

Guidelines/Suggestions for In-School and Outdoor Marching Band Rehearsals

Disclaimer

The South Carolina Band Directors Association does not offer mandates nor directives to its membership. The suggestions given in this document are by no means mandates nor should be taken as such. The guidelines and suggestions given are simply “best practices” and suggestions to consider when offering face to face instruction and training during school day band rehearsals and outdoor marching band activities. The information in this document is provided in good faith and further, we make no representation of warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the adequacy or completeness of these guidelines.

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Guidelines for School Day Band Rehearsals

These guidelines and suggestions are intended for application in non-health care related places of employment. The foundation guidelines for businesses and employers remain the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Interim Guidance for Business and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

All organizations have to determine how best to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace as well as in their community. In order to reopen and successfully remain open for business, every individually and collectively must actively participate in the core recommendations:

1. Self-isolation – if you are sick, stay home.
2. Practice social distancing of at least six feet distance to the greatest extent possible.
3. Wash hands frequently (20 seconds with soap and water or use of a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol).
4. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects (e.g., keyboards, phones) and surfaces (e.g., handrails, workstations, sinks) or remove unnecessary frequently touched surfaces (e.g., trash can lids).
5. Avoid touching of eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
6. Strongly consider wearing a cloth face covering when in public (do not use on children under two years old, people with difficulty breathing or people who cannot remove the mask themselves).
7. Cover mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues away immediately after use.
8. Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment when possible, or disinfect them before and after use.
9. Minimize the use of soft surfaces like cloth covered chairs or area rugs that are more difficult to clean or disinfect.

Guidelines/Suggestions Specifically for Band Ensemble Rehearsal Settings:

In addition to the CDC Guidelines outlined above, the guidelines below are designed to further reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 during rehearsals, training, or competition. Following these guidelines does not guarantee that transmission of the virus will not occur. Participating in ensemble rehearsals comes with a risk of contracting COVID-19, other illnesses, or injury.

1. It is recommended that each school consider marching band as a “non-contact sport” as defined by the SCHSL and follow the appropriate practice timeline.
2. Maintain minimum physical distancing of at least six feet between participants at all times.

3. All directors, staff and students should be screened according to their respective district guidelines and protocols.
4. Face coverings/masks that completely cover the nose and mouth should be worn by all directors, staff and students.
 - a. Wind players should wear face covering when not actively playing the instrument.
 - b. Percussion and Color Guard students should wear face covering at all times if possible.
 - c. Directors and staff should wear face covering at all times.
5. ***Taking into consideration that rehearsal spaces (outdoor and indoor) vary among schools, we advise to consult your local school district policies as to how many students/staff can participate in face to face activities at a given time. It is our recommendation that the number of students allowed in a rehearsal setting be based on the space available and the ability to properly and safely distance students and staff.***
6. Students and staff should report to rehearsals in proper gear/attire when possible. If not possible, changing areas should be limited to 50% capacity at all times and students/staff should wear face coverings.
7. Bell covers should be purchased for all instrumentalists is possible.
8. Students should be encouraged to wash their rehearsal attire immediately upon returning home.
9. Bathroom access should be limited to every other stall, with no more people allowed inside than the number of stalls in use.
10. Rehearsals should be conducted in with a minimum of 6 feet distance between students.
11. There should be no car-pooling to or from rehearsals if possible.
12. Alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol or handwashing stations should be available to all participants.
13. Instruments, equipment and sheet music should not be shared without proper cleaning and disinfecting. This includes percussion mallets and sticks and color guard equipment.
14. Individual should bring their own water bottle to each rehearsal and not share this bottle with anyone. Use of communal water fountains is not recommended and should be avoided.
15. Signs should be posted at the front entrance to alert staff and students not to enter the facility if they have had known exposure to someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days or have symptoms such as cough, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell.
16. Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all facilities used to mitigate any communicable diseases.
17. Prior to an individual or group of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within the facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, stands, furniture, door knobs, etc.).
18. If possible, bands should be seated in an alternative area for home football games away from the general public (behind end zone, separate bleachers, etc.). It is not recommended that bands attend away football games.
19. The masking and distance protocols should be adhered to during football games.
20. If indoor rehearsals are utilized, a few suggestions are:
 - a. Use portable air scrubbers (HEPA filtration system for large square footage).
 - b. Example of Air Scrubber: <https://www.amazon.com/Purifier-Washable-Pre-Filters-Particle-Allergens/dp/B073WJPK5H?th=1>
 - c. Have a plan for a “communal” water key dump site. Use buckets containing an alcohol based solution or provide personal sterilization materials for each individual as necessary for brass players to deal with water disposal.
 - d. Use of UVC lighting.

While this list is not exhaustive in terms of preventative measures, it is our hope that these recommendations can serve as a guide and a starting point for measures to be put in place to ensure the safety of directors, staff and students as you begin band camps in preparation for the marching band season.