



Are music education hubs back in schools?

All pupils should have access to a quality arts education...Singing, wind and brass instrument playing can be undertaken.

Schools can continue to engage peripatetic teachers during this period, including staff from music education hubs...Peripatetic teachers can move between schools.

Singing and playing wind and brass instruments do not currently appear to represent a significantly higher risk than routine speaking and breathing at the same volume...with appropriate safety mitigation and consideration, singing, wind and brass teaching can still take place.

Individual lessons in music, dance and drama can resume in schools...this may mean teachers interacting with pupils from multiple groups.

Guidance for full opening: schools
Department for Education, 1st October 2020

In October 2020, Music Mark sent a short survey to its members to gauge how the return to schools was going in the new academic year. 80 members responded, representing 60% of the membership.

84% reported that they are working in fewer schools than this time last year.

Engagement compared with the end of September 2019

Mode	Primary	Secondary	SEND/other	Or all settings
Face-to-face	68.2%	58.0%	49.9%	53.1%
Online	14.0%	17.3%	10.4%	13.5%
Total	82.2%	75.3%	60.3%	66.7%

Average (mean) of all responses; not weighted for size of LA

Through network meetings and anecdotal evidence, Music Mark members tell us that their actual work in schools (measured as hours per week) is considerably reduced, **in some cases by 50-65%**.

Schools delaying face-to-face activity

	Primary	Secondary	SEND/other	Or all settings
to November	11.5%	17.9%	9.0%	20.5%
Count	47	45	38	28
to January 21	11.3%	15.9%	11.7%	14.7%
Count	47	44	37	28

Average (mean) of responses; 67 unique responses to each question



There is considerable school resistance to remote, digital delivery into schools by hub tutors, despite the knowledge and experience that the sector has gained teaching in this mode since March. Many schools are preferring to wait until it is possible to restart face-to-face delivery.

Of those delaying until January 2021, appreciable numbers are saying that this is the earliest they will consider allowing music education hub staff in. Some are already talking about not restarting until Easter or even September 2021. One hub expressed concern that they thought two schools were unlikely ever to re-engage.

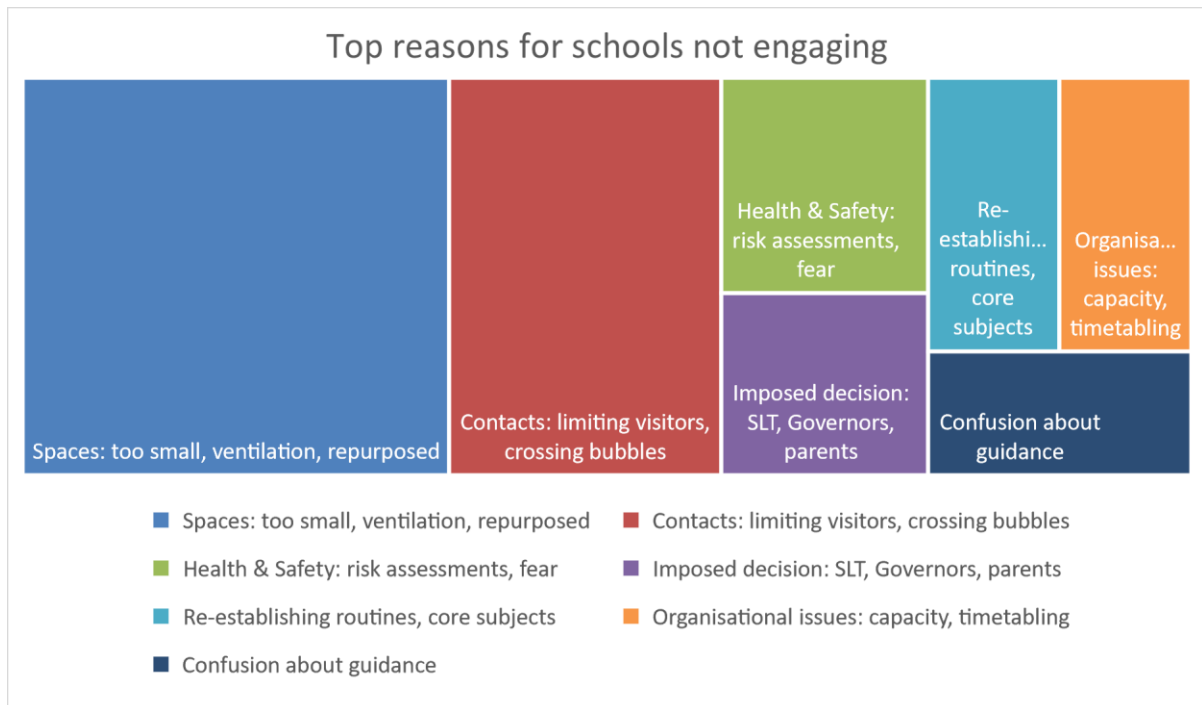


Chart shows relative frequencies that reasons were cited by respondents.

Space issues in schools are real and acute. Many rooms previously used for music tuition are now Covid isolation rooms or are being used as office space to enable admin teams to social distance. Some schools, against the DfE guidance, are simply not allowing external visitors. A large proportion of music education hubs’ out-of-school-hours provision is being prevented from happening by schools who are not allowing any outside lets. A few schools are simply scared to do anything they think might increase the risk, although some of these are special education settings with very legitimate concerns about their pupils’ vulnerability.

A worrying number of members say that senior leaders in MATs have dictated that music cannot happen in any of their schools; others say that this decision is increasingly being taken, without reference to the guidance, by MATs’ Health & Safety officers. Although it seems to be a minority of schools, the fear of a narrowing of the curriculum in response to a perception of the need to back-fill core subjects, is coming to pass in places.

Despite Music Mark’s best attempts to provide clarity through *Music Unlocked* and risk assessment templates, confusion about the guidance is widespread. Unresolvable tensions between the different sets of DfE and DCMS guidance and the frequent updates exacerbate schools’ uncertainty.



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School finances, difficulties of every school demanding a different approach and simply no response from some schools were also mentioned.

What can Music Mark do?

Music Mark asked members what else it could do to support them at this time. Their responses are summarised below.

Guidance	1-page flyer on why music is safe and the top 5 precautions Alerts when DfE guidance changes Examples of the “how” Reach school decision-makers	Messaging to schools	Thanks to supportive schools Reminder of what could be lost Positive messages about music’s safety and importance in the curriculum and wellbeing Case studies of schools and MEHs working together
Advocacy	Put the needs of music education hubs in the limelight Publish national and regional impacts on the sector	Messaging to DfE	Indication on 21/22 funding (good or bad) Multi-year funding settlement with possibility to carry forward Public support for MEHs and a message to schools about letting hub staff in
Idea	National bursary scheme		