



## **2021-22 NFHS Marching Band Modifications and Considerations**

The following guidance can be used in states and localities where COVID-19 restrictions are still in place.

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Music Committee offers this document as guidance on how state associations can consider modifications for marching bands. The modifications outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets. Depending on directives of the local and state health departments marching bands across the country may have different requirements to follow.

### **Return to Marching Band Activities**

The NFHS believes it is beneficial to the physical, social, emotional and mental well-being of K-12 students across the nation that students return to regular, face-to-face marching band activities as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. The NFHS recognizes the likelihood that all students will not be able to return to marching band activities at the same time in all schools, regions and states. There will likely be variations in which activities can recommence across the country. While we would typically have reservations regarding such inequities, the NFHS endorses the return to school-based marching band activities in any and all situations where a return can be done safely.

### **Prioritizing Face-to-Face Events**

As schools develop plans for the new school year, the health, safety, and security of our students, faculty, and staff is the predominant consideration. During this pandemic, many school communities were able to lean into their strengths, but also faced new challenges. We showed strength by being flexible and allowing students to participate during a difficult time. For example, in music the participants were able to have their performances reviewed and adjudicated in a nearly online only setting. However, often the participants were not able to experience fellow student performances.

### **[COVID-19 Aerosol Study](#)**

The NFHS, CBDNA and more than 125 performing arts organizations are supporting a scientific study to learn how COVID-19 may spread via aerosol distribution and develop mitigation techniques to prevent or lessen aerosol distribution during speaking, acting, singing, and playing of wind instruments. The results of this research will inform our understanding and, subsequently guide us, on how to safely resume face-to-face activities. We encourage you to check [here](#) for updated information.

### **Marching Band Considerations for states and localities where COVID-19 restrictions are still in place:**

#### **1. Distancing:**

1. Participants should be spaced at six feet apart while on the field
2. Students should have a marked off space on or near the field for their personal items and cases
3. Percussion ensemble (pit) members should be placed to allow social distancing
4. Adequate spacing should be provided between individuals at the adjudicators' table

## **2. Masking:**

1. Face coverings that cover both the nose and mouth that are well fitting and multi-layered should be used when not playing a wind instrument
2. Bell covers should be used at all times. Covers should be made of multi-layered 80+ denier thickness material lined with a MERV 13 filter material
3. Subject to the foregoing, all personnel should properly wear masks including participants, directors, adjudicators, event staff, etc.

## **3. Air Flow and Time:**

1. Outdoor: After a 60-minute rehearsal, a five-minute “rest in place” break should be given to allow accumulated aerosol to disperse. This should occur with students staying in place and talking should be limited
2. Indoor: After a 30-minute rehearsal, the room should be cleared for at least one air exchange
3. If using a tent for adverse weather exposure outdoors, the tent should have a high-pitched roof and all four sides should be open. Time within the tent should be limited. Distancing and face covering protocols must be maintained

## **4. Hygiene:**

1. Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in rehearsals with hand sanitizer being plentiful during rehearsal.
2. Shared musical equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual’s use of equipment. Each student should have their own mouthpiece, reeds, sticks, etc.
3. All students shall bring their own water bottles. Water bottles must not be shared

## **5. Spectators:**

1. Limitations on spectators should conform to local and state health department recommendations.

## **6. General**

1. Continue to check for study updates and the latest recommendations at - <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>
2. CDC cleaning and disinfection guidelines - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>