



March, 2021

The Wellesley Public Schools, in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), believe education in the arts is an integral part of the learning experience for students at every grade level.

Based on the updated guidelines from DESE released in March of 2021, the following guidelines will be followed for the WPS Performing Arts Department at this time. If any additional information or updates are communicated by DESE, this document will be updated accordingly.

Generally, all students participating in any Performing Arts program in chorus, orchestra, drama, technical theater, and dance will be required to wear a mask at all times. Students participating in Band will be required to wear a mask when not actively playing a brass or woodwind instrument.

The following specific guidelines will be followed in each content area, [PreK- 12:](#)

CHORUS/SINGING: :

General Guidelines:

- If outdoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with at least 10 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with at least 10 feet of distance between individuals.
- In an elementary classroom, singing can only occur if the students are 10 feet apart or the music teacher brings the class outdoors.
- It is the responsibility of the teacher/director to ensure all safety precautions are taken and guidelines are followed. It is also at the discretion of the teacher when/where any singing will take place.
- Note: These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.



Specific Guidance:

- Individuals singing indoors must wear masks. These masks should be tight and well-fitting. Consider what mask types may be most comfortable for singing. Students will provide their own mask. The school system will provide a mask if needed.
- When indoors, singing should be limited to 30 minutes at one time.
- When indoors, schools should prioritize the use of large, well-ventilated spaces for singing, such as auditoriums or gymnasiums.
- When indoors, students should sing at lower volumes. The lower the volume, the less projection required. Consider, also, the volume of any background music. The higher the volume of background music, the more vocalists will need to project to be heard.
- When outdoors, staff should monitor student volume to prevent harm to students' vocal cords.
- All students should face in one direction instead of facing one another. Avoid singing in a circle or semicircular formation.
- Students and teachers should avoid sharing materials (e.g., music stands) when feasible. Any sharing of equipment should follow the equipment sharing guidelines. (see DESE document)
- When it is not possible to continue with singing instruction based on the guidelines, courses can focus on other aspects of music instruction, such as history of music, music theory, or vocal anatomy. These courses could also be conducted virtually.

BAND:

General Guidelines:

- If outdoors, with masks encouraged if possible, these activities can occur with at least 10 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks encouraged if possible, these activities can occur with 10 feet of distance between individuals if in-person school is occurring.



Specific Guidance:

- As noted earlier, instruction for musical instruments that require air blowing (e.g., flute, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, saxophone, trombone) can occur outdoors or indoors, if in-person school is occurring, when individuals are at least 10 feet apart. These instruments should never be shared. For musical instruments that require air blowing, the use of bell covers and instrument masks are encouraged. Instrument masks are regular masks with a slit or hole cut for the mouthpiece.
- Spit valves should be emptied onto a disposable, absorbent pad rather than the floor so that contents can be contained.
- Instruction for musical instruments that do not involve air blowing (e.g., strings, percussion, piano) may continue indoors or outdoors as long as health and safety requirements are met. If needed, these instruments can be shared between students in accordance with the guidance on shared equipment. (DESE Document)
- Students should be encouraged to clean their instruments regularly, especially the mouthpiece and high-touch surfaces, such as finger pads.
- For cleaning guidelines specific to each instrument, the National Federation of State High School Associations, the National Association for Music Education, and the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation have published COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines.

DANCE:

General Guidelines:

- If outdoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with at least 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- Note: These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.



Specific Guidance:

- Prioritize forms of dance that allow for adequate distancing; Dances reliant on close-proximity partners must be adapted to maintain physical distancing requirements.
- All sharing of equipment should follow the shared equipment guidance from DESE.
- Keep music at a volume that minimizes the need for the instructor to project their voice.

ORCHESTRA:

General Guidelines:

- If outdoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with at least 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- Note: These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.

Specific Guidance:

- Instruction for musical instruments that do not involve air blowing (e.g., strings, percussion, piano) may continue indoors or outdoors as long as health and safety requirements are met. If needed, these instruments can be shared between students in accordance with the above guidance on shared equipment.
- Students should be encouraged to clean their instruments regularly, especially the mouthpiece and high-touch surfaces, such as finger pads.
- For cleaning guidelines specific to each instrument, the National Federation of State High School Associations, the National Association for Music Education, and the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation have published COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines.



DRAMA-NON-MUSICAL:

General Guidelines:

- If outdoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with at least 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- Note: These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.

Specific Guidance:

- Intentionally select artistic works that may facilitate reduced in-person interaction, such as those that involve smaller casts or that are easily rehearsed outdoors.¹¹ As one example, Concord Theatricals has created a list of such works.
- Avoid sharing equipment as feasible. Any sharing of equipment, including props, set pieces, rails, and voice amplification equipment, should follow the equipment sharing guidelines. Do not share makeup or anything that comes into close contact with mouth or eyes (e.g., microphones). Avoid sharing costumes and wigs.
- Any rental equipment should be thoroughly disinfected upon receipt and before returning and regularly cleaned and disinfected, as with other equipment.

DRAMA-MUSICAL:

General Guidelines:

- If outdoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with at least 10 feet of distance between individuals.
- If indoors, with masks required, these activities can occur with at least 10 feet of distance between individuals if in-person school is occurring
- Note: These activities cannot occur indoors without a mask.

Specific Guidance:

- Intentionally select artistic works that may facilitate reduced in-person interaction, such as those that involve smaller casts or that are easily rehearsed outdoors.



Drama-Musical specific guidelines continued...

- Avoid sharing equipment as feasible. Any sharing of equipment, including props, set pieces, rails, and voice amplification equipment, should follow the equipment sharing guidelines. Do not share makeup or anything that comes into close contact with mouth or eyes (e.g., microphones). Avoid sharing costumes and wigs.
- Any rental equipment should be thoroughly disinfected upon receipt and before returning and regularly cleaned and disinfected, as with other equipment.
- Individuals singing indoors must wear masks. These masks should be tight and well-fitting. Consider what mask types may be most comfortable for singing. Students will provide their own mask. The school system will provide a mask if needed.
- When indoors, singing should be limited to 30 minutes at one time.
- When indoors, schools should prioritize the use of large, well-ventilated spaces for singing, such as auditoriums or gymnasiums.
- When indoors, students should sing at lower volumes. The lower the volume, the less projection required. Consider, also, the volume of any background music. The higher the volume of background music, the more vocalists will need to project to be heard.
- When outdoors, staff should monitor student volume to prevent harm to students' vocal cords.
- All students should face in one direction instead of facing one another. Avoid singing in a circle or semicircular formation.
- Students and teachers should avoid sharing materials (e.g., music stands) when feasible. Any sharing of equipment should follow the equipment sharing guidelines. (see DESE document)
- When it is not possible to continue with singing instruction based on the guidelines, courses can focus on other aspects of music instruction, such as history of music, music theory, or vocal anatomy. These courses could also be conducted virtually.



PERFORMANCES:

- No indoor performances for audiences are permitted due to DESE and local Wellesley safety regulations. This includes school assemblies for students and staff within a school building.
- Outdoor performances are possible but a proposal must be submitted to the building principal and the Director of Performing Arts.
- All DESE, State and Local Board of Health guidelines and regulations will be in effect and followed for any performances held through the Performing Arts Department.

DESE Guidelines

[DESE Guidelines for Courses Requiring Additional Safety Considerations](#)