distance, students may be placed in rows that are offset as exemplified in the diagram below.



15. Due to distancing requirements, as well as the possibility of contact distribution of the coronavirus, music stands may not be shared by multiple people at once. Similarly, sheet music may not be shared.

16. Daily cleaning and disinfection of the classroom, including instrument lockers, chairs, stools, and music stands is critical to preventing the spread of all illnesses. It is recommended that the high touch surfaces that are listed be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
17. Clean and sanitize equipment between classes. Provide hand hygiene rules in the music room, and advise students not to share personal items. Provide school-supplied disinfectant wipe stations throughout the room for use on equipment after each use. Encourage students to practice good hand hygiene before and after using music room furniture or equipment.
18. Elementary music teachers who travel between classrooms should be allowed to return to their supply storage area between classes to avoid moving materials from one class to another.

Appendix A

NAfME-NFHS Guidance Information

Both groups believe that it is critical to reinforce the continuation of music education as a vital and essential area of study for all children. **Both groups believe strongly in maintaining and fostering band, chorus, orchestra, and all types of music education programs in schools.** As a result, both groups endorsed the [Arts Education Is Essential Statement](#), available for sharing with school principals and endorsed by the major principal associations.

When it comes to music education, including large group rehearsals, safety for **students and educators is our top priority.**

- Based upon CDC recommendations regarding group singing, both groups strongly advocate for the safety of students, music teachers, families, and communities. However, there isn't enough valid and qualified research to give guidance on how to return safely to face-to-face full ensemble rehearsals.
- When it comes to singing specifically there have been several, well-documented events, including in [the U.S., England, Germany, Austria, and South Korea](#), that appear to show an increased risk to viral spread via indoor singing activities over other music activities.
- Therefore, the following guidance focuses on known safety precautions implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while researchers continue to identify more definitive solutions. Please see:
 - [CDC Recommendations for Community Based Organizations](#)
 - [CDC Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#)

In July, preliminary results of an [aerosol distribution study](#) are expected to be made available, and both groups plan to update guidance, as necessary, to reflect the findings. Led by a coalition of over 100 music organizations, this study is systematically examining the distribution of aerosols to potentially reduce the risk of infection during music making. The study seeks to do so by scientifically determining valid approaches of mitigating risk towards a safe return to the music classroom.

- Background information is available here: [Aerosol Distribution study](#)
- Foundational resources:
 - Access the articles that formed the basis for the Statement of Work for the Aerosol Distribution study that was proposed to the University of Colorado-Boulder Institutional Review Board: [Basis for Work](#)

For additional COVID-19 Resources music educators, please visit:

- [NFHS's Performing Arts COVID-19 Resources page](#)
- [NAfME COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Additional articles](#) examining music-making and the spread of COVID-19, including the COVID Airborne Transmission Estimator.