

# Covid-19 risk mitigation for youth orchestras: a practical approach

09 December 2021

This document was prepared with assistance from Dublin Youth Orchestras and Slua Event Safety. Our thanks to Wendy Arlow at DYO and Peter Jordan for their ongoing support.

The document was written in the context of the Republic of Ireland and assumes compliance with all up-to-date public health directions and regulations from the Irish government.

Links in the document can be followed using the pdf version available from [iayo.ie/covid-19](http://iayo.ie/covid-19)

## Useful links:

[Arts Council - Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector](#)

[HSA Ventilation](#)

[Government information from Gov.ie](#)

## Prior to holding any rehearsal or event, each organisation should:

### 1). Keep up to date with latest public health guidance

[Government information from Gov.ie](#)

*Organisers of indoor and outdoor group activities should ensure that appropriate protective measures are in place and, where indoor groups have a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated people indoors, pods of 6 should apply. Fixed capacity limits will not apply to these indoor and outdoor group activities.*

### 2). Carry out a Covid-19 risk assessment and review the following:

- Venue assessment – with significant emphasis on ventilation
- How Covid-19 can spread and what (IPC) measures you have in place for rehearsals

5,000 young musicians in 108 youth orchestras  
making music in Ireland since 1994



Ceolfhoirne na nÓg

IAYO CLG  
Civic Trust House  
50 Pope's Quay  
Cork T23 R6XC  
Ireland

T +353 21 421 5185  
M +353 86 057 0062  
E [info@iayo.ie](mailto:info@iayo.ie)  
W [iayo.ie](http://iayo.ie)



PRESIDENT  
Joanna Crooks

BOARD  
Clare Daly CHAIRPERSON  
Wendy Arlow VICE-CHAIRPERSON  
Fiona Creedon  
Carol Daly  
Liam Daly TREASURER  
Anne Gannon  
Martin Mc Ginley  
Mona McMahon  
Brian Murray  
Denise Ní Dhuibhir  
Delphine Picovici

Registered No. 296500  
Registered Charity 20045623

### **3). Develop and circulate your Covid-19 policy to include:**

- The nominated Covid Compliance team and Covid Compliance officer.
- How your infection preventions and control (IPC) measures are implemented.
- Covid response plan if somebody presents with symptoms or in case of a suspected case.
- How you are going to communicate your policy to the appropriate people.
- Review your exiting arrangements to ensure they are still up to date and put in place a system to review.

#### **Risk Assessment for a Return to Rehearsals**

A risk assessment for the transmission of Covid-19 must be undertaken with mitigating actions put in place to reduce or eliminate the risk.

Please see <https://www.iayo.ie/covid-19/> for templates on how to develop a risk assessment for a return to rehearsals and Chapter 4 of the Arts Council Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector.

#### **Risk assessment for venue ventilation**

Reference the [Work Safety protocol](#)

The following should be considered when developing a workspace-ventilation assessment:

- How do you currently provide ventilation (fresh air) in your workspace?
- Most ventilation is provided by natural or mechanical means or a combination of both of these.

#### **How many persons occupy or use the area(s)?**

The more people who use or occupy an area the greater the risk that an infected person is there, increasing possible exposure to aerosol transmission. Ensuring that participants, tutors, staff, parents who have symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell remain at home is key here. In addition, reducing the number of people who use or occupy an area can also reduce this risk,

#### **How much time do people spend in the area(s)?**

The longer people spend in an area, the greater the risk. This risk can be minimised by having low occupancy levels in workspaces so crowding is avoided,

#### **What activities take place in the area(s)?**

Activities that make you breathe deeper, for example physical exertion or shouting, may increase generation of aerosols and increase the risk of transmission.

**How large is the area(s)?**

The larger the area, the lower the risk as the virus droplets will be diluted and less likely to build up.

**Are there any features in the workspace which might affect ventilation?**

For example, are there large drapes which might impact cross ventilation air flow? Do you use open windows?

Cross-ventilation is a good option for window ventilation as it facilitates the quick exchange of room air for fresh air through widely opened windows opposite to each other, where possible.

Propping open internal doors may increase air movement and ventilation rate.

Fire doors should not be propped open unless fitted with approved automatic closers so that they function as fire doors in the event of an alarm or fire, and

Airing rooms as frequently as you can improves ventilation.

Open all the doors and windows fully to maximise the ventilation in a room. This may be best done when the room or area is unoccupied.

**Do you use desk or ceiling fans?**

Desk or ceiling fans should not be used in poorly ventilated areas as they may only recirculate the virus droplets rather than remove them from the area. Fans should only be used in areas where there is a single occupant,

**Does the workspace have Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV)?**

Where workspaces have Local Exhaust Ventilation, the make-up air should ideally come from outdoor air rather than from adjacent rooms. The Health and Safety Authority guidance on LEV is a useful resource for advice and guidance and it is available [here](#)

**Does the Workspace have multiple or complex ventilation systems in place?**

For example, different systems on different floors or areas. In such cases, the [CIBSE Ventilation Guidance](#) can provide additional information. In addition, it may be necessary to retain the services of a ventilation engineer to provide expert advice on

what modifications are needed to the mechanical system to reduce any potential transmission risks. Before embarking on use of a service engineer, all other mitigation factors such as reducing occupancy etc., should be considered first.

## **Covid -19 Policy and Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures**

Draft your rehearsal / event policy and circulate to all attendees. Questions to Consider

- Fully vaccinated with proof of immunity or vaccination **OR** mixed immunity pods.
- Health screening (Covid declarations) – Use a form to confirm person is not ill (see Arts Council guidance). Especially, advise all players, staff and volunteers NOT to attend if they are experiencing any symptoms of Covid are not feeling well in any way.
- What is your mask policy? The general rule is masking wearing all the time,
- Have you appointed a Covid officer and do they have the training and expertise to carry out the role?
- Covid-19 Response Plan - Have you a protocol for dealing with a suspected Covid-positive player, staff or volunteer?
- Have you a cleaning plan and products?
- See the Work Safety Protocol (and maybe other sources) where Rapid Antigen testing is considered.
- Have you Covid signage and up to date information?

### **General**

- Everyone should sanitize hands on entry to the venue.
- Any seating used should be wiped down before and after use and in between groups.
- Minimise, as much as possible, the sharing of music stands, music, pencils, etc.
- Tutors, conductors or supervising adults should avoid, where possible, tuning instruments. However, where this is not possible, the adult involved should, wearing a mask, and with sanitized hands, tune the instrument and place it back on the player's chair and ask the player to then assume their

position at their chair and retrieve their instrument. They should sanitize hands after each instrument.

- Tutors, conductors and supervising adults should maintain social distancing whilst in the room and observe the recommended 2 metre distance from players.
- Breaks should be provided on a frequent basis, preferably outside, with regard to the room ventilation and size.

### **Mask**

- Masks should be worn by tutors, conductors and any supervising adults whilst admitting players and whilst in a room with players. Consideration should be given to the type of mask used, for example FFP2, N95 or KN95.
- All string and percussion players should be masked at all times.
- All wind and brass players should remove their masks only when the conductor commences the rehearsal.

### **Mixed-immunity pods**

- Working in smaller groups (maximum of 6 if unvaccinated or mixed-immunity)
- Ensuring that members of pods are particularly careful to maintain social distancing when interacting with other pods or individuals to minimise time spent doing so. It is preferable that break times are taken outside. If breaks are taken inside, then no mixing between pods can be allowed.
- Consider break areas and avoid congregation before and after practice or performance.
- Players within each pod should be spaced 2 metres apart and there should be a significant distance between individual pods.
- Players should be masked at all times except for wind and brass players whilst playing.

### **Peripatetic roles**

Where a tutor, conductor, or volunteer is operating on a peripatetic basis (a person who travels from place to place, especially a tutor or conductor who works in more than one school or college) and operating across multiple groups or individuals, they should:

- Maintain that strict distancing requirement within each pod.

- Avoid situations where the distancing requirement is broken, for example tuning an instrument.
- Make efforts to reduce the number of groups interacted with and locations worked in, to reduce the total number of contacts made.
- Restrict rehearsals and events to under 2 hours to avoid becoming a close contact within the room.
- Do not share transport with other tutors, conductors or volunteers.

### **Wind and Brass players**

- Players should be masked while entering and leaving the room and only remove their masks when the conductor commences the rehearsal.
- Players should be placed more than 2m apart.
- Perspex screens can be used and careful consideration should be taken to ensure adequate cross ventilation exists in the room. This should form part of the room ventilation assessment process.

### **Percussion players**

- Each player must wear a mask at all time.
- Each player has a designated folder containing all the relevant music.
- Each piece of equipment is cleaned by the player leaving the instrument.
- No sharing of music stands.
- Each player is placed 2 metres apart.

### **Vaccinated or immune persons**

See [Government information from Gov.ie](#) for latest guidance on gathering.

In line with guidelines from the Arts Council, social distancing should be maximised as far as is reasonably practicable, especially in shared areas. Please see the following [link](#) for further details.

Covid 19 pass checker [available here](#)