

Learning and teaching in Dance

Key Messages from the Covid-19 sub-group advice

Version

10.0

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Version	Date	Summary of changes
V 1.0	21/09/20	First version of the document.
V 2.0	30/10/20	The revised text is highlighted in yellow.
V 3.0	02/11/20	Various updates in line with Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools document (30 October 2020).
V 4.0	22/02/21	Various updates in line with ‘Prioritising the return of senior phase learners - Education Scotland Technical Guidance’ and Coronavirus (COVID19): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues – advice on mitigations to minimise transmission during phased return to in-person learning - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) documents.
V 5.0	03/03/21	Update in line with Coronavirus (Covid-19): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children’s Issues minutes
V 6.0	08/03/21	Update in line with Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on schools reopening - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) and Guidance-for-in-school-and-remote-learning-03-03-2021.pdf
V 7.0	22/03/21	Coronavirus (COVID-19): timetable for easing restrictions 16 March 2021
V 8.0	07/04/21	Update in line with Updated Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools 24 March 2021 The revised text is highlighted in yellow.

V 9.0	17/05/2021	Update in line with Updated Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools 17 May 2021. The revised text is highlighted in yellow.
V10	22/11/2021	Update in line with Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) 22 nd November 2021

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1. Overview and purpose

These guidelines must be used alongside the recently published documents.([Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-guidance-reducing-risks-schools/pages/1-introduction.aspx))

Schools should ensure that arrangements for individual subjects stay within the existing schools guidance and accompanying mitigations.

2. How to use these guidelines

This document reflects the latest scientific evidence and advice. A risk-benefit approach to decision making can be helpful while understanding that no risk can be reduced to zero.

The guidelines are designed to promote a consistent and equitable approach against the context of the current pandemic. Local authorities and schools will understand best how they can be applied in their settings. They should do so in a way that prioritises the health, safety and wellbeing of all children, young people and staff, and ensure that the risk mitigation measures set out in this document are implemented effectively. It has been written to stimulate conversations on how dance can be safely and effectively delivered.

3. Key Messages from the COVID-19 Sub-advisory Group¹

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-guidance-reducing-risks-schools/pages/1-introduction.aspx) provides guidance to ensure a safe and supportive environment for learning and teaching during the coronavirus pandemic.

¹ This advice is current on this date. The advice is reviewed periodically and may change as evidence is published and more about the virus is understood.

There is an increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 during activities such as physical education, dance, music (particularly singing, and playing wind and brass instruments) and drama (including school debating type activities) because of the respiratory aerosols which are exhaled during these activities and the close proximity of participants.

There is a hierarchy of risk in these activities: outdoors being safer than indoors; activities undertaken at low volume or that have lower respiratory exertion being safer than aerosol-generating activities; individual or small numbers involved being safer than large groups; activities involving no sharing of equipment being safer than those that do (or where equipment cannot be cleaned thoroughly between uses); and activities which can be done at a distance (or virtually) being safer than those in close proximity. Shorter duration carries lower risk than longer duration.

The sub-group has provided advice previously on safe ways of undertaking some form of these activities wherever possible, until they could be recommenced safely in full. The sub-group has now reconsidered its advice in the light of the ongoing success of the vaccination programme, the continued suppression of the virus, and the consequent easing of some of the wider restrictions across society in order to restore more normality to everyday lives. The sub-group has also taken into consideration the importance of physical education, dance, music, and drama for the health and wellbeing of children and young people, as well as their social, physical and cognitive development; creativity, communication, team working, and discipline. These activities are also important routes to equity and inclusion, and are the basis of further education and employment for many. Ongoing vigilance is required to minimise opportunities for spread, including continued commitment to reducing activities at the higher risk ends of the scales outlined above.

In preventing aerosol transmission, physical distancing and ventilation remain important mitigation measures, particularly in secondary schools. A precautionary approach to physical distancing should be maintained where possible.

For dance, activities which involve contact with shared equipment should be kept to a minimum. For all indoor dance, particular attention should be paid to ensuring effective ventilation, good hygiene and sanitising of shared equipment.

When appropriate risk assessments and mitigations are in place (including ventilation when indoors, good hygiene and sanitising of shared equipment) dance can take place both indoors and outdoors.

4. Practical Considerations

1	<p>Minimising contact between individuals and groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wherever possible, efforts should be made to keep children and young people within the same groups.• School staff and other adults in the school should take a precautionary approach to physical distancing when with other adults and with pupils.• Face coverings should continue to be worn at all times by staff and young people in secondary schools including in classrooms, in communal areas, changing rooms and when moving about the school.• There is a legislative exemption for exercise in respect of wearing a face covering. This is consistent with the advice from WHO.
2	<p>Ventilation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consideration should be given to ventilation in all indoor spaces. Staff should liaise with senior leaders and follow local/school guidelines.
3	<p>Changing Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing rooms are an area of increased risk of transmission. When considering their use schools should ensure that they implement pragmatic and proportionate control measures which reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practical level, for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ changing rooms are as well ventilated as possible○ close attention to cleaning surfaces after use.• If changing rooms are not used:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ consideration should be given to alternative places for storing learners' belongings, for example, assigning each learner their own space;○ young people should be encouraged to arrive at school in their dance attire on days when dance lessons will take place and, where possible, wait until they get home to change.

<p>4</p>	<p>Equipment & the Theatre Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities where there is no sharing of equipment are safer than those that do, therefore activities that minimise the use of equipment should be delivered. • There should be no sharing of costume, or hair & make-up products. • If any equipment has been shared as part of the activity, this should be carefully sanitised before next use/between each lesson. • Learners should wash their hands before and after touching shared equipment, for example, mats, props, set, and other music equipment. (see Hygiene Measures section below) • Consider keeping extra equipment on hand so that teaching time is not lost to re-clean equipment. • One person should take responsibility for controlling the music during the lesson, rather than multiple people.
<p>5</p>	<p>Hygiene measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders should ensure that spaces being used for dance activity are linked to the enhanced cleaning programme across the school. <p>Personal Hygiene:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-washing facilities or hand sanitiser stations should be available and easily accessible at entry/exit points, when children and young people move between groups and when entering or leaving a facility. • Hands should be washed and dried thoroughly or sanitised before and after the activity. • There should be no handshakes at the beginning or end of any activity. • There should be no sharing of water bottles.

6	<p>Other considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis should be placed on ventilation, by keeping windows open as much as possible, and doors open when feasible and safe to do so. • Scientific advice and research also indicates that indoor spaces where there is likely to be an enhanced aerosol generation rate (for example, indoor dance when permitted) should aim to ensure ventilation is sufficient to maintain CO2 concentrations at lower levels), and should also include additional mitigations such as face coverings for audiences and restricting the size of groups and duration of activities. This advice will be factored into consideration of any wider advice on restart of these activities. • There are clear guidelines relating to school visitors Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot (www.gov.scot). An alternative to large groups who may normally come into school to watch a performance or presentation of pupil's dance may be to host an online performance for the purposes of evaluation or to enable parents/carers and communities to observe pupil progress and achievements in dance activities. • School operators (e.g. local authorities, leisure trusts, third parties, etc.) should also be aware of additional with Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) which may be applicable within school buildings, for example, community use of gyms, fitness rooms, sports halls etc. • Clearly communicate the route and rules with learners ahead of every location, movement and transition. • Use learner voice to reflect on how well protocols are being followed and how practice can be improved. • If possible, create a virtual/visual tour of structures and routines and share with learners, staff, parents/carers. • Consider using physical and visual aids to define space and modify layouts, for example, tape, rope or chalk on required surfaces/walls.

5. Risk assessment

It is a legal requirement that local authorities and head teachers ensure that risk assessments are conducted or updated to reflect the revised planning assumption of a phased return to in-school learning. All risk assessments should be reviewed regularly as circumstances change to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults is not compromised.

6. Physical Activity and Expressive Arts

Physical activity and expressive arts bring many benefits to children and young people – including for health and wellbeing; social, physical and cognitive development; creativity, communication, team working, and discipline. These activities are also important routes to equity and inclusion, and are the basis of further education and employment for many. For all these reasons, it is important to find safe ways of undertaking some form of these activities within dance wherever possible, until they can be recommenced safely in full.

7. Conclusion

Changes in incidence of COVID-19, and the potential impact on the practical, experiential learning in dance will be kept under review and updated when necessary. Local authorities and schools will also need to be able to adapt to local issues, for example, outbreaks or local increases in cases of COVID-19, and follow any locally-determined advice and guidance.

External and private providers working within schools should follow these guidelines.

Safer workplaces guidance can be found on our returning to work safely webpage:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safer businesses and workplaces - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/healthandcare/coronavirus/covid-19/safer-businesses-and-workplaces)