



Framework for a Return to Band (v.1)

Revised September 29, 2020

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In continuation of our affiliate status with the OMEA, the OBA acknowledges the OMEA for referencing the *“Return to Band”* outline in *“A Framework for The Return to Music Classes in 2020/2021”*

Introduction

In response to the July 30, 2020 announcement by the Ontario Government, and following recommendations as put forward in *COVID-19: Guidance for School Reopening Report* from SickKids¹ and *Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools*², the Ontario Band Association (OBA) offers the following considerations and strategies for a full return to band. We do so using the most up-to-date evidence-based music-focused research as our foundation, as outlined by the Ontario Music Educators' Association in *COVID-19 Music Education Framework (v.4)*³, in addition to band and instrument-specific evidence, most specifically [Performing Arts Aerosol Study \(Round 1\)](#) and [\(Round 2\)](#)⁴ as published by the College Band Directors National Association.

This document serves to help support boards, administrators, and teachers as they implement a return to instrumental music. In compliance with *Ontario Public Health guidelines*⁵, the OBA has produced a working model to facilitate the return of instrumental music-making in schools. Although learning scenarios will differ across the province this school year, this document provides educators and administrators with viable strategies to re-introduce safe instrumental music rehearsal and practice in classrooms, working towards an eventual return to full band.

With the significant changes impacting our school environments in this challenging time of COVID-19, instrumental music education and the performing arts are more important than ever to the social and emotional well-being of our students and our communities. The OBA's *Framework for a Return to Band* will keep students engaged, develop their confidence, and give them a sense of stability and community at a time when our education system is managing unprecedented hurdles. In addition to the well-documented benefits of music education on the human condition, engagement in ensemble music-making is an integral element of student well-being.

¹ The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and Unity Health Toronto. (2020, July 29). *COVID-19: Guidance for School Reopening*. SickKids - hospital. Retrieved August 2, 2020, from

<https://www.sickkids.ca/PDFs/About-SickKids/81407-COVID19-Recommendations-for-School-Reopening-SickKids.pdf>

² Government of Ontario. (2020, August 2). *Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools*. Retrieved August 2, 2020, from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools>

³ Ontario Music Educators' Association. (2020, August 7). *A Framework for The Return to Music Classes in 2020/2021*. Retrieved August 11, 2020, from https://www.omea.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Framework-for-Music-Classes-During-Covid-19_v4.pdf

⁴ International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study. (2020, July 16). *Preliminary Recommendations from International Performing Arts Aerosol Study Based on Initial Testing Results*. NFHS. Retrieved August 2, 2020, from <https://www.nfhs.org/media/4029965/preliminary-recommendations-from-international-performing-arts-aerosol-study.pdf>

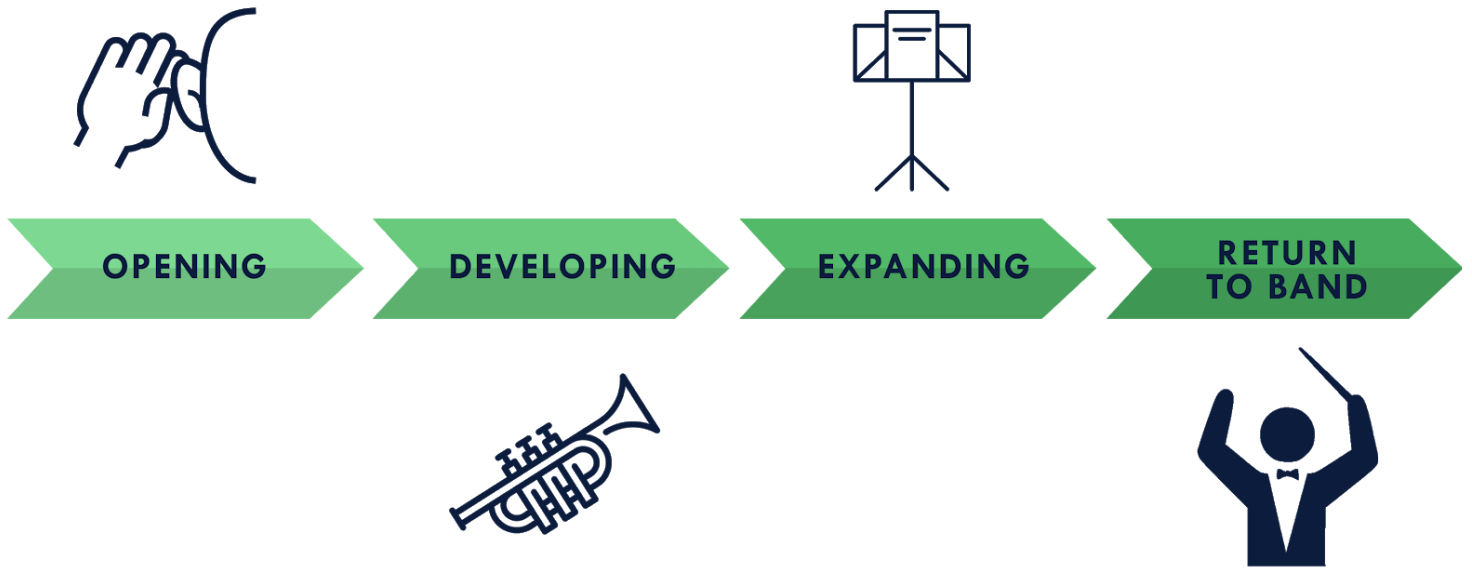
⁵ Public Health Ontario. (2020, July 9). *COVID-19 Transmission Risks from Singing and Playing Wind Instruments – What We Know So Far*. Retrieved August 2, 2020, from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/covid-wwksf/2020/07/what-we-know-transmission-risks-singing-wind-instruments.pdf?la=en>

To reinforce the importance of instrumental music in schools at this time, the OBA suggests the following key priorities will assist in achieving success as we move forward:

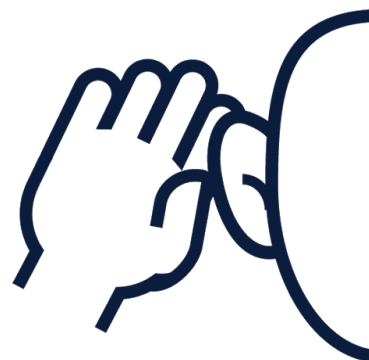
- Keep instruments in students' hands — instruments can be played safely during the pandemic with enhanced safety measures in place such as those outlined in the [Performing Arts Aerosol Study \(Round 1\)](#) and [\(Round 2\)](#)
- Focus on creating, performing, and hands-on activities to maximize student engagement and retention
- Ensure student health and wellness with social-emotional learning embedded throughout music instruction models
- Use creative and innovative tasks to meet expectations as outlined in the [Ontario Curriculum: The Arts - Music](#), and maintain high standards of excellence, regardless of learning environment (i.e.: in-person, online, hybrid; synchronous, asynchronous)

The Ontario Band Association has devised a strategic approach for the return to band. Below, four sections are introduced and accompanied by examples of instructional practices. These are but a sampling of possibilities depending on the context in which instrumental music and band will be delivered. There is intentional flexibility built into this model, including the possibility of starting anywhere along the timeline, to ensure all programs across the province can adapt their practice toward a full return to band. Finally, as new research presents itself and public health measures are implemented, the OBA commits to updating this living document by publishing newer versions, and to fine-tune the contents herein to reflect current realities.

Return to Band Timeline



Identification of and progression through the timeline will be fluid based on public health guidelines by region and physical limitations of each school (e.g., it is possible to start beyond “Opening”). Teachers/Schools are encouraged to begin each of their classes at any point along the timeline considering their classroom and/or extracurricular settings, and the regulations set out by their school board and regional public health policies. The primary goal should be to choose a starting point that provides a safe and engaging Return to Band.



Opening

Opening is designated for schools who, due to a deficiency in resources or local public health restrictions, will have limited use of instruments to deliver a traditional concert band instruction model. During *Opening*, teachers will guide students through creative tasks related to small and full ensemble work.

Opening may also be designated for schools who are able to offer a 1:1 ratio of instruments to students. In this situation, students will work individually and/or in small ensembles consisting of a combination of woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. These performance tasks can be executed remotely and could include the provision of instruments to keep at home.

Instructional Practices: Opening

- Instruments used at home at a 1:1 ratio
- Focus on notation, music literacy, wind band literature, listening and composition
- Replication of ensemble musicianship (e.g., balance, blend, intonation, tone quality, etc.) through examples and exploration
- Spoken word, rhythm ensembles, virtual composer/performer in the classroom
- May make use of alternative / found instruments / percussion instruments
- Creative exploration and performance of the elements of music
- Performance through remote instruction: individual and/or very small groups (if instruments available), masterclasses, sectional rehearsals, small ensembles, virtual ensemble
- Frequent use of flipped classroom practices (audio/video recording at home; introduction, pre-teaching, analysis and feedback of recordings in class)



DEVELOPING

Developing

During *Developing*, instruments continue to be used remotely by students. Schools can start the process of integrating instruments into the classroom subject to certain limitations. It is required that each student has their own mouthpiece and access to an instrument to play remotely at home. Students may have access to a school instrument on a rotational schedule which includes a disinfection⁶ period between rotations, i.e. October class A, November class B, etc..

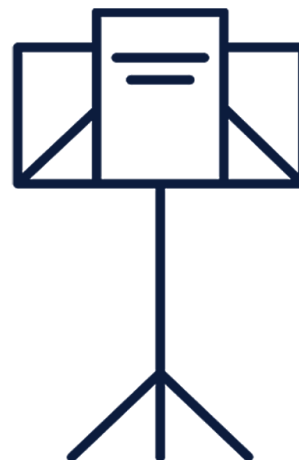
Students are working individually and/or in small woodwind, brass, and percussion performance ensembles. Performance tasks can be executed in person in school, if space permits, and/or remotely.

Instructional Practices: Developing

- Some use of mouthpieces and instruments; equipment can be used at a 1:1 ratio, or in rotation (with a built-in rest period between groups)
- Replication of ensemble musicianship (e.g., balance, blend, intonation, tone quality etc.) through examples and exploration, e.g., spoken word, body percussion, found instruments
- Performance: individual/small groups for short periods, in person if space permits (outdoors or indoors)
- Performance through remote instruction: individual and/or very small groups (if instruments available), masterclasses, sectional rehearsals, small ensembles, virtual ensemble
- Regular use of flipped classroom practices

Note: If playing inside, players should wear a mask with a small slit to accommodate the mouthpiece, bell covers for instruments, and provide proper distancing for players. (9 feet for trombones, 6 feet for all others). Also, consult the OMEA's *A Framework for The Return to Music Classes*, and CBDNA's *International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Studies*

⁶ <https://nfhs.org/articles/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines>



Expanding

Through *Expanding*, instruments can be utilized in small ensemble settings both inside and outside the school setting. If local public health units and boards of education permit the use of instruments, they can be distributed to students at a 1:1 ratio (either through the rotation process outlined in *Developing*, or for the full year). Students attend band classes in cohorts, and are predominantly making music in chamber or small ensemble music settings.

This scenario reduces the emphasis on remote performance and shifts the focus to performance in the school setting.

Instructional Practices: Expanding

- Continue instruction in notation, music literacy, wind band literature, listening and composition
- Develop ensemble musicianship (balance, blend, intonation, tone quality, etc) through ensemble work
- Creative exploration and performance of the elements of music
- Small ensembles (indoors/outdoors)
- Sectional work (indoors/outdoors)
- Minimal remote performance
- Minimal use of flipped classroom practices



RETURN TO BAND

Return to Band

Return to Band sees students returning to full large ensemble playing and performing. This final scenario resumes large ensemble instruction, playing, rehearsing, and performing in school without cohorting. Students utilize instruments on a shared or 1:1 basis.

Instructional Practices: Return to Band

- Continue instruction in notation, music literacy, wind band literature, listening and composition
- Develop ensemble musicianship (balance, blend, intonation, tone quality, etc) through ensemble work
- Creative exploration and performance of the elements of music
- Return to full ensemble and large ensemble rehearsals/performances/classes (while following the guidance of public health experts in regards to wind instrument use)
- Remote performance expectations suspended

REFERENCES

COVID-19: Guidance for School Reopening

<https://www.sickkids.ca/PDFs/About-SickKids/81407-COVID19-Recommendations-for-School-Reopening-SickKids.pdf>

COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines

https://www.nfhs.org/articles/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines/?fbclid=IwAR2PnWiMf8AQXjgsjR5E3IYmjGpXbAv_EQsHy_Qw2xM2yLQrAF8NK8ZqlU8

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<https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools>

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