

8 June 2020

## **Education Authority Music Service Covid-19 update for schools**

### **Music Unlocked**

Dear Principal,

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on us all, not least on the lives of our children and young people, and the Music Service recognise that music and the creative arts will play an important role in helping them settle back into a positive learning environment. The Music Service management team and instrumental tutors are available to help, support, and advise you. We will work along with you and your staff for the benefit of your school and pupils.

Following school closures on 20 March 2020, the Music Service temporarily suspended all music lessons, ensembles, and concerts, and closed our regional offices. Regular communication links with schools and parents were therefore restricted. Our website was updated <https://www.eani.org.uk/services/music-service> offering schools and parents contact with Music Service staff, together with links to additional online learning resources. This update was also promoted through EA Social Media channels and the C2k news desk.

**Please be advised that our first priority, when it is safe to return to operational status, will be to issue refunds to schools and parents for any shortfall of Music Service delivery for the academic year 2019 -20.**

Over the last number of weeks the Music Service has been working closely with our colleagues in C2k and the Child Protection Support Service to develop a pilot programme for online learning. C2k delivered training to Music Service managers who in turn have been training staff. Extensive guidelines have been written for the use of C2k's three secure platforms; Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom and Collaborate Ultra. Robust safeguarding guidelines have also been developed in conjunction with CPSS including; Expectations and Guidance for Students and Families, Parental Permissions, Tutor Guidelines & Risk Assessment. Recognising the ongoing restrictions, and the likelihood that some schools may want to limit visiting tutors initially, we felt it was essential to establish these pilot programmes now, in order to best prepare for a blended approach in September. They will also act as a training exercise for Music Service staff throughout the month of June.

The pilot programmes will be delivered directly to pupils/parents and will take the form of either shared, pre-recorded tutorials or live online lessons. These pilot programmes will be offered based on availability of resources and will be free of charge. Tutors participating in the pilots will identify pupils/parents to take part.

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Feedback from these pilot programmes will be important in our preparations for a blended learning approach to the new academic year. A combination of face to face and online learning; live teaching, pre-recorded tutorials, 'how-to' videos and other resources will be used. We are also currently working on guidelines for schools in relation to 'Making Music Safely in School'. These will include advice on the safe delivery of instrumental and vocal lessons, singing and choirs, instrumental ensembles, cleaning instruments and a code of practice for instrumental tutors.

The Music Service is confident that music and the arts have a vital part to play in helping your students settle back into school life after this unsettling period. Studies and many schools' own experiences have shown that, as well as being intrinsically valuable as a subject, music:

- Readies children for learning across the curriculum;
- Improves memory by stimulating both hemispheres of the brain;
- Has unrivalled connectivity across the curriculum;
- Correlates with improved progress in a range of other subjects;
- Is highly effective as a strategy for school improvement.

We would very much appreciate your views, and would welcome any discussions about the possibility of flexible delivery, taking into account both pupils in school and those who will not yet have returned. Please contact your local Music Service manager at the address below, they will be happy to discuss options that will be most appropriate for your school.

Belfast Office	Therese McKinney	<a href="mailto:therese.mckinney@eani.org.uk">therese.mckinney@eani.org.uk</a>
Antrim Office	Martin Haggan	<a href="mailto:martin.haggan@eani.org.uk">martin.haggan@eani.org.uk</a>
Omagh/Derry Office	Anne Bergin	<a href="mailto:anne.bergin@eani.org.uk">anne.bergin@eani.org.uk</a>
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Newry Office	Nuala Curran	<a href="mailto:nuala.curran@eani.org.uk">nuala.curran@eani.org.uk</a>

We hope that the partnership we have with your school will help ensure that your pupils and staff can access the academic, wellbeing and social benefits that come from having music as part of school life.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,



Darren Canmore.  
Interim Head of Music Service.

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