

# Instrumental music program guidelines for managing hazards associated with COVID-19

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These guidelines are intended to assist principals and instrumental music teachers/instructors in schools when considering how they implement their Instrumental Music program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This information is based on current government and medical advice, as well as published COVID-19 research, and complies with the current operating guidelines for Queensland state schools.

## Potential risk

The Instrumental Music classroom environment presents a number of factors that schools must consider in addition to the factors associated with a general classroom environment. These factors include:

- stagnant air flow in a space that would have excessive breath and saliva expulsion associated with playing a woodwind/brass instrument or singing (research suggests that the projection of moisture droplets when playing certain instruments is similar to a cough)
- close proximity to breath and saliva expulsion (the 'breath' space)
- excessive moisture/air inhalation associated with playing a woodwind/brass instrument or singing (requirement for continual deep breaths)
- sharing of resources that could hold moisture/saliva droplets
- contact with equipment that has been handled, placed on the face and in the mouth
- contact with equipment and surfaces that could hold moisture/saliva droplets.

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## Considerations for the instrumental music classroom numbers

### Volume, people, time

Within the school environment, members of large bands, choirs or ensembles are able to rehearse in the same location (indoors or outdoors) if they ensure that current hygiene management practices are maintained.

Choirs or bands that usually use a stage may need to relocate to the hall floor to ensure physical distancing. We would advise avoiding the use of podiums/platforms with risers.

Where possible, hold choir practice outdoors. If it is not possible to hold practice outdoors, open windows/doors or ensure air-conditioning is on.

Any gathering outside of the school grounds must be at a location/facility that has implemented an approved industry COVID-safe plan.

### Classroom

#### ***Hand hygiene***

Wash hands with soap and water before and after activity or ensure use of hand sanitiser upon entry and exit to facility, as well as before and after the lesson.

#### ***Air flow***

Open doors and windows if suitable and available and ensure ventilation system is operating.

#### ***Physical distancing***

At all times, all persons within choirs or ensembles should ensure they comply with general physical distancing guidelines (at least 1.5 metres between singers/players in all directions, no more than 1 person per 4 square metres).

Students should be spaced (and not facing each other) to ensure no air is blown directly towards another student or teacher.

Teachers should avoid touching student equipment. If necessary (for fixing or tuning), they could create a barrier using paper towel or gloves, or wash hands afterwards.

Teachers should position themselves alongside the student, not directly in front.

### ***Cleaning and disinfecting***

High-touch areas in teaching spaces and storage areas must be wiped down with approved disinfectant between each activity. The classroom must be cleaned after each teaching day or rehearsal (as part of regular school cleaning).

### ***Outside equipment***

Avoid carrying any unnecessary equipment into the classroom, i.e. no school bags.

## **Resources and equipment**

### ***Cleaning and disinfecting***

Used resources must be wiped down with approved disinfectant after each use — i.e. music stands, chairs, stools, amps, leads, keyboards, piano, desks, folders, percussion instruments.

### ***Limited contact***

Limit any sharing of resources wherever possible, i.e. all students should use their own music stand, pencil, folder, mallets, etc.

## Instruments

### ***Limited contact***

Neither instruments nor mouthpieces should be shared. (This excludes percussion — see particulars on the percussion page).

### ***Water and saliva release***

Absorbent paper towel should be provided to empty water/saliva onto.

Students must use their own towel.

Valves should be emptied gently and away from others.

### ***Cleaning***

Students must swab and wipe down their instruments after use as part of their regular instrument-cleaning practice. Extra paper towels should be provided to assist.

Students should have local access to a sink with running water to wash out brass mouthpieces.

## Accessories

### ***Limited contact***

No sharing of instrument accessories should occur — i.e. reeds, rosin, neck straps, seat straps and hand rests, reed covers/protectors/cases, mouthpiece covers.

All students must have their own instrument-cleaning equipment.

## Instrument cases

### ***Cleaning and disinfecting***

Cases must be wiped with disinfectant upon entry into the classroom.

## Woodwind

[Flute, clarinet, saxophone, oboe, bassoon]

The following section identifies concerns and possible mitigation for playing and cleaning woodwind instruments.

Woodwind instruments, cases and accessories are constructed with a variety of materials. Any cleaning product used should be approved for use by the school and must be suitable for its intended use. Select one of the following cleaning options based on the type of instrument and existing cleaning processes, using bleach, detergent or an alcohol-based product.

***Note: Products containing bleach could damage the instruments.***

### ***Before activity***

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Sanitise hands using an approved product.

### ***During activity***

- Students should play only the instrument allocated to them.
- No sharing of instruments/mouthpieces/reeds should occur.
- Teachers should avoid handling student instruments where possible. If a teacher has to handle a student's instrument, the recommended action is to use a barrier (paper towel or gloves) or sanitise their hands both beforehand and afterwards. The added step of wiping down the instrument with a disinfectant wipe is also an option.

### ***Accessories***

- Students should only use their own accessories, such as neck or seat straps, ligatures and mouthpiece covers, reed containers and protectors, and cork grease.

### ***Water keys and saliva***

- Paper towel must be available to all students for the absorption/cleaning of moisture/saliva. Each individual is responsible for disposing of their own wet towel.
- To avoid spraying droplets around the room, students should empty water/saliva out of their instruments as gently as possible.

### ***Equipment and cleaning***

- Students must use their own cleaning equipment — i.e. pull-throughs, cleaning rods and cloths, as well as music, pencils and any other item they may require to participate in instrumental music. These items should not be shared.
- Individuals must swab and wipe their instrument after each activity, using their own personal cleaning equipment.
- Students with wind instruments should have their own spit rag or cloth, which is placed under the instrument while it is being played. The spit rag should not be handled by anyone else and should be kept by the student in a zip-lock bag or container.
- It is to be assumed that any unallocated instrument from the school music storeroom has not been cleaned and therefore will need to be disinfected before playing.

### ***After activity***

- Used equipment and high-touch surfaces should be wiped down with approved disinfectant after activity.

## How to disinfect woodwind instruments

Note: These procedures are separate from the standard cleaning/maintenance practices used to clean instruments after each use. It is suggested that teachers/instructors consider these disinfectant procedures for when school instruments are returned and cleaned before reallocation.

### ***Flute: head joint***

1. Using a cotton swab saturated with denatured isopropyl alcohol (70% alcohol content is recommended), clean around the embouchure hole.
2. Alcohol wipes (if approved) 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 head joint.
4. Do not run the head joint under water because it may saturate and eventually shrink the head joint cork.

### ***Clarinet and saxophone mouthpieces***

1. Select a small container that will fit the mouthpiece vertically and place the mouthpiece, tip down, into the container.
2. Fill the container just past the window of the mouthpiece with a solution of 50% water and 50% white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide (if approved by school). Ensure water temperature is no hotter than lukewarm. Protect clarinet mouthpiece cork from moisture.
3. After the mouthpiece has soaked for 15 minutes, use mouthpiece brush to remove any calcium deposits/residue from inside and outside surfaces.
4. Rinse the mouthpiece thoroughly and then saturate with approved disinfectant solution. Place on paper towel and wait one minute.
5. Wipe dry with paper towel.

Note: Metal saxophone mouthpieces clean well with hot water, mild dish soap (not dishwasher detergent), and a mouthpiece brush. Disinfectant solution is also safe for metal mouthpieces (no bleach).

### ***Saxophone***

#### **Neck**

Swabs are available to clean the inside of the saxophone neck; however, a flexible bottle brush can also be used.

1. Use the bottle brush with mild, soapy water to clean the inside of the neck.
2. Rinse under running water.
3. Approved disinfectant solution may be used on the inside of the neck if desired.
4. Place on paper towel for one minute.
5. Rinse again under running water, dry, and place in the case

#### **Materials and products**

- Plastic, metal and synthetic materials may be cleaned with liquid (not gel) hand sanitiser. (Liquid hand sanitiser in a spray bottle would be an easy option wiped with some disposable paper towel.) Hand sanitiser and disinfectant products must be approved for use in schools. Disinfectant wipes might also be suitable; however, consider the product ingredients carefully.



## Brass

[Trumpet, French horn, tenor horn, baritone, euphonium, tuba]

The following section identifies concerns and possible mitigation for playing and cleaning brass instruments.

- Brass instruments, mutes, cases, etc. can be wiped over with alcohol wipes or disinfectant spray and paper towel. Any cleaning product used should be approved for use by the school and must be suitable for its intended use. Consider the product ingredients and the surface being disinfected before use.
- Products containing bleach will damage the instruments — e.g. bleach makes silver plating turn black.
- Brass instruments may be flushed with water or detergent if required.

### ***Before activity***

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Sanitise hands using an approved product.

### ***During activity***

- Students should play only the instrument allocated to them.
- No sharing of instruments should occur.
- Teachers should avoid handling student instruments where possible. If a teacher has to handle a student's instrument, a solution could be to use a barrier (paper towel or gloves) or to sanitise their hands both beforehand and afterwards. The instrument could also be wiped down with disinfectant spray and paper towel or a disinfectant wipe.

### ***Mouthpieces***

- Students should play only on their own mouthpiece.
- Brass mouthpieces should be cleaned regularly with a mouthpiece brush and warm, soapy water. Cleaning brass mouthpieces has always been recommended by the department and should be done at least every month. In the current environment, however, it is more important than ever.

### ***Water keys and saliva***

- Paper towel must be available to all students for the absorption/cleaning of excess moisture/saliva. Each individual is responsible for disposing of their own wet towel.
- To avoid spraying droplets around the room, students should empty water/saliva out of their instruments as gently as possible.

### ***Equipment and cleaning***

- Students should use their own cleaning equipment — i.e. valve oil, slide spray bottles, pencils and any other item they may require to participate in Instrumental Music. These items should not be shared.
- Individuals must clean their instrument after each activity, using their own personal cleaning equipment.

It could be assumed that any unallocated instrument from the school music storeroom has not been cleaned and therefore will need to be disinfected before playing

### ***After activity***

Used equipment and high-touch surfaces must be wiped down with approved disinfectant after activity.

## Percussion

[Tuned and un-tuned percussion as taught in the Instrumental Music curriculum, including snare drum, bass drum, timpani, xylophone, glockenspiel, marimba and auxiliary percussion]

The following section identifies concerns with the spread of germs and provides possible mitigation within the percussion section.

- Plastic, metal and synthetic materials may be cleaned with liquid (notgel) hand sanitiser in a spray bottle and residue wiped with some disposable paper towel. Hand sanitiser must be approved for use in schools. Please ensure you have received approval from your school and that its use within the classroom is managed effectively. Disinfectant wipes might also be suitable; however, consider the product ingredients carefully. Products with too many moisturising properties might damage the surface of the instrument, or build up residue over time.
- Wood and natural skin materials are difficult to clean. Using mallets or sticks to hit the instrument or substituting with another instrument are options. Alternatives to specific instruments are listed below.
- Recommended products for cleaning include bleach, detergent or a product containing 70% alcohol — whichever is best for the instrument.

### ***Before activity***

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Sanitise hands using an approved product.

### ***During activity***

#### **Mallets and sticks**

As students move around the percussion section, it is usual practice for them to share mallets and sticks. To mitigate the spread of germs within this practice, the following could be considered:

- Use your own sticks and mallets — do not share personally owned equipment.
- Sanitise school mallets (e.g. bass drum mallet) after each use, between different students.

#### **Instruments that are dampened with hands**

Percussionists are often required to use their hands to dampen instruments as they play. To mitigate the spread of germs from one player to the next, schools could consider cleaning the instrument/instrument head after each player.

Instruments to consider include:

- timpani (synthetic/plastic heads only)
- bass drum (synthetic/plastic heads only)
- suspended cymbal
- glockenspiel

#### **Instruments that are held in the hand to play**

Various percussion instruments are required to be held while played. Schools could consider limiting use of these instruments by substituting with a different instrument or cleaning between each player. The following require direct contact with hands:

- snare drum mechanism
- tambourine (synthetic/plastic heads only)
- other auxiliary instruments such as cabasa, cowbell, triangle, claves, etc.

### **After activity**

Wipe down used mallets, instruments and high-touch surfaces with approved disinfectant after each activity.

### **Suggested percussion instrument substitutes**

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Suggested substitutes</b>
Crash cymbals	Difficulty in cleaning leather straps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Substitute with suspended cymbal.</li></ul>
Xylophone and marimba	Cleaning products might damage lacquer or be absorbed into wood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Substitute with glockenspiel/vibraphone.</li><li>• Wear single-use gloves while playing wooden mallet instruments.</li></ul>
Aux instruments	Difficulty in cleaning intricacies of some auxiliary instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Substitute with another instrument, or play part on drum pad.</li></ul>
Bongos/congas	Difficulty in cleaning with non-plastic/synthetic head	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Substitute with another instrument/drum pad.</li><li>• Use round-ended mallets to hit the instrument</li></ul>

## Strings

[Violin, viola, cello, double bass, bass guitar/electric bass]

The following section identifies concerns and possible mitigation for playing and cleaning string instruments.

- Instruments, cases and accessories are constructed with a variety of materials. Any cleaning product used should be approved for use by the school and must be suitable for its intended use. Consider the product ingredients carefully because they could damage the instruments or finish.

***Products containing bleach will damage string instruments.***

### ***Before activity***

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Sanitise hands using an approved product.

### ***During activity***

- Students should play only the instrument allocated to them.
- No sharing of instruments should occur. If students need to share larger instruments, i.e. double bass, then a solution could be to wipe down the instrument and its case with approved disinfectant between each use.
- Teachers should avoid handling student instruments where possible. If a teacher has to handle a student's instrument, e.g. for tuning or repair, a solution could be to use a barrier (paper towel or gloves) and sanitise their hands both beforehand and afterwards. The instrument could also be wiped down with approved disinfectant.
- Students should be encouraged to tune their own instruments where possible.

### ***Accessories***

- Students should use only their own accessories, such as bows, rosin and stops.

### ***Equipment and cleaning***

- Students must provide their own equipment — i.e. music, pencils and any other item they may require to participate in instrumental music. These items should not be shared.
- Individuals must wipe clean their instrument after each activity, using their own personal cleaning equipment.
- It could be assumed that any unallocated instrument from the school music storeroom has not been cleaned and therefore will need to be cleaned thorough before playing or assigning to a student.

### ***After activity***

Wipe down high-touch surfaces with approved disinfectant after each activity.

## Poster/communication

This poster, downloadable from [OnePortal](#) may assist in managing COVID-19 hazards within the Instrumental Music field.

Department of Education

# Instrumental Music

## COVID-19 considerations



### Wash hands

Wash your hands with soap and water before and after entering teaching and rehearsal spaces.



### Percussion

- Clean and sanitise shared sticks and mallets after each player
- Use your own sticks and mallets if possible
- Clean and sanitise instruments held and dampened by hands after each player

### Strings

- Clean your instrument after use
- Use your own instrument accessories



### Woodwind and Brass

- Clean your instrument after use
- Empty water keys onto disposable paper
- Use your own instrument accessories



### Ensembles

- One stand per player
- Clean chairs and stands after use
- Empty water keys onto disposable paper
- Use your own resources (pencils, music, etc.)
- Ensure physical distancing of 1.5m between each ensemble member

