



# Instrumental music program guidelines for managing hazards associated with COVID-19

These guidelines is intended to assist principals and instrumental music teachers/instructors in schools when considering the implementation of their Instrumental Music program during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This information is based on current government and medical advice, published COVID-19 research and complies with the current operating guidelines for Queensland State Schools.

## Potential risk

The Instrumental Music classroom environment presents a number of factors for consideration by schools in addition to the factors found within a general classroom environment. These factors include:

- stagnant air flow in a space that would have excessive breath and saliva expulsion associated with playing a woodwind/brass instrument or singing (research suggests that the projection of moisture droplets when playing certain instruments is similar to a cough)
- close proximity to breath and saliva expulsion (the 'breath' space)
- excessive moisture/air inhalation associated with playing a woodwind/brass instrument or singing (requirement for continual deep breaths)
- sharing of resources that could hold moisture/saliva droplets
- contact with equipment that has been handled, placed on the face and in the mouth
- contact with equipment and surfaces that could hold moisture/saliva droplets.

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## Considerations for the instrumental music classroom numbers

### Volume, people, time

Within the school environment, members of large bands, choirs or ensembles are able to rehearse in the same location (indoors or outdoors) ensuring that current hygiene management practices are maintained.

Choirs or bands that usually use a stage may need to move down to the hall floor to ensure physical distancing. We would advise avoiding the use of podiums/platforms with risers.

Where possible, hold choir practice outdoors. If not possible to hold practice outdoors, open windows/doors or ensure air conditioning is on.

Any gathering outside of the school grounds must be at a location/facility that has implemented an approved industry COVID Safe plan.

## Classroom

### ***Hand hygiene***

Wash hands with soap and water before and after activity or ensure use of hand sanitizer upon entry and exit to facility/ before and after the lesson.

### ***Air flow***

Open doors and windows if suitable and available and ensure ventilation system is operating.

### ***Physical distancing***

At all times, all persons within choirs or ensembles should ensure compliance with general physical distancing guidelines (at least 1.5 metres between singers/players in all directions, no more than 1 person per 4 square metres).

Students should be spaced (and not facing each other) to ensure no air is blown directly toward another student or teacher.

Teachers should avoid touching the student's equipment. If necessary (for fixing or tuning) create a barrier such as a paper towel or gloves, or wash hands afterwards.

Teachers should position themselves alongside the student, not directly in front.

### ***Cleaning and disinfecting***

High touch areas in teaching spaces and storage areas must be wiped down with approved disinfectant between each activity. The classroom cleaned after each teaching day or rehearsal (as part of regular school cleaning).

### ***Outside equipment***

No unnecessary equipment carried into the classroom i.e. no school bags

## **Resources and equipment**

### ***Cleaning and disinfecting***

Used resources must be wiped down with approved disinfectant after each use i.e. music stands, chairs, stools, amps, leads, keyboards, piano, desks, folders, percussion instruments.

### ***Limited contact***

No sharing of resources where possible i.e all students use their own music stand, pencil, folder, mallets etc.

## Instruments

### ***Limited contact***

No sharing of instruments (excluding percussion, see particulars on the percussion page)

No sharing of mouthpieces.

### ***Water and saliva release***

Provide absorbent paper towel to empty water/saliva onto.

Students to use their own towel.

Valves emptied gently and away from others.

### ***Cleaning***

Students swab and wipe down their instruments after use as part of their regular instrument cleaning practice. Extra paper towels should be provided to assist.

Students have local access to sink with running water to wash out brass mouthpieces

## Accessories

### ***Limited contact***

No sharing of instrument accessories i.e. reeds, rosin, neck straps, seat straps and hand rests, reed covers/protectors/cases, mouthpieces covers

All students have their own instrument cleaning equipment

## Instrument cases

### ***Cleaning and disinfecting***

Cases wiped with disinfectant on entry into the classroom

## Woodwind

[Flute, clarinet, saxophone, oboe, bassoon]

The following identifies concerns and possible mitigation for playing and cleaning woodwind instruments.

Woodwind instruments, cases and accessories are constructed with varying materials. Any cleaning product used should be approved for use by the school and is suitable for its intended use. One of the following cleaning options should be taken based on the type of instrument and existing cleaning processes, use bleach, detergent, or alcohol based product.

***Note: products containing bleach could damage the instruments.***

### ***Before activity***

- Wash hands with soap and water
- Sanitise hands using an approved product.

### ***During activity***

- Students only play the instrument allocated to them.
- No sharing of instruments/mouthpieces/reeds.
- Teachers should avoid handling student instruments where possible. If a teacher has to handle a student's instrument, the recommended action is to use a barrier (paper towel or gloves) or sanitize their hands before and afterwards. The added step of wiping down the instrument with a disinfectant wipe is also an option.

### ***Accessories***

- Students only use their own accessories, such as neck or seat straps, ligatures and mouthpiece covers, reed containers and protectors, and cork grease.

### ***Water keys and saliva***

- Paper towel available to all students for the absorption/cleaning of moisture/saliva. Each individual to be responsible for disposing of their own wet towel.
- In order to avoid spraying droplets around the room, students empty water/saliva out of their instruments as gently as possible.

### ***Equipment and cleaning***

- Students' use their own cleaning equipment i.e. pull-throughs, cleaning rods and cloths as well as music, pencils, and any other item which they may require to participate in instrumental music. These items should not be shared.
- Individuals swab and wipe their instrument after each activity, using their own personal cleaning equipment.
- Students with wind instruments should have their own spit rag or cloth which is placed under the instrument while it is being played. The spit rag should not be handled by anyone else and should be kept by the student in a zip-lock bag or container.
- It is to be assumed that any unallocated instrument from the school music storeroom has not been cleaned, and therefore will need to be disinfected before playing.

### ***After activity***

- Used equipment and high touch surfaces wiped down with approved disinfectant after activity.

## How to disinfect woodwind instruments

Note: these procedures are separate from the standard cleaning/maintenance practices used to clean instruments after each use. It is suggested that teachers/instructors consider these disinfectant procedures for when school instruments are returned and cleaned before reallocation.

### ***Flute: head joint***

1. Using a cotton swab saturated with denatured, isopropyl alcohol (70% alcohol content is recommended), clean around the embouchure hole.
2. Alcohol wipes (if approved) can be used on the flute's lip plate to kill germs.
3. Using a soft, lint-free silk cloth inserted into the cleaning rod, clean the inside of the head joint.
4. Do not run the head joint under water as it may saturate and eventually shrink the head joint cork.

### ***Clarinet and saxophone mouthpieces***

1. Select a small container that will fit the mouthpiece vertically and place the mouthpiece, tip down, into the container.
2. Fill the container just past the window of the mouthpiece with a solution of 50% water and 50% white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide. (if approved by school) Ensure water temperature is no hotter than luke warm. Protect clarinet mouthpiece cork from moisture.
3. After the mouthpiece has soaked for fifteen minutes, use mouthpiece brush to remove any calcium deposits/residue from inside and outside surfaces.
4. Rinse the mouthpiece thoroughly and then saturate with approved disinfectant solution. Place on paper towel and wait one minute.
5. Wipe dry with paper towel.

Note: Metal saxophone mouthpieces clean well with hot water, mild dish soap (not dishwasher detergent), and a mouthpiece brush. Disinfectant solution is also safe for metal mouthpieces (no bleach).

### ***Saxophone***

#### Neck

Swabs are available to clean the inside of the saxophone neck, however a flexible bottlebrush can also be used.

1. Use the bottlebrush with mild, soapy water to clean the inside of the neck.
2. Rinse under running water.
3. Approved disinfectant solution may be used on the inside of the neck if desired.
4. Place on paper towel for one minute.
5. Rinse again under running water, dry, and place in the case

#### Materials and products

- Plastic, metal and synthetic materials could be cleaned with liquid (not gel) hand sanitiser. This in a spray bottle would be an easy option wiped with some disposable paper towel. Hand sanitiser and disinfectant products **MUST** be approved for use in schools. Disinfectant wipes might also be suitable, however consider the product ingredients carefully.



## Brass

[Trumpet, french horn, tenor horn, baritone, euphonium, tuba]

The following identifies concerns and possible mitigation for playing and cleaning brass instruments.

- Brass instruments, mutes, cases, etc. can be wiped over with alcohol wipes or disinfectant spray and paper towel. Any cleaning product used should be approved for use by the school and is suitable for its intended use. Consider the product ingredients and the surface being disinfected before use.
- Products containing bleach will damage the instruments e.g. bleach makes silver plating turn black.
- Brass instruments may be flushed with water or detergent if required.

### ***Before activity***

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Sanitise hands using an approved product.

### ***During activity***

- Students only play the instrument allocated to them.
- No sharing of instruments.
- Teachers avoid handling student instruments where possible. If a teacher has to handle a student's instrument, a solution could be to use a barrier (paper towel or gloves) or sanitize their hands before and afterwards. The instrument could also be wiped down with disinfectant spray and paper towel or a disinfectant wipe.

### ***Mouthpieces***

- Students only play on their own mouthpiece.
- Brass mouthpieces cleaned regularly with a mouthpiece brush and warm, soapy water. Cleaning brass mouthpieces has always been recommended by the department and should be done at least every month. In the current environment, however, it is more important than ever.

### ***Water keys and saliva***

- Paper towel available to all students for the absorption/cleaning of excess moisture/saliva. Each individual to be responsible for disposing of their own wet towel.
- In order to avoid spraying droplets around the room, students empty water/saliva out of their instruments as gently as possible.

### ***Equipment and cleaning***

- Students' use their own cleaning equipment i.e valve oil, slide spray bottles, pencils, and any other item which they may require to participate in instrumental music. These items should not be shared.
- Individuals clean their instrument after each activity, using their own personal cleaning equipment.

It could be assumed that any unallocated instrument from the school music storeroom has not been cleaned, and therefore will need to be disinfected before playing

### ***After activity***

Used equipment and high touch surfaces wiped down with approved disinfectant after activity.

## Percussion

[Tuned and un-tuned percussion as taught in the Instrumental Music Curriculum, including snare drum, bass drum, timpani, xylophone, glockenspiel, marimba and auxiliary percussion]

The following identifies concerns with the spread of germs and provides possible mitigation within the percussion section.

- Plastic, metal and synthetic materials could be cleaned with liquid (not gel) hand sanitiser in a spray bottle and residue wiped with some disposable paper towel. Hand sanitiser **MUST** be approved for use in schools. Please ensure you have received approval from your school and that its use within the classroom is managed effectively. Disinfectant wipes might also be suitable, however consider the product ingredients carefully. Products with too many moisturising properties might damage the surface of the instrument, or build up residue over time.
- Wood and natural skin materials are difficult to clean. Using mallets or sticks to hit the instrument or substituting with another instrument are options. Alternatives to specific instruments are listed below.
- The recommended cleaning product for cleaning is with the use of bleach, detergent, or product containing 70% alcohol whichever is 'best' for the instrument.

### ***Before activity***

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Sanitise hands using an approved product.

### ***During activity***

#### **Mallets and sticks**

As students move around the percussion section, it is usual practice for them to be sharing mallets and sticks. To mitigate the spread of germs within this practice the following could be considered:

- Use your own sticks and mallets, do not share personally owned equipment.
- Sanitise school mallets (e.g. Bass Drum Mallet) after each use, between different students.

#### **Instruments that are dampened with hands**

Percussionists are often required to use their hands to dampen instruments as they play. To mitigate the spread of germs from one player to the next, schools could consider cleaning the instrument/instrument head after each person.

Instruments to consider include:

- timpani (synthetic/plastic heads only)
- bass drum (synthetic/plastic heads only)
- suspended cymbal
- glockenspiel

#### **Instruments that are held in the hand to play**

Various percussion instruments are required to be held while played. Schools could consider limiting use of these instruments by substituting with a different instrument or cleaning between each player. The following require direct contact with hands:

- snare drum mechanism
- tambourine (synthetic/plastic heads only)
- other auxiliary instruments such as cabasa, cowbell, triangle, claves etc.

### ***After activity***

Wipe down with approved disinfectant used mallets, instruments and high touch surfaces after activity.

### ***Suggested percussion instrument substitutes***

#### **Crash cymbals**

Difficulty in cleaning leather straps

Substitute with suspended cymbal

#### **Xylophone and marimba**

Cleaning products might damage lacquer or be absorbed into wood

Substitute with Glockenspiel/Vibraphone

Use single use gloves while playing wooden mallet instruments

#### **Aux instruments**

Difficulty in cleaning intricacies of some auxiliary instruments

Substitute with another instrument, or play part on drum pad

#### **Bongos/congas**

Difficulty in cleaning with non plastic/synthetic head

Substitute with another instrument/drum pad

Use round ended mallets to hit the instrument.

## Strings

[Violin, viola, cello, double bass, bass guitar/electric bass]

The following identifies concerns and possible mitigation for playing and cleaning string instruments.

- Instruments, cases and accessories are constructed with varying materials. Any cleaning product used should be approved for use by the school and is suitable for its intended use. Consider the product ingredients carefully as they could damage the instruments or finish.

***Products containing bleach will damage string instruments.***

### ***Before activity***

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Sanitise hands using an approved product.

### ***During activity***

- Students only play the instrument allocated to them.
- No sharing of instruments. If students need to share larger instruments i.e. double bass, then a solution could be to wipe down the instrument and its case with approved disinfectant between each use.
- Teachers avoid handling student instruments where possible. If a teacher has to handle a student's instrument e.g. for tuning or repair, a solution could be to use a barrier (paper towel or gloves) and sanitize their hands before and afterwards. The instrument could also be wiped down with approved disinfectant.
- Students encouraged to tune their own instruments where possible.

### ***Accessories***

- Students should only use their own accessories, such as bows, rosin and stops.

### ***Equipment and cleaning***

- Students provide their own equipment i.e. music, pencils, and any other item which they may require to participate in instrumental music. These items should not be shared.
- Individuals wipe clean their instrument after each activity, using their own personal cleaning equipment.
- It could be assumed that any unallocated instrument from the school music storeroom has not been cleaned, and therefore will need to be cleaned thorough before playing or assigning to a student.

### ***After activity***

Wipe down with approved disinfectant high touch surfaces after activity.

## Poster/Communication

Posters similar to the one below designed by the North Coast Region may assist in managing COVID19 hazards within the Instrumental Music field.



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