

Guidelines for Back to Band

As we learn more about COVID-19 and aerosol production in performing arts, the research continues to prove that band programs CAN be offered safely. The SBA wants to support school administrators, facility managers and band leaders in their efforts to create the safest possible environment for encouraging music in classrooms, band rooms, rehearsal spaces, and performance halls. Participating in band is not only a great hobby, but it has proven to have both educational and mental health benefits for students. There is no need for the pandemic to cause our youth to miss out on the benefits of band!

The SBA is a supporting partner in the International Performing Arts Aerosol Study commissioned by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) and a coalition of more than 125 performing arts organizations. Led by scientists and experts in the field of aerosols, the study has generated evidence illustrating how key mitigations are effective in significantly reducing the risks from aerosols in the performing arts.

The Study released its results in 3 stages, studying different aspects of performing arts at each stage. The goal of the study was to identify the issues of aerosol production in performing arts activities, and identify ways performing arts programs can be offered in person with the lowest risk possible. Conclusions at each stage of the Study confirmed that, with mitigations, performing arts can be conducted while maintaining aerosols at near baseline levels.

With mitigations in place, Band programs can resume safely! Based on the research, the study recommends the following mitigations:

- **Mask the player** - Band participants should wear well-fitting masks at all times. Brass & woodwind players should wear a mask with a small slit for their instrument mouthpiece when actively playing and a full mask overtop whenever NOT playing.
- **Mask the instrument** - bell cover “masks” should be applied to musical instruments when playing. Bell covers should be made of a non-stretchy material that has a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) of 13.
- **Rehearsal times** should be limited to 30 minutes or less within a single room. Band directors should wait until at least one HVAC air change has occurred prior to using the same room again.
- **Social distancing:** at least 2 meters per participant (with 1 additional meter in front of trombone players) significantly reduces the aerosol risk.
- Bands practicing outdoors should stop playing for approximately five minutes after each 30-minute segment to allow the aerosol to disperse.
- Band participants should use basic hygienic measures, (keeping common areas sanitized and encouraging frequent handwashing)
- Instrument spit valves should be emptied onto absorbent material, such as puppy pads, for proper disposal rather than directly onto the floor.

To learn more about the researchers and the Study, please visit:

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>.

Let's Band Together!

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