

Guidelines for Back to Band

The Saskatchewan Band Association is pleased to provide school and community bands with updated guidance for their 2021-22 band programs. These guidelines are intended to provide further support to bands concerned about the emergence of the DELTA variant, increasing COVID case counts and with overall desires to ensure the greatest safety possible in band programs, rehearsals and performances. Our guidelines continue to be drawn from the International Performing Arts Aerosol study group. The full study has now been peer reviewed and published following traditional scientific protocols.

Additional Research – Assessing the Risk of Music Programs

In the spring of 2021, the Coalition completed an additional study to assess the level of spread events that had occurred in school-based music programs **during** the pandemic. 3,000 survey responses, covering 1,641 music programs were received. Of the 1,641 music programs, only 8 programs (5 choir, 2 band, and 1 orchestra) self-identified a potential additional spread of COVID-19 occurring in a music class or rehearsal. Two of the self-reported cases were from schools that **did not use any of the study mitigations**.

Researchers applied all of the data gathered to assess the potential COVID-19 risk 2020-21 program participants faced. “The overall expected chance of getting COVID-19 in a 30-minute rehearsal would be ... a chance of **one (1) in 1,969,709** per person per half hour...”. When most or all of the study mitigations were applied the risk dropped even further to 1 in 2,192,287. More Risk Assessment information can be found [HERE](#).

Moving Forward – Safety for 2021-22 Year

Band programs CAN be offered safely, even with the Delta variant. This has been proven by the research time & again, even before vaccination campaigns were underway. The SBA strongly encourages full vaccinations for everyone who is eligible. The higher the vaccination rate, the lower the risk of transmission at all times - including during band programs.

Whether or not formal COVID-19 related health restrictions are required by the Government of Saskatchewan, the SBA recommends the ongoing use of the mitigations recommended in the Aerosol Study for added protection. In fact, mitigations can be used to reduce transmission of many respiratory pathogens such as flu, virus, common cold, and measles etc. The recommendations below are meant to provide some best practices as we manage variants, increase vaccination rates and we continue to move out of the pandemic.

- **Outdoors:** Outdoors remains the safest space – no mitigations needed

Indoors:

- **Mask the instrument.** Bell covers made from appropriate material* remain the best way of reducing potential infected aerosol from circulating in an indoor space.
- **Mask the musician.** Musicians should wear a regular full mask made from appropriate material* when entering or moving around the rehearsal

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space. Continuing to wear masks while playing reduces the need for social distancing. In locations with a higher infection rate or when infections are spiking, woodwind and brass musicians should wear slit masks while playing to provide added protection.

- **Rehearsal Times.** In spaces with good ventilation rates (min. 3 air exchanges per hour) and HEPA filtration, indoor rehearsal times of 50 minutes may be considered. Spaces with higher air change rates, can have longer rehearsals.
- **Physical Distancing.** Distancing still enhances safety and when used along with other mitigations, may be decreased to 1 meter, adjusting farther or closer depending on vaccination rates & local conditions.
- **Hygiene.** Continue good hygiene practice, including appropriate elimination of brass fluid (use of absorbent receptacles such as puppy pads).
- **Face Shields and Partitions.** Plastic face shields only stop large droplets, not aerosol; room dividers inhibit the function of the HVAC system and **are not recommended.**

*Material should consist of MERV13 material or ASTM F2100 (or similar) standard.

To learn more about the Study, visit: [Aerosol Study Findings & Recommendations](#).

Dr. Mark Speed and Dr. James Weaver have an in-depth conversation about research findings, mitigations and recommendations for fall 2021. Timestamps on the video ensure ease of access to specific content areas. View [HERE](#)

About the Saskatchewan Band Association

The SBA is a registered charity dedicated to the development and promotion of Band throughout the province. Our Back to Band Guidelines have been updated throughout the pandemic and are based on ongoing research.

We welcome questions about the International Performing Arts study, the mitigation recommendations, or band programs in general.

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