



The future of Arts Education in our public schools is at a critical point in time. We know that when arts education thrives and is alive throughout the Commonwealth, students, families and communities benefit. Arts classes provide students a safe space to express themselves creatively, allow them to make personal connections that last a lifetime, and help them grow in all five of the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies. Parents come together to celebrate student artists' performances and gallery exhibitions. Communities benefit from engaged, focused and community-minded student leaders, animated by arts education. The arts lift voices of students to engage in positive social change. It is important that education, funding, and staffing for the arts are maintained to accomplish these outcomes. The arts can and should continue to be a part of a well-rounded education for students across the Commonwealth.

As we prepare to return to school this fall, The International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study has released **updated guidelines** for music education classrooms as school approaches this fall. The guidance *updates previous mitigation tactics* with the understanding that schools need to consult local and state COVID-19 guidance and transmission rates for appropriate mitigation adoption and adjust accordingly. The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) will continue working closely with The International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study to ensure guidelines are up to date as we monitor the effects of the Delta variant and its impact on transmission rates across the country.

Updated guidelines are as follows:

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4716952/international-coalition-performing-arts-aerosol-study-july-2021-update-final.pdf>

Outdoors:

- No mitigation is needed for outdoor performances depending on the level of local and state transmission rates. Outdoors remain the safest space for performances.

Indoors:

- Masking with appropriate material remains the best way of reducing potential infected aerosol from circulating in an indoor space. Masks are recommended to be worn while singing and speaking.
- Bell covers made from appropriate material remain the best way of reducing potential infected aerosol from circulating in an indoor space.

- Depending on your comfort level, instrumentalists can wear masks only when speaking and slitted performance masks are optional.
- In spaces with good ventilation rates and HEPA filtration, increased indoor rehearsal times of 50 minutes may be considered. A minimum of 3 air exchanges per hour should be used, if there are spaces with higher air change rates, you may consider longer rehearsal times.
- Distancing may be decreased to 3 feet, adjusting farther or closer depending on local conditions.
- Continue good hygiene practice moving forward, including appropriate elimination of brass fluid.
- Plastic face shields only stop large droplets, not aerosol; room dividers inhibit the function of the HVAC system and are not recommended.

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

On behalf of the Executive Board of the Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA), thank you for supporting arts education in your schools. Let's work together to keep the music in all of our communities.

Sincerely,
Dr. Heather Cote, President, MMEA
Dr. Cecil Adderley, Past-President, MMEA
Mr. Anthony Beatrice, President-Elect, MMEA