



COVID-19 Transitioning - Standards for Extracurricular Education and Visual and Performing Arts Education (Music, Art, Drama and Dance)

Version 3.0
Effective from 10th May 2021

Applicability

The obligatory conditions in these Standards are issued under the Public Health Act CAP 465 and require strict adherence. Failure to adhere to these conditions will result in enforcement procedures as provided by the Act.

These standards apply for all extracurricular education and visual and performing arts education. This includes private lessons, catechism classes, and music, art, drama, dance and other visual and performing arts schools. This guidance has been developed in the context of the current available evidence and contextualized to the current epidemiological situation. Mitigation conditions in similar educational institutions abroad have also been taken in consideration. These standards remain subject to review once evidence and contexts change.

COVID Compliance Officers

It is recommended that one member of staff is appointed as a COVID Compliance Officer. This officer is to ensure that the staff is well trained in measures and responsible for ensuring that daily recording of all classes is updated and records available to him to be presented to contact tracing team if required. The officer must also ensure that measures are kept in place and followed by all. In the case of an infected member of staff or student on the premises, the COVID Officer will coordinate with the health department and the school. The COVID compliance officer should also act as a contact point for health authorities should contact tracing be required. The

Standards applicable to Extracurricular Education and Visual and Performing Arts Education (Music, Art, Drama and Dance)

The following obligatory conditions shall apply to all extracurricular education and visual and performing arts education as defined above

PARENTS / GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS / LEARNERS

1. Online teaching is encouraged where possible. For in-person learning, attendance for each student / learner shall be accurately and timely recorded.
2. Parents and guardians of students / learners shall not be allowed on the premises, irrespective of the age of the learners. Parents / guardians shall wait outside the premises using social distancing measures. Classes shall be timetabled to avoid having more than 15 parents / guardians waiting outside at the same time.



3. Students arriving more than 10 minutes early shall be asked to wait outside and not to gather in the main entrance.
4. When wearing jackets, parents / guardians of younger students shall take jackets home with them and then bring them back for the student to wear when exiting. These jackets shall be handed to parents before entering the building.
5. Students shall only bring food and drink for their own consumption. No sharing of food and drink shall be allowed on the premises.
6. Students are to come ready dressed in their uniform/costume. Students shall remove outdoor shoes and leave them outside the studio. Shoes can be changed before entry to studios. When change of shoes or uniform are required for different lessons, outdoor clothes /shoes shall be placed in a clearly labelled bag and placed in a locker marked with the name of the student. Lockers shall be disinfected after every use.
7. All items are to be clearly labelled with the students' name. Non-Labelled items shall be disposed of at the end of the day.
8. All staff, students and parents/guardians should be made aware that any individual experiencing potential COVID-19 symptoms, even if mild, should not attend any sessions on the premises. Sick students/staff are to be sent home immediately. If the parent / guardian is not there, the sick child should remain in an 'isolation room,' which should be sanitized once the student leaves.
9. Anyone traveling overseas should present a negative PCR/RAT test result before their return to school if returning from an amber list country. Those who have travelled to red zones are required to quarantine on their return and hence must not come to the school/studios for 2 weeks after the date of return. Students are requested to present copies of their boarding flight pass or boat ticket. More information including details of which countries are currently on the amber list and the red zone can be found at the following link¹.
10. Where a break is necessary, this shall take place in the studio itself or in an outside area. No breaks shall be allowed in the waiting areas.
11. On arrival, students shall go directly to class.
12. Students are to sanitize their hands before and after class.
13. Students are to wear masks all the time irrespective of age. The exceptions to this are:
 - musicians playing instruments that cannot be played while wearing a mask - these are exempt from this requirement while playing their instrument, but they should still abide by the mask requirement the rest of the time.
 - sessions involving high intensity physical activity as determined by the tutor / staff – in this case the distance maintained between students should be at least 3m and masks should be worn again once high intensity activity ceases.
14. Where possible, students are to remain in their own bubbles/groups in fixed spaces. Bubbles need to be as small as possible. Size of groups should respect the limit established by the Number of Persons in Public Spaces Regulations, 2021 and any of its amendments specifying the number of persons allowed to gather as a group in public places.
15. Students shall avoid touching mirrors, instruments, and sound equipment in a class/studio. Only the necessary equipment shall be available in the studio.

¹ <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Pages/travel.aspx>



16. Keeping an appropriate physical distance of 2 metres from others shall be maintained as much as possible in all areas.
17. Where possible, markings indicating social distancing shall be made in all areas.
18. The maximum numbers as recommended by the public health department shall be adhered to at all times on the basis of a maximum capacity of 1 person per 6m², including staff.
19. Practice of respiratory etiquette shall be followed and encouraged.
20. Students shall avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth at all times but particularly with unwashed hands
21. Each student shall have their own sanitizer, apart from that provided by the school, except in the very young where sanitisation should be supervised to avoid possible accidental ingestion or splashing into eyes.
22. Students shall not share items unless they are wiped before and after change of use.
23. Students who have shorter lessons are encouraged to refrain from using the toilet facilities.
24. Certain activities such as singing, choirs, chamber music, ensembles, orchestral performance, acting & drama as well as dance present additional risks and each school needs to assess these risks and mitigate in ways where students would be able to continue to attend such lessons, such as using outdoors whenever possible, minimizing student contact, and extend social distancing to 2.5 metres from the 2 metres norm.
25. Shared food such as birthday cakes or any parties are forbidden. Individually packaged treats shall be allowed.
26. Communication from the parents/guardians with School's staff and management for day to day necessities should only be done through online services.

STAFF

1. Members of staff shall wear a mask or visor at all times.
2. Clear records shall be kept of time of arrival and departure of all members of staff as well as the class contact times.
3. Members of staff who are not well, shall not report to work.
4. Water fountains shall not be used by anyone. Water dispensers shall only be used by members of staff.
5. When using kitchen equipment, members of staff are asked to wipe down whatever they make use of before and after use.
6. Members of staff shall use their own labelled mugs for hot drinks and shall be responsible for cleaning them after use.
7. When meeting other members of staff, social distancing measures shall be in place. Staff members are encouraged not to gather in common rooms or waiting areas.
8. Where possible a separate toilet for 'staff members only' is to be used.
9. Teachers should ideally be the ones to move from class to class and to carry sound equipment with them when using. If this is not possible, bluetooth equipment is encouraged so that the tutor can avoid touching the sound equipment.
10. When a piano is being used by a different pianist, this should be wiped down before and after use.
11. A personal space shall be provided where members of staff can keep their own belongings. This space shall be clearly marked.



12. Members of staff shall maintain social distancing from the students as much as possible. Where not possible and where physical correction is required, staff members should sanitize their hands before and after being in physical contact with the student.
13. Attendance shall be taken in every class by the teacher including the time of arrival and the time the lesson finishes and where possible recording of attendance is recorded online.
14. Anyone traveling overseas should present a negative PCR/RAT test result before their return to school if returning from an amber list country. Those who have travelled to red zones are required to quarantine on their return and hence must not come to the school/studios for 2 weeks after the date of return. Staff are requested to present copies of their boarding flight pass or boat ticket. More information including details of which countries are currently on the amber list and the red zone can be found at the following link².
15. A Training and Information Pack collating relevant material linked to standards for safe operation of schools shall be produced by the school management for all staff working in schools.

DRAMA STUDIO STANDARDS

1. For one to one drama, tempered glass or acrylic screens shall be used where possible. If no screens are available, it is suggested that the tutor conducts side by side teaching respecting the 2m distance wherever possible.
2. Photocopies or personal scripts shall be used so that sharing is avoided
3. Any chairs, props used by the students shall be sanitized unless they are personal property of the student.
4. Where loud speaking/singing is being used, social distancing of at least 2.5 metres should be respected and adapted accordingly.
5. Physical contact shall be kept to a bare minimum
6. Work on monologues and small group scenes is encouraged.
7. Ensemble work shall be kept to a bare minimum and where possible is done virtually.
8. Students shall remove outdoor shoes and leave them outside the studio. Shoes can be changed before entry to studios.
9. A minimum of 2m shall be kept between students except for activities which require loud speaking where the recommended distance should increase to 2.5 metres or greater. In the case of sessions involving high intensity physical activity as discussed above where students are not wearing masks, the minimum distance maintained between students shall be that of 3m.
10. When it is not possible for the teacher/educator to mount in-person performance with the students, it is strongly recommended that virtual theatre productions are created with possible live streamed performance of students.
11. No physical correction of work will take place by the tutors, but necessary written feedback shall be done online.

MUSIC STUDIO STANDARDS

² <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Pages/travel.aspx>



1. The number of vocalists and instrumentalists is encouraged to be kept to soloists or small groups.
2. The type of instruments shall be accounted for when determining physical distancing between individuals.
3. Suggested minimum distance between singers, brass and woodwind instrumentalists shall be a minimum distance of 2.5 m. Minimum distance for all other musicians shall be 2.0m.
4. A tempered glass or acrylic screen should be considered between tutor and musicians. This barrier shall be sanitized after each use. Where barriers are not possible, side to side teaching is recommended.
5. Musicians shall face away from each other when performing in groups.
6. Students shall wear masks all the time irrespective of age. The exception is for musicians playing instruments that cannot be played while wearing a mask/visor - these are exempt from this requirement while playing their instrument and they shall still abide by the mask/visor requirement the rest of the time.
7. Equipment shall not be shared and if any items are shared these must be disinfected before and after use between different users.
8. To reduce the risk of exposure, cleaning of instruments with saliva build-up shall be done outside the group setting directing the saliva into a disposable container. Hand hygiene shall follow each cleaning of instrument.
9. Theory lessons shall be done wearing masks all along the lessons irrespective of age.
10. Aural tests shall be conducted wearing masks/visors and with the student facing away from the tutor.
11. Students shall bring their own writing equipment and sheet music/scores/journals.
12. The number of participants in singing groups, school choir and ensembles shall be kept as small as possible and the School shall follow the standards for choirs³ and musicians and orchestras⁴ as issued under the Public Health Act Chapter 465 of the Laws of Malta.
13. Virtual productions of performances by students shall be created with live streamed performances.

FINE ARTS STANDARDS

1. During discussion and evaluation of artworks, students shall take turns to talk while remaining in their place seated or standing up.
2. Small working groups are recommended.
3. Social distancing in any art-studio shall always be respected and the minimum of 2m between each student's working station shall be kept.
4. Wherever possible, lessons shall be held outdoors.
5. Students shall bring their own materials e.g.: pencils/ pencil colours/ paintbrushes/ markers/ glue/ safe scissors/ crayons/ pastels/ rulers/ erasers/ palettes/ recycled materials/ drawing-book/ art journal.
6. When the school provides materials and equipment, these shall be tagged with the name of the students so that each student uses their own material. No sharing of such materials shall be allowed.

³ <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Standards%20Choirs.pdf>

⁴ <https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Standards%20Musicians%20Orchestras.pdf>



7. Materials that are only used within a lesson timeframe, such as paints can be provided to students, pouring it on palettes that they bring and clean up afterwards. Equipment such as printing presses shall be wiped down between each individual student. Lessons are to stop 15 minutes before the end of lesson in order to clean and allow students to take single turns at the sink. They need to wipe hands and palettes in their own towels/ old T-shirt.
8. Group work or pair work on the same artwork, shall be avoided.
9. Monitoring of students' work and progress shall happen from a distance of at least 2m using Peer-Evaluation where students are asked to stand up, show their sketches/artwork and to talk about their work-in progress (self-evaluation).
10. Only artworks that need to dry shall be left in the art room. Students can collect finished dried artworks in their Portfolios and Art Journals.
11. Wearing of masks is obligatory for all students throughout art lessons due to the interactions that might take place, irrespective of the age of the learners.
12. Students shall keep to their own space for the entire session whenever possible while the teacher/educator will move around the space without necessarily touching equipment/s.
13. No physical correction of work shall take place by the teacher/educator, and necessary feedback is given online.

DANCE STUDIO STANDARDS

1. Small working groups are recommended.
2. A minimum of 2m shall be kept between students during theoretical teaching and masks / visors are to be worn.
3. A minimum of 2.5m shall be kept between students during practical dancing sessions and masks / visors are to be worn at all times. In the case of sessions involving high intensity physical activity the distance maintained between students should be at least 3m and masks should be worn again once high intensity activity ceases. The teacher shall determine high intensity physical activity.
4. Teachers are to move around the space without contact with the students. Sanitizing is to take place before and after physical contact.
5. Students shall use their own resources and no sharing shall be allowed
6. Equipment shall be sanitized between each lesson. Students are encouraged to sanitize their own work area.
7. Physical contact shall be kept to a bare minimum.
8. Ensemble work shall be kept to a minimum.
9. Students shall not be allowed to enter the studios with outdoor shoes. Shoes should be changed before entry to studios.
10. No use of changing facilities shall be available on the premises. It is recommended that students are given designated areas to leave their belongings.
11. Virtual productions of performances by students shall be created with live streamed performances.
12. No physical correction of work shall take place by the teacher/educator, but necessary feedback is given online.



Guidance for the application of COVID-19 standards in Extracurricular Education and Visual and Performing Arts Education (Music, Art, Drama and Dance)

BUILDINGS, STUDIOS AND FACILITIES

1. Toilets must be cleaned regularly. A log detailing the time when the toilet facility has been cleaned and by whom should be filled in for each toilet facility. No cloth towels will be available but disposable towelling will be used instead. Airflow driers should not be used.
2. Floor cleaning should be carried out more regularly and frequently throughout the day, and as necessary. The following areas should be cleaned particularly thoroughly and, if possible, several times a day in heavily frequented areas: door handles and any other handles on drawers, windows, stairs and handrails, light switches, tables, phones, and all other grip areas. Lined waste bins should be provided for safe disposal of waste such as used masks.
3. Proper indoor ventilation is essential. In order to ensure adequate circulation of air, and to reduce the level of pathogens in the air, windows and/or doors should be kept open throughout the use of the studio, room, class or workshop to allow for cross ventilation. The use of fans and air conditioners shall be utilised as specified in the Guidance for Air-Conditioning and Ventilation Systems⁵.
4. The use of equipment is to be avoided as much as possible and where possible students should be asked to bring their own. When using school equipment, students are responsible for sanitizing them after use. Equipment for children aged 3 to 8 should be sanitized by the tutor after every use. Where relevant it is recommended that the volume of music/audio be kept as low as possible to avoid the teacher having to shout to make themselves heard.
5. Where possible separate entrances and exits should be used. Where not possible, class times should be staggered to avoid children entering and leaving at the same time.
6. Payment of fees should be made electronically where possible. It is recommended that no cash should be accepted.
7. Posters with reminders of preventive measures should be prominently available in all areas.
8. Sanitizers and tissues need to be available inside the studio and in waiting areas.
9. Collaborators and contractors who provide services to the school are to abide by these same guidelines when providing a service to the school (masks, taking of temperature, signing on visitors' sheets, sanitising hands and objects, etc).
10. All precautions are to be constantly taken to ensure that water systems are safe to prevent the risk of infections derived from water such as Legionnaire's disease.

⁵ https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Guidance_Air-conditioning-and-ventilation-systems_23Jun20.pdf