

# Guidance for Music Classes in British Columbia During COVID-19



COALITION for  
MUSIC  
EDUCATION in  
BRITISH  
COLUMBIA



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Please note:

1. This document is not intended to replace or contradict the guidelines issued by the BC Centre for Disease Control, the Provincial Health Officer, Provincial Health Ministry, and/or the Provincial Ministry of Education or other government agencies regarding protocols on safety or how schools should operate during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Every school district and community is handling the pandemic differently. This guide seeks to support you as you make decisions that are right for your school communities.

## Preamble

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, the safety and viability of music education in schools has been called into question. The BC Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia have been working together to create recommendations to safely offer music in schools. Student safety is our top priority as we asked ourselves, "What do students need? How do we make THAT safe?"

Together both organizations have come up with a series of recommendations that you will see outlined in this document. This includes safety recommendations, suggested curriculum delivery models, and some of the latest data showing that music classes are safe to hold with social distancing recommendations.

We offer these ideas in an effort to preserve and protect our students' course choices, their passion for music, and their social-emotional wellness, among other things. Since the pandemic began and schools shut down, we have overwhelmingly heard from our students and their parents that they NEED music education in their lives. The following anecdotal evidence has been communicated to music teachers from families:

- "[a] lack of music class for [student] is more of a mental/emotional challenge than anything else."
- "I've gotten a lot of great friendships out of music and we have all stayed connected through a group chat in light of the situation going on, and I believe some of the friendships will last for life."
- "I really miss music. I need to get back to school so I can get back to music. It's hard to just do academics without the joy music brings."
- "The non-musical things I get from my ensembles are friends, laughter, teamwork skills, and joy."
- "Music has taught me to manage my time, work with others and meet deadlines."
- "If I had not joined music I believe I would still need tons of help in classes as I started out in school with a bit of a learning disability and constantly needed help, though now I am able to focus and don't use the help as much as I don't need it anymore."

Standing with you in solidarity for music education in BC,  
The BCMEA and CMEBC

## Music Advocacy Statement from the BCMEA & CMEBC

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During the first few months of this pandemic the arts came to the forefront as the remedy for the fear, anxiety, and loneliness that was so prevalent in everyone's lives. Over and over, social media was flooded with outstanding virtual performances where people across the globe found their voice through music. Music and the arts became the healing balm our souls so desperately needed and united music performers, music consumers, and music lovers all around the world in camaraderie and a sense that we are all in this together. Two articles articulate this well: [Why We Need the Arts Now More Than Ever](#) and [The Power of Music in a Stressful Pandemic](#). If our instinct is to turn to music for comfort and solace at times of trouble, it should follow that music education is of the utmost importance in our schools at this time.

When students return to school, many will come bearing a deep sense of loss: a loss of friendships, missed opportunities, experiences, family members and friends that may have fallen ill or succumbed to this virus, and an irrevocably altered view of safety and the world around them. All of this has wreaked havoc on their emotional and mental health. Music education is known to provide a healthy emotional outlet for students dealing with these altered world views. We need music education now more than ever and we need to protect music programs that are facing changes. Protecting music programs protects students' abilities to emotionally process what has been happening in the world around us.

As we chart a course forward for music programs, let us stay focused on this: just because our programs may look different for the time being, they are still an absolutely necessary part of every child's education. Music educators are inherently creative people. Together, we will adapt our programs in creative and innovative ways so that when a return to "normal" becomes possible, our students will have continued to learn and will have grown as musicians and individuals.

**We stand with you in support of a full and robust music education for every student in British Columbia.**

## Music Classes During COVID-19: Key Takeaways for Administrators

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- Music education can and must continue during COVID-19. By rethinking our strategies, students can continue to receive the high quality music education they deserve.
- Music is the lifeline for thousands of students across our province. Since the pandemic began and schools shut down, we have overwhelmingly heard from our students and their parents that they NEED music education in their lives. It is vital to brain development, social emotional learning, and cultural development in our communities. As decisions are made about how music classes are offered in schools, music teachers are prepared to offer classes in a way that will provide students with the best possible experience. Cancelling music classes should never be an option. Furthermore, re-assigning music classes to be taught by classroom teachers instead of music teachers is not a sound solution in any way.
- Teachers and administrators are called upon to work together to make informed decisions for their schools. Music teachers are inherently creative people and need to be consulted and engaged when charting a course forward.
- In-person instruction can be offered safely - the key is to understand social distancing and safety recommendations. The current research, as outlined in this document, does not suggest the need for a total ban on playing instruments or singing. The better approach is to control the environment, understand the risks, and rethink our class sizes and activities so that if we do play and sing, it is done safely and in very small groups. Please see the classroom environment section.
- Music teachers and administrators must consider music education as broadly as possible. For now, we are required to change the way we do things, and for many schools, this means reconsidering how we teach the students who are involved in large ensembles. These students can still learn music, for example, through a hybrid model, or in smaller groups on a rotating basis, or other methods. In addition to playing or singing in small groups, we have the opportunity to expand their musical learning in many ways beyond what they would normally experience.
- The BCMEA and CMEBC are here to help and will be a reliable resource so that our music programs emerge from this pandemic alive and well. We have created an online [Music Education Resource Room](#) for teachers to share lessons, projects, strategies, and ideas.

## Is Music-Making Safe in Our Schools?

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The safety of music-making in our schools has been discussed at length while the pandemic is ongoing. Much of the stories being given as evidence are anecdotal and we must be careful to use data-driven research to offer validity and credibility to the argument that we can offer music safely in our schools.

There are two North American studies currently happening that will give us more definitive answers: one at the University of Colorado Boulder and the other at Colorado State University. The results of these studies are expected in July 2020 and will help us to formulate policies and guidelines regarding the safety of music making in schools. You can read about this University of Colorado Boulder study [here](#) and the Colorado State University study [here](#).

While we are awaiting the results of these two studies, we have seen some encouraging evidence from Europe speaking to the safety of music-making with 2-metre social distancing recommendations in place.

1. A study was commissioned in May 2020 by the Vienna Philharmonic. Their official website reports that the full text of the study is, unfortunately, not yet available in English (please see [here](#) ) although the results have been summarized in multiple places online, including [here](#).
2. A study has been published by the Institute of Fluid Mechanics and Aerodynamics at the University of Bundeswehr Munich. This study shows that following the 2-metre social distancing recommendations will keep music students safe in both choir and instrumental classrooms. The study can be found [here](#).
3. Another study has been published from the Freiburg Institute for Musicians' Medicine (FIM), University Medical Center, and University of Music Freiburg. This study also concludes that there is no additional risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus while music-making. An English translation of this study can be found [here](#).

4. Many have referenced the concerns around choirs practicing and increased risk associated with choirs due to the spread of COVID-19 at the choir rehearsal in Skagit County, WA in March 2020. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted an investigation around the choir rehearsal where the COVID-19 virus was widely spread and concluded that there were multiple points of contact between members of the choir and social distancing was not adhered to. This example shows the necessity for social distancing and hygiene routines to curb the virus' spread. The report can be found [here](#).
  
5. A video was created by a group of Nashville Musicians that helps visualize and explain that aerosols do not pass through instruments. It is available [here](#).



## Environmental Considerations for Music Classes

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*The “General Safety” and “Room Considerations” sections are excerpted and adapted from the [Ontario Music Educators’ Association Framework document](#).*

### General Safety

Concern for the health and safety of all students and teachers is a top priority. It is of the utmost importance that the safety conditions, as described by your local and provincial Health Departments and School Board, are being applied and adhered to by the school. These are outlined in the [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#), the [BCCDC](#), and the [K-12 Education Restart Plan](#). Once those recommendations are met, we believe there are specific recommendations for music classrooms in order to ensure the continued safety of students and staff in this environment.

The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control guidelines for regular cleaning of surfaces in public settings can be found [here](#). Music classroom items such as chairs, music stands, equipment, surfaces, etc. should be sanitized on a regular basis.

Music rooms should be equipped with the following supplies:

- A sink with running water, soap, and paper towels
- Hand sanitizer
- Wipes that contain one of the following: bleach, isopropyl alcohol, medical virox
- A recommended disinfection agent appropriate for use on instruments and mouthpieces

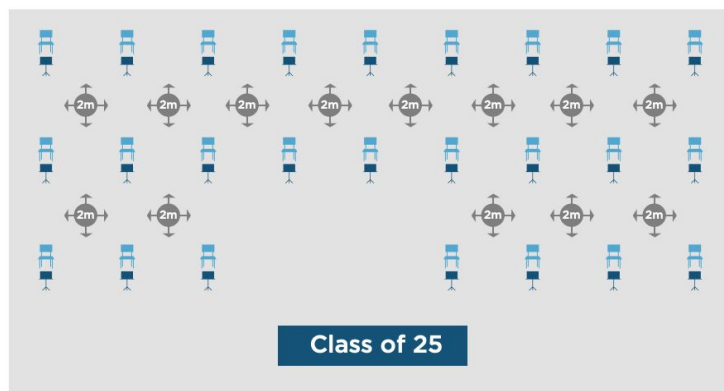
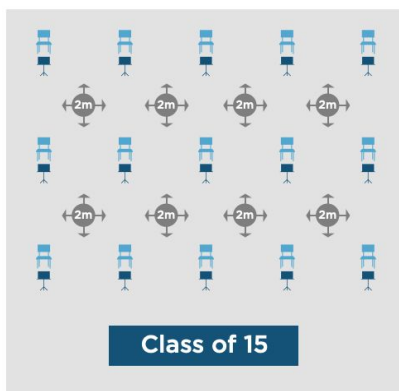
### Room Considerations for Singers

1. Physical distancing guidelines of two meters will need to be adhered to in the classroom.
2. Students will need to sing forward-facing not in a circle or facing each other.

3. Do not hold paper music. Music may be used on a music stand, may be displayed on a projector to decrease touchpoints in the classroom or a rote method may be used.
4. In singing games and choreography, students will not be allowed to touch. Minimal movement will make it easier to abide by the health guidelines of two metres for physical distancing.
5. The conductor should be 6 metres away from the singers or use a face shield and/or mask for protection.

## Room Considerations for Instruments

1. The room should allow for a physical distance of two metres so that speaking droplets have enough space to fall to the floor. Sharing of stands and music should be avoided and chairs and stands should be set up to avoid any unnecessary movement or touching. To achieve this, divide your room's total square footage by 36 (as each student will need a 'block' measuring 6x6 or 36 square feet) to achieve the recommended distancing.



2. Measurements of air turbulence by the [Freiburg Institute for Musicians' Medicine](#) suggests that air is not disturbed beyond the following distances:

Flutes	1.5m in front of player; 0.8m from the end of the flute
Other Woodwinds (excluding saxophones)	1.5m
Brass and Saxophones	2m from the bell

3. Wind instrument music classrooms need to have access to running water (sink and tap) for cleaning purposes. Three areas need to be available:
  - a. A station set up for cleaning that includes soap/water and/or a recommended disinfectant agent. No shared vessels for dipping mouthpieces.
  - b. Rinsing station (running water)
  - c. Paper towel station for drying off mouthpieces -- it is NOT recommended to use a common towel for drying

Students will need to be rotated through these areas so physical distancing can be maintained. Investigation into other appropriate items for disinfection is ongoing.

4. In some instances, it may not be possible to use the music room due to class sizes and the need to socially distance. If this is the case,
  - a. Investigate the ability to use larger spaces, such as the school gym, multipurpose room, theatre, cafeteria, community centre, etc.
  - b. When possible, use the outdoors to rehearse while adhering to the recommended social distance standards.
  - c. Create alternative schedules where the group is divided into smaller groups that do not rehearse at the same time. A non-extensive list of examples includes: large ensembles split into smaller ensembles; jazz bands split into combos; concert bands split into woodwind ensembles, brass ensembles, percussion ensembles, brass/percussion ensembles, or chamber groups; orchestras into chamber groups.
  - d. To support alternative groupings and unconventional instrumentation and voicing, options include alternative instrument arrangements, such as Flex Band arrangements and chamber ensemble arrangements.

## **Other Recommendations**

### Music Room as a Shared Space

1. Handwashing routines before and after classes must be established and followed.
2. Hand sanitizer should be available in the classroom.
3. High touch surfaces should be cleaned between classes as necessary.
4. Students should be given the option of bringing their own music stand to class.
5. Small instruments should be stored in students' lockers where possible.
6. Instrument storage shelves should be labeled with students' names and dividers placed between instruments.

7. Students should be taught [COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines](#) and be required to regularly clean their instruments. This requirement should be communicated to students' families as well.
8. Students must demonstrate and model appropriate safety precautions at all times including hand washing, instrument sanitizing, social distancing, and, when appropriate, the use of PPE.

### Music Room Traffic Management

1. Marks should be placed on the floor to mark where chairs should be set up.
2. Chairs and stands should be arranged by a teacher in a socially distanced configuration.
3. Wherever possible, create one-way traffic patterns for entry and exit of rehearsal rooms and access to areas such as instrument storage, music folder storage, sinks, and sanitizing stations.
4. Establish routines for students entering the classroom, sanitizing hands, and gathering and setting up instruments and music folders.
5. Please be aware that creating and implementing these new routines will result in more setup/takedown time and less rehearsal time.

### Shared School-Owned Instruments

1. No instruments should be shared during this time. This may mean you will need to find alternative instruments that can fill in gaps until such time as the pandemic has passed.
2. Pianos should only be used by students if required by the music. Pianos should also be sanitized after each use.
3. Percussionists should be required to have their own stick bag and sticks. Alternatively, school sticks could be assigned to specific students for their own use. This may require students being assigned to specific percussion instruments for a concert cycle to avoid movement between instruments.
4. A sanitization routine should be established at the end of the day for percussion instruments, sticks and mallets, pianos, string basses, and other large instruments that exclusively remain at the school. If there are back to back music classes in a schedule these instruments may need to be cleaned between classes.
5. Percussionists could wear sterile gloves while playing school percussion instruments.

## Condensation Removal

1. Water keys should not be released directly onto the floor.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 procedures.

## COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines

*This section is excerpted and adapted from the [NHFS COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines](#).*

### Sterilization vs. Disinfection

There is a difference between sterilization and disinfection of music instruments. Sterilization is limited in how long an instrument will remain sterile. Once an instrument is exposed to air or handled it is no longer sterile. However, disinfecting an instrument to make it safe to handle will last longer and is easier to achieve. COVID-19, like most viruses, has a limited lifespan on hard surfaces. Users of musical equipment may be more susceptible to infections from instruments that are not cleaned and maintained properly, especially if they are shared school instruments.

If the cleaning process is thorough, musical instruments can be disinfected. Basic soap and water can be highly effective in reducing the number of harmful bacteria and viruses simply by carrying away the dirt and oil that they stick to.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), National Association for Music Education (NAfME), and the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) received information from the United States Center for Disease Control that suggests that the COVID-19 can remain on the following instrument surfaces for:

Brass	up to 5 days
Wood	up to 4 days
Plastic	up to 3 days
Strings	up to 3 days
Cork	up to 2 days

Please note that these time frames should only serve as a guideline. Variables such as temperature and humidity could prolong the virus's ability to survive on surfaces.

The CDC recommends general cleaning techniques for instruments that have not been used or handled outside of the above timelines. Essentially, if students are picking up instruments for the first time since school has been closed, those instruments will not need more than general cleaning as stated below.

If distributing instruments for the first time since schools have closed, the NFHS and NAFME recommend, out of an abundance of caution, that all cases be sprayed with an aerosol disinfectant.

Additional guidance on general cleaning and disinfection can be found [here](#).

## Choosing a Disinfectant for Musical Instruments

1. Sterisol Germicide Solution can be safely used on plastics, hard rubbers, and metals.
2. Mi-T-Mist Mouthpiece Cleanser can be used on most materials. It is **NOT** recommended for use on hard rubber mouthpieces.
3. Isopropyl alcohol wipes are safe for most materials. They are NOT recommended for use on hard rubber mouthpieces.
4. A solution made with 50% water and 50% white vinegar or 50% water and 50% hydrogen peroxide can be safely used on plastics, hard rubbers, and metals.

While other potential disinfectants, including alcohol, boiling water, and bleach can be used as general disinfectants, they are not recommended for use on mouthpieces or instruments due to their potential effect on skin, plastics, and metals.

1. Whichever disinfectants are chosen, it is crucial to read the product instructions and follow them closely.
2. Disinfectants do not remove dirt, so mouthpieces and instruments must be cleaned thoroughly before using.

## Instrument Hygiene

Before distributing an instrument that has been shared, use of alcohol wipes, swabs, or disinfectant solution to thoroughly clean both the outside and the inside of the

mouthpiece is highly recommended. It is also essential to maintain overall cleanliness via the use of cleaning rods, swabs, mouthpiece brushes, etc., as this is necessary to prevent buildup of residue within the instrument.

For wood instruments, any excess amount of liquid can be damaging. Please be judicious and sparing outside of the mouthpiece area that needs cleaning. In addition, certain cleaning products that can be used on the mouthpiece should not be used around the pads associated with a woodwind instrument's keys (e.g. flute, clarinet, saxophone, etc.).

## **Mouthpieces**

Adhering to the following procedures will help to keep mouthpieces and instruments clean and safe for continued use.

### **Cleaning the Flute Head Joint**

1. Using a cotton swab saturated with denatured, isopropyl alcohol, carefully clean around the embouchure hole.
2. Alcohol wipes 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 headjoint.
4. Do not run the headjoint under water as it may saturate and eventually shrink the headjoint cork.

### **Cleaning Bocals**

1. Bocals should be cleaned every month with a bocal brush, mild soap solution, and running water.
2. English Horn bocals can be cleaned with a pipe cleaner, mild soap solution, and running water. Be careful not to scratch the inside of the bocal with the exposed wire ends of the pipe cleaner.

### **Cleaning Hard Rubber and Ebony Mouthpieces**

1. Mouthpieces should be swabbed after each use and cleaned weekly.



2. Select a small container that will accommodate the mouthpiece vertically and place the mouthpiece, tip down, into the container.
3. Fill the container just past the window of the mouthpiece with a solution of 50% water and 50% white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide. Protect clarinet mouthpiece corked tenons from moisture.
4. After the mouthpiece has soaked for fifteen minutes, use an appropriately sized mouthpiece brush to remove any calcium deposits or other residue from inside and outside surfaces. This step may need to be repeated if the mouthpiece is excessively dirty.
5. Rinse the mouthpiece thoroughly and then saturate with disinfectant solution. Place on a paper towel and wait one minute.
6. Wipe dry with a paper towel.
7. Note: Metal saxophone mouthpieces clean up well with hot water, mild dish soap (not dishwasher detergent), and a mouthpiece brush. Disinfectant solution is also safe for metal mouthpieces.

## **Cleaning Saxophone Necks**

1. Swabs are available to clean the inside of the saxophone neck. However, many saxophonists use a flexible bottle brush and toothbrush to accomplish the same results.
2. The saxophone neck should be swabbed after each use and cleaned weekly.
3. Use the bottlebrush with mild, soapy water to clean the inside of the neck.
4. Rinse under running water.
5. Disinfectant solution may be used on the inside of the neck if desired. Place on a paper towel for one minute.
6. Rinse again under running water, dry, and place in the case.

## **Cleaning Brass Instrument Mouthpieces**

1. Mouthpieces should be cleaned monthly.
2. Use a cloth soaked in warm, soapy water to clean the outside of the mouthpiece.
3. Use a mouthpiece brush with warm, soapy water to clean the inside.
4. Rinse the mouthpiece and dry thoroughly.

5. Disinfectant solution may be used on the mouthpiece at this time. Place on a paper towel for one minute.
6. Wipe dry with a paper towel.

## **Cleaning String Instruments**

1. Isopropyl alcohol that's above 70% should only be used on the strings and unfinished finger and fret boards.
2. String, percussion, and keyboard instruments present fewer hygienic issues that can be solved simply by the player washing their hands before and after use for a minimum of 20 seconds.

## **Other Instruments**

1. Plastic recorders can be washed with warm, soapy water and should be swabbed after each use with a plastic cleaning rod and soft thin cloth. Disinfectant solution and alcohol wipes may also be used.

## Suggested Models for Curriculum Delivery

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*What follows is a collection of articles from BC music teachers meant to provide examples for how music can be taught fully online or in a hybrid model. Teachers have professional autonomy in how the curriculum is delivered to their students. These articles serve as examples that have worked for others.*

### **Elementary General Music and Music Exploratory Classes: Suggestions for Curriculum Delivery**

by Christine Bourne, Lakeview Elementary School

With the focus being set on literacy and numeracy at the elementary level many of us have been instructed not to teach music online at this point, but we are hopeful this will change in the Fall.

#### **How to Implement Curriculum in a Fully Online Model**

There are several possibilities, ranging from a music teacher blog that provides several activities for students and their families to choose from, to full on teacher lead Zoom classes where students participate and interact from home in a similar way to what they would in the classroom. Naturally the range of activities that can be provided this way is limited, but Zoom and similar platforms do work well for teacher lead activities such as recorder, bucket drumming, rhythm practice, note naming, and so on.

#### **How to Implement Curriculum in a Hybrid Model**

This is the model that most teachers across BC will be experiencing in the Music classroom. Students will likely get one music block in the classroom and the rest will be done at home. The focus should be on ensuring that this teaching time, while short, is still meaningful.

1. Choose songs and activities that can be taught in completion in that single block; this is not the time to take on large scale units that span several classes, as you will likely have students with intermittent attendance.
2. Choose a single concept and take it across the grades at various levels – this will help you to stay focused and make evaluation simpler

3. Denise Gagne suggests making individual music instrument bags for each student that can follow them from school to home. Using a large Ziploc bag, create a kit that could include egg shakers, pool noodle scrapers, chopsticks, and so on. This way the students can continue their music when they are not with you in the classroom.
4. Keep in touch with your classroom teachers – it may be possible for you to come onto their weekly online meeting and do a quick activity – this is a great way to ensure good attendance
5. Keep the parents in the loop; we are all in this together, and we should be working together to ensure that our students are still progressing in their musical journey

## **Phasing Back Into the Classroom**

Space space space!

- Put away those risers and see if you can store extra instruments that may be cluttering up your room elsewhere, you will need space!
- Mark up your floor with tape or Velcro, depending on your flooring, so that the students have their own physical space to move.
- We want to keep movement activities in our repertoire, but this is not the time for partner songs – look for songs where students can move individually, or facing a partner without any physical contact
- Keep those individual instrument kits going, they will serve you well over the next several months
- Try to leave time between classes to allow for cleaning and for any physical set up that will need changing between groups (chairs, bucket drums, music stands, and so on)

## **Helpful Websites**

Denise Gagne's [musicplayonline.com](http://musicplayonline.com) is a fabulous resource which has been made free to students at this time.

[Classicsforkids.com](http://Classicsforkids.com) is great for composer activities; students can also compose their own music, do rhythm games, and much more.

[Symbaloo.com](http://Symbaloo.com) has music activities by grade.

## **Orchestra: Suggestions for Curriculum Delivery**

by Nicholas Urquhart, Killarney Secondary School

I would start this off by stating that I am not an expert in the field of online teaching. I did however have success teaching seven high school String Orchestras virtually from March until June. I also have recently completed a master's degree in Music Education, whereby the bulk of the instruction was online. Many of my philosophies stem from my online experiences so far and the work I have done with Dr. Dale Lonis.

There is no doubt that the current situation is devastating to what orchestras and orchestra teachers aim to achieve. However, with clear goals, ideas, effort and care, orchestra classrooms can still become buzzing hubs of engaged learning.

We need to consider our ensemble and program goals. If a program is built on highest level performances, the curriculum design will look different than a program that is built on entrepreneurial, social or music appreciation goals. As we know, there is no one recipe for music education, online or in-person. Know who you are, who your learners are, what your program is, and prepare an exciting curriculum.

Next we must remember that our goal as educators is to foster intrinsically motivated learners. In these times of isolation and remote learning, this point has never been so vital to success. Therefore, this is the perfect time to consider how we 'deliver' curriculum. It is well documented that, when learners construct their knowledge, they learn deeper and value that knowledge more. Many of the activities I propose to my learners are based on this important premise. A teacher's leadership style as well as the activities should be paramount if our programs are going to succeed in these formats.

September 2020 will have significantly greater and different challenges than did March 2020, but it also brings an expectation and preparation that was not present when we were first thrown into this situation. And while this is not an ideal situation, there are advantages and potentials that must be exploited to their fullest.

Moving from fully online to fully in class, should be a smooth and congruent curriculum. Learners must feel that we are laying out a plan to move the learners forward (rather than sideways) through this time. The three models should flow as a continuum of instruction.

## Fully online

*The fully online model requires a commitment from school boards and school administrations to support the learners and teachers in whatever is needed so that teachers can have classroom expectations. This may be with technology, instruments, and/or communication to the learners of expectations.*

Orchestras function best when they move as a whole. This can still be done online but needs to be set up correctly. Online meetings, with the teacher, must be mandatory, and district guidelines for safe video conferencing must be followed.

As with any course, communicating goals is important at the onset of the course. I suggest in the first online meeting to use a shared document (e.g. Google doc) to co-create these goals. Immediately, the teacher is showing a confidence in technology and a commitment to the learners. Further, it can build some community which is difficult yet paramount.

In a subsequent class meeting, you may want to ask students to share in common place (message board) their 'dessert island' pieces of orchestra music. This is an incredibly powerful way to give students voice online. Follow this by having students comment on two others' pieces. This is a great way to build an online community and create positive online etiquettes which you will need in order to find group success.

Soon after the initial meets, there should be a presentation. This may be performing a simple passage. Focus on the process and not the product. I.e. Students present 'where they are at' with the project. They identify points of difficulty and ask for the classmates' help to solve the issues.

Decide on a worthwhile small group project to be presented midway through the term. Ask learners to meet with each other to prepare. Then have them meet with you for a 'where we are at' session to guide them for their presentation to the class shortly after.

A note about the teaching style: the teacher is really the facilitator through these activities. We must frame the instruction, interactions, and products with great care.

Positivity, enthusiasm, and support are crucial to the learners feeling engaged with the activities, each other and the subject matter.

Online classes should include a takeaways section(s), where each student is required to put in their own words, what the takeaways from the class or portion of the class were. Often a chat function in the meet can help with this. We need to support this by validating each takeaway as important.

Further assignments given should relate directly to the goals identified by the learners and link to the concepts the teacher has identified as important and 'doable' in the online model. The learners should feel that their work has value. There are still many concepts to cover which can be covered in various ways. Be mindful of the power of online meetings and use them for the right reasons.

A careful and thoughtful use of online tutorials for specific instrument techniques is required in the online model. These may be created by the teacher or use existing content online. Use short videos and have a very decisive learning outcome. Have the student demonstrate that they understood the concept through a short video submission. Be sure that what your assignment focuses on is the learning outcome.

### **Hybrid (online/in-class)**

The goal of the hybrid model is to have successful and engaging ensemble learning which links online and in-person learning. All of the fully online model curriculum is valid here, but the focus now shifts to the teacher highlighting how the work in isolation is paying off in an ensemble.

Because orchestras are large and social distancing is an issue, we may only be seeing 50% of our ensemble at a time. A poll of my orchestras showed that overwhelmingly they would prefer to have all instruments (mini orchestras) present rather than like instruments (just violins). If scheduling can accommodate 'sectionals', it would be prudent to vary the class composition at times to have both. Learners should be connecting with as many fellow musicians as possible.

The key is to connect. This is a chance to finally rehearse as a group. Learners should be familiar enough with their parts to work on group phrasing, balance, blend, fitting with parts, chords, structures etc. This is a time to highlight the magic of music-making in an ensemble. We should be inspiring the learners so that they feel rewarded for their online work reinvigorated to do more meaningful online work.

A note about repertoire choice – choose pieces that are able to be learned by the musicians in isolation with online supports. We don't want to spend our precious rehearsal drilling parts.

To be able to work in varied ways, administrators need to give clear directives to the students about being accountable for their classes. Each school or district may be different in their approach, but teachers need to know that there are times that they can meet students without conflicts with other classes.

### **Phasing back into classrooms**

With students returning to classrooms regularly, don't throw away all the added value learned in the online realm. Teachers will have witnessed their learners working in new and positive ways where they were much more responsible for their own knowledge. This will be a huge asset to the orchestral classroom. Be mindful not to turn the orchestra room into a professional rehearsal setting model. The processes which proved successful in online teaching can transfer directly to create engaging in-person learning. Consider the skills you acquired as a facilitator and put them to use for classroom teaching.

*More information and resources can be found in the [Music Education Resource Room](#).*



## **Choir: Suggestions for Curriculum Delivery**

by Jonathan Krueger, North Surrey Secondary School

with contributions from Melodie Langevin, Seycove Secondary School, Kelly Proznick, New Westminster Secondary School, and Jen Williams, R.E. Mountain Secondary School

When you can't "aim" at "the concert", what do you do? You redirect your energy from all of the wonderful things that can be learned through concert preparation and performance, and set your sights on literacy, of course! Your students will one day be allowed to perform in "The Fall Concert" again, just not THIS Fall. If this is our new musical reality, what should we do then, as we adapt to this new way of being together?

### **How to implement curriculum in a fully online delivery model**

Students tend to feel safe and welcome in a place where they experience community. This becomes a difficult feeling and experience to create when person to person contact is not possible. Regardless of what curricular competencies you intend to address on any given day with students, work hard to have kids feel "plugged in" to friends, teachers and musical community.

- Real time conference (two-way video) is a must! (Zoom meetings/Microsoft Teams/Google Meet)
- If you are using Teams, consider setting up a private "chat" for each student. This chat is a quick, convenient means of communication. Students can use this direct connection to you to ask questions and you can privately express affirmation and concerns.
- Performance can be experienced and the expressive qualities in music can be studied through solo preparation. A solo performance unit prepared by Kelly Proznick from New Westminster Secondary School can be found in the [Music Education Resource Room](#).

- Give students curricular tasks that can be worked on alone or in small groups (eg. Mad Minutes, Rhythm Boot Camp, Note Pyramids, other activities online that reinforce key music and ensemble concepts). See the [Music Education Resource Room](#) for details.
- If you are going to work in small groups, assign groups to include leaders and learners. Structuring groups this way keeps advanced kids growing by having them support less advanced kids (for example, break-out rooms in online meeting platforms).
- Curricular activities should be structured so that students can move at their own pace.
- Games and activities make focusing on music literacy and skill building more enjoyable.
- Provide students with a reflective activity like a journal to document their struggles, learning needs, learning successes and feelings as they work at home.
- Thoughtful discussion around how singing with others fosters empathy and trust, and how making music together instills in us the capacity to listen, to appreciate, and to collaborate. Inspiring a passion for the music and what the ensemble stands for can have a significant impact on morale, learning environment, musical enjoyment, and the final performance or outcome.
- Student assessment of achievement with clear goals allows for a sense of accomplishment and celebration during weekly rehearsal times. See “Level-up Singing” and associated activities in the [Music Education Resource Room](#).

\*Video latency makes group singing in the traditional sense impossible. In this interesting situation, hand symbols and standard choral warm-ups can be used to good effect. Have students mute mics and “sing” along with your directions. Supporting accompaniment tracks can be played from your host computer, and students in a Zoom meeting can even sing-along from home with the repertoire that you have selected, so long as they have their microphone muted.

## How to implement curriculum in a hybrid model

Try NOT to rehearse in class and then send kids home to “practice” the material. Practicing repertoire at home alone is difficult, and will likely become an ear-training exercise of little value. This is not meant to work like Karaoke, this is Choir.

- Rehearse and enjoy your limited time together in class, and then send the singers home with purpose, to move their individual music skills forward for the next time that you are together. Many of the online activities listed above and in the [Music Education Resource Room](#) can be used here to good effect. Pick one skill at a time and focus on it in between rehearsals.
- Take time to publicly recognize achievement and allow students to talk about what they have learned in between classes. I use colorful incentives as an external motivator in my choir classes. (You’d be surprised at the power contained in a sticker). See “Level-up Singing” and associated activities in the [Music Education Resource Room](#).
- Don’t rush through the pleasant connecting and community building time at the beginning of class. That community time is what many of the kids in your class love most about being in choir with you and their classmates.
- Allow time for as much normalcy as possible. Focus on singing when you are in class together. Singing and community is what your students came to choir for.
- During this regular time together, reflecting and journaling can be an activity that adds direction and focus to the coming week “online”. This activity can take as little time as a few minutes. See the [Music Education Resource Room](#) for potential journaling framework.

## How to phase back into classrooms

When you create separation between your wonderful in-class activities and your authentic at home activities, the way back into life as we knew it is to just decide in what

way you might like to continue to include the at home activities into your rehearsal space. A few things that will make this transition back to “normal” a little easier are...

- Choose more repertoire than you will most likely need in our time of limited contact.
- Choose accessible music that allows for feelings of success and progress.
- Continue on with literacy as a skill that you build in class and a value that you display in your class time together.
- Small groups will be allowed to sing before you can run full rehearsals. See the second point.
- In some parts of our province, singing outside in an environment relatively free from safety concerns will be an option for an important amount of the school year.

## **Helpful Apps and Tech ideas**

Bandlab - Multi track recorder (See Colleen Sheridan's write up, *Band: Suggestions for Curriculum Delivery* for more information)

Acapella - Multitrack video and audio recorder (Apple product)

GarageBand - Apple recording and music engineering software.

iMovie - User-friendly video editing software (to add a visual component, if desired)

## **Beginning Band: Suggestions for Curriculum Delivery**

by Imran Amarshi, Notre Dame Regional Secondary School

Teaching beginning band during the age of COVID-19 presents unique challenges due to the fact that students may have had limited exposure to instrumental music in the past. A large focus of the beginner band curriculum includes teaching the baseline skills of wind, brass, and percussion performance that will need to be tackled in unique ways.

### **Unique Considerations**

- As we are starting beginners on each instrument, homogenous (same instrument) “breakout groups” are recommended as a starting point.
- The instrument selection process will look drastically different without the ability of having students try instruments in a communal setting. Best practices include partnering with instrument retailers for flexibility and rental trials to encourage student success.
- Encourage students to progress at their own pace while providing checkpoints and goal setting opportunities.

### **Fully Online Instruction**

- Collaborate with professional musicians and fellow teachers: partner with a specialist for each instrument to aid in higher quality online instruction. This can be done within districts by having each teacher teach start-up workshops on their primary instruments, or by inviting professional musicians to join the process throughout the year.
- Commission or research video tutorials for instrument set up and maintenance that students can refer to throughout the year.
- Highlight the importance of developing individual musicianship which will serve them well in all performing settings. Inspire students to develop love for playing their instrument in a solo setting, as well as an ensemble (chamber) setting when it is safe to do so. See the RCM/ABRSM syllabi for suggestions of etudes, and solo repertoire at beginner levels.
- Provide students with ample audio and video recordings to develop a superior tonal concept through critical listening and video demonstrations.
- Encourage experimental learning.

- Virtual concerts, virtual ensemble videos, and other online performing opportunities can allow students to have a shared goal, and build community.
- Supplement learning with music literacy skills, listening assignments, and performance reflections.
- Consider a “Band Karate” or game-based learning approach where students can develop various technical skills in a sequenced way.
- Create opportunities for reflection, journaling, and goal setting throughout the learning process.

## **Hybrid Instruction**

- Start in person instruction with homogenous instrument groups, if possible.
- Focus on fundamental playing habits and maximize playing time in-person to best prepare students for success during online learning.
- Partial group instruction due to space limitations can be used as an opportunity to develop chamber musician skills from the start. Perform alongside students to teach them how to cue, move, and maintain pulse.
- Recorded performances or outdoor performances can assist in building performance skills in a fun and community-oriented way.

## **Band: Suggestions for Curriculum Delivery**

by Colleen Sheridan, Fleetwood Park Secondary School

with contributions from Lauren Carley, Burnaby South Secondary School, Jonathan Krueger, North Surrey Secondary School, Brian Weingartner, Maple Ridge Secondary School, and Adam Gough, Fleetwood Park Secondary School

As we plan for September 2020 and our return to teaching and learning, the following information highlights how instrumental music classes can be adapted for the blended online /in-class model and for online-only delivery. Given the complexities of home learning situations, the list of suggested methods includes options for students and programs that have access to varied technology. There are options here for students who have limited opportunities to access technology at home, or whose home learning situations make it difficult to participate in performance-based practice routines. These suggested resources align with the BIG IDEAS in the New Curriculum in Grades 8-12.

### **Blended Online/In-class Model Ideas**

#### Flex Band Arrangements

Flex Band publications provide opportunities for flexible arrangements of 4 and 5 parts plus percussion. In smaller classes, instrumental music playing is achievable with repertoire fit for purpose. During home practice, students can reinforce rehearsal concepts and ideas explored in class. Flex Band arrangements can be used as chamber music or rehearsed in smaller ensembles moving to the whole ensemble context when we phase back into more traditional Band settings. A brief search of Flex Band on music publishing websites shows over a hundred arrangements in many genres, with e-print options available.

#### Chamber Music

There are options available that allow for flexible trio, quartet, and quintet opportunities. In small groups, students can access instrumental playing through the performance and rehearsal of chamber music. During home practice, students can reinforce rehearsal concepts and ideas explored in class. Publishing website searches reveal over 1000 e-print available resources for immediate use. Examples of adaptable instrumentation

series include: Quartets for All, Tradition of Excellence: Excellence in Chamber Music, FlexQuartets.

### Rhythm Boot Camp

This resource is a locally developed program created by Jonathan Krueger at North Surrey Secondary. This resource provides flexibility of delivery with pdf and fully digital programming. It takes the learner through step-by-step directions on how to read rhythm using the Kodaly method. In connection with this, in-class instruction can include how to build rhythm using craft sticks, white board and markers etc to develop student's musical literacy and compositional skills. At home learning can be supported by the digital resources available. See the [Music Education Resource Room](#) for lesson ideas and supplementary information on how to use this program in your classroom.

### SoundScape Composition Exploration

In this unit, students will embark on composing through improvisation and alternative compositional techniques (e.g. graphic score, fragmented score, directed improvisation etc). In small groups, students can create collaborative soundscape compositions to a given stimulus or their own created work. This unit can explore found sound, limited instrumentation, student-made instruments etc, to create soundscapes for poetry, prose, animation, art, dance etc. There is great scope for cross curricular exploration. At home learning can be developed through graphic score exploration and research (some composer investigations could include: Shafer, Crumb, Bersten-Neilsen, Berberian, Normura), through attempts to write a soundscape to be performed in class with peers.

## **Online/Remote Learning Model Ideas**

### Online Music Platforms (Music First, Smart Music etc)

These platforms provide support for in class instruction by allowing students to perform, record and reflect on their learning. Through generated feedback, students are able to see and correct pitch and rhythm, to continually assess and improve their playing. Once ready, students can submit recordings to teachers for final assessment of assigned tasks. Extension activities with these online platforms can include Exploration Portfolio Project; students can be given autonomy to choose pieces they like and to learn, record and hand in/drop or share to celebrate learning.

BandLab (edu.bandlab.com)



BandLab is a free web-based digital audio workstation similar to GarageBand. It is described as an award-winning, cloud-based music creation platform that lets students embark on a music-learning journey that unleashes their creativity and foster collaboration with peers. Students can collaborate on projects and share them with each other. This versatile program has track, effects, looping and sampled sounds and it also provides students with the option to record themselves. This program has the potential to work well in both models of delivery as students could access created work from home or school.

*learningmusic.ableton.com* is an interactive instructional guide on basic music theory and digital audio production. Students can apply their learning in BandLab to create a composition by using the tutorial and interactive guides..

### Performance-Based Assignments

In this project, student choose from one of three assignments: Acapella exploration – use the Acapella app to create a 30-second recording of yourself playing a duet, trio or quartet; Serenade performance – prepare a short piece of music to learn and prepare for a “public” performance by serenading someone; or Practice Investigation – maintain a practice log and include a short video performance of your work.

### Self-Directed Inquiry

Students are given autonomy to investigate a concern, issue or idea they have in Music! This could be improving one area in their playing, investigating social justice issues through Music, working on theory, auditioning for an extra-curricular ensemble (BCMEA, VYSO, etc), or exploring music in society. Students can share their learning in a chosen format and present to the class online or in person.

### Isolation Games

As a way to keep the band community together, the Isolation Games invites students to participate in weekly music-related tasks to share online. Example tasks included: 7pm serenade for essential service workers, exploration of found sound, hidden musical talent. Students uploaded their contributions and compilations and shared to the school music community.

## Virtual Ensemble

For the more technically able programs, explore virtual ensemble options to explore music-making in remote contexts. Students will explore personal and social responsibilities as they navigate how to perform and record to a click track. See the resource section for an outline on the requirements and tips & tricks on how to explore this possibility.

## Music Identity Project

In this project, students are on a musical journey. Through connection and conversations with an older relative, students can explore how music offers unique ways of exploring our identity and sense of belonging. Life was different when their parents were young, even more different when their grandparents were young. Students choose an older relative/family friend to have this music interview with. Use video conferencing if possible. See the [Music Education Resource Room](#) for the project outline.

## How to Listen to Classical Music

This worksheet guides students on developing listening skills as they dive deep into learning how to develop a critical ear. It is easily adaptable for other genres or for further exploration in class or at home.

## **Jazz Band: Suggestions for Curriculum Delivery**

by Carmella Luvisotto, Wellington Secondary School

Ideas for fully online learning:

- Transcription Project: Have students learn a solo and play along with a recording
- Playing parts with a pro recording and submit a recording in
- Give students the option of live online playing tests over video conferencing or sending in recordings
- Live online listening gathering over video conferencing
- Live online listening test over video conferencing
- Ear Training: post examples in Google Classroom and have students do live tests on video conferencing
- Google Classroom can work well for music theory assignments and any kind of writing assignments.
- Provide online Jazz Musician workshops that are instrument and vocal specific. You can make it part of their mark by requiring each student to ask a question.
- Music History Workshops
- Access to ear training apps is essential. If it's possible, investigate purchasing a subscription for all students to an ear training app, such as Harmony Cloud.
- Investigate platforms built for online teaching, private lessons, etc. WeVU, for example, is a great platform.
- Teach recording technology online using programs such as GarageBand, Ableton Live, Logic, etc.
- Investigate subscriptions to apps that provide backing tracks or play-along tracks, for example, iReal Pro and the Mitnzer Big Band Essentials
- Connect with Universities/Colleges across North America and ask if you students could participate in their online clinics or workshops. Funding may be needed to help accommodate this request.

- Investigate the possibility of connecting students for online jam sessions

### **Hybrid In-person/Online Suggestions**

- If possible, bring in the rhythm section in place and if students were in two days a week one day saxophones with the rhythm section and other day brass with rhythm section
- As much as possible, use music with smaller, flexible instrumentation
- If possible, seek funding for online clinics, workshops, and masterclasses

### **Other Observations and Recommendations From My Online Teaching Experience**

- I found that Zoom was best because the sound is in stereo and also has less latency. I recommend plugging into an ethernet cable for a more stable internet connection.
- If possible, you will get the best result if students have access to good recording devices, microphones, and headphones

## Performances

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Music performances are an important part of the culture of a music program. They provide a venue for students to demonstrate their cumulative learning. We encourage you to consider alternative, creative, and unconventional ways to showcase student learning that does not include a gathering of people. Some ideas could include:

- When in-class performances are viable, prerecord students' performance and host an online viewing party
- Livestream a performance without an audience
- Conduct a concert outdoors that adheres to social distancing guidelines and the most current gathering size restrictions
- Host a concert where small groups are positioned around the school, or an outdoor venue, and audience members can walk by and listen without congregating

If you have other ideas, please share those with your colleagues in [The Music Education Resource Room!](#)

## Health and Wellness for Students, Teachers, & Music Programs

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Music participation and learning are essential for every child and play such a significant role in students' well being. At a time when so many people are struggling with mental and physical illness, we need to provide a sense of normalcy, relief, and comfort for our students. Music classes must continue. There is no benefit to cancelling them or limiting our students' opportunity to participate in music. Even though our classes might look different for the time being, they must go on. As teachers and administrators, now is the time to work together to make the necessary accommodations so that music classes can be offered safely and effectively. **The task at hand is to re-think teaching strategies, not content or curriculum**, so that we can uphold the many benefits that music offers children.

### Social Emotional Learning

Music is a key part of Social Emotional Learning. As described in [this brochure published by the National Association for Music Education](#), it is so important that we continue to help students develop these skills and gain a greater understanding of themselves and others.

### Music's Inherent Value

Experiencing and learning through music provides unique benefits to students that only come through music. Music teaches us how to be human, how to listen, and how to process complex ideas and concepts. There are many ways to provide the benefits of music education, and our current situation offers us the chance to be innovative and creative. Try something new, teach the same concepts in different ways, focus on a different approach, but remember that what students gain through music cannot be delivered in other ways.

## **Educating the WHOLE Child**

We know the many reasons why we focus on developing the whole child, and music is an important component. At a time like this when we find ourselves in “survival mode,” some might find it more convenient to focus on literacy and numeracy. However, minimizing music education is counterproductive. Music changes the brain and helps students develop skills and competencies that support them in all areas of the curriculum.

## **Planning for the Future**

It is so important that students continue to build their musical skills and understanding during these challenging times so that when we do return to the classroom, future students can have the same experiences and opportunities that their predecessors did. Students of the COVID-era have made many sacrifices; the opportunity to learn music should not be another.

## The Music Education Resource Room

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Are you wondering what's working for others during these times? Do you need an inspirational ready-made activity or lesson? Do you have one to share? We are stronger together! In the Music Resource Room, you will find ideas, lesson plans, activities, projects, and resources that have been created, suggested, and/or vetted by your colleagues. This is a place to submit materials that have worked for you and to obtain materials that will be valuable for you and your students as we navigate our way through COVID-19.

The BCMEA will maintain the Music Education Resource Room so it can be a living hub of information for all BC music teachers.

Visit the Music Education Resource Room here:

<http://www.bcmusiced.ca/music-resource-room>

Submit Resources or Ideas here:

<https://forms.gle/chJARWH2nfnWxt8z8>



## Conclusions and Next Steps

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We are truly all in this together, as has been said, weathering the same storm in very different boats. We are also trying to build our plane while we fly it. Remember that YOU are the expert on your music program, and that your input during planning is crucial. With circumstances and plans that seem to change daily, there is not time to sit back and wait for decisions to be made for us. Now is the time to be proactive advocates for our programs, to know the recommendations and safety measures that need to be in place, and to use our expertise to advise on the direction of our music programs. The BCMEA and CMEBC can support as much as possible, but we must all commit to being active and engaged in planning in our own schools and communities.

### Next Steps:

The BCMEA and CMEBC are here to help and will be a reliable resource so that our music programs emerge from this pandemic alive and well. Please contribute to the [Music Education Resource Room](#) and make use of the valuable materials that will be posted there. Feel free to reach out to us anytime for support or to share ideas.

On June 22, an advocacy message and survey about music classes during COVID-19 were distributed by the CMEBC to BC school trustees, superintendents, administrators, DPAC's and PAC's. Results of this survey are forthcoming.

Further information as it becomes available about music classes in the 2020-2021 school year will be shared through BCMEA and CMEBC newsletters, websites, and social media channels. This Framework document will be updated as needed to reflect the most recent information.

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