

Ontario Dance and Performing Arts Schools  
**Workplace Guidelines for COVID-19**

May 20, 2020

## Introduction

Dance and performing arts schools are uniquely positioned and can become an important partner with the Province of Ontario to assist in the restart and recovery of the economy by providing valuable programming during the summer months. With many challenges facing families and their children during this unprecedented time - children's physical and mental health and well-being are priority for parents across the province. Dance and performing arts schools are a source of both education and trusted programming for these families.

According to the Canadian Youth Sports Report published by Solutions Research Group, dance as an activity is second only to swimming in terms of participation - more popular than soccer or hockey, with several times the participation levels of gymnastics, karate, and other children's sports.

For many years, dance schools and performing arts schools have been a critical, reliable, and affordable source of education and socialization and has fostered children's foundations in creativity, dexterity and development through summer day camp programming, and evening and weekend classes. Dance schools are typically large spaces well-suited to physical distancing requirements.

Children are also missing out on the critical social aspects of school and their extra-curricular activities. Since COVID-19, more than half (59%) of parents in an Ipsos Reid index noted behavioural changes in their child ranging from difficulty sleeping/altered sleeping patterns and persistent sadness to outbursts or extreme irritability, as well as drastic changes in mood, behaviour, or personality, and more.

Studies repeatedly show that participating in dance and performing arts activities have a positive impact on self-confidence, self-esteem, resilience, relationship building, and contribute to a sense of belonging, all qualities which are associated with good mental health.

Parents have relied on performing arts schools as a trusted source for programming for their children during the summer months, evenings, and weekends year-round.

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide the Government of Ontario with the assurance that Ontario Dance and Performing Arts School business owners/operators are committed to employing the necessary guidelines to meet the expectations and objectives specified by provincial and municipal authorities. A current list of businesses in this industry who have reviewed and support the document accompanies this submission. The coordinated response herein addresses criteria sourced from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Public Services Health and Safety Association websites, the COVID-19 Guidance for Emergency Child Care Centres, health care practitioners, and in communication with colleagues in Ontario.

This guide provides basic information only. It is not intended to take the place of medical advice, diagnosis, treatment, or legal advice. In the event of any conflict between this document and any orders or directives issued by the Minister of Health or the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the order or directive prevails.

Owners/Operators agree to check the [Ministry of Health \(MOH\) COVID-19](#) website for updates to this document, Reference Document for Symptoms, mental health resources, and other information.

Owners/Operators agree to check the [Directives, Memorandums](#), and Other Resources page regularly for the most up to date directives.

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## **Executive Summary**

Dance and Performing Arts businesses, commonly referred to as “Dance Studios”, deliver skilled instructor-led programming to registered participants. Given the nature of our work, we are accustomed to enacting and following robust protocols to ensure careful adherence to the health and safety considerations associated with serving the needs of clients from children to adults in an instructional setting.

Dance and Performing Arts business owners recognize our critical role and responsibility in preventing the risks of COVID-19 in our place of business. The health and safety of our staff and clients are of utmost importance and we are committed to supporting their ability to work and learn in an environment that excels at protecting them.

Ontario Dance and Performing Arts business owners have collaborated to create this set of procedures and guidelines for ministerial review. All business owners will communicate COVID-19 policies to employees, contractors, and visitors. These policies will cover how the workplace will operate, including but not limited to:

- Requirements for Health and Safety
- Screening Procedures
- Sanitization of Workplaces
- How to Ensure Physical Distancing
- Management of Children with Symptoms of COVID-19
- Occupational Health and Safety

Businesses will be accountable for understanding the Provincial/Regional Emergency level, the Provincial/Regional stage of business operations, and will adjust business operations in accordance with the guidelines and orders of the overseeing agencies.

## Requirements for Health and Safety

### Prevention

Maintain physical distancing of at least two metres (6 feet) or more between persons, including clients, students, and co-workers.

Promote good hygiene:

- Wash hands often with soap and water upon arrival, before and after any breaks, at the beginning and end of each class, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (> 60% alcohol) if hand washing is not possible.
- Avoid touching face including eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid high-touch areas where possible, or ensure hands are washed or sanitized after.

Employees are not to report to work if they are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or are under self-isolation or quarantine

Regular cleaning and disinfection will be implemented.

Minimize contact with people who are sick and ensure controls are in place for the protection of employees, contractors, and students.

### Screening Procedures

All individuals, including children, parents/guardians, staff, contractors, and volunteers will be screened prior to arrival. Entry will be denied to any person who has any of the symptoms outlined below.

Screeners will take appropriate precautions when screening, including maintaining a distance of at least two metres (6 feet) from those being screened.

*Did the person have close contact with anyone with acute respiratory illness or travelled outside of Ontario in the past 14 days?*

*Does the person have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?*

*Does the person have any of the following symptoms:*

- *Fever*
- *New onset of cough*
- *Worsening chronic cough*
- *Shortness of breath*
- *Difficulty breathing*
- *Sore throat*
- *Difficulty swallowing*
- *Decrease or loss of sense of taste or smell*
- *Chills*
- *Headaches*
- *Unexplained fatigue/malaise/muscle aches*
- *Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain*
- *Pink eye (conjunctivitis)*
- *Runny nose/nasal congestion without other known cause*

## **Hygiene**

Employees, contractors, volunteers, and students will be advised to wash their hands upon entry and as often as needed, with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use approved hand sanitizer.

Everyone will be encouraged to follow respiratory etiquette (e.g. coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow, promptly disposing of used tissues in the trash).

## **Sanitization of Workplaces**

Frequently touched surfaces (door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, sinks, barres, props, et cetera) will be disinfected between each class.

Only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or low-level hospital grade disinfectants will be used.

Disposable towels and spray cleaners, or disposable wipes, will be made available to regularly clean and disinfect commonly used surfaces.

## **Retail Items (if applicable)**

Only fitting rooms with doors will be used, not curtains, to facilitate disinfecting. Use is restricted to every second fitting room at any one time to allow for cleaning after use and ensure physical distancing.

If trying-on items is necessary, encourage customers to sanitize hands before trying on clothes.

Items that were tried on should be isolated for 24 hours before returning to the sales floor. Surfaces in change rooms will be cleaned and disinfected after use.

The business will also update return policies to prevent the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to workers, volunteers, and patrons. This may include:

Eliminating the opportunity to return purchased goods where appropriate (i.e. final sale only).

Isolating, cleaning, and disinfecting soft-surface items for a minimum period of 24 hours prior to resale.

Isolating, cleaning, and disinfecting hard-surfaced, returned goods prior to placing them back onto the sales floor and only after disinfection has appropriately taken effect.

The business will ensure physical distancing of two metres between customers and staff, and will consider appointment times to help manage customer flow.

### **How to Ensure Physical Distancing**

Only registered students may enter the building, when advised by the business, to reduce cross-over and maintain appropriate physical distance before and after their scheduled class time.

Accurate capacity may be established using each studio's Fire Safety Plan and room dimensions. For example, one client per 4 square metres (43 square feet), to ensure physical distancing of two metres at all times. Businesses agree to work with Provincial and Local Health Units to confirm the allowable site-specific threshold.

Class start and end times will be staggered if necessary to limit the number of students in a common space at the same time and adhere to physical distancing requirements.

All outdoor belongings (shoes, jackets, et cetera) will be placed and stored at least two metres apart, or will be kept with the parent/guardian outside of the business.

Space markers will be placed in common areas, retail spaces, and classrooms to ensure two metre physical distancing requirements are adhered to at all times.

Waiting rooms will be closed, other than for students who are in need of a caregiver at all times. Parents/guardians will be advised of necessary physical distancing requirements and encouraged to wait outside or in their vehicles where/when possible.

Parents/guardians will be advised to wait with students until the designated drop off time, and to meet their child outside the building after class at the designated time. Children's safe exiting of the building to a parent/guardian will be monitored by staff.

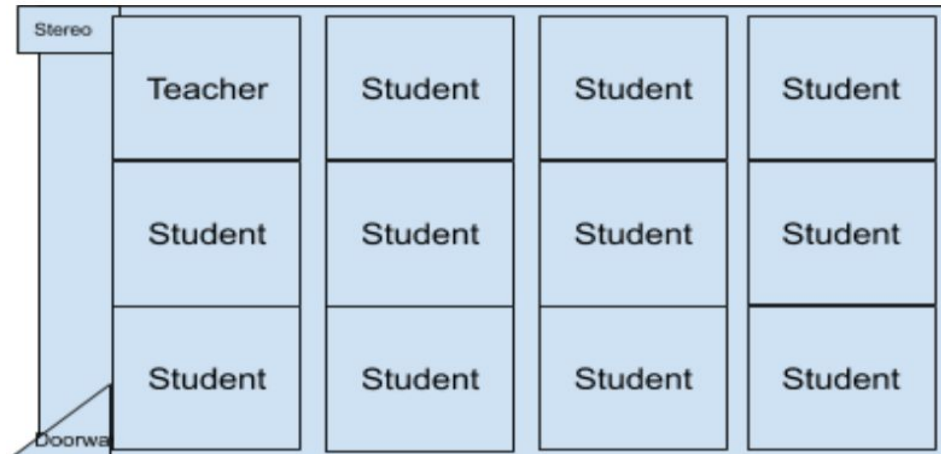


Parents/guardians must sign an acknowledgment of policy agreements.

Multiple entrances and exits will be used where possible. Students may enter and exit their studio space utilizing fire doors to limit access to common areas.

Class schedules will be adjusted to allow for the cleaning of studios, barres, and any equipment used between classes as directed by the MOH and Local Public Health Units.

#### ***Safe Physical Distancing Placement Example***



#### **Management of Children with Symptoms of COVID-19**

If a child begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while at the facility:

- They will be immediately separated from others in a supervised area until they can go home. Whoever is supervising the child will maintain a distance of at least two metres.
- Parents/Guardians and local public health will be contacted to notify them of a potential case and seek advice regarding the information that should be shared with other parents/students.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will be practiced while the child is waiting to be picked up.
- Tissues will be provided to the child for proper respiratory etiquette, along with safe and proper disposal of the tissues.
- Environmental cleaning of any space the child was in contact with will be conducted once the child has been picked up.
- Other children and staff in the centre who were present while a child or staff member became ill will be identified as a close contact and grouped together. Parents and the local public health unit will be notified and their direction will be followed.
- Children or staff who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be required to stay home for 14 days.

## Contact Tracking and Tracing

Business owners/operators will communicate frequently with employees, contractors, students, and visitors with clear signage and other notices regarding when it is necessary to stay home from work or their dance classes at the studio.

The business will accurately track all absences as they occur. Records will be kept to assist in tracking in the event that an absence is due to symptoms or a diagnosis consistent with COVID-19. Record management will be kept diligently while respecting privacy policies.

The business will maintain accurate and up-to-date contact information for all staff, contractors, students, and visitors. This information will include, as appropriate:

- Name
- Phone Number
- Home Address
- Medical Conditions
- Parent/Guardian Name and Contact Information
- Agreement to Business's Policies and Guidelines

The business will provide records as required for the purpose of conducting contact-tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic to Provincial/Local Public Health officials.

## Occupational Health and Safety

### Employee/Contractor/Volunteer Diagnosed with COVID-19

Ontario MOH requires individuals to be in isolation for a minimum of 14 days if they have tested positive for COVID-19. Individuals may return to work when they have been medically cleared to do so.

If an employee, contractor, or volunteer is confirmed to have COVID-19 and it is determined that other people may have been exposed to that person, the Local Public Health Unit may be in contact with the business to provide the necessary Public Health guidance.

Employers have a duty to report suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#). The business will contact, where required, their local public health unit to report a suspected case of COVID-19. The local public health unit will provide specific advice on what control measures should be implemented to prevent the potential spread and how to monitor for other possible infected staff members and children.

Business owners/operators agree to work cooperatively with the Local Public Health Unit to ensure those potentially exposed to the individual receive the correct guidance.

### **Job Protection**

Job-protected leave, if required, will be provided in accordance with Ontario's Employment Standards Act. Employees are not required to have a medical note for absence.

## **Acknowledgments**

The coordinated response herein addresses the criteria communicated in the Province of [Ontario Ministry of Health \(MOH\) Guidelines for COVID 19](#), [MOH COVID 19 Guidance: Emergency Child Care Centres](#), [Public Services Health & Safety Association Resource Centre](#).

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