

Safe singing – in school, and out of school/after school clubs

wiltshire
music
connect

Guidance has been updated, with the most recent updates issued 17th May 2021.

1. Singing in schools

Excerpt from Music Mark guidance published 10th May: [download here](#)

There is no restriction on singing in class bubbles.

Music Mark is confident that a well-managed singing lesson which follows these recommendations will create no more risk (and quite probably less) than many other subjects.

1. **Schedule singing sessions before a break** if possible, so the empty room can be ventilated immediately afterwards.
2. **Limit singing sessions to no more than 40 minutes.** Children will only actively be singing for a fraction of this, even though the time is being used in a focussed, valuable and musical way.
3. **Ventilate the room** as best you can during the session. If there are higher windows, opening these provide clean air without making the room uncomfortably cold.
4. **Face all children in the same direction** so that nobody is singing directly at another person's face. It may help to offset rows, placing singers in a checkerboard pattern.
5. **Keep the dynamic (volume) down**, generally to no more than *mezzo piano* (moderately soft). Focus on making a beautiful sound, not a loud one.
6. **Do not insist on musical-theatre levels of diction.** Emphasising consonants creates additional water droplets ranging from visible to aerosol size (below 5µ) and increases risk of transmission.
7. **Project words and music** onto a whiteboard if possible. If you must distribute paper copies, have children name theirs and retain it for future sessions. All state schools in England can make copies of most music under the Schools' Printed Music Licence, which the DfE funds.
8. **Ventilate the empty room after the session** for a good fifteen minutes. This is especially important if you sing in a shared space (like a school hall) and another group will use it after you.

2. Singing in out of school / after school clubs

Excerpt from Government guidance: Protective Measures for out of school setting during Coronavirus updated 17th May: [download here](#) – **please read carefully for more detailed information eg on group sizes and limiting mixing of children.**

Measures you can take to reduce the risk of transmission and infection include:

1. **limiting the number** of children singing or playing
2. **size of group** - ensure you are following the advice in “considering group sizes” – [see page 9 here](#)
3. **making sure children are socially distanced at all times** (2 metres apart), are outside or in a well-ventilated room – if indoors use as much space as possible – large rooms, rooms with high ceilings..
4. **improve ventilation** whenever possible, through the use of mechanical systems or opening windows and doors

5. **keep the volume down** – including background or accompanying music to levels which do not encourage teachers or other performers to raise their voices unduly
6. **Sit down, back to back, or side to side** where possible – don't sing into each other's faces
7. **Use microphones** where possible (do not share microphones; if they are shared, follow the guidance on handling equipment and instruments)
8. **limit the length of activity** as far as possible, considering the need for breaks

3. Performances and events

Excerpt from Government guidance: Protective Measures for out of school setting during Coronavirus updated 17th May: [download here](#)

From page 29 in the guidance: In line with Step 3 of the roadmap, providers can host sports events, performances, and other organised events with an audience from 17 May. If planning an indoor or outdoor face-to-face performance in front of a live audience, you should follow the latest advice in the [DCMS performing arts guidance](#), which provides details of how to manage audiences as well as carry out performing arts safely.

If planning an outdoor performance you should also give particular consideration to the guidance on delivering outdoor events.

Attendees should also ensure they maintain social distancing in line with the current guidance on (COVID-19) Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do. You may also wish to consider alternatives such as live streaming and recording performances, subject to the usual safeguarding considerations and parental permission.

4. How to measure ventilation in a room

The NEU (National Education Union) have published guidance on how CO2 monitors can contribute to ensuring adequate ventilation [here](#) . This states 'Carbon dioxide (CO2) levels in a relatively well-ventilated room should be at 600 – 800 parts per million (ppm)'

An example of a CO2 monitor that we know is being used for example by a professional choir leader can be found [here](#) (other models are available).

IMPORTANT: *all settings should still be following the general guidance on minimising contact between individuals, and sanitisation – hand washing, cleaning of surfaces and equipment etc, as well as appropriate, recommended regular lateral flow tests. (Information including how to collect or order free test kits [here](#) .)*

**Music Mark is a trusted source of information. They are a membership organisation, subject association and charity. Their membership consists of Music Education Services and Hubs, their teaching and support teams; schools; individuals; NYMOS; HE/FE bodies; Hub and Corporate Partners.*