

Member Advice on the Re-Opening of Schools

Additional Guidance on Managing Risks of Covid 19 for Instrumental Music Teachers

This advice should be read in conjunction with the [EIS Curriculum and Pedagogy Guidance for schools](#) and the updated [EIS Advice to School Reps and Members re Revised Risk Assessments](#) and [EIS Heating and Ventilation advice](#). It is designed to provide additional guidance to reflect the distinct nature of the delivery of Instrumental Music Tuition and ensure that school reps and Instrumental Music Teachers (IMTs) are aware of their entitlements under Health and Safety legislation and of the specific considerations which should be assessed in relation to the provision of Instrumental Music Tuition in schools.

In terms of risk assessments, the Scottish Government advice is that they need to be conducted by employers in conjunction with trade unions and LNCTs.

Headteacher and Depute Headteacher members should find the guidance useful, also, in supporting their ongoing assessment of risk as it will probably fall to them to act on behalf of the Employer at school level. The EIS recommends that Instrumental Music Service Managers, Headteacher and Depute Headteacher colleagues continue to work closely with School Reps, a strongly collegiate approach being the best way to protect the health and safety of all within the school community.

Additional Considerations for Health and Safety and Risk Assessments for IMTs

The general advice to members on Health and Safety and Risk Assessments (referred to above) sets out the legal background to the employer's duty of care, risk assessments and consultation. It makes it clear that your employer is obliged to provide you with a safe place of work through the use of risk assessments. A risk assessment will facilitate the identification of hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm.

The practical nature of teaching voice and instrumental music, together with the increased potential of droplet or air-borne transmission of Covid-19, means that consideration should be given to the implementation of an additional risk mitigation strategy for IMTs. Both staff and pupils need to have confidence in the safe delivery of in-school Instrumental Music Tuition.

In addition to the Safe Workplace Checklist contained in the advice referred to above, the EIS would recommend that the following additional questions, contained in the checklist below, are used when considering Health and Safety issues relating to the control of Covid-19 within the workplace, specifically for the provision of Instrumental Music Tuition.

There should be bespoke risk assessments for vulnerable groups, e.g. older staff, disabled staff, pregnant women, new mothers, staff with underlying health conditions, staff who are on the highest risk list and BAME staff, as well as individual children identified as at greater risk or with additional support needs.

Risk assessments should be kept under regular review and should also reflect and be adapted to respond to local issues, such as local increases in the cases of COVID-19, local outbreaks or the emergence of new variants of concern.

Covid Secure Workplace

Checklist for Instrumental Music Tuition (February 2022)

The following checklist should be used as a guide when considering Health and Safety issues relating to the control of Covid-19 within the workplace, specifically in the context of Instrumental Music Tuition. This list is not exhaustive and there may be specific issues relevant to individual settings or circumstances which should also be considered as part of the risk assessment process.

Allocation and Cleaning of Rooms for Instrumental Music Tuition

- Reflecting the [Scottish Government Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance on Reducing the Risks in Schools](#) and the importance of minimising the movement of individuals between work stations, has a designated room been identified for the provision of Instrumental Music Tuition within the school?
- Has an enhanced cleaning strategy been agreed and adopted in relation to the provision of Instrumental Music Tuition? Have arrangements been put in place to ensure that the room will be cleaned prior to and after use and between use by different pupils and by different staff members?
- Does the cleaning strategy extend to more regular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and hard surfaces, such as table-tops, chairs, doors, handles, shared technology, light switches, keyboards and staff equipment? Are procedures in place to ensure that such objects are cleaned between use by different groups of pupils and by different staff members?
- Is there adequate ventilation within the room to minimise the spread of Covid-19 through droplet or air-borne transmission?
- The importance of space and well-ventilated rooms continues to be paramount. Has consideration been given to the use of alternative spaces within the school, such as assembly halls, games halls or other general purpose areas, to ensure compliance with ventilation requirements?

Hand Hygiene Protocols

- Is there a hygiene protocol in place, providing for an enhanced hygiene regime for IMTs and pupils, participating in instrumental music tuition? Does this include handwashing (for 20 seconds) with hot water and soap on arrival at the classroom, where necessary, during the lesson or practice session and prior to departure?

Physical Distancing

- Are physical distancing measures being strictly implemented? Whilst public health guidance demands physical distancing of at least 1m, the Scottish Government guidance sets out its expectation that most schools will want to retain 2m physical distancing arrangements between adults and between staff and pupils. Given the transmissibility of Omicron, the EIS strongly recommends that 2m physical distancing between adults and between staff and pupils is strictly observed in all situations.
- In exceptional circumstances when adults cannot keep 2 metres distance, face coverings (or where appropriate, PPE and other protective barrier measures) should be worn at all times.

- The practical nature of the subject may mean that there are exceptional situations in which the 2 metres distancing cannot be observed for a short period of time for a specific purpose. What additional risk mitigation measures have been put in place for those situations and to ensure that the period in which the distance is breached is kept to a minimum?
- Where physical distancing requirements cannot be adhered to, has provision been made to ensure that staff are wearing face coverings?
- Has the school provided clear guidance for staff and pupils on how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings to avoid inadvertently increasing the risk of transmission in the setting?

Establishment Operations

- Have sufficient steps been taken to ensure that the movement between classrooms of children, young people and staff involved in Instrumental Music Tuition has been minimised?
- Have timetables been reviewed to reduce the movement around the school estate of groups of pupils, receiving Instrumental Music Tuition, as much as possible?
- What arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the number of children and young people with whom IMTs come into contact in the provision of Instrumental Music Tuition is kept to a minimum?
- Given that IMTs may be teaching a range of different pupils in one room for extended periods, what measures have been put in place to mitigate the risk from their exposure to multiple pupils, sharing the same air over long periods of time? Has consideration been given to the use of plexiglass screens or of face coverings? Has consideration been given to timetabling additional breaks to ventilate rooms periodically? Is personal protective equipment ('PPE') required? Is it adequately provided to staff?
- Has the layout of the teaching space been adapted to support physical distancing between pupils where possible, between staff and pupils, and between staff and other staff?

Sharing and Cleaning of Instruments

- Has an assessment been made of the types of instruments and associated equipment which may be safely shared by pupils and IMTs in schools?
- Has clear guidance been given to prevent the sharing of mouth-blown instruments and mouthpieces, until the instruments and mouthpieces have been thoroughly cleaned?
- Is there an enhanced, before & after use cleaning provision in place for all instruments and equipment, assessed as capable of being shared safely by pupils and IMTs in schools?
- Has provision been made to ensure that where sheet music is being used, each pupil has their own copy of the music? If this is not possible, consideration should be given to projecting words or music onto a screen.
- If instruments or equipment are used by more than one person (e.g. stringed instruments, keyboard, piano, drum kit, tuned percussion, CDs, audio equipment, beaters and music stands), or taken in and reallocated (e.g. at the end of a whole-

class programme), enhanced cleaning is required. Has this been included in the risk assessment?

- What provision has been made to ensure that all instruments and equipment are effectively cleaned & maintained on a regular basis?
- Have enhanced hand hygiene arrangements been put in place to ensure that children, young people and staff wash their hands prior to and following use of shared equipment?

Singing and Woodwind/Brass Musical Instruments

- Whilst Scottish Government guidance permits the teaching of voice, brass and wind instruments in schools, the 'increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 during instrumental and class music lessons (particularly when singing and playing wind instruments)' is acknowledged in the Education Scotland [Guidelines on Music](#).
- The EIS would, therefore, emphasise the need for rigour in risk assessments in relation to these activities, in particular and the strict adherence to all COVID-19 mitigation measures.
- Good ventilation, physical distancing, enhanced hygiene protocols and where appropriate, the wearing of masks remain important mitigation measures and must be strictly adhered to.
- If the number of COVID cases in the local area is high, has consideration been given to the use of alternative approaches to the delivery of vocal, wind or brass tuition outwith school? Have arrangements been made to ensure that the curriculum is reviewed to allow the delivery of theory or composition to be taught at this time? Could the use of digital technology assist in supporting the delivery of learning and teaching in these areas?

Choirs, Orchestras and Ensemble Work

- Whilst choirs, orchestras and ensemble work is permitted, the Education Scotland Guidelines highlight the hierarchy of risk and that individual activities or those involving small numbers are safer than large groups performing.
- In light of the increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant of the virus, risk assessments around these activities should have been and must be re-visited as necessary, with consideration given to whether any additional mitigation measures are required to manage the risk presented. Where group activity is proposed, discussion should focus on the appropriate size of the group and the prevalence of the virus in the locale in which the school is situated. Consideration could also be given to the use of technology to facilitate collective participation, perhaps on a virtual basis. Recordings of individuals performances could also be used.

Health

- What arrangements have been put in place to ensure that IMTs are aware of the protocol in their school(s) for situations in which an individual develops Covid-19 symptoms, including isolation arrangements?

- What arrangements have been put in place to ensure that IMTs are aware of the Test and Protect protocol in place in their school(s) in relation to the testing of staff who have symptoms, as well as any contingency arrangements for dealing with self-isolation?
- Is there a need for any additional control measures to be put in place to reduce the risk of IMTs inadvertently bringing the virus into school?
- Is personal protective equipment (PPE) required? Is it adequately provided to IMTs?
- Have individualised risk assessments, for IMTs who have particular vulnerabilities or who are pregnant, been reviewed to ensure all necessary risk mitigation measures are in place, including arrangements to support remote working where appropriate?

Travel

- The Scottish Government guidance provides that where possible, efforts should be made to minimise staff movement across schools. For peripatetic IMTs, what consideration has been given to the reduction in the amount of travel across different schools and to consolidating the provision delivered by the IMT in one school?
- In circumstances where provision cannot be limited to one school, what efforts have been made to minimise the number of schools in which the IMT will teach? Has consideration been given to the continued delivery of Instrumental Music Tuition through lower risk methods such as digital/virtual means?
- Where movement across locations is necessary, has a joint risk assessment been completed and reviewed regularly? What arrangements have been adopted to minimise the number of interactions which IMTs will have in each setting? Has provision been made to ensure that physical distancing between adults and between IMTs and pupils is strictly adhered to?
- Where an IMT is working across local authorities, this should be made known to each of the respective Heads of Instrumental Music and consideration should be given to minimising the number of schools in which the IMT will teach and to the delivery of Instrumental Music Tuition through lower risk methods such as digital/virtual means. Consideration should also be given to a joint risk assessment and to any additional risk mitigation measures which may be necessary, given the nature of these working arrangements.
- Are car parking spaces clearly set out to ensure that IMTs have a dedicated space for the day on which they will be in attendance at a particular school?

Consultation

- Have IMTs been consulted on and involved in all of the above?
- Instrumental Music Service Managers and School Leadership Teams should involve union reps at the outset and consult IMTs as widely as possible and practicable. Has this happened, involving union workplace reps and health and safety reps?

Advice and Support

If an IMT/Music Teacher, having due regard to the guidance, is concerned about the activities permitted or the mitigation measures which have been identified and has concerns about their safety or the safety of anyone else in the setting, they should raise this with the management

team and seek advice and support from their EIS school representative or Local Association Secretary thereafter as necessary.