

## Music Education P–12

Updated December 2020



The information below was developed with input from music educators, reviewed by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and informed by research and practice. The following recommendations for Music P–12 are based on research and practice in music education and are informed by the [Nova Scotia Guidance for Vocalists and Instrumentalists](#) and guidance on music in schools from the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#). Schools should also consider broader public health guidance from the [Back to School Plan Appendix](#), including considerations for careful frequent hand hygiene and cough and sneeze etiquette.

### *Background*

Evidence on the playing of instruments and singing is inconclusive regarding the possibility of increasing the transmission of COVID-19 and the risk is not yet fully understood at this time. Playing instruments and singing have a theoretical possibility of increasing the transmission of COVID-19. The evidence is evolving and will continue to be monitored and updated as more is known. The current research does not suggest the need for a total ban on playing instruments or singing. The better approach is to control the environment, understand the risks, and design singing and playing activities to be accomplished safely. A decision to resume playing instruments and singing should incorporate additional risk mitigation measures as outlined below based on [Federal](#) and [Provincial](#) guidance.

It is suggested that every music teacher (P–12) begin classes in September/February with learning opportunities that do not require singing, excessive movement, or the initial playing of instruments. Teachers would create engaging musical experiences that meet curricular outcomes while allowing students to settle into their new learning environment and learning about new routines. For example, through musical practices such as listening to music, doing rhythmic activities, reviewing music fundamentals, shadow playing, and/or creating music using found sounds, students can express their thoughts, feelings, and understandings of their world. This will allow students to engage in meaningful music making, develop their social-emotional needs, get to know each other, and build a safe and trusting environment within the classroom community. These activities should be monitored—compiling evidence and building on successes.

In elementary music, junior high Explore Music, and high school non-band programs, there is no fixed timeline for moving beyond these initial, low-risk learning experiences. It will be different in every school. Over the weeks, if the epidemiology remains constant, as new evidence emerges, and/or as students and teachers become more comfortable and familiar with their new learning environment and routines (disinfecting procedures, public health guidance, etc.), they could safely move to expanding the musical experiences. This would include playing instruments, increased movement activities, small group activities (ensembles), etc., adhering strictly to public health guidance as outlined in the tables below. Once again, careful monitoring is important, and music teachers are encouraged to document the success of these activities, gradually expanding the breadth and depth of musical experiences while adhering to evolving public health guidance. Band programs and singing can safely begin as soon as recommended mitigation measures are in place. Details can be found in the tables below.

The key to success will be a gradual return to full music education as public health guidance permits. However, if the need arises, teachers should be prepared to return to lower-risk activities. Above all, public health guidance must be followed carefully. Updates will be published on the provincial [e-learning site](#).

To assist music teachers throughout the province an online network has been established within a Google Classroom to share lesson ideas and to provide updates as new evidence is reviewed and deemed feasible for Nova Scotian teachers and students. Music teachers can [click here to access this Google Classroom](#)

## Music in Grades P–12

The elementary music program comprises a developmentally sequenced and integrated spiral curricula encompassing five learning outcomes. This addresses the scenarios of learning environments that may be utilized during the 2020–2021 school year, moving between in-person and online delivery. In all scenarios, students will engage in curricular-based learning opportunities as music educators consider what media is appropriate and approved in the scenario(s) they are presented with.

The renewed junior high music program comprises a developmentally sequenced and integrated spiral curricula encompassing seven learning outcomes in Explore Music, and eight in Band Instruments. The collaborative, learner-centred approaches of the revised curricula and the integrated, reduced learning outcomes are well-suited for student learning success in any of the three learning scenarios. Those schools who are not yet offering the revised music curricula should feel free to refer to the renewed curriculum to identify foundational outcomes when offering these two courses.

The music program in grades 9–12 comprises several courses with curricula rooted in three strands: Creating, Making, and Presenting; Understanding and Connecting Time, Place, and Community; and Perceiving and Responding. Specific curriculum outcomes number in the range of 34 to 37, depending on the course. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has made suggestions for prioritizing foundational outcomes to assist teachers as they continue to support student learning. This will assist on where to focus instruction as many students did not complete the full music program in the 2019–2020 school year and students will need to be met where they are at in their learning. The suggested foundational outcomes are not new but are a prioritization of current outcomes and are connected to the provincial curriculum site for ease of access by teachers. <https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/>

The tables below address the scenarios of learning environments that may be utilized during the 2020–2021 school year, moving between in-person and online delivery. In all scenarios, students will engage in curricular-based learning opportunities as music educators consider what media is appropriate and approved in the scenario(s) they are presented with.

### Full In-School Learning

What considerations need to be made in Music to address public health measures outlined in [Nova Scotia's Back To School Plan?](#)

- Current evidence suggests there is significantly less risk outside
  - Teachers of all subject areas will look for meaningful opportunities to take learning outside
    - Masks do not need to be worn outside - students and teachers can benefit from having a mask break
- Utilize larger spaces wherever possible – use the music room as a primary teaching space if feasible in your school setting, keeping in mind the importance of minimizing congestion in hallway spaces and movement throughout the school.
- Minimize mixing of students
  - When teaching and learning practices require mixing of students within a cohort, keep the same students together
    - For example: same partner for a week; keeping groups as small as they can be; keeping the same combined groups together; etc.
    - Keep time in combined groups in closer contact to 15 minutes or less
  - Ensure hand sanitizing protocols occur before and after learning experiences that involve students in close contact
- Minimize high touch surfaces
  - Minimize the use of equipment
  - When teaching and learning practices require the use of equipment, use equipment that can be easily disinfected between cohorts
  - Ensure hand sanitizing protocols occur before and after learning experiences that involve use of high touch surfaces or equipment
- Establish exit/entrance traffic patterns (one-way) for classroom and storage areas
  - Place floor markings to indicate physical distancing and to show spots for students to sit
- Playing recorder, brass, and wind instruments
  - Use a layered approach with multiple measures including environmental cleaning and conducting frequent hand hygiene
  - No sharing of instruments, mouthpieces, personal items
  - Bell covers made of a double layer of nylon material (such as pantyhose) are optional
  - Encourage fixed seating arrangements where relevant
    - Players will face the same direction, in staggered rows
    - Place floor markings to indicate physical distancing and to show spots for appropriate seating
  - Separate players by maintaining physical distance of a minimum of 2 meters
    - The length of the instrument should be considered as an extension of the individual and included when determining spacing (e.g., allow 3 meters for trombonists)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o A playing cycle of 30 minutes total playing time is recommended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Non-playing learning experiences will take place for 30 minutes while the air exchanges (in another space, if possible), after which time playing may resume for the next playing cycle, if class time remains</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Cleaning and disinfecting of instruments should be part of the daily routine and students should be guided in following manufacturers suggested procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When cleaning individual instruments with saliva build-up (for example, spit valves), do so physically (more than 2 meters) away from others and by blowing into a disposable cloth or container that will collect the saliva, to reduce the risk of exposure of others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do not blow the spit on to the floor</li> <li>✓ The cloth or container should be placed in a waste receptacle of cleaned immediately. Wash hands immediately afterwards.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Singing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 2 meters is a minimum recommended distance between singers. More distance may provide a greater benefit.</li> <li>o Outside, singing may take place when students are physically distancing a minimum of 2 meters.</li> <li>o Indoor singing is allowed for music classes or as a teaching strategy in any class and should occur with the employment of the following guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain class cohorts whenever possible</li> <li>▪ Singing softly is expected to pose less risk than louder, more vigorous vocalizations</li> <li>▪ Use of physical distancing (minimum of 2 meters) for the teacher and all singers P–12</li> <li>▪ Use of a well fitted mask for teachers and all students in grades 4–12</li> <li>▪ Singers facing one direction, in straight lines with singers staggered between lines, for all singers P–12</li> <li>▪ In group settings where physical distancing is not possible for all students, small groups of students (e.g. a trio or quartet, masked and physically distanced) may sing while others accompany or listen.</li> <li>▪ Singing should not take place for more than 30 minutes in one session.</li> <li>▪ If the above guidelines cannot be met in an indoor learning space, teachers may consider singing outdoors, or humming (as an alternative to singing)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>What Are Other Considerations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live formal performances and concerts are not recommended until physical distancing and gathering limit restrictions are lifted for schools.</li> <li>• Please note that school guidance is particular to the education sector. <a href="#">The Back to School Plan</a> is updated to reflect current guidance and the <a href="#">Q &amp; A's on the EECD website</a> reflect the up to date responses for our sector.</li> <li>• Creative, informal class performances within cohorts could take place outside (or in alternate locations where physical distancing guidelines can be followed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Alternatives to live performances that meet curriculum outcomes may be explored <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Virtual demonstrations; Informances; Recorded solos; Chamber music events; Digital collaborations; Online coffee houses; Improv sessions; etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Familiarize students with the approved technology that they will be using should it be necessary to move to Blended or Learning from Home scenarios</li> <li>• Consider virtual guest artist/clinician visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o For example, the <a href="#">Artists in Schools</a> program will be virtual in 2020–2021 and there will be no cost share fee</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Blended/Partial In-School</b>	
<p>What considerations need to be made in Music to address public health measures outlined in <a href="#">Nova Scotia's Back To School Plan</a></p>	<p>Grades P-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-school settings with increased public health measures</li> <li>• Consult <a href="#">the Back to School Plan</a></li> </ul> <p>Grades 9-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily working from home</li> <li>• Consult <a href="#">the Back to School Plan</a> and the <a href="#">Learning from Home</a> Scenario 3 documents</li> </ul>
<p>What Are Other Considerations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtual choir and band performances produced through combining and editing individual recordings to create an ensemble performance do not reflect the authenticity of music-making in the classroom. The process does not satisfy any learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum, nor does it present pedagogical value. Creating such virtual performances require an enormous investment of time from audio and video editors. Teachers should not feel any obligation to produce such materials. The focus, as always,</li> </ul>

**Commented [HA1]:** The text highlighted in turquoise is lifted directly from the Nfld Guidance. I feel we could tweak it a little to better align with how our documents are worded. I also recommend deleting the sections crossed out and adding text that we created in our recommended guidance.

	should be on creating engaging and collaborative music-making learning experiences. Live or recorded performances of individuals/classes may be presented online to share music-making experiences with parents.	
<b>Learning from Home</b>		
What considerations need to be made in Music to address public health measures outlined in <a href="#">Nova Scotia's Back To School Plan?</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult <a href="#">Learning from Home Scenario 3</a> document released by EECD</li> <li>• Synchronous Information Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personal discourse; video conferencing; small group work; Phone calls; conversations; etc.</li> <li>○ Full ensemble meetings could consist of students playing/singing along (muted) with the teacher</li> <li>○ Informal one-on-one sessions could be arranged for students and students can meet with each other in peer groups</li> <li>○ Use of body percussion or found sounds for percussionists without access to equipment at home</li> <li>○ Body percussion or clapping exercises for rhythm practice.</li> <li>○ Arrange “watch parties” with ensembles using programs like SyncTube (see Recommended Resources) to watch concerts simultaneously</li> <li>○ Consider establishing a mentorship program with local or other high schools and/or universities as part of a regular guest speaker program</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Asynchronous Information Acquisition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pre-recorded instructions/teaching segments; email; posted videos; individual research; individual projects; individual practice/creation; theory; listening; etc.</li> <li>○ Assign solo repertoire for students to work on (e.g., SmartMusic—see Recommended Resources below)</li> <li>○ SmartMusic has several method books (e.g., Standard of Excellence) built in so that teachers can assign content from those books to students. A play along track is included and an easy to use assessment tool as well</li> <li>○ Breathing Gym videos [NSSBB# 19046] can be used by students at home. Also see Learn 360 for videos that will support students. This can be accessed from gnspes landing page.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
What Are Other Considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtual choir and band performances produced through combining and editing individual recordings to create an ensemble performance do not reflect the authenticity of music-making in the classroom. The process does not satisfy any learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum, nor does it present pedagogical value. Creating such virtual performances require an enormous investment of time from audio and video editors. Teachers should not feel any obligation to produce such materials. The focus, as always, should be on creating engaging and collaborative music-making learning experiences. Live or recorded performances of individuals/classes may be presented online to share music-making experiences with parents.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommended Resources</b>		
Artists in Schools	The Artists in Schools program supports arts-enriched learning experiences through Nova Scotian artists working in the classroom (virtually in 2020–2021) with students from Grades Primary to 12. There will be no cost share fee in 2020–2021.	Interested teachers should consult the Artists in Schools website for further details and to book a virtual artist visit to their classroom. Click the links below to access the websites: <a href="https://www.ednet.ns.ca/artists-in-schools">https://www.ednet.ns.ca/artists-in-schools</a> <a href="https://www.ednet.ns.ca/fr/artists-in-schools">https://www.ednet.ns.ca/fr/artists-in-schools</a>
<a href="#">Australia Online Teaching Resources</a>	This is a teacher resource out of Australia. An excellent resource for online music teaching techniques. Free content.	No issues noted. No privacy or security issues as there is no login or account creation required.
<a href="#">Chrome Music Lab</a>	Website tool to explore music in a variety of ways. Free program.	No issues noted. No privacy or security issues as there is no login or account creation required.
“How-to” Tips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">How to Control Sound Input and Output Devices in Windows 10</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How to change sound input/output on Mac® OS X™</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How to view YouTube concerts simultaneously</a></li> </ul>	No issues noted. No privacy or security issues as there is no login or account creation required.
<a href="#">Incredibox</a>	A music app that allows students to create their own mixes. Choose your musical style among seven impressive atmospheres and start to lay down, record, and share your mix. Free program.	No issues noted. No privacy or security issues as there is no login or account creation required.

<a href="#">Musictheory.net</a>	Free theory exercises and comprehensive lessons on basic theory, rhythm and meter, scales and key signatures, intervals, chords, diatonic chords, chord progressions, etc.	No issues noted. No privacy or security issues as there is no login or account creation required.
<a href="#">Symphony Nova Scotia</a>	Educational music resources. A useful tool when teaching music to grades P to 12. Free content.	No issues noted. No privacy or security issues as there is no login or account creation required.
Other	<p>Please note that additional resources are currently under evaluation. As these are approved this will be noted on the e-learning site. Other resources that music teachers should be considering for classroom use include: Google for Education (classroom, sheets, docs, slides, meet, forms, etc.), Moodle (Learning Content Management System), Learn 360 (classroom videos connected to the curriculum), EBSCO (scholarly articles, magazines, Canadian Points of View, journals etc.), My Blueprint (see arts related careers) and additional approved video conferencing and productivity tools as noted by region on the <a href="#">e-learning site</a>. Please ensure that all materials used in the music classroom online or in person conform to <a href="#">Canada's copyright guidelines</a>.</p> <p>For support on assessment, accessibility, and how to teach using online tools please refer to the <a href="#">e-learning site</a>.</p> <p>For curriculum and interdisciplinary samples please refer to the <a href="#">curriculum site</a>.</p>	
<b>References</b>		
	<p><a href="#">Nova Scotia's Back to School Plan</a>  <a href="#">Government of Canada COVID-19 Guidance for Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12</a>  <a href="#">Nova Scotia Guidance for Vocalists and Instrumentalists</a>  <a href="#">NFHS. (06 August 2020). 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Preliminary Data from the University of Colorado International Coalition Covid-19 Study</a> – while this data is promising it is still preliminary and has yet to be peer reviewed or have quality assurance completed. We will continue to monitor research as it emerges and continue to have discussions with NS Public Health about what is feasible in Nova Scotia schools.  <a href="#">NFHS (9 July 2020). <i>Statement of Work: Aerosol Generation from Playing Band Instruments, Singing and Performing and Risk of Infectious Disease Transmission.</i></a></p>	