



## **Quaker Valley High School Musical Program Plan 2020-21**

**LAST UPDATED: October 12, 2020**

### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented countless challenges to the way performing arts organizations typically operate. The purpose of this document is to inform our stakeholders of how the Quaker Valley High School Musical will be approaching practices/rehearsals, and to provide some guidance as to how our practices/rehearsals, procedures and schedules will be different for the 2020-21 school year.

This document is primarily adapted from the 2020-21 [QVSD Athletic Department Health and Safety Plan](#) and is intended to provide specifics about issues unique to the musical program. While Musical is not recognized as an athletic activity by the PIAA (Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association), decisions about how the Musical will proceed this year are based in some part upon the guidance athletic teams have received and are abiding by from the PIAA and QVSD Athletic Department.

In addition, this document is informed by the latest guidance on COVID-19 from the [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#) (PA DOH) the [Pennsylvania Department of Education](#) (PDE), the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), the most recent findings from an ongoing study on the aerosols produced by wind instrument playing, singing, and theatre performance commissioned by an international coalition of performing arts organizations and conducted by the [University of Colorado Boulder](#) (referred to hereafter as “the Colorado Study”), and recommendations from the [Educational Theatre Association](#) on reopening school theatre programs.

The Quaker Valley High School Musical, as part of the Quaker Valley School District, will follow the recommendations and guidance from all of the aforementioned in order to operate in as safe a manner as possible. It is important to understand that due to the nature of how singing and theatre performing produces aerosols as a byproduct of sound production, there is no completely risk-free way to participate in musical when considering the potential ability of contagions to travel through those aerosols. We realize knowledge about COVID-19 is continuously changing and we will adjust our plans as needed and recommended to us as further information becomes available in order to continue to minimize the risk of exposure for all of our stakeholders.

## **Mandates**

The following will be mandatory for all practices/rehearsals and performances in the 2020-21 season until further notice:

- The Musical will utilize indoor rehearsal spaces by doing the following:
  - All of the mitigation strategies contained in this document including but not limited to face masking and physical distancing are followed to the extent feasible.
  - Restrict the number of individuals in a single area to less than 20% of the maximum capacity AND rehearse only areas where physical distancing requirements can be met to the extent feasible (ex. band room, choir room, auditorium).
  - Stagger start times of multiple scenes scheduled to meet indoors and/or if coming indoors after beginning rehearsal outdoors, enter rehearsal spaces at different times and/or through different entrances to prevent large groups from crossing paths and/or being in one place at one time.
  - Areas in which students can and cannot be present will be clearly articulated. Restroom use should be on an as-necessary basis only and staggered if needed by multiple individuals.
  - Routine cleaning of all backstage areas, sets, props, costumes, and equipment (light board, sound board, rigging system, etc.).
- All students and staff will undergo a COVID-19 health screening before any meeting of Musical members to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Locations and procedures of this screening will be announced prior to the event with designated pick-up and drop-off times and locations. No one other than the participating student should exit the vehicle at the designated drop-off location. **Rides should not leave** until the student passes the screening. Students may drive themselves to rehearsal. Carpooling is discouraged.
  - The screening will involve a temperature check by staff with a temporal thermometer, and participants will be asked the following questions:
    - “Do you have any new or worsening symptoms associated with COVID-19 in the last 14 days?”
    - “Are you aware of any contact in the past 14 days with someone who has had a fever, shortness of breath, cough, or COVID-19 diagnosis?”
    - “Do you have a fever, shortness of breath or cough?”
    - “Have you avoided high risk behaviors such as gathering in large groups without proper physical distancing, masking, etc.”
    - “Have you traveled outside of the Pittsburgh area in the past 14 days?”
      - This question is to determine whether a student has been to a “high risk location.” as designated by the PA DOH as being high risk for COVID-19 exposure. More information is found on the [PA DOH website here](#).
  - Presence of a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, and/or showing obvious signs of illness and/or a “YES” response to any of the screening questions prohibits that person from participating that day and they will be asked to leave school grounds, at which point parents/guardians should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health care professional for guidance.
  - Attendance records, and records of screening information (including for staff) will be kept for contact tracing purposes.

- Healthy hygienic practices to limit the spread of COVID-19 must be followed including:
  - Hand washing (20 seconds with warm water and soap)
  - Students should wear a mask (not face shield) to the extent feasible. Exceptions include:
    - If the individual has a reason that the wearing of a face covering jeopardizes their health -OR-
    - Anyone briefly removing the wearing of a face covering to hydrate
  - Use of hand sanitizer
  - Routine cleaning of set pieces, props, costumes, equipment, backstage areas, and green room before and after each rehearsal
- Specific Masking Requirements
  - For the purposes of the Musical, acceptable face coverings follow [the following PA DOH and PDE language](#) **excluding** the language about face shields:
    - “...a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face.”
    - “Face coverings may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or improvised from household items, including but not limited to, scarves, bandanas, t-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels.”
    - “...procedural and surgical masks intended for health care providers and first responders, such as N95 respirators, would meet these requirements...”
  - While face shields are currently deemed to be sufficient by the PA DOH and PDE for regular school activities as of this writing, the Colorado Study currently asserts that face shields are not sufficiently effective at blocking singing and theatre performance related aerosols. Therefore, face shields are not permitted to be used during Musical activities unless a face mask is also worn under the shield.
  - While mandatory outdoor face coverings under the most recent PA DOH guidelines are for when physical distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained, *masks will be worn at all times* (save for the previously listed exceptions) *both indoors and outdoors* during Musical activities *regardless of spacing* due to potential spread of aerosols associated with singing, as per the results of the Colorado Study.
- Physical distancing between individuals will be enforced through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing of groups to the extent feasible. Staff and students should maintain physical distancing at all times possible and should not congregate during downtime. All unnecessary physical contact is prohibited.
  - Default physical distancing when inactive in rehearsal is at least 6 feet per CDC guidelines. The Colorado Study also asserts that 6 feet distancing is sufficient for singing and reciting dialogue.
- Anyone who is sick must stay home. Anyone who becomes sick *while* at rehearsal or a performance will be isolated from others and should be picked up immediately at which point parents/guardians should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health care professional for guidance.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must be limited to the extent possible, including but not limited to the following guidelines:
  - No eating, chewing gum or spitting at rehearsals or performances.

- All participants must provide their own water/filled water bottles for hydration. Water bottles cannot be shared and students should **clearly** identify their water bottle(s) with their name. Access to fixed water fountains or communal water coolers will not be provided—students must plan to bring all of the water they may need with them. At the Musical Staff's discretion depending upon the practice/rehearsal plan and weather conditions, if a student does not bring any water to an event or shows signs of dehydration, they may be required to return home.
- All participants are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer for use as needed during rehearsal and it should be labeled **clearly** with their name.
- Food may not be brought to practice/rehearsal or performances unless deemed medically necessary. This should be documented and shared with Mr. Wolford and Nurse Gilmore ahead of time. Medically necessary food should be **clearly** labeled with the student's name and not shared with anyone.
- No meals will be served within the context of any Musical activities.
- No equipment or accessories may be shared at any time for any reason. Student-specific equipment should be clearly labeled. Specific examples include but are not limited to:
  - **No members** should borrow from another student or share items, accessories (such as props, wigs, hats or shoes, clothing articles, makeup, scripts, etc.) or handle items that are not their own.
  - **All students** must come to practices/rehearsals with their own personal items such as face coverings, pencils, script, music, and accessories. To the extent feasible, personal items should be **clearly** labeled with the student's name.
- No visiting rehearsals/practices is permitted by anyone. Only staff and participating students are permitted to be present at any Musical-related gathering.
- Parent volunteers will not be utilized until further notice. All activities of the Musical should be conducted and supervised by staff.
- The Musical will not participate in any event that requires bus transportation until further notice. This includes but is not limited to recruitment trips, previews, and ceremonies.
- Staff and students who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions are encouraged to notify Mr. Wolford
- Regular communication and monitoring of developments will take place between staff, parents/guardians and students regarding cases, exposures and/or updates to policies and procedures. Students and staff will be kept up to date on the latest health and safety protocols.

## **Phases**

The Quaker Valley High School Musical will return to operations in three phases in four parts—mirroring the phases that will be observed by our athletic teams. Each phase must remain free of COVID-19 to proceed to the next phase.

### ***Phase 1—Education Phase October 20<sup>th</sup> through November 3<sup>rd</sup>***

- **Purpose:** To ensure education of our stakeholders of our policies and procedures this season; to educate our stakeholders about COVID-19 symptoms, spread and prevention as it relates to musical activities; to inform parents/students of our revised calendar, their responsibilities, and give them time to complete those responsibilities prior to our first in-person meetings.

### ***Phase 2a—Small Groups Part 1 (Auditions) November 4<sup>th</sup> through November 20<sup>th</sup>***

- **Purpose:** To introduce musical members back into musical activities in small groups/sections to 1. Help maintain maximum physical distancing, 2. Address musical/technical skills in a way that is targeted toward the needs of one specific group, 3. Address typical beginning-of-season clerical/procedural issues.
- Groups will average **no more than 20% of the maximum occupancy** of the rehearsal space in accordance with guidance from the state as of October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Sessions will not exceed 60 minutes. Singing rehearsals will not consist of more than 30 minutes of consecutive singing activities without allowing for a minimum of one air exchange as per the Colorado Study.
- Musical staff will place equipment with the required spacing for physical distancing (min. 6 feet) and teach student procedures for handling their own equipment.

### ***Phase 2b—Small Groups Part 2 (Beginning Rehearsal) November 30<sup>th</sup> through December 23<sup>rd</sup>***

- **Purpose:** To allow regular musical rehearsals to begin to resume, to allow multiple small groups to connect their work in larger groups.
- Groups will average **no more than 20% of the maximum occupancy** of the rehearsal space in accordance with guidance from the state as of October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Sessions will not exceed 90 minutes, with no more than 30 minutes of consecutive singing activities without allowing for a minimum of one air exchange as per the Colorado Study.
- Musical staff will supervise student placement of music stands and equipment with the required spacing for physical distancing (min. 6 feet).

### ***Phase 3—Full Return Phase (Routine Rehearsal/Tech Rehearsal) January 4<sup>th</sup> through March 7<sup>th</sup>***

- **Purpose:** To allow for the regular teaching of choreography, blocking, and music typical to the full group setting (still following all aforementioned guidelines to the extent feasible).
- Groups will average **no more than 20% of the maximum occupancy** of the rehearsal space in accordance with guidance from the state as of October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Sessions may exceed 90 minutes. No more than 30 consecutive minutes of singing without allowing a minimum of one air exchange as per the Colorado Study.
- Musical staff will supervise student placement of music stands and equipment out with the required spacing for physical distancing (min. 6 feet).

**All of the aforementioned phases are contingent upon conditions and subject to change in accordance with the most up-to-date local, state and/or federal guidance, and/or new research findings.**

## **Public Performance Information**

To ensure the health and safety of students and staff, the Quaker Valley High School Musical will be creating a pre-recorded performance to be streamed this spring. There is no intent to have a live audience at this time. The filming of the show will take place in March dependent upon other events within the district.

## **For More Information**

### **Primary Point of Contact:**

- Austin Wolford, Director of Choirs, Quaker Valley High School
- Office: 412-749-6040
- E-mail: [wolforda@qvsd.org](mailto:wolforda@qvsd.org)

### **Other Information Feeds for the Quaker Valley High School Musical:**

- Instagram: @qvhs\_musical
- Twitter: @qvhs\_musical
- Website: [www.qvmusical.weebly.com](http://www.qvmusical.weebly.com)

### **Other Relevant Information:**

- See the [QV Athletic Health and Safety Plan 2020-21](#) for more information and suggested resources regarding COVID-19 signs and symptoms, what to do if you are sick, policies and procedures related to symptomatic and/or COVID-19-positive students and staff and more.
- [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#) Coronavirus Information and Guidance
- [Pennsylvania Department of Health Designated “High Risk Locations”](#)
- [Pennsylvania Department of Education](#) Coronavirus Information and Guidance
- [Centers for Disease Control](#) Coronavirus Information and Guidance
- [University of Colorado Boulder](#) Preliminary/Latest Results of Wind Instrument and Singing Aerosol Study
- [Educational Theatre Association](#) Recommendations for Reopening School Theatre Programs