



NAfME Position and Guidance on Singing in Our Schools

The NAfME Council for Choral Education advocates for continued in-person choral singing in K-12 school music programs. This can be accomplished in a safe manner by meticulous utilization of the CDC guidelines for gatherings and in coordination with your local, state, and governmental efforts. We believe that music education is essential to a balanced education for K-12 students.

Mitigation Techniques for Choral Ensembles:

Although no procedure is 100% effective, the following measures have been proven to mitigate the risks of spreading the virus through in-person singing:

1. Masks must be worn at all times.
2. Singers should stand 6 feet apart in every direction.
3. In-person rehearsals should last no longer than 30 minutes before moving to a secondary space. Rehearsals can resume in the primary space after an appropriate amount of time for air exchange (see #4).
4. Indoor rehearsal spaces should be ventilated, and indoor rehearsals should be "followed by a minimum of one air exchange rate (ACH), preferably 3 ACH, to change the air indoors with outside air."¹
5. Larger rehearsal spaces are preferable.
6. When possible, use of outdoor spaces for rehearsal is recommended.
7. Depending on the size of the ensemble, directors may need to divide their group into smaller ensembles.
8. Frequently wash hands using soap and water or hand sanitizers.

Myths:

1. *Singing is more dangerous than playing an instrument.* This is false. "Wind instruments and singing produce aerosol, which vary by instrument as well as intensity. The produced aerosol amount is, on average, similar across all instrument types and singing with the exception of the oboe."¹
2. *Singers must wear expensive "Singer's Masks."* This is false. "Singers wearing a well fit 3-layer surgical style mask reduces aerosol emission."¹
3. *Plexiglass partitions will aid in mitigation efforts.* This is false. "Plexiglass partitions or barriers between musicians are not recommended due to room HVAC system design limitations."¹

Equity in curricular and extracurricular offerings:

By utilizing the above mitigation techniques, singing in school is a discipline that can be as safe as any other curricular and extracurricular activity. By supporting choral programs and singing in schools, administrators will demonstrate the equity of choral/vocal education with other curricular and extracurricular activities in school programs and its intrinsic importance to the development of the whole student.

For more information:

- NAfME/NFHS Fall 2020 Guidance for Music Education
- International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study
- ACDA COVID-19 Response Committee Report

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¹National Federation of State High School Associations. *International Coalition of Performing Arts Aerosol Study. Report no. 3, 2020.* <https://www.nfhs.org/media/4294910/third-aerosol-report.pdf>