

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 [EIS Advice for Safety in Schools for EIS Representatives](#). 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 Healthy 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 (April 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 of Rooms for Instrumental Music Tuition

- Reflecting the importance of good ventilation which is highlighted in the [Scottish Government Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance on Reducing the Risks in Schools](#), has a designated room with suitable and sufficient ventilation been identified for the provision of Instrumental Music Tuition within the school?
- 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?
- Where centralised or local mechanical ventilation is present, have re-circulatory systems been adjusted to full fresh air? Where this is not possible, are systems operating normally?
- Where ventilation units have filters present, are enhanced precautions being taken to ensure the safe changing of filters?
- Have ventilation systems been checked or adjusted to ensure that they do not automatically reduce/increase ventilation levels due to differing occupancy levels?
- Have windows and doors been checked to ensure that as many as possible are able to be opened to improve natural ventilation, where it is practical, safe and secure to do so, whilst maintaining appropriate internal temperatures?
- Does the school have access to CO2 monitoring and have arrangements been made to ensure that this is being used to assess the level of ventilation in the room in which Instrumental Music Tuition is being delivered at regular intervals and to ensure that ventilation is sufficient to maintain CO2 concentrations at lower levels?
- Further information on ventilation in schools and when action should be considered can be accessed in [the Advice on Safety in Schools for EIS Representatives \(March 2022\)](#). In addition, a summary of key ventilation information can be accessed [here](#) and an EIS Heating Checklist is available [here](#). These documents are intended for use as a guide for EIS reps to check that the arrangements detailed in guidance on health and ventilation are being implemented in schools. The information can be used as a basis to investigate complaints about heating and ventilation in buildings. Has this information been used to inform the risk assessment in relation to Instrumental Music Tuition, in particular in relation to the allocation of rooms?

Hand Hygiene Protocols

- Is there a hand 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 warm 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 implemented, where possible? Has the layout of the teaching space been adapted to support physical distancing between pupils in Secondary schools where possible, between staff and pupils, and between staff members?
- The practical nature of the subject may mean that there are situations in which adults cannot adhere to physical distancing arrangements for short periods of time for specific purposes. In these circumstances, has consideration been given to the adoption of additional risk mitigation measures, such as the use of face coverings?
- Has the school provided clear guidance for staff and pupils, where appropriate, on how to put on, remove, store and dispose of face coverings to avoid inadvertently increasing the risk of transmission in the setting?

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?
- 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), has provision been made to ensure that the item has been cleaned before and after use?
- What provision has been made to ensure that all instruments and equipment are effectively cleaned & maintained on a regular basis?

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 identified risk mitigation measures.
- Good ventilation, physical distancing, where possible, and good hygiene protocols remain important mitigation measures and we would recommend that they are strictly adhered to.

Choirs, Orchestras and Ensemble Work

- Whilst choirs, orchestras and ensemble work are 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 new variants of the virus, we would recommend that risk assessments around these activities are reviewed regularly and consideration given to whether any additional mitigation measures are required to manage the risk presented. Where group activity is proposed, we would suggest that discussion focuses 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?
- 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?

Peripatetic Staff/Visiting Professionals and Travel

- Peripatetic staff and visiting professionals, including IMTs, who are visiting schools are required to be considered within all risk assessments and should act in accordance with the risk assessment for the establishment in which they are working.
- Where movement across locations is necessary, has consideration been given to the preparation of a joint risk assessment between establishments?
- Where an IMT is working across local authorities, we would recommend that this is made known to each of the respective Heads of Instrumental Music and that consideration is 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 available 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 the risk assessment process and the implementation of safeguards and mitigations?
- 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?
- Is there a formal process for reviewing the updated risk assessments and implementing revised control measures where appropriate and necessary?

- Are Management reviewing updated risk assessments and protocols at regular intervals and when circumstances change, in consultation with staff and union representatives?

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.