

North West Drama COVID-19 Safer Working Practice

Policy Updated: 25th February 2020
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Please also see our COVID-19 Risk Assessment policy document. Both this and our risk assessment document are subject to further updates in line with changes in government guidance.

This document is intended to provide clarity on the measures being taken to ensure North West Drama's working practice during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is as safe as possible.

How has our COVID-19 safe working practice been developed?

In the development of this policy the following guidance documents have been consulted:

Space for Learning: [Covid Secure guidance for museums, galleries, heritage and performing arts sites](#)

DCMS: [Guidance for Performing Arts](#)

DfE: [Guidance for full opening: schools](#)

DfE: [Protective measures for out-of-school settings for children during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

We had the opportunity to visit a few schools to lead workshops during the summer term 2020. This allowed us to explore the possibilities of how participatory drama can take place with social distancing, and as a team we are sharing and disseminating what we learnt from this. We're confident that it is possible to deliver high quality drama and that it can be very effective despite the restrictions currently placed upon it.

We know that schools are all working to make their environment as safe as possible as for staff, pupils and visitors. Where the school's COVID-19 health and safety policy permits us to do so we are visiting schools, and our team will adhere to our minimum Safer Working Practice guidelines.

Where our work takes place in theatres, we are working with the organisations concerned to provide the most accurate information on safe practice, but please be aware that this information is only beginning to emerge as theatres begin to look towards reopening and many of their employees are currently furloughed. We will update this document in light of further information as and when it becomes available.

What general measures are we taking in order to safely work in schools?

We will ALWAYS liaise closely with school staff to ensure that we comply with individual school's policy, but in addition to any measures the school requires us to take, North West Drama will ensure that:

- All booking forms, consent forms and other paperwork will be completed digitally where possible
- Share our risk assessment document and safe working practice document prior to any visit being confirmed
- We confirm with schools the space being used (ensuring adequate ventilation), group size and specific needs to be accounted for, the number of adults who will be supporting pupils and any social distancing measures that we are required by the school to take
- Practitioners will travel directly to the school and ensure social distancing if they need to use public transport. They may also request to adjust session timing in order that they can avoid travelling at times when public transport is busier
- Practitioners will, as a minimum standard, sanitise their hands on arrival at the school and before meeting a new group of pupils

- Practitioners will wear a face covering when moving around the school, and will remain in the designated space as much as possible during their visit. They will not stay in the building any longer than necessary
- Practitioners will be asked to take a lateral flow test 24 hours before visiting schools each week until such a time as this is deemed no longer necessary
- Maintain a safe distance (+1 metre) from staff and pupils during workshops, and/or wear a face shield if it is judged that this is not possible
- If weather permits the workshop will be delivered outdoors, but if it is delivered indoors doors and windows will remain open as long as this is feasible and safe
- Work will be planned to ensure physical contact between individuals is as little as possible, and will avoid activities if they are considered high risk (such as singing or projecting voices)
- Avoid using paper handouts and objects that could be passed from one person to another
- If the risk of practitioners visiting schools is deemed to be high, we will offer virtual visits where this is possible

What measures will we take in order to mitigate the risks associated with delivering The Children’s Shakespeare Festivals in 2020/21?

We're expecting to go ahead with all planned Children’s Shakespeare Festivals (CSFs) for 2020/21. Operating large-scale, inter-school performance festivals during this time presents a number of challenges, and these require a responsive and flexible approach. In 2020/21, all festivals will take place between January and July 2021 (meaning that no Spring festivals will run).

Whilst working to ensure that CSFs can take place, we may need to make adaptations to the project as the situation changes and guidance is updated. In addition to the general measures identified above, we also have a number of CSF specific measures in place, or which we are able to implement should we need to:

Meetings

The initial, midpoint and technical meetings will be held by Zoom/ Teams where possible.

The ‘Residential’ CPD element

We will offer both an *in person drama CPD* (if there is demand for it) and a series of *virtual drama CPD sessions* to replace this important element of the project:

- The ‘*in person drama CPD*’ will be a 2 day event, but will not involve staying overnight and will take place in a suitably sized, local venue so that we can maintain social distancing, in line with our ‘Safer Working Practice’ guidelines
- The ‘*virtual drama CPD sessions*’ will form a series of 1.5hr Zoom/Teams workshops, which will cover the content of the Scheme of Work, and focus on practical drama work

Both the *in person drama CPD* and *virtual drama CPD sessions* will include a physical resource pack and teachers will be welcome to attend both the in person event and the *virtual drama CPD sessions* should they wish to.

Scheme of Work

This year’s scheme of work will take account of the current guidelines for schools, and indicate where and how teachers can adapt the work as the requirements on school ‘bubbles’ change. We hope that the ‘virtual drama CPD sessions’ will provide a useful forum to share what works and to keep on top of the changing situation.

In addition to the usual scheme of work format, there will also be a set of ‘Home Learning Tasks and Resources’ included in each section. These are intended to support teachers in the event of bubbles closing to self-isolate, and we hope that this will mean that sections of the scheme can still be explored through home learning and keep the project moving forward. These home learning tasks will be accompanied by freely accessible video content created by the North West Drama team (via our YouTube channel and a home learning page on our website) to engage and inspire your pupils.

Workshops in (and visits to) Schools

We hope that the situation will not require us to find an alternative means of delivering the launch workshop and directing visit, but should this be the case we will be able to offer schools a virtual workshop (via Zoom or Teams) with their festival director, or a personalised video and accompanying workshop plan for teachers if a virtual workshop is not possible. Workshops via Zoom/Teams will always be carried out in accordance with your and our safeguarding policies.

If the risk of practitioners visiting multiple schools is deemed to be high, we will offer a video 'launch workshop' instead of an in person visit. We will agree this with individual schools based on the current situation at the time of the planned visits.

Final Performances and Alternative Contributions

We hope that a change in restrictions will allow a final performance to take place in our partner theatres as it usually would, but as many are yet to reopen we will update this information as and when we can. However, we are already exploring other options, which might include:

- A final performance at a partner theatre, with *all* classes performing in front of an invited audience (our preferred option)
- A final performance with *most* classes performing in front of an invited audience (with alternative contributions from those who are unable to attend - see below for examples of these)
- A final performance which is filmed on stage at a partner theatre, with classes attending separately for a short time to rehearse and record their performance (filmed, edited and collated into a final film by North West Drama)
- An outdoor performance in a suitable space (either in front of an invited audience or as a sharing with other classes) which could be filmed if this was appropriate
- A film compiled of class performances that are self-filmed in their own schools (edited and collated into a final film by North West Drama)

What measures will we take in order to mitigate the risks associated with delivering Speech Bubbles in 2020/21?

Speech Bubbles will take place in 2020/21, though due to the age of the children and the nature of the small group drama work, in addition to the general measures identified on page 1 a number of Speech Bubbles specific measures will be in place:

- *The induction day (September) and collaborative learning sessions (January and July) will be delivered on-line where appropriate*
- *The project start date will be a little later than usual in order to allow for pupils to settle back into school and their new classes before the project begins*
- *An additional note on referral guidance will be given to schools in order to recognise the need for some children to have access to a creative programme like Speech Bubbles to support them as a result of lockdown/ prolonged absence from school*
- *Practitioners will wear a transparent face shield during the delivery of the session*
- *Practitioners will be asked to take a lateral flow test 24 hours before visiting schools each week until such a time as this is deemed no longer necessary*
- *Sessions will be planned so that activities avoid physical contact and the passing of objects (such as a mascot) from person to person*

How is the process for invoicing and payment for 2020/21 going to mitigate the financial risk to schools?

We appreciate that schools are facing increased financial pressures as a result of implementing their COVID-19 safety measures, and in order to help mitigate the financial risk of our projects being unable to take place, we have implemented a new payment structure for this year. Project fees for 2020/21 will remain unchanged, and all schools will be invoiced in accordance with the following schedule:

Project (and expected completion)	Autumn Term (Nov 2020)	Spring Term (Jan 2021)	Summer Term (May 2021)
Children's Shakespeare Festivals		1st half of agreed fee	2nd half of agreed fee
Speech Bubbles (end of academic year)	One third of agreed fee	One third of agreed fee	One third of agreed fee
All other work inc. drama days	Payment in full immediately following delivery		

You can also visit our website to read our [COVID-19 FAQs](#) or [read this document in HTML format](#).

For more information or to request a copy of our current risk assessment, please contact:

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