

# North West Drama COVID-19 Safer Working Practice



Updated: 1st November 2021  
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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
- All NWD staff will administer a lateral flow test no more than 4hrs prior to a school visit (or once every 48 hrs if multiple visits are being made)
- If weather permits the workshop will be delivered outdoors, but if is delivered indoors doors and windows will remain open as long as this is feasible and safe
- Practitioners will use vinyl markers on the floor to help pupils to remain socially distant. These will be sanitised before being used by another group
- 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

## **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 2021/22. Operating large-scale, inter-school performance festivals during this time presents a number of challenges, and these require a responsive and flexible approach.

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.

### **The ‘Residential’ CPD element**

We will offer both an *in person drama CPD* (if there is demand for it) and a *virtual drama CPD session* for those unable to attend this important element of the project face to face:

- The ‘*in person drama CPD*’ will be a 26 hour residential event, with limited participant numbers so that we can maintain social distancing, in line with our ‘Safer Working Practice’ guidelines
- The ‘*virtual drama CPD sessions*’ will take the form of a two day Zoom workshop, which will cover key content of the Scheme of Work, and focus on practical drama work

The *virtual drama CPD sessions* will include a physical resource pack

### **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.

### **Final Performances and Alternative Contributions**

We hope that our planned final performances will take place in our partner theatres as they usually would, but we will monitor and respond to any changes to the COVID-19 situation as they occur.

- A final performance at a partner theatre, with *all* classes performing together as part of a ‘filmed’ performance
- 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 individual performance (as we did in 2020/21)

- A last-resort of a film compiled of class performances that are self-filmed in their own schools

## **What measures will we take in order to mitigate the risks associated with delivering Speech Bubbles in 2021/22?**

Speech Bubbles will take place in 2021/22, 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 collaborative learning sessions (January) will be delivered on-line where appropriate*
- *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 administer a lateral flow test within 4 hrs of the school visit for each session*
- *Sessions will be planned so that activities avoid physical contact and the passing of objects (such as a mascot) from person to person*

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

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