

In-Person Transition Info Sheet

Last Updated April 19, 2021



Our Guiding Principles

As we transition interested students back to in-person lessons **our number one priority will always be the safety and health of our students, faculty, and staff.** Effective learning can only be accomplished if these fundamental needs have been met. Our decision making has been, and always will be, guided by the latest scientific data and research, as well as the feedback provided by our faculty and students. **Students will not be required to return to in-person lessons before they feel ready,** and will have the option to continue online lessons for as long as they wish. We are so grateful for your support and patience, and we are excited to see you in-person when you're ready!

Timelines

When will in-person private lessons be offered?

Starting July 19, we will be offering in-person private lessons to interested students taking piano, guitar, and violin. This transition date is contingent on the Austin area entering Stage 2 of Austin Public Health's risk-based guidelines and having a positive test rate of less than 2%.

What if Austin does not enter Stage 2 by July 19?

We will delay the transition to in-person lessons to September 20, contingent on the Austin area entering Stage 2 by this date. Our goal is to provide students with a consistent and reliable education, while also leaving room for flexibility as data becomes available. This is why we've decided to set a transition date that is *contingent* on specific, actionable metrics. As always, we will continue to communicate with our students about our plans.

What about voice lessons?

Because masking is not conducive to teaching voice, and because there is a higher risk of transmitting Covid-19 associated with singing, we will not be offering in-person voice lessons at the initial transition date. Instead, voice lessons will continue online and will be phased back to in-person at a later date. We are researching ways that we can safely resume in-person voice lessons, and will keep our voice students updated about possible plans.

What about group classes?

Starting August 16, in-person group classes will be offered to interested students, contingent on the Austin area entering Stage 1 of Austin Public Health's [risk-based guidelines](#) and having a positive test rate of less than 1%. In order to ensure social distancing, in-person group classes will be scheduled at a limited capacity of only 5 students per class. For this reason, all parents will be asked to choose a new group class lesson time in advance of August 16 (regardless of if they choose to schedule online or in-person). Our admin staff will contact students once the fall group class schedule is available. Until then, group classes will continue online with our exciting [Summer Musicianship program!](#)

What if Austin does not enter Stage 1 by August 16?

We will delay the transition to in-person group classes to January 2022, contingent on Austin entering Stage 1 by this date.

Can students keep taking online lessons if they wish to do so?

Yes! Students will have the option to continue online private lessons and/or group classes for as long as they wish. We are proud of our online program, and will be happy to deliver the same quality online education that you've come to expect until you are comfortable enough to return to in-person lessons.

Health and Safety Protocols

After weeks of researching CDC guidelines, consulting with doctors, and reviewing steps taken by other schools, as well as collecting feedback from parents, students, and teachers, we have decided on the safety protocols below. These protocols may evolve over time as more research becomes available. Teachers, students, and staff will be notified in advance of any possible changes.

Any teacher offering in-person lessons will be fully vaccinated, and all administrative staff will be fully vaccinated before working in-person.

- Many of our students commented that having their teachers vaccinated was an important factor in their comfort returning to in-person lessons. Additionally, over 75% of students stated that they were concerned about potentially spreading Covid-19 to their teachers, so we are grateful for safe and effective vaccines that help our teachers come back to in-person teaching while reducing their risk!

Face masks will be worn by students, teachers, and staff at all times during lessons and in common areas.

- In addition to this being the guideline set out by the CDC, over 80% of students and 80% of teachers stated that wearing face masks during lessons was very important in making them feel comfortable returning to in-person lessons.

We have installed the Dust Free Active Pure air purification system that works by filtering air and ionized particles through a UV-C light that kills viruses and bacteria.

- This same system has been installed in schools, daycare facilities, a dentist office, and an urgent care clinic by our HVAC provider. Test results show this filtration system to be 99.7% effective in the reduction of the SARS-COVID-2 (Covid-19) virus within 20 minutes. For specifics on how this system was tested visit [HERE](#).

All students will apply hand sanitizer before entering the building, and teachers will apply hand sanitizer between lessons.

- Over 75% of students and 70% of teachers stated that hand sanitizer application/general hand hygiene was important in making them feel comfortable returning to in-person lessons.

Social distancing will be maintained between students, teachers, and staff.

- In addition to this being the guideline set out by the CDC, over 60% of teachers stated that social distancing was important in making them feel comfortable returning to in-person lessons.

We will limit the occupancy of the building to below 50% of our normal capacity while Austin is still in Stage 2. In order to ensure this, common areas will be closed and parents will be asked to remain outside during their student's lesson. Parents may observe their student's lesson live via Zoom.

- While we know that parent observation of the student's lesson is important for parents, students, and teachers, over 85% of students and over 75% of teachers stated that limiting the number of people inside our buildings was important to them feeling comfortable returning to in-person lessons. We are grateful that we have perfected our systems of providing access to lessons online via Zoom over the past year, so that parents may still observe their student's lesson and interact with their teacher in real time. This option also expands the opportunity for parents or other guardians not present at the location to observe the student's lesson if they wish.

A Health and Safety Manager will be present to ensure that protocols are being followed. They will help guide the student's experience so they have a positive, safe, and comfortable in-person lesson.

- The Health and Safety Manager is a member of our admin staff whose sole responsibility during their shift will be the health and safety of students, parents, and teachers. Their duties will include greeting students, handing out masks, administering hand sanitizer, and periodically sanitizing common areas.

Teachers will take steps to sanitize their lesson rooms between lessons, and staff will sanitize common areas periodically throughout the day.

- Between each lesson, teachers will disinfect door knobs, chairs and benches, footstools, piano keyboards, and step bells. Writing implements and mallets will not be shared between students throughout the day, and will be disinfected daily. Because of the extra steps required to sanitize rooms between students, in-person lessons may end anywhere from 3-5 minutes early.
- The Health and Safety Manager will be responsible for disinfecting surfaces in common areas on an hourly schedule. This includes door knobs, counters and tabletops, outdoor chairs, and bathroom faucets.

Paperless methods for sharing practice assignments and sheet music will continue to be used by all teachers.

- In addition to reducing transmission risk, many parents, students, and teachers stated that use of online systems for practice goals and homework assignments was a convenient way to help students stay on track, so we're excited for this practice to continue and expand!
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Additional Precautions for In-Person Group Classes

- To ensure the recommended distance between students, and limit the number of people in the building, in-person group classes will have a reduced capacity of 5 students per class (as opposed to the usual 10).
 - The sanitization protocols outlined above will also apply to group classrooms.
 - In order to provide time for teachers to sanitize rooms, and also to allow for air to circulate through our air purification and filtration systems, in-person group classes will be scheduled with 15-minute gaps between classes.
 - Online group classes will still be offered so that students can stay home and take an online group class if they are exhibiting any symptoms of illness (or if it happens to be more convenient that week).
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Response Plans

What happens if there is a surge in cases after Orpheus re-opens to in-person lessons?

- Once in-person lessons are offered, Orpheus will closely monitor the [risk-based guidelines](#) for the Austin area to ensure that in-person lessons continue to be a safe option for students and teachers. As long as Austin remains in Stage 2 we will continue to offer in-person private lessons for piano, guitar, and violin. As long as Austin remains in Stage 1 we will continue to offer in-person group classes. In the case of a possible surge, our response depends on the severity in the rise of cases. No matter what we will always communicate with our students in advance of any changes to their schedule. Here's our plan:

- ***For in-person private lessons (for piano, guitar, and violin):***
 - If the Austin area enters Stage 3, in-person private lessons will be suspended and online lessons will resume until 2 weeks after Austin enters Stage 2 with a [positive case rate](#) of less than 2%.

- ***For in-person group classes:***
 - If the Austin area enters Stage 2, in-person group classes will be suspended and online group classes will resume until 2 weeks after Austin enters Stage 1 with a [positive case rate](#) of less than 1%. In-person private lessons (for piano, guitar, and violin) may continue as long as Austin remains in Stage 2.

What happens if a student or teacher exhibits symptoms of illness?

- Students and parents are expected to perform a daily health check before coming to Orpheus. As part of this daily health check students and parents will ask themselves, “in the past 24 hours, have you had any of the following symptoms:”
 - Fever?
 - Chills?
 - Cough?
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
 - Fatigue/have been unusually tired?
 - Headache?
 - New loss of taste or smell?
 - Sore throat?
 - Congestion or runny nose?
 - Nausea or vomiting?
 - Diarrhea?
 - Not feeling well in general?

- If the answer is ‘yes’, then we ask that students stay home and participate in online lessons until either the symptoms have passed, or the parent/student has tested negative for Covid-19.
- Similarly, teachers and staff members will be conducting daily health checks and will not be coming to work if they are exhibiting any of the above symptoms. For this reason, a student’s in-person lesson may be rescheduled as an online lesson at any point. They will be contacted in advance if this occurs.

What happens if a student tests positive for Covid-19?

- If a student, or household member of a student, tests positive for Covid-19 we will notify all of the students and teachers who came to the building on that day. All lessons and classes taught by any teacher who had contact with that student will be conducted online for at least two weeks.

How to Sign Up For In-Person Lessons

1. Students will be notified when in-person lessons are available for scheduling.
2. Once in-person lessons are available current students should first discuss the transition with their private teacher.
3. Their teacher will then arrange for them to be sent an online in-person lesson agreement form.
4. After the parent or student signs the agreement form, our administrative staff will schedule their in-person lessons going forward and send them a confirmation email.

Other FAQs

At what point will parents be able to observe their student’s lesson in-person?

- Two weeks after Austin enters [Stage 1](#), one parent or guardian will have the option to observe their student’s lesson in-person, though Zoom observation will still be available. Parent observation of group classes will remain unavailable until further notice.

Since the waiting area will be closed, where will parents and students wait before and/or between lessons?

- We will be working to enhance the outdoor spaces at both of our locations to make them as welcoming and comfortable as possible. Some of our ideas include adding additional shade/rain cover, seating, fans, and misters. Additionally, parents may choose to wait in their car if they feel it is safe to do so. As was true before the pandemic, we will not be able to provide childcare for children waiting between lessons. Our outdoor waiting areas will not be monitored by a member of the Orpheus staff. For this reason we ask that a parent or guardian is present at all times while students are outdoors.

Will students be able to schedule some online lessons even if they are in-person the majority of the time?

- Absolutely! As usual, we only ask that students communicate any schedule changes with the front desk so that we may notify their teacher in advance of the lesson. Many parents and teachers stated that they've enjoyed the flexibility of online lessons! So, if a student is feeling under the weather, can't make their lesson due to commute time, or is traveling while on vacation, they can take their lesson online. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to schedule online make-up lessons!

Where can students submit feedback about this?

- We truly value the input of our students! We plan on surveying our students and teachers periodically throughout this process to ensure we meet expectations. Participation in these surveys, when available, is greatly appreciated! In the meantime, if students have questions, or would like to share feedback, they may email us at admin@orpheusacademy.com to schedule a phone appointment with a member of our admin staff.