

Return to Dance Guidance

Webinar 3 'What you need to know to get back to the studio'

One Dance UK & NIDMS Expert Panel

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Chair: Andrew Hurst

Panellists: Roger Wolman, Kim Hutt, Matthew Wyon

Live Q&A

1. Time Point: 30:10

Q. Is administering first aid an exception of the 2m social distance rule?

A. [AH] Yes, it's acceptable to provide and administer first aid and social distancing does not need to be maintained in this instance.

2. Time Point: 31:05

Q. How can children that do different styles of dance in dance schools keep to their bubbles/ fixed teams?

A. [AH] Where social distancing cannot be maintained, other mitigations need to be put in place. One of these mitigations is fixed groups. It is recognised that young children may not always be able to maintain social distancing, and therefore fixed groups help as mitigation in these circumstances.

3. Time Point: 34:10

Q. Marking the floor out by 2m by 2m boxes – should we be leaving 2m between each 2m size box? What is the best way to do this?

A. [AH] You should look at your space and think realistically about how many people can safely maintain social distancing. You need to think of how you can move in and out of/around the space safely.

4. Time Point: 34:44

Q. Regarding bubbles, what is the significance of the maximum number of 15 per bubble? Is this the maximum number of students allowed per class?

A. [AH] The guidance around bubble size being a maximum of 15 individuals refers to things like after/out of school settings. The maximum number of students per class will depend on your space. If you hire a space, there may be restrictions in place limiting numbers.

5. Time Point: 36:15

Q. Does the two-household limit apply in dance settings?

A. [AH] This depends on the setting. Again, this could be a maximum number of 15 depending on whether you hire a studio/ where the class is happening.

6. Time Point: 36:33

Q. Is there a recommendation for shortening the class time for non-professional participants?

A. [MW] This is up to the creativity of the dance teacher. If you can make a dance class technically harder and physically easier, this would be helping the dancers. Think about how you want to engage and challenge your dancers in learning. If you are doing a higher intensity class, have a shorter one. Be flexible as you plan your classes.

[KH] A lot of dancers will have done a lot less during lockdown, and therefore having shorter classes will help them work their fitness levels back up more gradually.

7. Time Point: 38:26

Q. I have been challenged by a member of my dance classes who has said that they have read studies that state wearing a mask during exercise can be highly dangerous. Can you signpost to any studies that demonstrate it is safe to wear a mask? What is the science here?

A. [RW] The general principle is that wearing a mask may make people apprehensive to begin with, particularly if you are engaging in an activity where you are having to breathe more rapidly. This is more of a psycho-emotional impact, as even whilst wearing a mask you are still able to uptake sufficient air. This can create anxiety, however. For example, if an individual is asthmatic, the anxiety surrounding breathing difficulties whilst wearing a mask may then trigger an asthma attack, as opposed to the lack of oxygen itself. Anybody with a chronic respiratory illness should seek further guidance and medical advice. For others, it is just a case of gradually getting used to and feeling comfortable wearing a mask.

[MW] Wearing masks will only reduce oxygen saturation minimally – this is not something to be worried about as masks will hardly be interfering.

8. Time Point: 41:33

Q. Regarding corner work and dance phrases that move across the space

A. [KH] Wherever possible it is advised to keep socially distanced and to keep within floor markings. If you do introduce travelling in a socially distanced way, there is some suggestion that one dancer should not go/follow on directly in line with another dancer. In doing so dancers will be entering one another's slipstream and could potentially pick up droplets from the person travelling ahead of them. Consider travelling side by side, or in another direction. The more movement in the room, the more these droplets will be dispersed and not able to settle. Provide time between people travelling.

[MW] Droplets will land on clothing and therefore you should consider how you are washing your clothes, and washing your hands during and after class.

9. Time Point: 43:35

Q. 7-11-year-old students wearing masks in the dance class – is that a recommendation providing they don't have respiratory issues?

A. [AH] It is not recommended for children under the age of 11 to wear masks, they would be considered exempt.

[MW] From a physiological point of view, it should not impair what they do, as long as the class is easy. Again, this may increase anxiety slightly.

[RW] The occasional droplet that may carry small amounts of the virus may not necessarily be dangerous, but we should consider viral load. This is the concentration of the virus in an environment – the higher the load the higher the risk. The greater viral load a person inhales, the greater the risk is for that person contracting more serious symptoms of the disease. Keeping a room well ventilated will help to keep risk lower.

10. Time Point: 46:40

Q. Regarding professional performers living and working in fixed teams during the creation/rehearsal period; what are the implications for their housemates who may be working in other fixed teams outside of the home? Do other members of the household need to be considered as part of a risk assessment? What other risk mitigations would you put in place?

A. [RW] One thing that should be considered is whether any members of that household are carrying any comorbidities that may put them at risk of having a severe COVID illness (obesity, type 2 diabetes, respiratory diseases, the elderly), and how your interactions with other people daily may heighten this risk. Ideally, the bubble that you work in would be the bubble that you live with to avoid cross-contamination. It is understood however that this is not practical for everyone, and so maybe consider trying to reduce the number of people that you are exposed to. If you are going between home and the dance studio, trying to avoid public transport would be better, as would avoiding other households whereby occupants are all travelling to different places of work.

11. Time Point: 49:46

Q. Regarding the designation of partners/fixed groups, is contact work possible?

A. [AH] The current guidance for professional dancers recognises that dancers will need to be working closely together, and this is where the fixed group mitigation measure comes into play.

[KH] London Contemporary Dance School will not be encouraging partner work at the beginning of term as this is something that we can avoid- we won't be partnering whilst social distancing measures are in place if at all possible. People will be working in partners at The Place however, as this would be considered a professional dance environment – one of the mitigation factors that will be implemented here is testing before those partners work together.

12. Time Point: 51:23

Q. Outdoor shoes – it is important to leave them outside/put them in a box?

A. [MW] Take your shoes off, put them in a bag and store them away. This would be helping to mitigate risk by reducing cross-contamination.

[RW] The virus can be carried on shoes. Be sure to also wash your hands after touching your shoes.

13. Time Point: 53:10

Q. Does the temperature of the room make a difference? If we have our windows and doors open we might need our heating on higher.

A. [MW] No. The temperature will not affect the spreading of the virus whereas humidity will. Humidity is related to the amount of water that is in the air meaning that droplets will be hanging around longer.

14. Time Point: 54:00

Q. Regarding wooden floors in rented studios – how can I clean them without risking them not being dry in time for the next class/space user(s)?

A. [AH] Cleaning of high contact areas is particularly important when a space is being used by different groups. You will need to do so thoroughly.

15. Time Point: 54:35

Q. Are fogger machines recommended for effectively cleaning dance studios?

A. [MW] This depends on what cleaning solution you use in the machine, and whether using it will add to the humidity of the environment. Milton is a good disinfectant.

16. Time Point: 55:26

Q. As a teacher, would it be better to wear a visor or a face mask, or both? Is there a difference between the two that would help or hinder?

A. [RW] It depends on how close the teacher needs to be to the pupils. At 2m, the need for the mask and the visor is less.

[KH] The consensus amongst our team has been that visors may be preferable for teachers so as students can see the teachers mouth moving whilst speaking.

[MW] A visor will guide air-flow differently but would provide some protection whilst enabling the class to see your face. At 1m +, the visor should be ok. It is worth considering deaf dancers, and how the inability to lipread if wearing a mask may impact them.

[RW] If you are teaching young children, who may be below your line of sign (following the flow/channel of breath from the visor), the mask may be the better option. This is largely down to how close you will be getting to the dancers.

17. Time Point: 58:56

Q. From the perspective of professional dance settings, does the guidance on no more than 6 people from 2 households meeting apply when bringing dancers back to the studio?

A. [AH] In line with professional dance settings, the household limit does not apply in this context. You should still consider space and social distancing. Non-professional groups should adhere to the guidance on the meeting of 2 households.