



TULARE COUNTY  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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**Clarification on School Band and Choir March 5, 2021**

Tulare County will follow the state guidance from the school plan. Per COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year:

*Activities where there is increased likelihood for transmission from contaminated exhaled aerosols such as band and choir practice and performances are permitted outdoors only, provided that precautions such as physical distancing and use of face coverings are implemented to the maximum extent (p 24)*

*Outdoor singing and band practice are permitted, provided that precautions such as physical distancing and mask wearing are implemented to the maximum extent possible. Playing of wind instruments (any instrument played by the mouth, such as a trumpet or clarinet) is strongly discouraged. School officials, staff, parents, and students should be aware of the increased likelihood for transmission from exhaled aerosols during singing and band practice, and physical distancing beyond 6 feet is strongly recommended for any of these activities. (p 25)*

Certain band and choral activities increase risk of COVID-19 transmission. Wind instruments and singing forcefully expel [potentially contaminated] aerosolized respiratory droplets, which may linger in the air for a period of time. This heightened risk was recognized early in the pandemic after the documented super-spreader event from a choir rehearsal in Washington where 87 percent of participants contracted COVID-19.

The use of brass and woodwind instruments continues to be specifically not advised per current state school guidance. As previously, outdoor choral practice and band practice sans wind instruments with masking and increased physical distancing measures are outlined in state school guidance. Unless specified, the guidance and preventive measures apply similarly for orchestra, drum line, and color guard.

It should be noted that increased risk persists even with implemented precautions and all persons involved should be aware of the increased likelihood of transmission. Informed consent of student participants, families, staff, and audience members is a consideration. Schools should also ensure good contact tracing and notification measures for extracurricular activities are in place for when a case of COVID-19 is identified. The use of bell covers and woodwind bags as well as routine test screening (similar to school sports guidance) may be considered to decrease risk further. Be advised that the effectiveness of bell covers and woodwind bags has not yet been demonstrated and their use does not eliminate the need for other preventive measures such as physical distancing and masking.

Guidance is subject to change with developing information on new virus variant transmissibility as well as evolving community transmission conditions.

*COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Instruction Framework & Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California, 2020-2021 School Year. CDPH, January 2021.*

[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated\\_Schools\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Consolidated_Schools_Guidance.pdf)

*High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice – Skagit County, Washington, March 2020. CDC MMWR, May 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>*