

Teaching Music Safely During COVID

We know that music-making is an important part of our students' education as well as having a huge positive benefit on their well-being. Whilst it is essential to follow the social distancing and general guidance given at a school, trust, authority and country level it is still possible to adhere to this advice and offer safe and practical music-making opportunities for all students.

It is important that all activities suit students working individually, in groups or classes in school, or through a hybrid or blended approach to learning. Using Charanga you simply decide which activities are appropriate for your students at any given time.

The main activities which are currently limited for many are singing and the playing of certain instruments.

Singing

Although singing in the classroom may not be allowed, it is worth considering other options such as singing in the playground or at home. For this reason we have not removed the Learn to Sing the Song activity from our Units of Work.

Additionally we have given suggestions for other ways to enjoy the songs - see the Teaching Guides on each unit homepage for more details. These suggestions include ideas such as reflecting on the meaning and message of the unit song or creating your own lyrics (words).

We are also thrilled to offer a signed version of the main song from the adapted units offering your students the chance to communicate through signing rather than singing.

Playing Instruments

The playing of instruments especially those that are blown such as recorders and other woodwind or brass instruments, may be advised against in a classroom setting. In certain circumstances this may also include sharing of any instruments including classroom percussion.

If you have classroom percussion such as triangles and drums, consider allocating specific instruments to individual students and swapping around each week or so. Percussion instruments are easily carried by your students should you need to move to a different space. Divide the students into two music teams when necessary, with each team taking it in turns to be the performers and the listeners.

If there are not enough percussion instruments for every student why not create some? They can be as simple as striking the chair with a pencil or as elaborate as you like! You might even want to set a 'create your own instrument' homework task.

For instruments such as glocks which require a beater, you may need to invest in additional beaters so that everyone has their own. These could be stored easily in the students' pencil cases.

Should you usually use instruments such as recorders, it will be important to label them very clearly with every student having their own. Depending on the guidance it is likely you may need to use recorders and other blown instruments outside, in smaller groups, or at home. It is easy to share teaching resources to support learning at home through Yumu along with the unit packages. More details are available on the CPD & Training section.

If you decide that instruments should be avoided in school altogether, or if you want to explore a new skill, why not try body percussion – sounds you make with your body such as claps, clicks or stamps. Body percussion can be used for rhythmic work or you can allocate a particular action to a particular note.

Liaise with your local hub or instrumental provider to plan for whole-class, group or individual instrumental lessons. Many providers are exploring online provision or you may be able to use a larger space to allow for social distancing with certain conditions in place such as the use of a screen; blank roller blinds are ideal for this. Students who enjoy additional instrumental or vocal tuition will be really grateful for the opportunity to continue.

Optional Replacement Activities

If you are using the Adapted for COVID Scheme and prefer not to use Learn to Sing the Song, we have inserted a complete replacement activity for you to explore. As you would expect, this replacement activity will seamlessly link to the unit focusing on a specific feature of the main song. For example, the replacement activity for Hey You! explores a rhythm pattern from the song itself and Hands, Feet, Heart features a listening game celebrating music from around the world.

Each unit has a Teaching Guide which gives step-by-step instructions. Further support is provided with the live and recorded webinars such as You Can! Explore Rhythms and You Can! Create Develop Listening Skills. Your CPD & Training Manager will also be happy to offer advice.

Hybrid and Blended Learning

All the units within the adapted Scheme are accompanied by a Musical School Scheme At Home Package which, unlike the previous streamlined Music At Home Packages, includes every resource from the unit.

The Scheme At Home packages are designed to be flexible so that you, as the teacher, decide which activities should be completed in or outside of the classroom. If your students are not singing or playing certain instruments in school this is the ideal opportunity to encourage these activities at home.

Access to these packages is via Yumu. Providing students with individual logins is a two minute job – you simply copy and paste a class or group list to create a unique username and password for everyone. Distributing the login details in school is easy with a choice of printable letters or stickers. It is more time-consuming if students are not in school so do make this a priority. Additionally this will allow you to set appropriate tasks for your students to complete during, before or after their music lessons.

Help and Support

The Help and CPD & Training sections are packed full of guides, articles and live or recorded webinars. The CPD & Training Team, all teachers themselves, are also on hand to answer any queries or concerns you may have.