

Post-pandemic Planning Guide: Email Template About NFHS Aerosol Studies

Dear Principal/School Board Member/Superintendent/Local Health Department Official:

When schools shut their doors in March 2020, there were few who anticipated that these closings might last through the entire subsequent school year. Students who had been participating in performing arts courses were suddenly robbed of all of the life-changing experiences that the performing arts contribute to their well-rounded education and impactful lifetime memories.

During this time, however, a coalition of music education professional associations, universities, and music industry professionals was formed to commission studies from two of the nation's leading research institutions—University of Colorado Boulder and University of Maryland—to examine how performing arts activities generate respiratory aerosol including volume, direction, and density so that appropriate mitigation strategies might be recommended.

Three iterations of this massive study have now taken place. They are considered preliminary and will be further defined as the studies continue. It is hoped that providing these latest results will assist schools in the safer return to performing arts activities.

Below are the 5 principal recommendations resulting from the 3rd iteration of the study which focus strictly on the distribution of respiratory aerosol that is generated while playing wind instruments, singing, acting, speaking, dancing, and in a simulated aerobic activity.

General procedures: See Appendix G of full report which is available at:

<https://www.nfhs.org/media/4294910/third-aerosol-report.pdf>

1. MASKS: Masks must be worn at all times. Multi-layered bell covers must be used by all wind instruments
2. DISTANCE: CDC guidelines for social distancing of 6x6 feet, with 9x6 feet for trombone players
3. TIME: Indoors limited to 30 minutes followed by a minimum of one air exchange rate (ACH), to change the air indoors with outside air
4. AIR FLOW: Increase ACH to HVAC maximum, add HEPA Filtration designed for the size of the room
5. HYGIENE: Practice good hygiene by washing hands, using sanitizers, and preventing uncontrolled spit valve release

As Sarah Robinson, strategic partnership coordinator for Music Makes Us at Metro Nashville Public Schools, wrote in the Hechinger Report,

Music teachers are community builders. They are masters of creating opportunities for expression. Music teachers will continue to craft those special touch-points as they see their students to the other side of this crisis. It's going to be less about the mechanics of music — the intonation, balance and blend — and more about the joy, hope and connectedness that music brings to kids' lives.

Post-pandemic Planning Guide: Email Template About NFHS Aerosol Studies

Throughout this historic pandemic, we have seen time and time again how music has helped so many to heal. It is now time for us to heal our students through music as we make plans for the future.

With your continued support, we look forward to implementing these procedures in our program, and in doing so, strive to offer the best learning environment possible while also minimizing risk for our students. I will reach out to you to set up a time to discuss these recommendations resulting from the ongoing NFHS studies.