

Supplemental Guidance and Additional Considerations on Visual and Performing Arts

Updated: May 18, 2021

This document is part of [Ready Schools, Safe Learners Guidance](#) and is linked in Section 5f – Instructional and Extra-Curricular Activities Requiring Additional Consideration. This document is aligned with OHA guidance on [Indoor Entertainment](#), [Outdoor Entertainment](#), and [Youth Program Guidance](#).

Introduction

All of the instructional models in Ready Schools, Safe Learners (RSSL) include opportunities for arts education (On-Site, Hybrid, and CDL – including LIPI). As Oregon students return to On-Site and Hybrid instruction, there are additional factors to consider when designing in-person visual and performing arts experiences. No matter which instructional model a school chooses, art education should continue. Engagement in the arts can improve school climate and empower students with a sense of purpose and joy in their education. Additionally, arts educational experiences have significant positive impacts on students' academic, social and emotional, and engagement outcomes. The following guidelines address the requirements and recommendations for On-Site and Hybrid arts programming for the 2020-21 school year. The document begins with general requirements and recommendations and then addresses additional specific requirements and recommendations for five specific areas: 1) Music Instruction, 2) Theatre, 3) Dance, 4) Visual Arts, and 5) Performance Events.

Students are now allowed to sing indoors with face coverings securely on with at least six feet of physical distance. This activity is recommended to take place outdoors whenever possible.

Students are now able to play wind¹ instruments indoors, removing face coverings while playing, with at least six feet of physical distance. Again, this activity is recommended to take place outdoors whenever possible.

Limits on capacity for any given room or setting follow capacity limits set forth in RSSL guidance.

¹ The term “wind instrument” includes all instruments which utilize breath to project sound, including brass instruments.

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General Requirements

- Prepare for how students enter and exit the classroom. Specifically, plan for distributing supplies as well as storing and retrieving personal belongings. If the classroom space has cubbies for personal belongings, mark off appropriate spacing between cubbies.
- Face coverings must be worn by all students and staff prior to entering a performing arts room or setting.
- Students must wear face coverings at all times except in the case of:
 - Playing a wind instrument and situated more than 6 feet from others.
 - Singing outdoors and situated more than 6 feet from others.
- Understand that there is a great risk of aerosol projection associated with vocal projection and wind production, especially at high volumes. Risk mitigation strategies include virtual rehearsals and performances, moving any in-person singing and playing of wind instruments outdoors, and using certain instrument bell covers when available. Refer to latest update of [vocal music resources](#) for changing information and ongoing studies in this field. Educators, parents and students must be educated about the associated risks and mitigation strategies.
- Move outdoors for high-risk activities, like singing or playing wind instruments, whenever possible. If access to outdoor areas is prohibitive, hold classes on stage/auditorium/cafetorium when available to allow for more physical distancing.
- Large classes shall be reorganized into multiple smaller classes that meet at different times to satisfy physical distancing guidelines.
- Increase transition time between classes where transitioning classrooms is necessary. Increased time is required for cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces. Specifically, the dance studio floor will need to be cleaned between classes.
- Large classes shall be reorganized into multiple smaller classes that meet at different times to satisfy physical distancing guidelines.
- Students must not share props, microphones, make-up, costumes or any other equipment for class, rehearsal, or performance.
- If *indoor* school performances are permitted, they must be streamed online without live audiences.
- Students must not face each other when singing or playing.

General Recommendations

- ⇒ Design an age-appropriate block schedule to limit time spent moving through hallways. Students can see teachers for longer periods of time but less often for conducting

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instructional demos as well as providing individual feedback and instructional support. This can support health and safety by limiting the number of students and allowing time for disinfection between blocks or alternating supplies used between classes. (9-12)

- ⇒ Use larger facilities as available. Measure and pre-set these spaces. Physical distancing should occur as suggested in section 1c of the RSSL guidance document. This will reduce the number of students that can fit in a performing arts classroom. Straight lines should be used because curved setups can affect the aerosol movement in a room.
- ⇒ If school policy and volume level allow, consider keeping classroom doors open in order to improve airflow ventilation and avoid contact with door handles or knobs.
- ⇒ If mobile teaching options are being considered (i.e., “art on a cart”), limit the number of students/classes a teacher is exposed to at a given time (for instance, grade levels rotate through specialist subjects a few weeks at a time) in order to reduce risk of exposure by specialists.
- ⇒ Teachers should use voice amplification equipment to reduce viral transmission. To avoid increased droplet distribution in the air, all teachers and students must avoid yelling.
- ⇒ Students should wear clothing that is appropriate for weather conditions, allows for full movement and is safe for participation in performing and visual arts class or activities. Consider relaxing dress code standards for class rules and performances, as well as any requirements to change clothing.
- ⇒ Reduce the number of students a specialist teacher is exposed to on a daily/weekly basis through alternate scheduling models.

1) Music Instruction

Oregon encourages the return to school-based music activities in any and all situations where a return can be done safely. Physical distancing will be a part of the return to school across all grade levels and content areas. This will have an impact on music classes that are often much larger than a typical class. This means each class will likely be smaller than traditional large ensembles unless facility space is available to support the physical distancing of large groups of students. If providing in-person, indoor instrumental ensemble experiences, teachers may focus on chamber music (excluding wind instruments) with smaller groups of students due to physical distancing constraints or may consider new music course offerings like Music Technology/Recording, Percussion or String ensembles, or Composition/Theory.

Required

- Follow [Instrument Cleaning Guidelines](#) for any music course where instruments are used.

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- ❑ Students must not share wind instruments. Any sharing of durable equipment owned by the school should be limited. Shared equipment, including music stands, tuners, metronomes or instruments, must be disinfected in-between players. Students using shared instruments, such as a piano, keyboard, percussion, hand bells, or other classroom instruments, may wear gloves when practical.

Recommended

The following recommendations are adapted from the [Fall 2020 Guidance for Music Education](#) developed by the National Federation of State High School Associations and National Association for Music Education. For additional reference, with continually evolving data and recommendations, see the revised recommendations following preliminary results of an [aerosol study](#) updated in November 2020. For live performances and rehearsals that include wind instruments, consider covering the instrument with a secured piece of cloth (or “bell cover”) to limit the spread of droplets and aerosols when using the instruments.

- ⇒ Utilize technology to sing over a virtual connection in order to minimize the risk associated with singing together in-person. Choral and general music students can sing and join together to learn singing technique and songs virtually, and limit the amount of time they are singing together indoors.
- ⇒ General music teachers may consider providing each student with a personal music kit that includes common classroom instruments (rhythm sticks, mallets, etc.) and instituting student routines to disinfect equipment after each use.
- ⇒ Consider use of amplification systems with mics for educators that can fit behind a face covering to improve projection across the large spaces required for appropriate physical distancing.
- ⇒ Trombones should have an additional three feet of distancing making their space 9x6. The player’s seat should be situated with 3 feet behind them and 6 feet in front of them.
- ⇒ Spit valves should not be emptied on the floor. Recommend using a puppy pad (or similar) to catch the contents of the spit valve and discard.
- ⇒ Small music groups can meet in many different areas in and outside of the school building if facilities space is limited due to the creation of multiple smaller class-sized classes.

2) Theater

As theatre is primarily done as a group ensemble, consider using digital collaboration to perform and develop group pieces. An emphasis on social emotional learning through self-exploration via story-telling, invested listening, devised ensemble theatre script writing, theatre

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history, theatre of the oppressed, forum theatre and the like provide real-world application during these unprecedented times.

Required

- Reorganize and re-imagine theatre/dance instruction to allow for smaller classes and physical distancing. For more strenuous activities that might increase heart rate and breathing, increase the physical distancing to 10-12 feet.
- Disinfect equipment and props after each use. Wipe down all surfaces (e.g., chairs, set pieces, props, rails, etc.) before and after rehearsal and performances, using EPA-approved disinfectants.
- Disinfect all technical hardware--microphones/headsets, rigging, sound and light boards, lights and rigging before and after each rehearsal per manufacturer instruction.
- Avoid person-to-person physical contact and modify ensemble building activities/ games that might increase the transmission of respiratory droplets.

Recommended

- ⇒ Alternate and/or divide rehearsals to minimize the numbers of students in rehearsal halls, theatres and practice rooms, require physical distancing, and disinfect equipment between sessions. Whenever possible, hold virtual rehearsals.
- ⇒ Use of larger stage performance and rehearsal equipment that cannot be disinfected should be kept at a minimum. Curtains and drops should be flown out or drawn open during rehearsals.
- ⇒ Consider use of recorded music instead of hiring live musicians to accompany rehearsal and performance.
- ⇒ Consider modifying some performances to Readers' Theatre for plays and/or concert versions of musicals to minimize interaction and physical contact between performers.
- ⇒ Use of dressing rooms should be limited to performances and dress rehearsals, and the number of people within them should be limited for proper physical distancing. Utilize hallway bathrooms, if necessary, to comply with physical distancing.
- ⇒ Launder all costumes and disinfect wigs with shampoo and baking soda or alcohol-based spray after each rehearsal and/or performance. Put procedures in place when distributing costumes, props, scripts to avoid clustered groups or dense lines of students.
- ⇒ During all call or larger cast rehearsals, consider staggering customary rehearsal breaks to accommodate small-group physical distancing protocols in restrooms and other theatre support areas.

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- ⇒ Provide a hand-washing station and have alcohol-based hand sanitizer readily available in the dressing rooms, green rooms, backstage and all other production areas.
- ⇒ No one should share any voice amplification equipment (microphones) during a single rehearsal or performance.
- ⇒ Consider avoiding forced breath cues (inhale/exhale). Avoid or minimize vocal warmups that reinforce projections, articulation, and vibration. Physical stretching warm-ups should be done with appropriate physical distance.
- ⇒ Provide scripts for each student—ideally digitally—that honor copyright restrictions. If students are using personal devices to access digital scripts, they should not be shared. Consider having hard copy scripts available for students without access to technology to avoid the need for students to share devices or scripts.
- ⇒ Meet technical needs (set and costume construction, lights, sound, etc.) through the application of standard safe practice procedures. Stagger the technical production work with rehearsal schedule to ensure physical distancing in all workspaces. Avoid overlapping technical production work with rehearsals.
- ⇒ Special measures and configuration should be in place for physical distancing when students are off stage, backstage, in the wings and in the house during rehearsals. Avoid having students in the rehearsal space or its supporting areas when not directly working with the theatre director or teacher.

3) Dance Instruction

Required

- Reorganize and re-imagine dance instruction to allow for smaller classes and physical distancing of 10-12 feet.
- Plan lessons for dance activities that avoid direct or indirect contact such as partnering, tactile cueing, direct floor work, touching the same equipment or traveling across the floor. Consider alternative methods for teaching dance forms that traditionally involve physical contact (Latin dance forms, ballet pas de deux, and contact improvisation among others).
- Disinfect equipment, surfaces, and props after each use as well as high touch surfaces such as ballet barres, yoga mats and dance floors. Please see Task Force On Dancer Health informational paper on [COVID-19 FAQ for dancers and dance companies returning to the studios](#) for suggestions on cleaning vinyl dance floors.
- For indoor dance, follow the [OHA Indoor Recreation and Fitness Guidance](#) when/if the district's county is listed in the Advisory Metrics Framework in the Distance Learning (Red) column. Note if the county is in the Extreme Risk Level, the dance class must be moved outdoors or held virtually.

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Recommended

- ⇒ Where possible, students should enter and leave the studios with dance clothes under street clothes.
- ⇒ Street shoes should be removed prior to entering any studios. Dance shoes should not be worn outside of the studio/classroom.
- ⇒ Teachers should monitor the intensity of class/workout to allow for wearing face coverings during exercise.
- ⇒ Consider avoiding forced breath cues (inhale/exhale).
- ⇒ Assign “spots” in the room; avoid rotating lines and cross-patterned group movement. Modified movement phrases in order to maintain distance.
- ⇒ Since $\frac{1}{3}$ of a dance class is “across the floor” movement sequencing, consider avoiding or minimizing this section of classwork and avoid the customary practice of having students wait in line for these activities.
- ⇒ Consider double casting in order to minimize the number of people on stage together and to maintain distancing.
- ⇒ Consider reducing or eliminating dance floor work as skin contact, sweat, and breath on the floor may lead to increased chance of disease transmission.
- ⇒ Cleaning and disinfecting the floors should ideally happen prior to every new class or rehearsal.
- ⇒ Whenever possible dance instruction should take place in the designated dance studio, gymnasium or outdoors.

4) Visual Arts Instruction

Visual Arts can be readily adapted to the additional health and safety practices needed during the pandemic. Students can successfully engage in art-making individually, within a small space, so long as they have access to specifically designated materials and supplies. Two key components of visual arts education merit special attention: the regular need for clean-up of students' hands, tools and materials, and the common sharing of supplies and materials between students.

At the K-5 level, it is also important to note that specialist instructors generally meet with many groups of students in a day with minimal transition time. Alternate scheduling models are necessary to minimize the educators risk of exposure.

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Required

- Students will wear face coverings and frequently wash hands. Use signage that encourages good hygiene (K-12).
- Provide adequate physical distancing of students and staff. The spacing could be encouraged through markings on tables and floor, and the placement of desks.
- Plan for the sanitation of surfaces (desks, work tables, partitions, doorknobs, etc.), tools, shared art materials, and personal protective equipment common to visual arts instruction, such as safety glasses, gloves, and aprons. Be certain to disinfect items before being used by another student. Have alcohol-based hand sanitizers and disinfectant wipes readily available.
- Review [CDC guidance](#) on disinfecting art supplies and materials if they need to be shared, with time built into the school day for cleaning. (K-12)

Recommended

- ⇒ Establish practices for minimal sharing of necessary materials. Disinfect shared materials when possible.
- ⇒ Provide each student with a [personal art kit](#) of “high-touch” quality materials and supplies central to instruction (pencils, colored pencils, sketchbook, scissors, etc.) differentiated by grade level. (K-12)
- ⇒ Consider the traffic flow when distributing materials and other movements. Establish clear classroom procedures (e.g. the supplies will be given to students instead of walking around the room to retrieve them) consistent with CDC and State guidelines for health and safety in the use of materials and equipment in common areas. (K-12)
- ⇒ Consider using disposable materials and small-scale projects to reduce sanitation needs. (K-12)
- ⇒ Modify grouping practices. Provide additional seating/table space to allow for proper distancing. (K-12)
- ⇒ Prepare for how students will safely and effectively clean up at the end of instructional time. (K-12)
- ⇒ Increase transition time. When possible, provide longer transitions for cleaning the art room and tools between classes to allow for disinfecting supplies, wiping down tables or getting a whole new set of supplies to another classroom (if traveling). (K-12)
- ⇒ Whenever possible, art instruction should take place in the designated art room. (K-12)
- ⇒ If mobile teaching options are being considered (i.e., “art on a cart”), limit the number of students/classes a teacher is exposed to at a given time (for instance, grade levels rotate through specialist subjects a few weeks at a time) in order to reduce risk of exposure by specialists. (K-5)

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- ⇒ If mobile teaching options are being considered, additional supplies will be needed in order to have sets of tools/materials in “homeroom” or cohort-specific classrooms.
- ⇒ If mobile teaching options are being considered, preserve the art classroom as a dedicated safe environment for the art teacher to prepare materials and clean supplies between uses. (K-12)

5) Performance Events

Required

- Enforce use of face coverings for all participants and attendees per state and local health authority requirements.
- Participation is limited to students and staff. Volunteers are not permitted at this time.

Recommended

- ⇒ Once or if allowed, consider modifying productions to podcast or video broadcast events ([see example](#)) to minimize concerns of physical distancing at a live performance.
- ⇒ Consider outdoor performances, where maintaining physical distancing would be easier.
- ⇒ Educate audience members on health rules and expectations through:
 - school or program website;
 - social media channels;
 - online ticket purchasing;
 - mails and push notifications;
 - signage leading to and at the event site;
 - announcements at the beginning of each performance;
 - announcements in the printed program.
- ⇒ Identify, mark and enforce a one-way path of travel for entrance in and exit out of the theatre.
- ⇒ Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer in the lobby and restrooms.
- ⇒ Disinfect all public areas prior to and after a performance—seats, rails, restrooms, back of house, and other high touch surfaces, using EPA-approved disinfectants.
- ⇒ Disinfect all set pieces and props before and after the performances.
- ⇒ Backstage for performance:
 - Face coverings should be worn at all times by all students and in the backstage area;
 - Disinfect all technical hardware--microphones/headsets, sound and light boards, lights, and rigging before and after the performance or rehearsals, per manufacturer instruction;

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- Disinfect all surfaces in the control booth, using EPA-approved disinfectants;
 - Limit the number of students in the control booth, based on physical distancing rules.
- ⇒ Concession sales at performances should consist of individually wrapped, commercially prepared items. Bake sales or homemade items are prohibited.
- ⇒ Open adequate restroom facilities in other parts of the building to reduce crowding and preserve physical distancing.
- ⇒ Place artwork exhibits far enough apart to allow for physical distancing.
- ⇒ Consider creating and uploading artwork in various online platforms and technologies to create virtual art galleries.

Resources for Reference

- Educational Theatre Association [Recommendations for Reopening School Theatre Programs](#)
- Maryland Public Schools: [ARTS TOGETHER: PLANNING GUIDE FOR ART EDUCATORS IN MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS COVID-19 RESPONSE AND PATH FORWARD](#)
- Dance/USA [Task Force on Dancer Health](#)
- National Dance Education Organization: [Teaching Dance in the Fall 2020](#)
- [Considerations for Reintegrating Into the Dance Studio](#) by Dr. Kat Bower PT and Dr. Kathleen L. Davenport, MD
- The National Arts Education Association (NAEA) has established baseline guidance around specific components of the visual arts classroom in their publication "[Tips for Returning to the Visual Arts or Design Classroom.](#)"
- [September Ready Arts Ed. Guidance](#), produced by Arts Ed. New Jersey
- [Recommendations for Arts Education -- North Carolina](#)