

# **Band COVID-19 Protocols**

October 14, 2020 Update

Due to the hunger for playing band instruments that students are showing and the recent unavailability to play outdoors (due to poor air quality and cold weather), I have been searching for ways to allow for band-playing indoors. However, certain guidelines and rules **MUST** be met by students to ensure everyone's safety.

Our staff is taking our students' health very seriously and we want to protect them in the best ways that we can. This is a virus we are constantly learning new things about, and protocols may change over time as we become more familiar with it. These COVID-19 protocols were determined using the most recent aerosol studies from the University of Colorado in Boulder (UC Boulder), the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), and the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

In order to allow for band to be held inside:

1. **Outdoor Rehearsal** will be held whenever possible and will only be held indoors when outdoor rehearsal is not applicable (due to unsuitable weather, air quality, etc.). Students in these rehearsals are to be placed a minimum of 6 feet apart, facing the same direction. Trombones must have 9 feet of clearance in front. Outdoor playing time will be limited to 30-minute increments with a 5-minute playing break. Specialized masks and bell covers are recommended but not required.
2. **Indoor HS Band Rehearsals** will take place in the band room. The current ventilation system in the band room is one of the highest quality throughout the building and allows for safe air exchange. Doors leading outdoors must remain closed to not interfere with the ventilation system's work. Students must remain 6 feet apart. Trombones must have 9 feet of clearance in front. Playing time must still be limited to 30 minutes, and the room must be vacated for 15 minutes to allow for an air exchange.
3. **Indoor Elementary Band Rehearsals** will take place in the gym with students a minimum of 6 feet apart, facing the same direction. Playing must not exceed 30 minutes. After class, I will turn on the exhaust fan to commence an air exchange, and a custodian will shut it off before the end of their shift.
4. **For Wind Instruments**, specialized masks and bell covers are **REQUIRED** for indoor playing. Our mask maker in Bozeman, MT has handmade musician masks and bell covers for our school district. These masks/bell covers are double-layered, non-woven polypropylene with snug adjustments to fit faces/instruments. This equipment must be washed and cleaned regularly by hand with warm (not hot) soap and water. ***Masks/bell covers can NOT be washed with other laundry.***

5. **Students Must Practice Good Hygiene**, wash their hands, and use hand sanitizer. There will be no sharing of instruments or wind instrument supplies. It is recommended that personal equipment/materials are acquired by individual students whenever possible. Drumsticks/mallets may only be shared if they are sanitized between uses.

We have received amazing assistance from a community member in Bozeman, MT who has volunteered several hours of her time to assemble high-quality instrument masks and bell covers for students in our district, Moscow School District, and others. This Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is made of double-layered, non-woven, well-fitting, polypropylene fabric.

If you have any questions/concerns or would like to read more about the protocols or resources mentioned above, please feel free to get in touch with me or any member of administration and we will do our best to provide an informed answer. We've all had an eventful and trying year and school starting will add a new challenge for everyone, but I cannot stress enough the importance and infectiousness of a positive attitude!

We are all disappointed about the things this pandemic has prevented us from doing. However, it will do nobody any good to mourn the loss of what we cannot do, but rather to look forward to doing the things we CAN do. We are very lucky that we are allowed to play music in school at all, and our attitudes should reflect this. I personally am excited to start my first year of teaching in Potlatch and am looking forward to making music with your students!

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