

COVID-19 Policy, Best Practices, Risk Mitigation

The Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon (YSSO) prioritizes the health, safety, and success of its musicians, music coaches, adjudicators, governing board, volunteers, staff, and audiences. Throughout the past two years, members of the governing board and staff have monitored data on best practices for mitigating risk and current research from government, education, nonprofit, and public health sectors. As the YSSO adapts its policies and revises mitigation strategies the organization will:

- endeavor to offer high-level music performance and learning opportunities; and
- follow the science, guidance, directives, and recommendations of health agencies.

The Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon recognizes that recommendations related to COVID-19 are fluid. Mitigation protocols for responding to COVID-19 variants may change. Therefore, the YSSO will adapt or realign plans based on evolving guidance from leaders in science, health, medicine, and education, and from local, state, and federal agencies. The YSSO will comply with restrictions, directives, and guidelines developed by state and local government leaders, public health officials, as well as schools and facilities. All YSSO participants will be expected to follow the protocols established by rehearsal and event facilities, and performance venues.

The best tools and strategies for protection are vaccination, physical distancing, masking, ventilation and airflow, hand hygiene, cleaning, and staying home if ill. The opportunity for transmission decreases with each mitigation effort implemented. A layered approach to health, safety, and mitigation will help ensure equitable and inclusive access to in-person rehearsals and concerts and reduce disruptions for musicians, families, governing board and staff, music coaches, volunteers, and patrons.

With the above in mind, the governing board of the Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon strongly recommends a full vaccination regimen (including recommended boosters depending on vaccine) for YSSO musicians, conductors, music coaches, adjudicators, governing board directors, volunteers, and staff. This recommendation is intended to protect the health and safety of the YSSO community. Although not required, musicians, staff, governing board, and others are encouraged to wear masks/face coverings at rehearsals and performances when practicable. Getting vaccinated and wearing properly fitted, high-quality face coverings are the two most effective mitigation tools.

The YSSO asks that musicians and others refrain from sharing instruments or using school instruments (unless assigned to a specific musician by the school), refrain from sharing personal items, and stay home when sick or if exposed to COVID-19. The YSSO may implement physical distancing requirements (minimum of three feet) between musicians and others at rehearsals.

The YSSO understands that despite safety measures, protocols, and policies, an inherent risk of exposure to infectious disease still exists. Therefore, the Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon asks that all musicians, families, staff members, governing board directors, audience members, and others involved in the organization, adhere to all policies, demonstrate patience, respect, and cooperation, and work together as a team to ensure successful in-person rehearsals, performances, and activities.