

# GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING PRIVATE MUSIC STUDIOS

## Recommendations by the Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Association in accordance with Alberta government guidelines for Stage 2 and beyond

As of August 17, 2020

COVID-19 is a new virus and scientists are continuing to research how it spreads. Some measures are well understood to reduce its spread but uncertainty remains in other specific areas as to what may be considered to be safe. With this in mind, these guidelines make a distinction between:

1. **Required:** what is mandated by the Alberta government.
2. **Good, Better, and Best:** what are considered to be good, better, and best practices with regards to reducing the risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19. **They may not be the same as the best ways to run your studio or the best ways to deliver a music education, so it is up to the teacher to determine which measures are appropriate for their particular studio and circumstances.**

While the core requirements of the Alberta government are duplicated here, studio teachers are encouraged to consult the original documents and consider them authoritative:

- **Alberta Biz Connect:** <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>
- General Relaunch Guidance: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-general-relaunch-guidance.pdf>
- Guidance for Live Music, Dance, and Theatre: <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/covid-19-information-guidance-for-live-music-dance-and-theatre>
- Guidance for Home-Based, Mobile and Door-to-Door Operations: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-home-based-mobile-and-door-to-door-operations.pdf>
- Guidance for DayCamps (recommended for teachers teaching group classes for children): <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-guidance-for-day-camps>
- Guidance for Wearing Non-Medical Face Masks: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-guidance-for-wearing-non-medical-masks>

In developing these guidelines, ARMTA accounted for Alberta Health guidelines and also emerging data linking transmission of virus to aerosol particles as well as larger droplets.

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# Communication

The Alberta Government strongly recommends businesses and entities develop, implement, and publicly post Relaunch plans that address the requirements to:

- implement practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees;
- provide procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness;
- ensure that attendees maintain high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene;
- comply, to the extent possible, with this guidance, and any other applicable Alberta Health guidance found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>.

## A Relaunch Plan Template

(<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-considerations-for-businesses.docx>) has been developed to support business operators in developing and communicating their plan. Teachers may also use the template as a guide and develop their own planning documents and to implement their plan. This plan should be shared with students and parents.

Encourage students and parents to stay up to date with developments related to COVID-19. Notify students and parents of the steps being taken to prevent the risk of transmission, and the importance of their roles in these measures.

As much as teachers are able, the more you can communicate with students and parents about reopening plans, the better. Private studio music teachers generally have more flexibility in offering online lessons, in-person lessons, or a combination of the two, which means that accommodations can be made, particularly with students or family members who are considered to be at a higher risk. Offering multiple options of modes of delivery is an advantage.

Establish a clear and consistent line of communication with students/guardians, whether through email or your website.

- Provide regularly scheduled updates.
- If using online or hybrid modes of instruction, find ways to ensure that students stay up to date with scheduling, delivery modes, and assignments.
- Investigate using online shared documents and calendars, as well as weekly announcements, to facilitate communication.
- Create a document that outlines all policies and procedures for lessons during this time and distribute to students/guardians.

COVID-19 signage should be posted in highly visible locations. Posters are available at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information-posters.aspx>.

## Records management

To support public health contact tracing efforts in the event that an attendee tests positive, teachers should maintain the contact information of their students including names, addresses and phone numbers and keep records of whether lesson attendance was in-person or online and any other people present. Records should be kept for up to 2 weeks.

## Mental health

It is important to plan to support the psychological health and safety of students in addition to meeting public health requirements. Remind students of available mental health and social supports that are available and encourage them to use these resources.

### Urgent/Crisis Services

**If someone is in immediate danger or has thoughts of suicide, call 911.**

<b>Distress Centre (Calgary)</b>	Offers no-fee, short-term crisis counselling.	Free	24-hour Crisis Line: 403-266-HELP (4357)
<b>Sheldon Chumir Walk-In Crisis Services (Calgary)</b>	Emergency care. Services include treatment, intervention, referrals, plans for follow-up as required.	Free	403-955-6200 1213 4 St SW Calgary
<b>Distress Centre (Edmonton)</b>	Offers no-fee, short-term crisis counselling.	Free	24-hour Crisis Line: 780-482-4357
<b>Health Link (Alberta)</b>	Referrals and information	Free	811
<b>Kids Help Phone</b>	Short-term crisis counselling	Free	1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868

For more information on mental health resources in Alberta:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx>

## Sick leave policies

There should be no disincentive for teachers or students to stay home while sick or isolating. In your attendance and makeup policies, it is recommended that (a) if you are offering online lessons that you make it clear that online lessons may be offered instead of in-person lessons or (b) make accommodations for teachers or students or who are not well enough to give or receive a lesson at all.

## Quarantine and isolation

Teachers should:

- Be familiar with the different legal isolation and quarantine requirements for COVID-19

**Quarantine:** Required when people are not sick, but have been exposed. The quarantine period for COVID-19 is 14 days. This is because it can take up to 14 days for an individual to develop symptoms.

**Isolation:** Required when people are sick, to keep them from infecting others. The isolation period for COVID-19 is 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.

- Develop a plan to provide isolation for a student if needed. The Guidelines for Summer Schools and Day Care/Out-of-School Care (<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-guidance-for-daycare-out-of-school-care-child-care>) outline the following procedures:

If a student develops symptoms while at the school facility, the student should be asked to wear a non-medical mask if they are able to, and be isolated in a separate room. The parent/guardian should be notified to come and pick up the student immediately. If a separate room is not available, the student must be kept at least 2 metres away from other students. The student should be encouraged to access COVID-19 testing by accessing the AHS Online Testing tool. (<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>)

- If the student requires close contact and care, staff can continue to care for the student until the parent is able to pick up the student. Staff should wear a mask during all interactions with the student and should avoid contact with the student's respiratory secretions.
- Staff/students must wash their hands before donning a mask and before and after removing the mask (as per mask guidance), and before and after touching any items used by the student.
- All items the student touched/used while isolated must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the student has been picked up. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected should be removed from the classroom and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 10 days.

# Infection Prevention and Control Measures

Infection prevention and control key points:

- A combination of controls is the best way to reduce spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19.
- Eliminating the risks and substituting for new ways of operating are the most effective controls.
- When in-person attendance is required, teachers should implement a variety of control measures.
- Practice good hand hygiene and thorough cleaning and disinfecting.
- Use Health Canada approved hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers.
- Encourage physical distancing through barriers, signage, floor markings and traffic flow controls, and limit the number of people in a space.
- Use personal protective equipment and follow guidance to wear it properly.

## Eliminating hazards - Screening

Teachers who have symptoms, who have travelled internationally in the past 14 days, or who have been in close contact with a known case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days must postpone in-person lessons.

Teachers should pre-screen students and attendees for COVID-19 before arriving for their lessons.

- Post signs that instruct those who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 to not enter.
- Consider implementing active screening of students and teachers for symptoms

**GOOD:** In your communications with students before their lessons or with lesson reminders, be sure to emphasize the importance of staying home if they are feeling at all unwell, have been travelling out of the

country, or been in contact with someone who is feeling unwell or is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19. Post signs (<https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information-posters.aspx>) at the door or entrance as a reminder.

**BETTER:** Use the Alberta Health Daily Checklist

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-alberta-health-daily-checklist> or the Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/Assessment.aspx>. This checklist can either be sent in advance of each lesson, or students/parents sign the checklist at the beginning of each lesson. Written records should only be kept for 2 weeks for contact tracing purposes.

The recommended screening questions are as follows:

## Alberta Health Daily Checklist

### 1. Do you/your child have any new onset (or worsening) of any of the following symptoms:

• Fever	YES	NO
• Cough	YES	NO
• Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
• Sore throat	YES	NO
• Chills	YES	NO
• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
• Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
• Feeling unwell / Fatigued	YES	NO
• Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea	YES	NO
• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
• Muscle/ Joint aches	YES	NO
• Headache	YES	NO
• Conjunctivitis (commonly known as pink eye)	YES	NO

### 2. Has the person attending the activity/facility travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?

YES NO

### 3. Have you/your child had close unprotected\* contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) with someone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days and who is ill\*\*?

YES NO

### 4. Have you/your child attending the program or activity had close unprotected\* contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) in the last 14 days with someone who is ill\*\*?

YES NO

### 4. Have you/your child or anyone in your household been in close unprotected\* contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?

YES NO

\* "unprotected" means close contact without appropriate personal protection equipment (PPE).

\*\* "ill" means someone with COVID-19 symptoms on the list above.

**BEST:** Wherever possible, instruction and practice sessions for the performing arts should be conducted remotely, via video conference or other means.

## Substitution - Alternate methods

Even with regular screening, teachers may not entirely remove the risk of exposing themselves or their students to COVID-19.

For studio music teachers, consider a lower risk alternative such as in-person lessons once a month or every other week and all other lessons online. Another option would be to shorten in-person lesson times with the remainder of the time dedicated to giving feedback on video/audio recordings or theory assignments outside of the typical lesson time.

Use contactless electronic payment and avoid cash payments, where possible.

## Engineering controls - Barriers and Air Ventilation/Filtration

When in-person attendance is necessary, teachers should implement physical controls to support spacing of at least 2 metres or physical barriers to prevent direct contact between attendees. These types of controls reduce the opportunity for transmission.

These barriers may include:

1. **Masks.** In Stage 2, masks or a barrier are required if 2 metres of distancing cannot be maintained.

Masks are recommended even if distancing can be maintained, particularly by teachers who usually do more of the talking. It is recommended that teachers practice hand hygiene before putting a mask on and before taking a mask off. It is reasonable for teachers to consider a change of masks throughout the teaching day, ideally between students.

Wearing a non-medical mask is not a replacement for following proven measures such as hand washing and physical distancing.

Canadians need to understand exactly what wearing a mask will achieve, and that if they choose to wear non-medical masks they need to be used safely. It should be well-fitted (non-gaping). People should also be aware that masks can become contaminated on the outside or when touched by hands. Avoid moving the mask around or adjusting it often. Also, masks should not be shared with others.

### Mask Facts - Surgical versus Cloth

Mask type	Situation 1: Teacher is in the same room but farther than 2 metres from student: (ie. small droplets present a risk)	Situation 2: Teacher is within 2 metres of student: (ie. large and small droplets present a risk)	Health order
Surgical mask	<b>Partially</b> protects mask wearers and others	<b>Protects</b> mask wearers and others	Reserved For

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller aerosol droplets may travel further than 2 metres, while suspended in the air of the room.</li> <li>• Surgical masks catch some of these smaller aerosol droplets as they are exhaled by the mask wearer, thus reducing the concentration of smaller droplets that could possibly be inhaled by others in the room</li> <li>• Suitable for long periods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• from larger droplets which fall to the ground within 2 metres of the person exhaling them</li> </ul> <p><b>Partially protects mask wearers and others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• from some percentage of smaller aerosol droplets circulating throughout the room for periods of time</li> <li>• Suitable for long periods if teacher and student are within 2 metres of one another</li> </ul>	Medical Settings
<b>Cloth mask</b>	<p><b>Partially Protects mask wearers and others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as surgical mask, possibly to a lesser degree but there is no definitive data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protects others</b> from wearer’s larger droplets and some percentage of wearer’s aerosols</li> <li>• <b>Does not protect mask wearer</b></li> </ul>	Intended For Non-medical settings

Further information from the Government of Canada about wearing non-medical masks can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>. It includes measures you should take, such as hand washing when putting a mask on or taking it off. There is also information on how to wash cloth masks or safely dispose of other non-medical masks (such as dust masks).

Bags can be used on wind instruments to reduce aerosol dispersion. See [Considerations for woodwinds/brass teachers](#) under Sector Specific Guidance.

**2. Plexiglass barriers.** In Stage 2, a barrier or masks are required if 2 metres of distancing is not able to be maintained.

Plexiglass barriers can be purchased to place between the student and teacher to stop the spread of large droplets. More cost effective DIY solutions may include using clothing racks, curtain stands or rods, or PVC pipe to hang plexiglass or clear shower curtains like this example by Wendy Freeman of Band Directors United: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mgU1SoUD4Q&feature=youtu.be>

Our current understanding of aerosols and aerosol spread is that smaller droplets are easily moved around the room from a singer, wind instrument, or person speaking loudly, which may or may not remain suspended in the air for an unknown period. After longer periods of time, room circulation and air exchange become the more significant factors in spreading smaller droplets. For this reason, plexiglass barriers should be floor to ceiling to be most effective, and masks are well proven to be more effective than a partial barrier. Barriers and masks can also be used together to reduce the risk of spreading both large and small droplets. See the Performing Arts Aerosol Study referenced in Other Resources for more information.

**3. Increasing ventilation and filtration.** Anything that improves air circulation in the studio aids in ventilation. The University of Colorado-Boulder has developed a risk assessment tool (<https://tinyurl.com/covid-estimator>) estimating the propagation of COVID-19 by aerosol transmission. To





reduce the risks, increase the size of the room used, reduce the number of people and the amount of time spent together, use masks, and increase the air changes per hour.

**GOOD:** Increase air movement, particularly between lessons. Opening all of the doors in the studio that lead to other spaces can improve airflow. If you have any ceiling fans in the studio, keeping these running can encourage air movement. Ceiling fans create a breeze strong enough to push air out the doorway. Portable fans can also help with this. Another fan option is setting a box fan in the doorway which can pull air from outside of the studio, and push studio air back out. Avoid blowing air directly onto either the teacher or the student.

**BETTER:** Increase air replacement and filtration, bringing in fresh air as much as possible. Opening windows and doors a few times per day and/or between lessons quickly replaces stale indoor air with fresh outdoor air. If you have exterior doors with screens, keeping these open for a few minutes can improve ventilation. Ventilating the studio space overnight is also helpful. As for filtration of the air in studios, there are HEPA air filters and ultraviolet air purifiers on the market of varying effectiveness. The faster they can exchange the air, the better, but this efficiency is paired with increased expense.

**4. Waiting areas.** As recommended for Home-Based Operations (<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-home-based-mobile-and-door-to-door-operations.pdf>) and Personal Services (<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-personal-services.pdf>), consider the following controls for your waiting areas:

- Stagger lesson times to enable distancing at entrances.
- Space lesson times to ensure studios can be properly cleaned and disinfected.
- Ask students to attend appointments unaccompanied, unless accompaniment by a parent or guardian is necessary.
- Ask students not to arrive more than 5 minutes before their lesson.
- Where waiting areas are not large enough to enable two-metres of distancing, ask students to wait outside or in vehicles and text or call students when the teacher is ready for them.
- Screen students for symptoms before they enter the studio.
- Remove non-essential high-touch items like magazines and toys.
- Provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content for teacher and student to use as they enter and exit.
- Allow students to hang up their own jackets and hats in closets or place them into plastic bins that can be easily sanitized.
- Eating should be avoided or not permitted in waiting areas. Water bottles should have a designated spot or a clean paper towel placed underneath for each student.
- Have your own family and pets remain in a separate area and avoid the waiting area and studio.

## Administrative controls: change the way you work

### Physical Distancing

Physical distancing means maintaining 2 metres distance between students and teachers as much as possible.

Maintain physical distancing from other household members and pets not required to be present for the lessons.

Never provide lessons in areas of the home where a household member is isolating due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

Develop strategies to minimize the handling of objects between multiple students and ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of these objects.

Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch/shared surfaces such as:

- Doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets and taps, railings.
- Computers, phones, tablets, remote controls, keyboards,
- Tables, desktops
- Pens, pencils, markers, and erasers
- Music stands, chairs, benches, and metronomes.
- Coat hangers, hooks
- Instruments, instrument stands, and instrument cases. See further details for each instrument under considerations for each type of teacher.

For items that are not easily cleaned:

- Sheet music or books that have been used or borrowed should be set aside for 72 hours before reuse by another student according to guidelines given to libraries.
- Headphones should be provided by the student if they are required.

Minimize or remove the handling of objects such as:

- Area rugs and soft furnishings
- Prize or incentive boxes. If you use them, keep them where they can be seen but not touched.
- Candies or other food. If they are used as an incentive, they should be single portions and individually wrapped. Avoid eating during lessons.
- Stickers

**GOOD:** Clean and disinfect high-touch/shared surfaces daily.

**BETTER:** Clean and disinfect high-touch/shared surfaces between each student.

In their communication, teachers should keep their students informed of which surfaces are being cleaned and disinfected at which frequency and emphasize the importance of hand hygiene.

Cleaning refers to the removal of visible soil. Cleaning does not kill germs but is highly effective at removing them from a surface. Disinfecting refers to using a chemical to kill germs on a surface. Disinfecting is only effective after surfaces have been cleaned. Use a “wipe-twice” method to clean and disinfect. Wipe surfaces with a cleaning agent to clean off soil and wipe again with a disinfectant.

Regular household cleaning and disinfecting products are effective against COVID-19 when used according to the directions on the label.

- Health Canada has approved several hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers for use against COVID-19. Use these lists [Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\)](#):

[List of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html)  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html> to look up the DIN number (for hard-surface disinfectants) or NPN number (for hand sanitizer) of the product you are using or to find an approved product.

- Make sure to follow instructions on the product label to disinfect effectively.
- Alternatively, use a bleach-water solution with 20 ml (4 teaspoons) of unscented, household bleach to 1000 ml (4 cups) water. Ensure the surface remains wet with the bleach water solution for 1 minute.

Here's a short list of fast-acting disinfectants:

Product name	Time period the product must remain wet on a surface after application in order to kill viruses
Isopropyl alcohol 70%	30 seconds
Spray Nine (DIN 02160331)	45 seconds
Hydrogen peroxide 3%	60 seconds
Lysol wipes (listed for comparison only)	10 minutes

Obtain a sufficient supply of masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, hand soap, disinfectants, and cleaning materials before providing lessons.

## Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Teachers should promote and facilitate frequent and proper hand hygiene of all students and attendees. Consider the following:

- Enabling and instructing students to wash their hands at the beginning and end of their lesson with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and a single-use towel or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer (greater than 60% alcohol content).
- Hand washing with soap and water is required if the attendee has visibly dirty hands.
- Teachers should wash or sanitize hands before starting work, before and after each student, and after any other activity (e.g. breaks, washroom use).
- Keep hand sanitizer available at the entrance and in the studio to maintain hand hygiene.
- The AHS Hand hygiene education webpage (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page6426.aspx>) has more information, posters and videos about hand hygiene.
- Teachers should make every effort to encourage respiratory etiquette (e.g., coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow even if wearing a mask, promptly disposing of used tissues in a lined garbage bin) is followed.
- The use of highly visible posters that remind attendees to practice respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene is strongly encouraged at entrances and washrooms. Posters are available at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information-posters.aspx>.

## Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE controls are the last level of defense and should be used with other controls. PPE is dependent on type of activity and risk of exposure to a COVID-19. PPE is necessary when physical distancing of 2

metres or physical barriers cannot be maintained by administrative and engineering controls. Examples of PPE include gloves, eye protection (goggles or face shields), gowns, and face masks.

Community protective equipment, such as a non-medical mask, is worn as a community effort to prevent asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19 from spreading the virus. A face covering or mask is required when it is not feasible to maintain social distancing measures (i.e. at least 2 metres of separation between others) between teachers, students, and parents. A face covering or mask is recommended at all times. A plastic face shield is not considered a substitute for a mask, but it can be used in addition to a face mask.

## Sector specific guidance

### Considerations for all music teachers

In the Guidance for Music, Dance, and Theatre

(<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/covid-19-information-guidance-for-live-music-dance-and-theatre>) it reads under **Instruction and practice**:

- Practice, rehearsals, and paid or voluntary instruction of dance, music, and theatre may proceed so long as all participants follow the relevant instruction in this guidance and other applicable guidance documents. (<https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>)
- Business, entities, and individuals that offer instruction or practice opportunities (whether professional or voluntary) should follow the COVID19 General Relaunch Guidance (<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-general-relaunch-guidance.pdf>) and all other applicable guidance (<https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>) to keep themselves and their students safe.
- **Wherever possible, instruction and practice sessions for the performing arts should be conducted remotely, via video conference or other means. Where in-person teaching and practice is required, it may occur so long as:**
  - **Participants should maintain two metres of physical distance from all others at all times, unless they are members of the same cohort or household.**
  - **Non-cohorting individuals from different households who must come within two metres of each other for the purposes of instruction should wear masks or be separated by a barrier.**
  - **If practice or rehearsal occurs outside of a venue, the number of people present (including instructors, coaches, students, and technicians) should adhere follow the Restrictions on Gatherings.** (<https://www.alberta.ca/restrictions-on-gatherings.aspx>)

In addition, the following clarification was received by email from a representative of the Government of Alberta BizConnect:

**At this time [Alberta Stage 2], in person singing and wind instrument lessons (including woodwind and brass) should not take place. These are considered high-risk activities for COVID-19 spread because infected individuals who participate are more likely to spread infection**

**through their respiratory droplets or aerosols. If possible, singing and wind instrument lessons should be delivered remotely.**

## **Singing in all music lessons**

The Alberta Restrictions on Gatherings (<https://www.alberta.ca/restrictions-on-gatherings.aspx>) states the following:

Singing is a high-risk activity because infected people can transmit the virus through their saliva or respiratory droplets.

Congregational singing is strongly discouraged. Consider a soloist or instrumental music instead.

Gatherings that include singing – ideally soloists or small groups – should take as many of the following precautions as possible:

- keep singers completely separate from the audience and each other by livestreaming individuals singing separately
- limit the number of people singing in the same place to the fewest possible
- have people sing facing away from others or otherwise creating separation using a barrier such as Plexiglas
- use pre-prepared audio or video recordings
- have singers wear facemasks while singing

There is no evidence to determine exactly what a safe distance would be between singers and others, but greater distances can reduce risk.

Because of these guidelines, all instrumental music teachers should avoid singing, substitute humming for singing, wear a mask for singing, or use other precautions listed above.

## **Other considerations**

The University of Colorado-Boulder has developed a risk assessment tool:

<https://tinyurl.com/covid-estimator> Using the square footage of the room that you are in, the air exchange rate, the number of students, the amount of talking and activity, the duration of the class, and whether and what type of masks the teacher and student are using, this tool will estimate the risk of transmission by aerosol transmission in a classroom or choir. It assumes that 2 metres of social distancing is respected. While it describes itself as a “simple” model, it is still not easy to calculate, but may help you understand the statistics associated with each variable.

Teachers and students should ideally each have their own sheet music or books and avoid sharing. If a teacher wishes to point out a specific place in a beginning student’s music, a laser pointer or hand pointer may be useful. The student should be responsible for making their own markings in the score as much as possible.

For assignments, online documents and folders or emailing lesson assignments to students can substitute for notebooks. Consider recording or having students record part or all of their lessons to help with remembering their assignments..

Students can be encouraged to bring their own pencils to reduce the need for cleaning.

Even if you are requiring students to provide their own masks, keep a few additional masks on hand in case students forget, get their masks dirty or damaged, or if you plan on maintaining distance but the need to assist a student up close arises.

## Considerations for piano teachers

Refer to general guidelines for all teachers re: screening, alternate methods of delivery, physical distancing, wearing masks, using barriers, cleaning and disinfecting, etc. In addition, piano teachers may also want to consider the following:

- For information on cleaning and disinfecting your piano, please see:
    - Steinway: <https://www.steinway.com/news/features/utility/cleaning-your-piano>
    - Piano Technicians Guild: <https://www.ptg.org/covid-19>
- Piano keys can be safely cleaned with hydrogen peroxide or alcohol-based products. Bleach-based products should be avoided as they will damage the piano keys.
- Pianos are the most common high-touch surface and should be cleaned and disinfected between every student unless they are members of the same household. High-touch surfaces that need frequent cleaning and disinfecting should include the piano bench and piano music stands.

**GOOD:** Avoid playing the same piano at the same time. If it is necessary, the piano keys should be cleaned and disinfected between players. If this is not possible, players should perform hand hygiene before and after touching the piano and refrain from touching their faces while wearing masks.

**BETTER:** If possible, it would be recommended for piano teachers to use two pianos or keyboards so that the teacher and student are not touching the same instrument at the same time.

- Duets and ensembles should be avoided unless they can be performed at multiple pianos or with other instruments to maintain 2 metres of distancing. Ensembles involving siblings or parents would also be an exception as members of the same household or cohort do not need to maintain distancing. Consider playing along with recordings as an alternative.

## Considerations for vocal teachers

**In-person singing is currently [Alberta Stage 2] not recommended**, due to aerosolization of particles during singing and loud speaking. Refer to general guidelines for all teachers re: screening, alternate methods of delivery, physical distancing, wearing masks, using barriers, cleaning and **disinfecting**, etc.

In addition, vocal teachers may also want to consider the following safety measures, taken from current health guidelines, engineering controls within these guidelines, and emerging data regarding Covid-19 virus transmission indoors:

- Using a larger room where a large distance, greater than the general recommended 2 meters, can be maintained.
- Wearing a mask. A singing teacher might consider a mask with a clear window.
- Using a pre-recorded track or accompanying the student themselves rather than having an additional pianist in the room.
- Shortening the live lesson time.
- Using an air filtration system.

- Opening windows and running a furnace fan to ensure circulation of air.
  - in consideration of aerosol particles containing infectious molecules, air movement should be directed away from both teacher and student during lessons
- Leaving time between students for the room to air out.
- Limiting the number of people in the studio area at one time.
- Wiping down all surfaces in the studio including microphones, pop screens, music stands, shelves, pianos, and speakers between students.
- Where partitions are used, in order for them to be effective, they should be floor to ceiling and completely seal the student from the teacher.
- Music and props should not be shared.
- Students should bring their own water, tissues, straws and writing implements and hand sanitizer. Where studio pencils are used these must be wiped clean before and after use.
- Semi-occluded exercises such as lip trills or exercises that produce large amounts of spit such as those using plosives and fricatives should be avoided. Straw in water exercises might be successful if the cup is covered with a lid.
- Avoiding hands-on adjustments.
- Facing singers away from the teacher.

## Considerations for woodwind/brass teachers

**In-person wind instrument lessons are currently [Alberta Stage 2] not recommended.** Refer to general guidelines for all teachers re: screening, alternate methods of delivery, physical distancing, wearing masks, using barriers, cleaning and disinfecting, etc.. In addition, woodwind/brass teachers may also want to consider the following:

- If possible, have students set up their instrument before entering the studio so they can leave their instrument case outside. If instrument case is brought inside, have a plastic bin or mat available to store it that can be easily cleaned after the lesson
- Instruct students to keep their own hand sanitizer inside their instrument case so that they may use it during lessons if they come in contact with instrument condensation, either directly, or through reeds, swabs, spit valves, etc.
- If possible, keep a distance **larger** than 2m or use an instrument covering such as a pillowcase or sheet with cut outs for hand access. A pantyhose can be used to cover the bell. This should restrict air disturbances even less than regular playing.
- Masks should be worn by a student or teacher while they are not playing or use a disposable mask with a slit cut in it for the mouthpiece during the lesson. Maintain good hand hygiene during lessons (use sanitizer if there is contact with instrument condensation) in order to avoid mask contamination if removing and replacing mask before and after playing.
- Teachers should refrain from supplying the student with materials normally given out in class such as cork grease, mouthpiece patches, reeds, etc.
- Teachers should avoid contact with the student's reed, instruct the student how to make their own adjustments.
- Clean instruments regularly or if contact has occurred between student/teacher equipment. See <https://nfhs.org/articles/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines> for cleaning guidelines specific to each instrument

- Establish and communicate a condensation removal procedure and routine to ensure the safe collection of all condensation. That routine should include condensation disposal, sanitization of the area around the water key(s) or slides, and handwashing/sanitizing procedures.

#### **Condensation Removal Recommendations\***

- Water keys should not be released directly onto the floor.
- Either a central condensation dumpsite should be provided for brass instrumentalists or paper towels can be used to soak up condensation, then disposed of at the condensation dumpsite.
- Every dumpsite should include a bucket containing a disinfectant solution (if that is being used to collect condensation), paper towels, disinfectant spray, soap, and water.
- Swabs and other cleaning materials should be handled only by the instrument owner and cleaned regularly.

\*Adapted from BCMEA Guidance for Music Classes in British Columbia during Covid-19 document: [http://www.bcmusiced.ca/uploads/2/4/3/6/24360110/guidance\\_for\\_music\\_classes\\_in\\_bc\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.bcmusiced.ca/uploads/2/4/3/6/24360110/guidance_for_music_classes_in_bc_2_.pdf)

## **Considerations for string teachers**

Refer to general guidelines for all teachers re: screening, alternate methods of delivery, physical distancing, wearing masks, using barriers, cleaning and disinfecting, etc. In addition, string teachers may also want to consider

- Avoiding handling another person's instrument. Since the virus can live on steel and plastic for about 3 days, if the teacher must handle a student's instrument, it may be put away for at least one day and then cleaned or set aside for 3 days before use by another person.
- Consider using new single use latex gloves and a clean handkerchief over the neck and chin to handle a student's instrument and discard them before the next student.
- To disinfect string instruments, please see:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qam4x1159n0>
  - [https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Instrument\\_Cleaning\\_Tips.aspx](https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Instrument_Cleaning_Tips.aspx)
- Do not use alcohol based products on the body of the instrument. Alcohol will damage the finish on the wood.
- Use a damp cloth with a small amount of dishwashing liquid to clean the body of the instrument. Rinse with a new damp cloth.
- You may use alcohol wipes (60-70% alcohol solution) for metal and plastic parts like the strings and chin rest

An additional resource is the American String Teachers Association Resuming Studio Instruction During COVID-19 available at

[https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Returning\\_to\\_School\\_During\\_COVID-19.aspx](https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Returning_to_School_During_COVID-19.aspx).



## Considerations for guitar teachers

Refer to general guidelines for all teachers re: screening, alternate methods of delivery, physical distancing, wearing masks, using barriers, cleaning and disinfecting, etc. In addition, guitar teachers may also want to consider:

- Have students (or their parents) tune their own instruments so that the teacher does not have to handle them. If they are not advanced enough to tune up, they should consider getting a tuner (easily available from any music store) or downloading a suitable tuning app such as GuitarTuna or Fender Tune.
- Guitar strings can safely and easily be cleaned and disinfected with alcohol. The neck and body of a guitar is easy to clean but more difficult to disinfect. Most guitar body finishes won't be damaged by alcohol, but some may be, so use with caution. The best practice is to not share instruments or set it aside for 3 days before use by another person.

## Considerations for theory teachers

Refer to general guidelines for all teachers re: screening, alternate methods of delivery, physical distancing, wearing masks, using barriers, cleaning and disinfecting, etc. In addition, theory teachers may also want to consider:

- Online theory lessons using screen sharing and/or assignments that are corrected outside of lesson time may be more effective than teaching in person from 2 metres away.
- To avoid working out of the same theory book in person, consider using whiteboards, screens, or projectors to demonstrate theory concepts from a distance.

## Considerations for travelling teachers

Refer to general guidelines for all teachers re: screening, alternate methods of delivery, physical distancing, wearing masks, using barriers, cleaning and disinfecting, etc. In addition, if the music teacher is instructing in the student's home, they may also want to consider:

- Ensure the student or family sanitize and clean all areas approaching the piano or playing area before arrival of the teacher. Anything that a teacher may touch such as doorknobs, handrails on stairways, coat hangers or hooks as well as lavatory facilities will need cleaning before & after each lesson.
- As an additional precaution, the screening questions should apply to all members of the household that you are entering, not just the student.
- Never provide lessons in areas of the home where a household member is isolating due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- Two metres of distancing must be maintained between the teacher and the student as well as all other members of the household. If two metres of distancing is not able to be maintained, then masks or barriers are required. Masks are recommended at all times.

- Hand sanitizer needs to be easily accessible. Be sure to have sanitizer at the playing area and perhaps in another appropriate place. Teachers should plan on bringing their own sanitizer with them to be sure that is available.

## Considerations for group lessons or masterclasses

If you are teaching **group lessons for children**, please consult the Guidance for Daycamps at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-guidance-for-day-camps>. Additional information and resources for working with young children are found in the Guidance for Daycare & Out-of-school care <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-guidance-for-daycare-out-of-school-care-child-care> but is beyond what is required for typical studio music teachers.

If your group lessons include **group singing**, please follow the Guidelines for Choral Singing from Alberta Health posted at <https://www.choiralberta.ca/>.

Group lessons with younger children are discouraged from being in person at this time unless it is possible to maintain the required physical distancing or cohorts.

As with all music instruction, group lessons with older children and adults may proceed if required. Two metres of distancing must be maintained between all participants unless they are members of the same household or cohort. Where it is not possible to maintain two metres of distance, additional barriers such as acrylic shields or masks should be used.

- Sharing of instruments, equipment, and other items should be avoided.
- Instruments, equipment and other items that must be shared or passed between individuals should be cleaned and disinfected at an increased frequency. If this is not possible, individuals touching these props should perform hand hygiene before and after touching the items, and refrain from touching their faces.
- Individuals who are heavily exerting themselves while playing music should maintain a distance greater than two metres from all others while performing.
- Singers and wind instruments should take additional precautions as outlined under Considerations for all Music Teachers.

Consider the use of a microphone and speaker to avoid the need to speak loudly, which increases the rate of aerosol dispersion.

## Considerations for recitals and concerts

Alberta Stage 2 Guidance for Live Music, Dance, and Theatre (<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/covid-19-information-guidance-for-live-music-dance-and-theatre>) reads:

At this time, group singing and wind instrument playing (including woodwind and brass) as well as singing and wind instrument performances should not take place. These are considered high-risk activities for COVID-19 spread because infected individuals who participate are more likely to spread infection through their respiratory droplets or aerosols.

For recitals or other performances, follow current restrictions on gathering sizes set by the Alberta Government (<https://www.alberta.ca/restrictions-on-gatherings.aspx>). Phase 2 guidelines as of July 29, 2020 are currently:

- 200 people maximum for audience-type community outdoor events
- 100 people maximum for other outdoor events and indoor seated/audience events
- 50 people maximum for indoor social gatherings including receptions
- Performers can have a cohort of up to 50 people (cast members or performers) whose members do not always keep 2 metres apart

Consider alternatives to traditional performances including outdoor concerts, live-streaming recitals, pre-recording and posting videos, smaller performance groups, or mini-recitals.

### **General Advice:**

Live performance activities such as playing non-wind instruments, and dancing may proceed if physical distancing is possible.

If frequent close contact and sharing of items is required between performers and/or performers and the production team, these individuals may form a cohort.

- Sharing of instruments, microphones, musical scores, and all other items should be avoided. Items that must be shared should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between each individual use.
- A cohort is defined as a closed, small group of no more than 50 individuals who participate in the same activity, and remain together for the duration of Stage 2.

Albertans, and performers visiting Alberta, must follow CMOH Order 05-2020, which establishes legal requirements for quarantine and isolation.

While performing in public places, performers are encouraged to observe frequent hand hygiene and proper respiratory etiquette.

Wherever possible, music, dance, and theatrical performances should be moved to outdoor settings to reduce the risk of transmission.

### **Music:**

Conductors, instructors, musicians, technicians, and production crew members who are not cohorting should maintain two metres of physical distance from each other at all times.

Two metres of distance should be maintained at all times from venue staff.

For non-cohorting musicians, music instructors, and production staff:

Activities which would normally require individuals to be in close proximity should be adapted or avoided to maintain physical distancing.

- Where it is not possible to maintain two metres of distance (for example, in a sound booth or change room), additional barriers such as acrylic shields or masks should be used.
- Sharing of instruments, equipment, and other items should be avoided.
- Instruments, equipment and other items that must be shared or passed between individuals should be cleaned and disinfected at an increased frequency. If this is not possible, individuals

touching these props should perform hand hygiene before and after touching the items, and refrain from touching their faces.

- Individuals who are heavily exerting themselves while playing music should maintain a distance greater than two metres from all others while performing

## Performances

The total number of people in the performing cohort group (including performers, instructors, and production team members) should not exceed 50 at this time.

The number of audience members permitted in the venue at one time (not including the performing group or venue staff) may not exceed 100 people.

Music, dance and theatrical performances by children are discouraged at this time unless it is possible to maintain the required physical distancing or cohorts.

Members of the performing group should not mingle with audience members, patrons, venue staff or volunteers during or after performances.

## Venues

Notify attendees of the steps being taken to prevent the risk of transmission, and the importance of their roles in these measures.

- COVID-19 signage should be posted in highly visible locations:
- “Help prevent the spread” posters are available.
- When possible, provide necessary information in languages that are preferred by attendees.

The venue staff should ensure that organizations, groups, or individuals that participate in music or theatre activities in a public venue comply with the venue’s rules and precautions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Venue operators should consider adjusting publicly accessible spaces to support physical distancing among performers, staff, volunteers, and attendees who participate in these activities. This could include:

- Controlling and staggering entry into, and exit from, the venue.
- Extending the time between door opening and performance start to allow for staggered entry.
- Establishing different points of entry and exit from high traffic areas.
- Arranging or marking seating to ensure minimum 2 metre social distancing between individuals who are not members of the same household.
- Identifying areas, such as lobbies or bathrooms, where crowding and bottlenecks are common, and using volunteers, staff, or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.
- Using floor markings to encourage physical distancing if attendees are required to wait in line.

Venues should take steps to ensure the safety of all patrons at musical, dance, or theatre events, including:

- Using online ticketing, and cashless payment options, wherever possible.
- Blocking off the front two rows of spectator seating or ensuring a minimum distance of at least 2 metres between performers and audience seating areas.
- Posting signage and making verbal announcements to encourage patrons to maintain physical distance from other people at all times and follow proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Encouraging safer alternatives to cheering, such as clapping and noisemakers.

- Where possible, offering alternatives to in-person attendance, such as live streaming music, dance, and theatrical performances or offering drive-in only venues.

Organizers should increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of all areas of the venue, including front of house, box office, technician booths, backstage or dressing rooms.

See Alberta Stage 2 Guidance for Live Music, Dance, and Theatre <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/covid-19-information-guidance-for-live-music-dance-and-theatre> for further requirements for venues.

## Outdoor Vocal Concerts

Indoor vocal concerts should not occur.

In Stage 2, vocal concerts may take place in an outdoor setting, in front of a seated audience or a drive-in style event, or both.

- See the Drive In Event Guidance (<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-drive-in-events.pdf>) and Outdoor Event Guidance (<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-outdoor-events.pdf>) for more information on operating in these settings. For an outdoor seated audience event, the maximum number of individuals is 200. For a drive-in style event, there are no capacity restrictions on the number of individuals attending so long as they stay inside their vehicles at all times except for using washrooms.
  - All attendees within a single vehicle should be from the same household or cohort.

See <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-outdoor-vocal-concerts.pdf> for further guidelines.

## Options to traditional recital live performances may include:

- mini-recitals or performance groups with smaller groups of students or audiences
- outdoor concerts
- online recitals via videoconferencing or live streaming services
- pre-recorded performances posted online, possibly watched together as a watch party

## Daily Checklists for Teachers & Students

ARMTA has put together two posters for teacher and student use:

- Daily Checklist for Music Teachers.pdf
- Daily Checklist for Music Students.pdf

We encourage you to post these and use them for regular daily reminders.

## Non-compliance

Teachers should develop additional policies and procedures that address how to respond to students or parents who do not comply with the studio guidelines.

Teachers have the right to refuse in-person lessons to students who are not willing to comply with policies and procedures established by the studio to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

If a teacher is concerned an individual is not following public health orders, the teacher can:

- Remind the person that not following public health orders is against the law and puts people at risk.
- To report urgent matters that require an immediate response contact your local law enforcement agency. Do not call 911.

If an organization/business/entity/studio is not following public health orders:

- Submit a complaint to AHS public health inspectors online or leave a message at 1-833-415-9179.

## Other Resources and Information

### Government of Canada Public Health Information on COVID-19

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

### Risk Assessment Tool

The University of Colorado-Boulder has developed a risk assessment tool:

<https://tinyurl.com/covid-estimator>

Using the square footage of the room that you are in, the air exchange rate, the number of students, the amount of talking, the duration of the class, and whether and what type of masks the teacher and student are using, this tool will estimate the risk of transmission.

### Performing Arts Aerosol Study:

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>

Preliminary report: <https://www.nfhs.org/media/4029952/preliminary-testing-report-7-13-20.pdf>

Round 2: <https://www.nfhs.org/media/4030003/aerosol-study-prelim-results-round-2-final.pdf>

Webinar explaining the results of the preliminary study results on aerosols in the performing arts by The National Association of Teachers of Singing, the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), Chorus America, Barbershop Harmony Society, and Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_oWlrV3rCao](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oWlrV3rCao)

Initial CFD findings confirm the effectiveness of social distancing directives to keep 2m/6ft apart as this is the boundary of the region around an infected person in which the risk of infection begins to rise steeply, **especially with an exposure duration greater than 30 minutes.**

Teachers are assumed to talk the most and as a result should wear the most efficient mask possible that is readily available, which are surgical masks. (N95s are not recommended at this time due to supply chain issues.)

There are HEPA air purifiers on the market to provide additional filtration appropriate to the size of the rehearsal space which will increase the air change rate from standard HVAC systems.

## **American String Association: Resuming Studio Instruction During COVID-19**

[https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Returning\\_to\\_School\\_During\\_COVID-19.aspx](https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Returning_to_School_During_COVID-19.aspx)

While targeted to string teachers in the United States, it includes additional information on wellness and student engagement that would be useful for all studio teachers.