



NATIONAL BOYS CHOIR
OF AUSTRALIA

From the Executive Committee

Covid-19 Return to Rehearsals Protocols

9 June 2020

This document has been prepared by the Executive Committee on behalf of the NBCA Board, to outline the Choir's procedures and protocols for a gradual winding back of online activity, and a return to normal rehearsals in the studios at Ringwood.

There have been several articles available recently about the relationship between choirs and the spread of Covid-19. Much of the debate centres around the methods by which Covid-19 is transmitted, particularly the possibility that the virus is being spread through aerosols. The evidence appears inconclusive so far, but it is a possibility.

The other issue facing the Choir is the concept of asymptomatic transmission, in which people are carriers of the virus without showing any signs of illness. Such infection is only detected through testing.

While we are keen to start our return to normal rehearsals, the uncertainty regarding aerosol transmission, and the possibility of asymptomatic spread have led the Choir to take temporary additional precautions, detailed below. This is to keep everyone in the Choir community safe and well. Community transmission in Victoria is very low, and at the time of writing there are only 71 active cases in the state, many of whom are in isolation after travelling from overseas, and six in hospital.

Social Distancing

Conforming with current Government rules, all boys will be required to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between each other. Floors will be marked accordingly in corridors and rehearsals studios. We will also be limiting numbers in each studio according to Government density requirements allowing 4m² per person, up to a current maximum of 20 people per indoor space. Despite providing music educational services, we are not a school, and there are no specific Government rules regarding our Choir, so we have adopted the 20-person maximum guideline from related areas.

Attendance

All rehearsals will continue to be accessible via Zoom. Attendance at rehearsal in person at the Ringwood studios will be by the following arrangement:

- We will ask you to register your interest in bringing your son to Ringwood for rehearsal
- Boys attending each week will be notified via the Circular, including rehearsal times and rooms

Please do not bring your son to Ringwood if he is not listed on the Circular, as there are currently maximum numbers allowed.

Face Covering

- Boys will be asked to wear a cloth face mask, which will be supplied by the Choir, as a temporary item of uniform. Cloth masks are much more comfortable to wear than surgical face masks, and allow space in front of the mouth to breathe and sing
- An alternative would be a plastic face shield
- These are intended primarily to protect others, including Staff
- They should be carried clean to the rehearsal (in the satchel) and put on once rehearsal has started. The face covering should stay on until the chorister has left the building
- Boys will be encouraged not to touch the face-covering

If there is a reason why your son cannot wear a face covering (for instance, asthma or claustrophobia), please let the Office know. Those boys will not be excluded from rehearsal, but will be seated away from the centre of the room.

Cloth masks can be hand- or machine-washed. They should be brought clean and dry to rehearsal

Face shields can be purchased or home-made – there are several online instructional videos available, such as this one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHUrSX2cJyA>

Entry & Exit

- Boys will need to be dropped off in the carpark, and will be met at the door by staff
- The foyer will be closed (waiting room is closed) and the Office will be accessible only after the rehearsal has started
- Boys will be asked to sanitise their hands upon arrival, assisted by staff. *Sanitiser will be supplied.*
- A temperature check will also be done at this time. *Anyone with a temperature detected over 37.5°C will not be permitted to enter the rehearsal*
- Boys will divert directly to their rehearsal room, following the floor markings, and sit in marked places (on the floor or in chairs)
- Boys will be released from rehearsal one-by-one, and supervised at the exit door
- Boys will need to keep their face-coverings on until they have left the building

Hygiene

Boys should:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using the toilet, sneezing or coughing
- Cough or sneeze into an elbow, clean tissue or handkerchief *and then clean their hands*
- Avoid touching their face or mask/shield

Toilets will be sanitised frequently - we suggest that your son might plan to use the toilet before leaving home if possible



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What to Bring

- Music in satchel with pencil, sharpener and eraser
- Small bottle of sanitiser in satchel for personal use (refills are available if needed) – *this limits movement around the room*
- Water bottle (drinking fountains are currently not in use)

In rehearsal

- Rehearsals will be limited to 60 minutes maximum for the remainder of Term 2, without breaks.
- Details of start and finish times will continue to be published in the Circulars.
- Boys will only access their own music folder, satchel and drink bottle.
- If more than one group is rehearsing at the same time, start and finish times will be staggered to reduce traffic in the building and carpark.

In case of infection

If it is reported that a member of the Choir, family member or staff member has tested positive for Covid-19, we will comply with all Government protocols, as directed by the Department of Health and Human Services. These may include shutdown, isolation, contact tracing and deep cleaning.

Should this occur, you will be informed immediately, but names and other personal or identifying details will be kept private.

In this scenario, we would also be required to provide the DHHS with contact details for tracing purposes, so strict attendance rolls will be maintained, photos will be taken of each rehearsal to verify proximity, and parents may be required to sign in if they are inside for more than 15 minutes.

If you think your child or a family member may have the coronavirus, please call the 24-hour coronavirus hotline (1800 675 398).

If your child or a family member is a confirmed case, please call the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to discuss further actions (1300 651 160).

Sickness

If your son or anyone in your household is sick or symptomatic, please do not come to Choir. If you are concerned, please continue to use the Zoom rehearsal option.

These procedures will remain in place while they remain necessary, which we hope will not be very long. The Board and Staff will continue to monitor the situation, and keep you informed, and we look forward to seeing all our Choristers in person again soon.



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Please contact the Office if you have any queries about this matter.

With thanks for your support, and wishing you all health and safety.

NBCA Executive Committee

Rex Wenn, **President**

Colin Seedy, **Treasurer**

Andrew Bainbridge, **Vice-President; Co-Artistic and Administrative Director**