

COVID-19: Return to educational establishments

Dance Guidelines

Version 4.0

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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). The revised text is highlighted in yellow
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.

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1. Overview and purpose

These guidelines must be used alongside the recently published [‘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.

Senior phase learners timetabled in school to undertake practical work at any one time should be no more than 5-8% of the secondary school roll. That figure is additional to those children and young people already in attendance as a result of being classified as vulnerable or through key worker status. 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

Given the new variant, high current prevalence of COVID-19, and the advice from senior clinicians (as set out in the sub-group advice published on 3 February) the sub-group has concluded that its advice on physical distancing for secondary schools should be strengthened. At the current time, and during the phased return to in-person learning, 2 metre distancing should be in place for secondary aged pupils, in addition to continuing to be in place for staff.

Physical distancing requirements in primary schools should remain unchanged: 2 metre distancing between adults not from the same household, and 2 metre distancing between adults and children whenever possible.

Within early learning and childcare establishments (ELC), 2 metre distancing should be in place between staff, but no distancing should be required between young children, or between young children and staff.

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.

The sub-group has concluded that its previous advice on face coverings in schools and ELC settings should be maintained, with the additional requirement that senior phase pupils should wear face coverings in classrooms.

The sub-group is aware that this is more cautious than other guidance, and this is to support a limited return to school. This will be kept under review as we continue to suppress the virus and more children and young people return to school.

Considering the recent scientific evidence, the sub-group has concluded that practical elements of Dance can only take place as follows:

	Indoors	Outdoors
ELC Primary 1 - 3	Not permitted	Children can participate in dance

	Indoors	Outdoors
Secondary	Not permitted	Young people can participate in dance and 2 metre physical distancing must be maintained

All dance practitioners, including external and private providers working within schools, should follow these guidelines.

4. Practical Considerations

1	<p>Minimising contact between individuals and groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 metre physical distancing must be maintained for young people in secondary schools. • Secondary schools should ensure young people wear face coverings, when in non-participating areas, for example, changing-rooms. • There is a legislative exemption for exercise in respect of wearing a face covering. This is consistent with the advice from WHO.²
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² <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters#exercising>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, efforts should be made to keep children and young people within the same groups.
2	<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 ○ 2 metre physical distancing maintained ○ 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.
3	<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.
4	<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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonly touched objects: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools Para 33 states: ‘Local authorities and schools should ensure that an enhanced environmental cleaning regime is in place. The regime put in place should be in line with Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings’. This specifies in particular: • Equipment: Para 36 states: ‘Careful consideration should be given to the cleaning regime for specialist equipment (for example, in practical subjects or for children with additional support needs), sensory rooms, practical subjects with specialist equipment... etc. to ensure safe use’. Personal Hygiene: • 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.
5	<p>The Dance Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor areas where physical distancing is possible should be used for all practical dance. <p>For secondary schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher should have an assigned area for teaching, to ensure they are able to maintain a 2 metre distance from learners. • Consider ‘home spaces’: a space allocated to each learner, with a 2 metre physical distance from others, while also having enough room to move around. • Consider using physical and visual aids to define space and modify layouts, for example, tape or chalk on required surfaces/walls. <p>Physical distancing requirements in primary schools should remain unchanged: 2 metre distancing between adults not from the same household, and 2 metre distancing between adults and children whenever possible.</p>

6	<p>Learning, Teaching & Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For choreography, learners should stay within the area they have been allocated. • Where possible, learners should face either the same direction or away from each other, to mitigate the risk of breathing on each other. • When creating choreography, choreographers should utilise choreographic devices which do not require contact between dancers. They should also consider their spatial elements, mainly proxemics and formations, when creating choreography to ensure that their dancers are able to physically distance from each other. • Instructions should be given to choreographers that remind them to avoid shouting or speaking to their dancers with a loud volume over music, as shouting or speaking loudly is a higher risk activity. • All learners should be encouraged to use a quiet volume or normal voice. As a result, music might need to be adjusted to play at a quieter volume. • In secondary, where the remainder of a class form an audience to watch a performance, 2 metre physical distancing must be maintained
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5. Risk assessment

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools includes information on 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.

In ELC and primary, dance can only take place outdoors with appropriate mitigating actions outlined in this document to ensure the safety of all children, young people and staff.

In secondary, dance can only take place outdoors and 2 metre physical distancing must be maintained with appropriate mitigating actions outlined in this document to ensure the safety of all children, young people and staff.

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

Safer workplaces guidance can be found on our returning to work safely webpage: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-returning-to-work/pages/employers/>

In particular, providers are encouraged to follow the relevant links below:

- [‘Prioritising the return of senior phase learners - Education Scotland Technical Guidance’ 15 February 2021](#)
- [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 \(www.gov.scot\) 15 February 2021](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools](#)
- The Coronavirus (COVID -19) guidance for sport and leisure: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-sport-and-leisure-facilities/>
- The Coronavirus (COVID-19): general guidance for safer workplaces: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/>;

- The Coronavirus (COVID-19): small and micro businesses guidance: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-small-and-micro-businesses-guidance/>;
- The Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for the performing arts and venues sector: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-performing-arts-and-venues-sector/>;
- Where children are being taught, the Coronavirus (COVID-19): organised activities for children provisional guidance: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-organised-activities-for-children/>

These sets of guidance will be updated in response to changing circumstances and scientific advice, and providers are advised to check the guidance regularly.