



Ontario Dance and Performing Arts Studios

# **Workplace Guidelines for COVID-19**

May 28, 2020

## Introduction

Dance and performing arts studios 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 studios 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 studios and performing arts studios 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 studios are typically large spaces well-suited to physical distancing requirements.

Children are also missing out on the critical social aspects of the studio 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 studios 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 Studio 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 will operate in accordance with the Government of Ontario and the Emergency Order. They agree to reference the [COVID 19 Ontario](#) 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 and Washrooms
- 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.

## Framework for Reopening Ontario Dance and Performing Arts Studios

Ontario Dance and Performing Arts Studios have developed a phased approach to return with programming aligned to the Framework for the Reopening of Ontario.

By working together and following the advice of public health experts, together we made steady progress in the fight against this deadly virus. Modelling in mid-April 2020 shows early signs that enhanced public health measures — including staying home, physical distancing and hand washing — are working to stop the spread of the virus and flatten the curve of the outbreak. By following these simple steps, everyone across the province is making a positive difference.

### PHASE 1 – PROTECT AND SUPPORT



The primary focus of Phase 1 was to support the Ontario Government and health industries by staying home to flatten the curve. Ontario Dance and Performing Arts Studios did this by complying with the closure of our facilities. In addition, we have continued to work and message with our students the focus of the government through different forms of on-line methods.

Ontario Dance and Performing Arts Studios have continued to support their many staff while closing operations in many instances due to the circumstances.

### PHASE 2 – RESTART, PROTECT AND SUPPORT



Following the guidance of the Ontario government, the safety of all stakeholders and participants will continue to be the priority. This staged approach aligned to the Framework for the Reopening of Ontario does not have a specific timeframes, but will evolve at the guidance of public health and the provincial government. At any point during the progression we may need to pause or return to a previous stage to protect and support our participants and the public.



#### STAGE 1 –GROUP VIRTUAL TRAINING

##### 1.1 Virtual Training

- 1.1.1 Operation of video classes (ballet, tap, acro, jazz, lyrical, yoga etc.) and interactions to keep students connected with each other.

#### STAGE 2A – REOPEN OF STUDIOS FOR SMALL GROUP TRAINING

##### 1.2 In-Person Training

- 1.2.1 Instructional Training – individual and small group training at physical locations with all protective measures in place for the staff, students and parents.

##### 1.3 Virtual Training

- 1.3.1 Operation of video classes (ballet, tap, acro, jazz, lyrical, yoga etc.) and interactions to keep students connected with each other.

#### STAGE 2B – STUDIO OPEN FOR LARGE GROUP TRAINING

- 1.4 Larger group development in compliance with the Ontario Government Emergency Order.
- 1.5 Day Camps

#### STAGE 3 – FULL OPERATIONS WITHOUT SOCIAL DISTANCING

- 1.6 If the reintroduction of programming continues to be successful and we have the approval of public health, the provincial government full operation with students dancing with each other in choreographed numbers can resume.

### PHASE 3 – RECOVER, PROTECT AND SUPPORT



Begin greater interaction between the dance community and the overall Ontario economy. This can be done through attendance of events, hosting of performances and travel with a focus on growing registration numbers to pre COVID-19.

## Requirements for Health and Safety

### Prevention

Maintain physical distancing of at least two metres (approximately 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.
- 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).



Employees are not to report to work if they are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or are under self-isolation or quarantine. Clients will be informed not to attend the studio or classes 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.

Pre-screening prior to class attendance will be required. It may be conducted online, via electronic program, or in-person using the screening questionnaire below.

*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*



### **Sanitization of Workplaces and Washrooms**



Frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, 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. Staff will wear appropriate PPE while cleaning and sanitizing.

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

Washrooms will be for urgent use only and disinfected regularly. Students will sanitize their hands before and after use.

### **Retail Items (if applicable and where permitted)**

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).

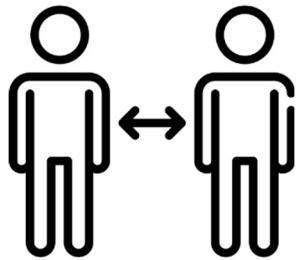
Isolating, cleaning, and disinfecting soft-surface items for a minimum period of 24 hours prior to resale.

Isolating, cleaning, and disinfecting hard surfaces.

Isolating, cleaning, and disinfecting returned items, placing them back onto the sales floor 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. It will comply with the order on total group numbers, always allowing for movement without encroachment, and to ensure physical distancing of two metres. Businesses agree to work with Provincial and Local Health Units to confirm the allowable site-specific threshold.

Class start and end times may be staggered 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 in a personal bag and stored at least two metres apart or will be kept with the parent/guardian outside of the Dance Studio.

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. Each Dance Studio based on their physical structure will need to develop their own layout.

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 Dance Studio policies.

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.

### **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, away from other persons inside the facility, 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.
- Masks will be provided to the child for proper respiratory etiquette. The child and parent will dispose of mask after leaving the Dance Studio Facility.
- 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 Dance Studio, 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. If contact occurs during after hours for public health unit, all students identified as a close contact will be sent home until direction is received the following day.
- Children or staff who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be required to stay home and self-isolate 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 as provided by local public health units or the Government of Ontario.

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](#) (R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7). 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

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