

Returning to Manitoba Music Classrooms: Recommendations for school reopening

September 2020

(Revised January 14, 2021)



Ce document est aussi disponible en français, sous le titre de « *Le retour en classe de musique au Manitoba : Recommandations pour la réouverture des écoles – Septembre 2020* ».



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This document does not in any way replace or negate recommendations from Manitoba Health or Manitoba Education and Training. We hope this document will assist policy makers in understanding the unique considerations of returning to music classrooms, while stressing the importance of continuing to provide music programming for all.

Please note that this document will be revised as circumstances change and new information/research becomes available.



Introduction



The Association of Music Administrators of Manitoba (AMAM), in consultation with the Manitoba Music Educators' Association (MMEA) and its partner groups, which represent guitar, band, choral and elementary music educators in our province, have worked together to prepare this list of recommendations for school reopening in accordance with code yellow Manitoba Health guidelines. We hope that by doing some detailed thinking around concerns that are specific to our specialty areas, we can offer some meaningful parameters for school reopening, while being cognizant of the changing landscape of our situation and the need to respond to new instructions from government as the situation unfolds.

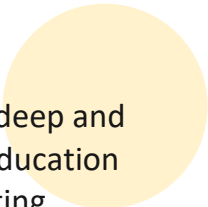
"Welcoming Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools" emphasizes that "mental health and wellbeing is critical to reopening plans". As music educators, we must stress the importance of the arts in helping students feel comfortable at school. Arts education is a crucial component of student well-being and provides a strong foundation for learning in all areas of the curriculum. Furthermore, the arts are a mandated part of the Manitoba Curriculum K-8, and therefore should be considered "core" It is essential that students continue to receive arts programming under the return to school plan. In high school, in addition to contributing to student engagement and motivation, many students rely on music courses to complete the required number of electives for graduation.




Music Advocacy Statement

In this time of stress and uncertainty during the COVID pandemic, many of us have turned to music and the arts to alleviate our anxiety and fear. The “Welcoming Students Back” framework states that “mental health and wellbeing is critical to reopening plans.” As music educators, we must stress the importance of the arts in helping students feel comfortable at school. Arts education is a crucial component of student well-being and provides a strong foundation for learning in all areas of the curriculum.

As stated in the *Rationale for Music Education* from the Manitoba K-8 Music Curriculum Framework;



“Music is a vital part of every student’s education and contributes to deep and enduring student engagement that leads to learning success. Music education develops unique, powerful, and multiple ways of perceiving, interpreting, knowing, representing, and communicating understandings about self and the world. Through music experiences, students have opportunities to think creatively, explore ideas and feelings, and develop emerging personal, cultural, and social identities.



The social act of music making generates synergy and provides unique opportunities for students to be part of collaborative and diverse knowledge building. Learning music enables students to explore ambiguity, to think imaginatively, innovatively, and with flexibility and empathy, and to feel confident with uncertainty and risk. Music education promotes open-ended, critical, divergent, and dialogic thinking and encourages understanding and feeling mediated through body, mind, and senses.

Music helps students to appreciate and connect with others past and present, as well as to understand and celebrate their own distinctiveness. Mind, body, and spirit interact through music to engage students profoundly as they seek meaning in the world around them. through music, students are empowered with the creative energies and sense of agency that are needed to consider diverse views and transform thinking and possibilities. Music has the potential to promote responsibility and leadership and to prepare and inspire future citizens of the world to understand and address the most critical challenges of their times.”

Takeaways for Administrators

Why music is essential

- Music education is an essential component of student learning, contributing to student motivation and engagement. The Restoring Safe Schools document clearly states that we will need to “develop strategies to re-engage” students “who are vulnerable to disengage from school.” For many students, music classes are essential to their sense of belonging at school. [Research](#) supports the multiple ways in which music education contributes positively to health & well-being.




“Self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-management and perseverance, social awareness and relationship skills are central to any arts education activity, no matter the age and ability of the student or the environment in which the learning takes place. The arts, with their strong emphasis on team-building and self-reflection are supremely suited to re-ignite students’ interest in learning through collaboration, while simultaneously fostering creativity, critical thinking, and communication.” [Arts Education is Essential](#)

- Arts education plays a fundamental role in identity construction. Through the arts, students develop their ability to express themselves in multiple ways.
- Although it is not the primary reason music is important, it is also well documented that learning in the arts supports learning in all areas of the curriculum, including literacy and numeracy.

Time allotment & programming

- In Manitoba, arts education is compulsory for grades 1 to 8. The minimum recommended time allotments for arts education in grades 1 to 8 are as follows:
 - Grades 1 to 6 – 10 percent of instructional time
 - Grades 7 and 8 – 8 percent of instructional time
- Current and on-going research, as outlined in this document, confirms that music education can proceed with safety measures in place. If we understand the risks and control the environment, we can safely play instruments and sing.

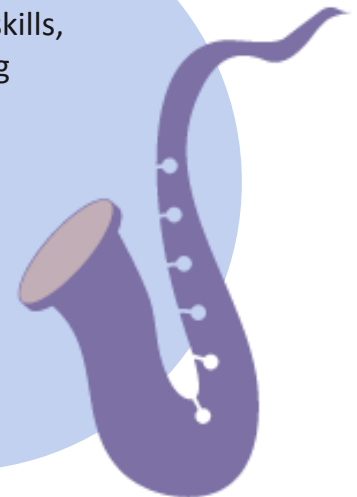
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- We may need to reconsider the way we teach our students in larger ensembles. Students can still experience authentic music learning through smaller groups on a rotating bases, or through a hybrid model. We may be able to introduce musical concepts that we normally do not have the opportunity to address.
 - We strongly encourage collaboration between teachers and administrators when adjusting programming and schedules in response to the recommendations in this document. Music teachers are uniquely situated to offer creative solutions to ensure quality music education experiences for all students that are aligned with the Manitoba framework.
 - Music classes that focus on stringed instruments, percussion or music production offer no additional risk of contributing to the spread of COVID-19 if singing or wind instruments are not included in the programming. Performing on these instruments or using technology to make music does not involve breathing into the instrument to create a tone and students can safely participate in these classes while respecting the same social distancing guidelines that are implemented in the rest of the school.

Staffing

- We strongly recommend that music classes continue to be taught by qualified music specialists

“To teach any of the four arts disciplines effectively, teachers need the appropriate knowledge and skills, which can be acquired in various ways, including specialist education, preservice and in-service education, and other professional learning opportunities.

*(Kindergarten to Grade 8 Music –
Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes, p. 3)*



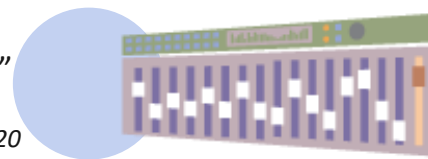
Budget Implications

- Additional purchases or rental of instruments and equipment may be necessary to provide each child with equitable opportunity
- Specialized cleaning supplies for music rooms that won't damage instruments
- Purchase of music appropriate for small groups/chamber groups or for remote learning
- Licensing fees for new technology
- Consider portable microphone for music teachers to avoid high volume speech.
- Purchase of bell covers for wind instruments and masks with slits for students who play wind instruments, if recommended by public health
- In the event of music being taught in regular classrooms or elsewhere, consider a mobile cart to facilitate transporting equipment and resources.
- Purchase of portable HEPA Filters for music rooms to help with ventilation between groups

Music Education and Social Emotional Learning (SEL)


“Music is Social. Music is Emotional.”

Bob Morrison, *CSI Connect Keynote, June 9, 2020*



SEL is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. <https://casel.org/> Music educators consistently work to develop students' capacity on many levels. Students' social emotional growth works hand in glove with music experiences in classrooms from Kindergarten to Grade 12. In Manitoba, SEL is embedded into the day to day instruction across curricula. Music class is especially rich in developing students' social emotional competencies.

As outlined in the September Ready Fall 2020 Guidance for Arts Education Report, Arts Ed NJ, Music and arts experiences promote social emotional learning in a variety of ways:

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- The relationship built between arts teacher and students over multiple years of instruction fosters the caring environment necessary to help build school connectedness and foster empathy.
 - The perseverance needed to dedicate oneself to artistic excellence fosters resiliency both in and out of the arts classroom.
 - Artistic creation fosters self-awareness and allows students to develop a greater sense of autonomy and emotional vocabulary.
 - The collaborative community developed in the arts classroom welcomes discussions and an awareness of acceptance and embracing diversity.
 - Through the arts students learn the necessity of personal goal-setting, self-assessment, and accountability as they develop high standards for their artist endeavors and themselves.
 - Arts education provides developmental experiences that actively allow students to practice and hone social emotional competencies.

For more information on the connection between Social-Emotional Learning and Music Education [Click Here](#)


Connections to Literacy & Numeracy

The Manitoba Music Curriculum Framework includes the following statement;



“In today’s multi-faceted world, literacy is defined as much more than the ability to read and write print text. The texts that fill the world of today’s learners are multi-modal and combine print, digital, kinesthetic, aural/oral, gestural, spatial, and visual texts, along with many more. Music is considered an expressive form of literacy with a unique set of language, skills, knowledge, and practices. Music is an important way of knowing that expands learners’ repertoire of literacies needed to make and communicate meaning in diverse and evolving contexts.”

(Grades 9 to 12 Music – Manitoba Curriculum Framework, p. 4).



The history of public education is riddled with back to basics reforms that consistently failed to achieve the desired results of producing literate, numerically competent adults, ready to take their places as productive members of society. Few would argue that learning to read is the single most life-altering skill a child can develop. If they progress beyond basic decoding and comprehension skills to a level of understanding that opens them up to a world of culture and ideas, gives them the tools to think critically about what they see hear and experience as part of a vibrant community, teaches them how to interact with the world as thoughtful, intelligent, kind human beings, then they have accomplished much.

This deep understanding, this kind of literacy, is not however achieved through spelling tests and levelled readers. Necessary as they may be, they are just the mechanics of early literacy. Early years music classes also contribute to the mechanics of literacy by helping children to hear the sounds that letters make, alone and in combination with other letters, through rhyming and alliterative play. The rhythm of music instills in the child a more sophisticated understanding of the rhythm of language, the cadence not only of speech, but of the give and take of conversation, negotiation, and nuance.

Beyond the merely mechanical, students' experiences with music give them a direct conduit to feeling, emotion and expression. Knowing how to speak, they need the deep understanding, fostered by the arts, to give them something to say about the human condition, and to say it well.

Turning to numeracy, it is important to understand that music doesn't just support number sense. It is fundamentally numerical in nature. Music is the tangible representation of the complex interplay of numbers. What students come to understand about how time, space and quantity are measured, divided and compounded and manipulated, they understand first as a musical idea.

The dry facts, well supported by decades of research, draw strong correlations between the study of music and high reading and math test scores. The importance of maintaining strong music programs is validated by this research. But a deeper understanding of the why behind this connection can best be understood holistically, as an inevitable web of connection that scholars spend lifetimes attempting to grasp empirically, but that we can understand intuitively if we allow ourselves to acknowledge this deep connection.

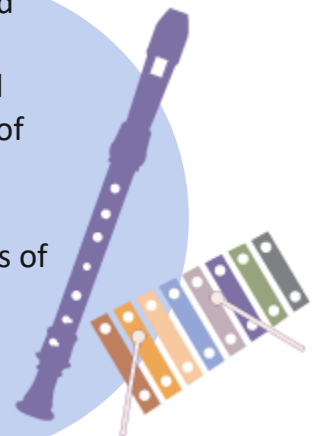
Making Music Safely

In the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, alarm bells were raised about the safety of singing, and subsequently wind instrument playing, as high-risk activities. These concerns were due to a number of early outbreaks, including one that occurred after a choir rehearsal in Washington State, and several others in Europe.

Since that time, many public health organizations, including Alberta Health Services Review and Public Health Ontario, have acknowledged that “evidence that singing is a contributing factor in the spread of the disease is largely anecdotal and is limited to a few observational studies.” In all cases, multiple sources of transmission may have contributed to disease spread, including poor ventilation, close proximity of choir members and contact with high touch surfaces. To date, there are no reports of transmission of the disease when physical distancing, hand hygiene and disinfection of high touch surfaces and limiting group sizes are observed. Furthermore, there are no published reports of transmission via wind instruments, although scientists agree that there is a theoretical risk based on limited information from earlier studies.

Moving forward, it is absolutely essential that we base our decisions about a return to music making on reliable research. Dr. Adam Schwalje from the University of Iowa cautions;

“It is more important than ever to read studies and guidelines with a critical eye and keep in mind the basics of scientific inquiry. A scientific study would cite sources, would be peer reviewed, in the case of COVID-19 would have the input of a physician or infectious disease specialist, and would be clear about who is producing the study and any conflicts of interest. The ability to replicate results is crucial, though this aspect of scientific inquiry can take time.”



Several scientific studies that address how COVID-19 is spread are available, but results are inconclusive. Fortunately, work is underway that should provide more reliable answers about the mechanisms of singing and wind instrument playing and provide evidence-based suggestions for mitigating the risk of transmission.

The following studies currently in progress are mentioned in a preliminary report published by the College Band Directors National Association (CBNDA) on May 21, 2020



“While scientific studies on virus transmission of aerosols in ensemble settings remain limited, two studies are underway. The first study, led by CBDNA and the National Federation of State High School Associations, and supported by over 30 professional organizations, will be conducted at the University of Colorado. The second study, supported by various arts organizations, will be led by a team of researchers and musicians at Colorado State University including CBDNA member Rebecca Phillips. In addition to measuring transmission of aerosols, each of the studies will also address ways to mitigate the aerosols produced while breathing and playing. These scientific studies will provide more information about woodwind and brass instrument aerosol emissions and will better inform the possibilities for large ensemble instruction.”

Preliminary results from the first study, which measured flow and aerosol release pathways for wind playing, singing, and speaking, were made available on July 13 and can be found here. <https://www.nfhs.org/media/4029965/preliminary-recommendations-from-international-performing-arts-aerosol-study.pdf>

While further work is needed, the study suggests that physical distancing measures are effective in curbing transmission while singing or playing wind instruments, although the risk rises steeply after 30 minutes of exposure to an infected person. Recommendations from this study are reflected in specific sections of this document.



Environmental Considerations


Physical Space

Many classrooms used for music instruction are large enough to continue to accommodate class groups. Ideally, music classes should continue in music rooms unless rooms are too small to accommodate students with recommended physical distancing. Music rooms should have proper ventilation. In this case, music teachers can move between homeroom classes or, if weather permits, classes can occasionally occur outside. [Click here](#) for an on-line tool to help determine this. Increased frequency of ventilation, cleaning and sanitizing is facilitated when students leave their classrooms during the day. Using the music room for music provides opportunities for homeroom teachers and support staff to ventilate their spaces and to disinfect and organize materials between activities.

- Extra time in schedule between groups for cleaning/transitions
- Outside classes may be considered when weather permits
- Designated entrance and exit in rooms with more than one door
- Students arranged facing forward in straight, staggered lines in band and choir
- Teacher requires more space when facing the group
- Markings on floor to indicate where students can sit/stand according to physical distancing guidelines
- Recommended 6'x6' of space per student
- Additional 3' space in front of trombones (6'x9')
- Flutes in the front row
- Spit valves should be emptied onto a puppy waste pad (or similar) rather than the floor so that contents can be contained.
- Need for larger space requires that some equipment be put in storage

Ventilation

- Where possible, existing HVAC systems in classrooms should be fitted with HEPA filters, which will increase air filtration appropriate to the size of the rehearsal space. Consider a portable ventilation system that adequately covers the space, if needed.
- Rooms with higher ceilings generally provide better ventilation or air circulation.



The next four bullets are taken from Ontario guidelines concerning room ventilation:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/approach-reopening-schools-2020-2021-school-year>

- Adequately ventilated classroom environments are expected to be associated with less likelihood of transmission compared with poorly ventilated settings
- Avoid recirculation of air, as far as practically possible and ensure clean filters.
- In general, ventilating indoor environments with fresh air, whether by increasing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings as much as possible or by opening windows, and avoiding or reducing recirculation, will dilute the air exhaled by the occupants including any infectious particles. Even if this is not feasible for the whole facility, consider for higher risk areas, e.g., where crowding may be an issue.
- Recommended maintenance measures for air handling systems. (including inspection and replacement of filters, if applicable) are essential to follow.

Equipment

- Large band instruments and guitars should be stored in the music room in designated spaces for each instrument and clearly labelled.
- Use of microphone and portable amplifier by teacher to minimize aerosol production indoors and to help with projection outdoors; use of mask by teacher indoors may also help.
- Each student has their own instrument/manipulatives, music/pencils. Sharing of instruments or equipment should be avoided unless they can be cleaned thoroughly. No sharing of wind instruments.
- Student carries instruments and equipment with them and takes them home
- Limit use of music stands to one person per class. Wipe down between uses.
- Use of bell covers – ideally fashioned from multi-layered high-density fabric with a MERV13 filter and placed over the bell of an instrument – makes a substantial impact on performers’ aerosol pathways.
- Use of large percussion equipment limited, wiped down at the end of each class.
- Cleaning products comply with disinfecting guidelines without damaging equipment (*see Product and cleaning recommendations*)
- If recommended by Health Manitoba, masks should be used at all times, especially when singing or projecting the voice.
- Some evidence suggests that using masks with slits when playing wind instruments can help to mitigate aerosol transmission.



Product and cleaning recommendations

The following information is available on the National Federation of State High School Associations (nfhs) [website](#);

Sterilization vs. Disinfection

There is a difference between sterilization and disinfection of music instruments. Sterilization is limited in how long an instrument will remain sterile. Once an instrument is no longer sterile. However, disinfecting an instrument to make it safe to handle will last longer and is easier to achieve. COVID-19 like, most viruses has a limited lifespan on hard surfaces. Users of musical equipment may be more susceptible to infections from instruments that are not cleaned and maintained properly, especially if they are shared school instruments.

If the cleaning process is thorough, musical instruments can be disinfected. Basic soap and water can be highly effective in reducing the number of harmful bacteria and viruses simply by carrying away the dirt and oil that they stick to.

The NFHS, NAFME and the NAMM Foundation received information from the CDC which suggest the COVID-19 virus can remain on the following instrument surfaces for the stated amount of time:

Brass – Up to 5 Days
Wood – Up to 4 Days
Plastic – Up to 3 Days
Strings – Up to 3 Days
Cork – Up to 2 Days

The CDC recommends general cleaning techniques for instruments that have not been used or handled outside of the above timelines. Essentially, if students are picking up instruments for the first time since school has been closed, those instruments will not need more than general cleaning as stated below.


If distributing instruments for the first time since schools have closed, the NFHS and NAFME recommend, out of an abundance of caution, that all cases be sprayed with an aerosol disinfectant.

Additional guidance on general cleaning and disinfection can be found here

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines>

<https://usa.yamaha.com/support/safety/index.html>

- Cleaning required during school day done by teachers (older students can be responsible for disinfecting their own equipment with proper instructions provided by the teacher)

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- Handwashing or hand sanitization before entering music room, and before returning to classrooms
 - Use of wipes (70% or higher) to clean surfaces between groups, including chairs and music stands
 - No loose papers or small equipment left out at the end of the day to facilitate wiping down of all hard surfaces by custodial staff
 - Disposable gloves available for use by teachers to help with tuning, mouthpiece adjustments, etc. when hand washing is not possible within classroom
 - Videos for general cleaning of wind instruments published by the University of North Texas can be found at <https://tcpah.unt.edu/covid-19>
 - Homeroom teachers and EA's to assist with transitions and sanitizing instruments and equipment

Here is a list of products, for general use, approved by Health Canada: [Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\)](#)

Instrument specific cleaning protocols

- Pianos and electronic equipment should be wiped down with a soft cloth sprayed, but not soaked, in an approved solution. A 70% alcohol spray has been recommended. https://www.yamaha.com/yamahavgn/Documents/disinfection/DisinfectionGuide-Digital-Pianos.pdf?_ga=2.7202993.2068700657.1595342538-1794339041.1595342538
- Guitar https://www.yamaha.com/yamahavgn/Documents/disinfection/DisinfectionGuide-Guitars.pdf?_ga=2.15139765.2068700657.1595342538-1794339041.1595342538
- String Instrument Cleaning Tips *Information provided by William Harris Lee & Company and Yamaha* https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Instrument_Cleaning_Tips.aspx
- Wind Instruments https://www.yamaha.com/yamahavgn/Documents/disinfection/DisinfectionGuide-Winds-Strings.pdf?_ga=2.207997585.2068700657.1595342538-1794339041.1595342538



Timetable & Programming

The preliminary results of the University of Colorado study indicate that risk of transmission increases after 30-45 minutes because of aerosol production in the same room. Rooms should be aired out every hour between groups. *Hepa filters* can help with ventilation.

- In cases where schools are operating in a blended in-class and remote learning model, consider giving music classes, which are more difficult to enact remotely, in-person priority
- Allow time between groups to properly ventilate the space
- Simplify programming to use fewer pieces of equipment
- Project music and teaching instructions on screens when possible (no interactive white board use)
- Singing together in an enclosed space should be limited to 30 minutes. Consider alternating singing activities with non-locomotor movement, percussion or learning activities that do not require the voice or a wind instrument
- Large ensemble classes may need to be split according to social distancing guidelines
- Like instrument classes in first year band (e.g. all clarinets together)
- Opportunities for sectional rehearsals
- Chamber groups/small ensembles in band/choir
- Use of alternative strategies for instrument assignments including a survey of student preferences, physical characteristics, simulated embouchure formation without the use of instruments, and the recommendations of the student's last music teacher
- Band instrument testing limited to small pieces (mouthpieces/head joints) which can be thoroughly disinfected between students. Use of inexpensive 3D printed mouthpieces is effective. No sharing of reeds.
- Suspend in person interactions with guest clinicians. Consider virtual visits

Concerts & Events

- While restrictions on large gatherings remain in place, live concerts can only take place if physical distancing guidelines can be implemented
- Suspend field trips and festivals in the fall unless physical distancing can be accommodated
- Postpone divisional projects and events until social distancing rules are relaxed
- Consider outdoor performances
- Consider streaming live, pre-recorded concerts or virtual alternatives



Trips

- Out-of-province and international travel will remain subject to ongoing guidance from public health.

Technology

In models that include distance learning, collaboration between music and classroom teachers, including communication with parents and students, is essential. Teachers are encouraged to plan with technology in mind and incorporate the use of technology from the beginning of the school year in order to facilitate possible transitions between in school and at home learning. In learning at home and hybrid models, enhanced technology should be explored, including better recording capabilities and interactive technologies that solve lag problems.


- Ensure that all students have equitable access to devices and internet at home
- Teachers need professional development in new technology and planning for remote learning
- Students need training in online learning technology and remote learning (building autonomy)

Sketches of Practice

Robust music programs can and should be delivered during the 2020-2021 school year regardless of the curriculum delivery model that is in place. The Manitoba Music Educators' Association partner groups, which include the Manitoba Choral Association, Manitoba Orff Chapter, Manitoba Classroom Guitar Association and the Manitoba Band Association, have put together an extensive list of activities for music classes K-12 for all three possible scenarios that reflect all four areas of the Manitoba Music Curricula as represented by the wings of a butterfly. While all four areas work together to support the musical development of the student, they are described here individually with a brief outline of possibilities for all areas and grade levels. The complete document is available on the MMEA website and will be updated on a regular basis as new ideas and lessons are developed.

Music Language and Performance Skills - Making Music

Making music is at the core of the Manitoba Music Curriculum. Students build skills for making music independently and collaboratively. Through singing, playing, moving, creating, and



exploring, students develop an understanding of and facility with the elements, concepts, and techniques for making music.

Possible activities in this wing include small group and individual instruction, band and choir sectionals, chamber music groups, online masterclasses, and conducting classes for older students. Students can use youtube videos to help them work on specific techniques, including learning classic guitar riffs. Younger students can engage in speech ensembles, body percussion activities and drumming. Humming may be possible for choir and elementary classes. Music theory can also be strengthened, from basic note and rhythm reading to harmonic and formal analysis.

Creative Expression in Music – Creating Music

Creating music allows students to express themselves and contributes to their personal wellbeing. When creating music, students apply their skills by working individually and collaboratively to generate, develop, and communicate ideas for a variety of purposes.

Many online forums are available for music writing, including Chromelab, Garage Band and Soundtrap. Students can create sound effects to accompany stories as Foley artists. Student compositions can flourish with the support of teachers in both distance and in-person teaching models.

Understanding Music in Context – Connecting to Music

Humans are naturally drawn to music and interpret and connect with it in different ways. In addition to exploring their personal connection with music, students discover how music reflects and influences culture and identity. They also connect music to the larger contexts of history and humanity.

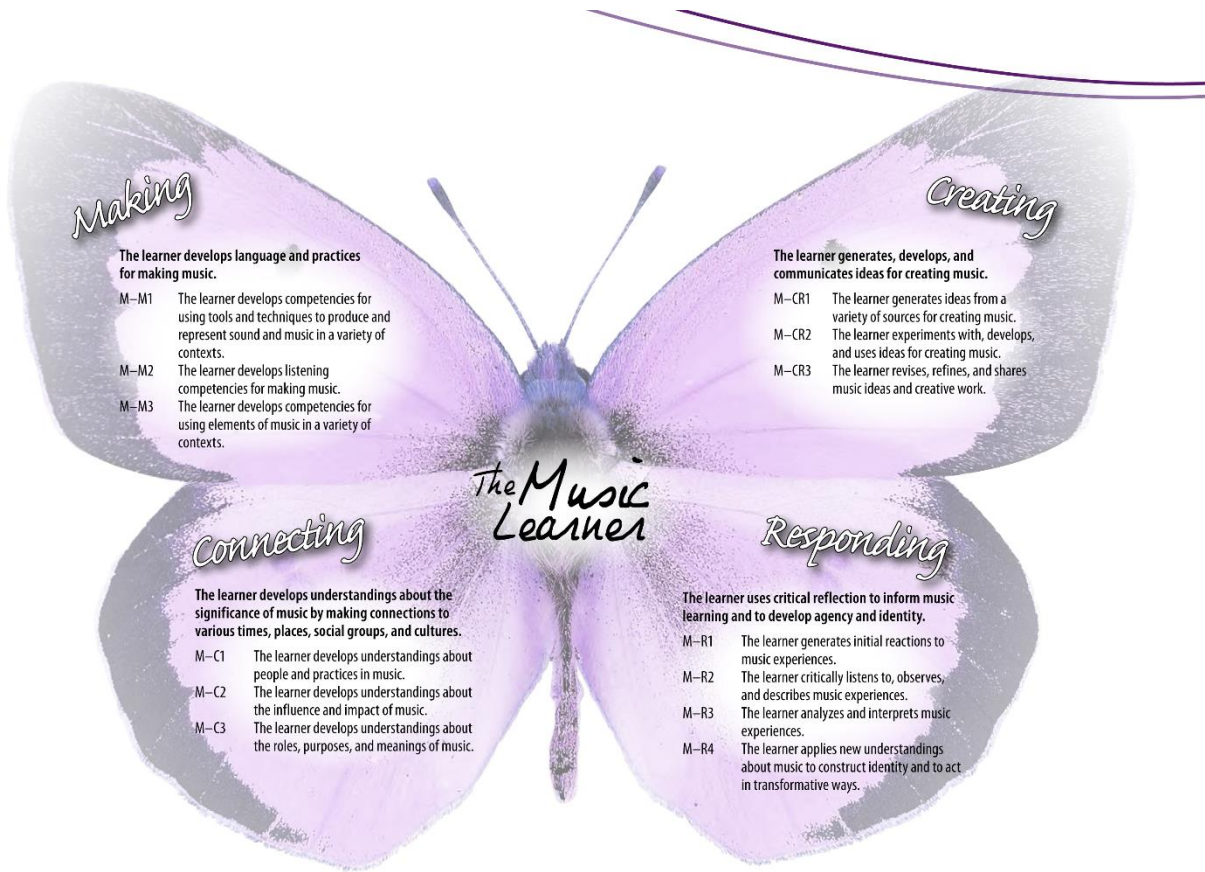
Students can explore music from a variety of cultures and time periods through listening and research. Making a playlist for an older relative, exploring personal connections to music of different styles and genres, and looking at how music is used in movies, video games and advertising are valuable activities that can be explored in distance, hybrid and in-person teaching scenarios.

Valuing Musical Experience – Responding to Music

Responding to music focuses on the student voice. When responding to music, students are encouraged to think critically about a musical experience and articulate their thoughts, feelings, and observations. This process helps students think constructively about their own and others' music.

Work that involves listening and reflecting on musical experiences fits well with this wing. Younger students can draw graphic scores to describe what they are hearing. All students can

create song journals. Using the chat feature in online platforms, students can listen to music together and comment on it in real time, with guidance from the teacher.





Research & Resources

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