

Covid-19: Return to educational establishments Dance Guidelines

Version 1.0

Published 21 September 2020

Version	Date	Summary of changes
V 1.0	21/09/20	First version of the document

Content

1. Overview and purpose	1
2. How to use these guidelines	1
3. Key Messages from the Covid-19 Sub-advisory Group	2
4. Practical Considerations	2
5. Risk assessments	6
6. Physical Activity and Expressive Arts	6
7. Conclusion	6

1. Overview and purpose

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020](#), Para 136 states: 'Practical, "hands-on" learning and activities, experiments and investigations are an important part of the curriculum across all subject areas'. This document focusses on the practical, experiential nature of learning in, through and about dance. Dance provides a critical learning opportunity for children and young people as they re-connect and adapt to the new learning environments in schools. The practical and interactive nature of the subject will lend itself well to supporting nurturing conversations with learners following the period of school closure. This document will assist teachers and school leaders with risk assessment and decision making, leading to the provision of learning through dance in a safe and carefully considered way.

2. How to use these guidelines

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

This document is designed to promote a consistent and equitable approach against the context of the current pandemic. Local authorities and schools will understand best how these guidelines 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 Group ¹

There is an increased risk of transmission of Covid-19 during activities within physical education, dance, music and drama because of the respiratory aerosols which are exhaled and the close proximity of participants. The wearing of face coverings is usually not possible for activities in these areas. There is a hierarchy of risk:

- outdoors being safer than indoors;
- activities undertaken at a quiet 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 thoroughly cleaned between uses);
- 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.

It takes 2-3 weeks to understand the effects on coronavirus incidence and prevalence of major changes as Scotland progresses through its route map. It is important to enable the actions required to prevent transmission of the virus to become established, and monitoring to be undertaken for a further period before resuming activities which carry such an increased risk (refer to the above hierarchy).

4. Practical Considerations

1	<p>Minimising contact between individuals and groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a precautionary approach schools should encourage physical distancing where possible between adults, and between children and young people, particularly in the senior phase. Delivery of activities that do not involve close physical contact, will contribute to further lowering of any risk involved. • Learners should maintain physical distancing between each other while participating in dance activity. Dance should be conducted with zero contact between learners.
----------	---

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.

<p>2</p>	<p>Changing Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing rooms are an area of increased risk of transmission and should be avoided where possible. • Consideration should be given to the needs of children and young people who require additional support. • When considering the use of changing rooms, schools should ensure that they implement pragmatic and proportionate control measures which reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practical level. They should have active arrangements in place to monitor that the controls are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ effective; ○ working as planned; ○ updated appropriately considering any issues identified and changes in public health advice. • Following a risk assessment, if the use of changing rooms is considered necessary, schools should ensure mitigating actions are in place. This includes ensuring that changing rooms are as well ventilated as possible, used only by small numbers at any point in time to maximise physical distancing, and that close attention is paid 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>3</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. • People should wash their hands before and after touching shared equipment such as, mats, props, set, lighting desk, sound desk and other music equipment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> • Hand-washing facilities or hand sanitiser stations should be available and easily accessible at entry/exit points, when young people move between groups and when entering or leaving an outdoor facility. • Hands should be thoroughly washed and dried or sanitised before and after the activity. • There should be no sharing of water bottles. • Trainers or dance shoes should be worn at all times. In situations where dancers may be asked to rehearse or perform in bare feet or foot thongs for a specific dance style, like contemporary, it is advised that dancers wear dance shoes for the majority of rehearsals and only switch to bare feet or foot thongs closer to practical assessments.
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 activity. • Introduce 'home spaces': a space allocated to each learner, physically distanced from others, while also having enough room to move around, where they go to at the beginning of every lesson and where they will do their warm-up. • As there should be physical distancing between adults and between adults and pupils, this means ensuring that there is enough space between 'home spaces' for an adult to walk between two learners and still be able to be physically distancing from both. • Areas should be marked out within the dance space for group work. Each area should be big enough so that each group is able to move within their area easily while still managing to physically distance from each other. Groups should be limited to a maximum of four dancers plus one choreographer. • Creating a group work area might mean splitting the space into sections and having multiple dance areas in which groups are able to rehearse the routine at the same time safely. In some spaces, it might mean recognising that only one group can safely work within that space.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using physical and visual aids to define space and modify layouts, for example, tape or chalk on required surfaces/walls.
6	<p>Learning, Teaching & Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During dance activity, solo dancing should be conducted within 'home spaces'. If there are more individuals than there are adequate 'home spaces' this might mean that individuals have to rotate between doing theory-based tasks, and utilising the dance space for practical work. • Group choreography, or working in teams, should be limited to a maximum of four dancers plus one choreographer. • For group choreography, learners should stay within the area they have been allocated and should not cross into another group's area. If there are more groups than there are adequate group work areas, this might mean that groups will have to rotate between doing theory-based tasks, and utilising the dance space for practical work. • 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 physically distance from their dancers and to avoid shouting or speaking to them 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. • Where the remainder of a class form an audience to watch a group perform, they should also physically distance from each other. • In-class performances, including solo dance technique rehearsals, duet or group choreography rehearsals, and rehearsals utilising theatre arts at Higher, should continue to be recorded as part of normal learning and as part of a virtual portfolio. This can provide support for the development of dance skills and provide latest and best evidence of the level achieved by a learner. • Establish and clearly communicate the rules involving the dance space and designated areas within it.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
--	---

5. Risk assessment

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020](#), 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 full return to school. 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.

While intended for wider use, the Health and Safety Executive has produced helpful guidance on [COVID-19 risk assessments](#).

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.

We encourage all private dance teachers and all other dance partners who work with young people to read and follow this guidance.

