



seattle youth symphony orchestra

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Policies & Procedures as of September 2, 2021*

Overview

SYSO prioritizes the health and safety of its musicians, faculty, and staff. We follow three basic principles in making decisions regarding COVID-19 risk mitigation:

- 1) We commit to providing the high-quality music education experience for which SYSO is known.
- 2) We follow the science and guides of the recommendations by government health agencies.
- 3) We will be transparent and communicative.

We also think it is important to remember:

- The best tool to protect yourself and the community is for all eligible persons to get vaccinated.
- The additional mitigation efforts to wear masks, increase ventilation and airflow, implement hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting, and staying home if ill or exposed to someone with COVID-19 will also reduce the spread of the virus.
- Social distancing, even though it is not required by the governmental public health agencies at this time, will be implemented to the extent possible.
- COVID-19 continues to change with new variants and for this reason, the guidance for responding to COVID-19 also changes.

Washington State COVID Guidelines

On June 30, 2021, Washington State has reopened under the [Washington Ready](#) plan. All industry sectors previously covered by the Roadmap to Recovery or the Safe Start plan (with the limited exceptions noted below) may return to usual capacity and operations.

SYSO will follow guidelines that are in line with the State of Washington Department of Health [Washington Ready](#) plan, including:

- Social distancing between musicians is not required

- Limiting the number of people who can be in a space (beyond the physical capacity of a given room or the restrictions imposed by the facility) is not required
- Health screenings upon entrance are not required
- **Continue to require face coverings /masks even for those who are fully vaccinated** (two weeks from completing the vaccine series).
- Highly encourage all eligible students (12 years and older) to be vaccinated
- Provide adequate ventilation
- Monitor students/staff/faculty for symptoms of COVID-19 and following all proper procedures if someone becomes sick
- Educate students, families, staff, and faculty to stay home when sick.
- Provide information to public health officials if there is a COVID-19 outbreak

SYSO will take the following additional measures beyond what is recommended by the Washington State Department of Health to mitigate the risks of the coronavirus:

- Require all staff and teaching faculty to be vaccinated (unless they are granted a valid exemption and instead they will need to provide a negative COVID test for each time they are teaching for SYSO)
- **By January 2022, all students who are eligible to be vaccinated will be required to be vaccinated in order to participate in SYSO.** (Valid medical and religious exemptions will be considered.)

Please see below for more detailed information related to the above-mentioned guidelines.

Face Coverings / Masks

Face coverings/masks are required by all participants (students, faculty, staff, and volunteers) even if they have been fully vaccinated per public health guidelines, until further notice.

Universal and correct use of cloth face coverings or masks helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 and is required for all SYSO personnel, students, and volunteers. There are specific exceptions based on age, development, or disability outlined below. See the [Washington State Department of Health Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings](#) for more information.

All SYSO students, school personnel, volunteers, and visitors (except as described below) must wear cloth face coverings or an acceptable alternative (e.g., surgical mask) at SYSO rehearsals and performances. Participants are responsible for providing their own masks.

Face coverings should not be worn by:

- Those under 2 years of age.
- Those with a disability that prevents them from comfortably wearing or removing a face covering.
- Those with certain respiratory conditions.

- Those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those who provide instruction to such people, and use facial and mouth movements as part of communication.
- Those advised by a medical, legal, or behavioral health professional that wearing a face-covering may pose a risk to that person.

Students may remove face coverings to eat and drink and when they can be physically distanced outside.

For Brass & Woodwinds

- Aerosol-producing musicians, e.g. woodwinds and brass musicians may remove their face coverings/masks when performing on their instrument and must replace their face covering/mask during resting position and non-performance time.
- Woodwinds and brass must also use appropriate bell covers while performing. If the student does not own a bell cover, SYSO will provide one.

For SCM Musicianship Class students:

- Universal masking with appropriate material – MERV13 or 3-layer medical face mask or similar material – is required when singing is performed. SCM Faculty will provide students with singers' masks to replace their cloth masks in these settings. When not singing, students should wear correct masks as described above.

Testing and Vaccination

SYSO has required all staff, faculty, and coaches to be vaccinated, and has required verification of vaccination status, which includes either:

- Vaccine card or photo of vaccine card
- Documentation from a health care provider
- State immunization information system record

SYSO highly encourages all students who are eligible to be vaccinated as soon as possible for their own safety and the safety of others.

By January 2022, all students who are eligible to be vaccinated will be required to be fully vaccinated in order to participate in SYSO. (Valid medical and religious exemptions will be considered. Please email Executive Director Kathleen Allen at kathleen.allen@syso.org for more information on how to request an exemption.) Please plan to be prepared to submit proof of full vaccination in one of the three formats listed above. If an eligible student has not yet begun the vaccination process, we recommend that they start no later than November to be fully vaccinated by January. A student who has already submitted vaccine proof for a SYSO summer program, will not be required to re-submit documentation.

Performance Venue COVID-19 Guidelines

SYSO will follow all COVID protocols for performers and audience members at our performance venues. These are subject to change as per their directive:

Benaroya Hall COVID Safety - <https://www.seattlesymphony.org/benaroyahall/plan-visit/safety>

Meany Hall COVID Safety Information - <https://meanycenter.org/visit/covid-safety>

Ventilation

Good ventilation and indoor air quality are important in reducing airborne exposure to respiratory pathogens, chemicals, and odors. In rehearsal spaces, there will be air purifiers and open windows (weather permitting), and SYSO will work with the building owner to adjust the HVAC system to allow the maximum amount of outside air to enter the program space and increase air filtration.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

SYSO will follow all current infection control plans that are updated to reflect what is known about COVID-19. These include a process of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting to remove, reduce and kill germs on surfaces. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulated sanitizers and disinfectants will be used in this process.

Surfaces will be treated before and after each program day and between each orchestra rehearsal or sectional period.

Practice good hygiene by collecting water condensation from brass instruments. Consider using “puppy pads” for students to empty spit valves rather than emptying directly on the floor

Physical Distancing

As of June 30 Washington state has reopened under the [Washington Ready](#) plan and **physical distancing is no longer required** for the performing arts sector. However, SYSO will follow any physical distancing required by a facility or venue. SYSO will closely monitor public health guidelines for both the performing arts sector and the K-12 education sector as relates to physical distancing requirements.

Addressing Suspected Cases of COVID-19

Families are responsible for assessing whether a student has any COVID-19-like symptoms (listed below) and they should stay home and not attend the program. If symptoms are detected during the program the student must be immediately isolated from others and sent home as soon as feasible.

SYSO staff and faculty will monitor for the following symptoms not caused by another condition:

- Fever (100.4 Fahrenheit) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Recent loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

While waiting to leave SYSO, the individual with symptoms will be isolated in a designated isolation space. They must continue to wear a cloth face covering or mask. Anyone providing care or evaluation to the isolated individual must wear appropriate PPE.

Close contacts of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 will need to get tested at least 5 days after exposure and provide a negative COVID-19 test result prior to resuming SYSO activities.

A close contact is defined as including anyone in one or more of the following categories:

- has been within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a combined total of 15 minutes or more within a 24 hour period.
- Lives in the same house as someone with COVID-19.
- Cared for someone with COVID-19

Reporting Cases and Outbreaks and Working with Public Health

All cases of COVID-19 and outbreaks must be reported to the local health jurisdiction and SYSO and the general public must cooperate with public health authorities in the investigation of cases and outbreaks that may be associated with SYSO.

A COVID-19 outbreak is considered when the following have been met:

- There are two or more COVID-19 cases among students, faculty or staff
- The cases have a symptom onset or positive test result within a 14-day period of each other. The cases are epidemiologically linked.
- The cases do not share a household.
- The cases are not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during the investigation.

If there is a positive COVID-19 case within one of our orchestras, all families with students in the same orchestra will be notified. SYSO will work with Public Health - Seattle and King County on how to best manage contact tracing, and to provide the next steps according to public

health guidelines including cancelling in-person rehearsals if required. In the event that an in-person rehearsal must be put on hold, we are committed to continuing our services online during any possible limited quarantine periods and therefore we will not be refunding tuition for this time period.

Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement

All program participants will sign the SYSO COVID-19 Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement in order to participate in in-person rehearsals. Unvaccinated participants will acknowledge their increased level of risk based on their vaccination status.

Policy Adherence

We ask that all students, faculty, and staff adhere to SYSO's COVID-19 policy in order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for our community. A lack of adherence may result in immediate dismissal from rehearsals that day. Repeated lack of adherence may result in removal from participation in SYSO programs.

Anti-Bias & COVID-19

A person's race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data are revealing that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. This is due to the effects of racism, and in particular, structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share only accurate information to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

More COVID-19 Resources

[WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)

[WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Find Your Local Health Jurisdiction](#)

[CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions? Call the COVID-19 Information hotline: **1-800-525-0127**

Monday – 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday and observed state holidays, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider. To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

**COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve and these guidelines may be revised to reflect changing conditions and public health guidelines and mandates. Families will be notified if updated SYSO COVID-19 Guidelines have been posted to the SYSO website.*

SYSO GUIDELINES ADAPTED FROM:

K-12 Schools 2021-2022 Guidelines as of August 10, 2021

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-105-K12Schools2021-2022.pdf>

Labor & Industries Requirements and Guidance for Preventing COVID-19 as of June 30, 2021

<https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-164-000.pdf>

Guidance for Businesses and Organizations (Non-Health Care) (PDF) as of July 2, 2021

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/420-350-NonHealthCareBusiness.pdf>

National Association of Music Educators (NAfME) Return to Music Guidance – Phase III

<https://nafme.org/my-classroom/nafme-and-nfhs-return-to-music-guidance-phase-iii-august-2021/>

Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestras Return to In-Person Rehearsals – Policies & Procedures as of April 2, 2021

Portland Youth Philharmonic – COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Policies & Procedures as of July 26, 2021