9/29/2020

Interim COVID-19 Music Guidance

Background

The available evidence for COVID-19 transmission from singing or playing instruments is limited.[1] The extent to which group singing or playing of wind instruments increases the risk for COVID-19 transmission remains unclear. However, measures to reduce the potential risk of transmission include organizing sessions to minimize duration of interactions and contact with contaminated objects and surfaces, maintaining physical distancing of at least 6 feet, utilizing source control measures (e.g., face coverings and masks) and optimizing ventilation. The following recommendations are based on the latest results and science around current aerosol studies and represent best practices for preventing COVID-19 transmission among faculty, students, and staff engaged in music.

Face Coverings

Persons playing instruments in orchestra, band, or general music settings, singing in choir or other lessons, dancing, participating in color guard, or teaching should wear a washable or disposable, multi-layered face covering or mask. Students who play wind instruments can use face coverings with a slit. Face coverings should only be removed while outdoors when social distance is maintained.

Social Distancing

A minimum distance between singers and/or instrumentalists of 6 feet side-to-side should be maintained. For larger instruments that have an increased likelihood to create a higher quantity and size of liquid droplets and aerosols (e.g., trombones and vuvuzelas), a minimum distance of 9 feet front-to-back is recommended.

Hand Hygiene

Alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol should be available. Soap and warm water should also be available for cleaning hands. A strong emphasis should be placed on hygiene and frequent hand washing. At a minimum, hand hygiene should be performed before and after contact with surfaces and equipment.

Shared Instruments or Other Shared Objects

Avoid sharing instruments, sheet music, music stands, and other commonly shared equipment. For example, if music stands are shared, students may inadvertently move closer to each other to see the music. Whenever possible students should have their own set of equipment (e.g., flags, auxiliary equipment, mallets, and drumsticks). If instruments or equipment must be shared (e.g., keyboard instruments and drums), they should be cleaned and disinfected between students. Music reeds and mouthpieces should not be shared. Some instrument surfaces may be damaged by

cleaning and disinfecting products, so contact your instrument dealer for guidance on disinfection, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning. Long-term rentals through a music company or school should be properly cleaned and sanitized between rentals.

Instrument Covers
Instruments should be fitted with bell covers consisting of a minimum of two layers of dense fabric. Bell covers should be made of a non-stretchy material with a MERV-13 rating (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) to protect against bacteria and virus particles.[2]

Cleaning and Disinfection
Instruments and equipment should be cleaned daily following manufacturer's instructions. Empty spit valves away from others to reduce the potential for exposure. Surfaces, especially common areas, should be frequently cleaned with a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved disinfectant with demonstrated effectiveness against the SARS-CoV-2 virus, also known as List N.

Cohorting and Time Recommendations
Practice cohorting (keeping staff and students together in pods over the course of a predetermined period of time). Rehearsals should be conducted in "pods" of students with the same 5-10 students always rehearsing together. An aerosol study recently commissioned indicates limiting rehearsal times to 30 minutes or less significantly reduces the quantity and spread of aerosol among the individuals involved.[2]

Outdoor Rehearsal Recommendations
Outdoor rehearsals, with strict adherence to social distancing, may be conducted in an open uncovered space, in a bandstand or pavilion, or under a canopy tent. If a canopy tent is used, the sides should be fully opened. Rehearsals should be limited to 30 minutes of playing, singing, or dancing with a break of at least five minutes afterwards to allow the droplets and aerosols to disperse.[2] If face coverings are removed, social distancing should be strictly maintained at all times. While outdoors, multiple groups of 50 must be 30 feet apart. Outdoor rehearsal is the preferred option.

Indoor Rehearsal Recommendations
Ensure there is adequate ventilation and air exchange for the space being utilized. For prekindergarten through 12th grade public and nonpublic schools, no more than 50 individuals may gather in one space. Limit the number of students at a time in a room based on the ability to maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing and 9 feet for larger instruments. Rehearsals should be limited to 30 minutes of playing, singing, or dancing. After rehearsal, the room should be vacated for at least one air exchange prior to the next use of the room, but three air exchanges are recommended.[2]

Indoor Airflow and Filtration Recommendations
An air exchange per hour (ACH) is a measure of the air volume added to or removed from a space and divided by the volume of the space.[3] If the air in the space is uniform or perfectly mixed (which rarely occurs), ACH is a measure of how many times the air within a defined space is replaced within an hour. The formula for calculating ACH is:

ACH = 60Q/Vol

ACH = Number of air changes per hour; higher values correspond to better ventilation
Q = Flow rate of air in cubic feet per minute (cfm)
Vol = Space volume (length × width × height) in cubic feet

Schools should consult with their building engineering staff to maximize the amount of fresh, outdoor air introduced into their heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC) and determine the highest MERV-rated filters their HVAC can handle. Portable HEPA filter air cleaners may be used to supplement the HVAC system filters.

Additional guidance and technical resources for ventilation for acceptable indoor air quality is available from the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-conditioning Engineers Inc. (ASHRAE).

References:

[1]Public Health Ontario Synopsis: COVID-19 Transmission Risks from Singing and Playing Wind Instruments – What We Know So Far. 07/09/2020

[2] Second Round of Performing Arts Aerosol Study Produces Encouraging Preliminary Results- By NFHS on August 06, 2020

[3] "ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 62.2-2013: Ventilation and Acceptable Indoor Air Quality in Low-Rise Residential Buildings". Atlanta, GA: American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers. 2013.

Part 3 Joint Transition Guidance: Starting the 2020-21 School Year
CDC Operating schools during COVID-19: CDC's Considerations
CDC Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff from COVID-19

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