

SUMMER PRE-SEASON BAND PRACTICE GUIDELINES

These guidelines cover optional summer sectionals only. Updated guidance will be made available for band camp. Further guidance will then be issued for practices during the school year which will include indoor rehearsals, performances, and transportation guidelines.

OVERVIEW

- The following guidelines are in place in order to (1) provide the safest environment for participants, and (2) provide meaningful music and marching activities. The first point is always more important than the second.
- These guidelines are compiled from a number of sources including, but not limited to: CDC, PDE, PMEA, PIAA, the American Bandmasters Association, RTM, Penncrest High School, and numerous conversations and idea-sharing among fellow band directors.
- Enforcement of the guidelines begins with the individual; it is not possible for authorities of the school district to enforce guidelines for all summer practices. Band members, especially student leaders, should remind and monitor all aspects of the practice.
- Our situation continues to evolve, as does our understanding of it. Expect guidelines to change, sometimes rapidly.
- Maintain an open mind, flexibility, and a creative approach. Care for one another and err on the side of caution when the opportunity arises. Finally, remain positive and keep up a high level of expectation that is consistent with our programs mission and goals.

STATEMENT

Music is a fundamental element in the education of students worldwide. A student's ability to participate in ensemble music such as bands, orchestras and choirs is a unique and irreplaceable element of student access in not only learning about, but sharing in, the art of music making. The future of this opportunity must be of paramount concern to teachers and administrators, though the health and safety of these music students and their teachers must also be at the front of our decision making. To the dual effort of keeping everyone safe and preserving quality music education for all, we offer these ideas for consideration while planning scheduling and health considerations in situations where adjustments become necessary. It is obviously our goal to retain as much student enthusiasm and educational rigor as possible so that all may return to the proper delivery of these important classes, healthy and musically prepared when it becomes possible. It is crucial that teachers and administrators carefully evaluate all decisions in navigating these uncharted waters so that adjustments do not produce unintended long-term consequences. Whatever accommodations become necessary during this difficult time, it must remain the goal to return to full ensembles in regularly scheduled classes when health and safety permit. A distance of 6 feet is used in these guidelines as a cautionary measure for the type of activity (i.e. deep breaths) that occurs during instrument practice. The unique value of ensemble music making is well documented and necessary to our students and to our society. This document is based on the belief that our present focus should not be on the "what" but the "how." The COVID-19 pandemic forces us to re-think "how" we will deliver quality music instruction through the American band program. What is good for students is always the focus. Our effort is to preserve music ensembles for the future so that we can continue to serve students through music.

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The science of protecting people during this pandemic and the opinions of medical professionals are still evolving. Any accommodations should be made with careful consideration of the best science currently available and reviewed regularly for possible revision based on that science. Several research projects are currently in progress studying every aspect of aerosol projection of particles while playing and singing, surface retention of contaminants, disinfecting instruments and surfaces, and the control of projected air, which will provide more information, very soon. Every teacher and administrator must be vigilant in their efforts to apply the latest research and reevaluate all procedures as the science evolves.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is a lab confirmed to have COVID-19

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- All practices are optional. If students or parents do not feel comfortable with live, outdoor, in-person participation, they are not required to attend. Communication about this is required; any request to be excused from practice must be in writing to the section leader or staff member in charge. If your family is not comfortable with hosting a practice, do not do so.
- Staff and section leaders will receive training to conduct safe summer practices.
- Continue to use and take advantage of video conferencing for practices in some cases.
- Practice outdoors whenever possible.
- Maintain at least 6' social distance between students, more if possible. A wide circle or arc, with the instructor in the center is ideal. The attendance block is also within guidelines.
- Masks are to be worn when not playing or exerting (exercising, running, or marching). Put your mask down, play or march, put your mask up, receive feedback.
- Minimize sharing of equipment. If equipment must be shared, such as moving of percussion equipment, disposable gloves should be worn.
- All shared equipment is to be sanitized in between and after practice sessions with disinfectant sprays and wipes. Care is to be taken not to damage wood or metal surfaces.
- Music and drill charts should be personal and electronic when possible.

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- Staggered arrival to practices is recommended. If parking at the school, park in every other space. Arrive even earlier than usual to allow for extra time to do this.
- Try not to go inside for any reason. Visit restrooms one at a time, with an emphasis on hand washing. Try not to use the restroom, especially in someone's home.
- Carefully monitor weather to avoid rushing and crowding into indoor spaces in the event of inclement weather.
- Early season practices, when students are building endurance, often results in excessive coughing. Cough into your mask and away from other people.
- Do not enter homes or buildings to retrieve equipment. Everyone should report to practice with their own personal equipment. This could include: a wire music stand, instrument, guard equipment, water jug, and snacks.
- Set personal gear and equipment at least 6' apart.
- Staff are required to wear masks and/or face shields when in proximity with the students. Use microphones and speakers systems to communicate clearly.
- Report to practices in proper attire, and change and shower immediately upon returning home.
- Clean and disinfect your own instruments and equipment after each use, especially mouthpieces and reeds.
- Students, staff and families should not carpool to and from practices.

GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO GREEN PHASE PRACTICES

- Practice outdoors whenever possible.
- If practicing indoors, maintain 6' of distance between people. Create a one-way traffic flow through the area. Stagger entry and exit of the area - this will reduce the amount of time you will practice, but is important for safety. Indoor practices can be conducted to a maximum of 25% of facility or room capacity.
- Brass players need to bring their own "condensation dump" container to empty their water keys. This can basically be a bucket.
- Up to 250 people can gather outdoors. Full band rehearsals with staff, as well as performances for small audiences, are possible.
- If you have had fever or cold symptoms in the 24 hours prior to a practice, do not come to practice.
- Vulnerable individuals can resume practicing if they wish, but should be abundantly cautious to create distance, and avoid close gatherings.
- Formations can condense to 3' of distance between players. Students should still spread out when possible, such as when receiving instructions or feedback.

WHEN DECIDING WHAT TO DO, BE CAUTIOUS. SAFETY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BAND.

LOOK FOR BAND CAMP GUIDELINES IN THE WEEK PRIOR TO AUGUST 24.

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Resources:

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>

<https://slippedisc.com/2020/06/a-full-assessment-of-the-covid-risk-of-playing-wind-instruments/>

<https://hsbdna.org/>

<https://www.tmea.org/news/covid-19-updates>

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/sports-guidance/>

<https://nafme.org/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines/>

<https://nafme.org/my-classroom/fall-2020-guidance-music-education-from-nfhs-nafme/>