



THE AMERICAN FEDERATION PUERI CANTORES

*Bringing together youth choirs throughout
America to sing the Peace of God*

March 1, 2022

Effective yesterday, February 28th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has relaxed mask guidelines for up to 70% of the US population, or 63% of US counties. People in counties with low and medium levels of COVID-19 no longer need to wear masks in public, the agency said. People in counties with high levels of COVID-19 (37% of US counties as of this date) still should wear masks in indoor public settings, including schools, according to the CDC. **The CDC also reiterated that people may choose to mask at any time. The remainder of our 2022 festival schedule takes place in counties currently with Low and Medium levels of COVID-19.**

On February 10, 2022, the International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study Updated Guidelines were released, reaffirming that the mitigation efforts in indoor environments (increased ventilation/use HEPA air cleaners, the wearing of well-fitting masks, physical distancing, and good hygiene practices) have been greatly effective in reducing the spread of the omicron variant of the SarsCov2 virus,

On February 11, 2022, the American Choral Directors Association reaffirmed that all performing arts activities *can* and *should* remain active in schools, including concerts and festivals.

Within the context of these reports, the American Federation of Pueri Cantores has updated their mandates and recommendations for the remainder of the 2022 festival season:

- 1. ALL singers, chaperones, and choir directors participating in AFPC choral festivals, regardless of vaccination status, are encouraged, but not required, to wear facial masks that cover their mouth and nose throughout the entire day, except for those periods when lunch or snacks are being consumed.**
2. Within the limitations of the rehearsal and worship spaces, singers will be distanced from one another, as possible. AFPC will coordinate their efforts with the local representatives to arrive at working solutions in advance of the festival day, so that a seating plan for both the rehearsal and worship can be adopted.
3. Within the limitations of the rehearsal and worship spaces, efforts will be made to provide a renewed source of fresh air via open/cracked windows and doors/air filters/purification systems to encourage cross ventilation and air changes. AFPC will coordinate their efforts with the local representatives to arrive at working solutions.
4. Throughout festival days, efforts will be made by AFPC and the local representatives to encourage all choristers and chaperones to wash their hands thoroughly at regular intervals.
5. Protocols for the lunch and snack periods will be coordinated with the local hosts to ensure safe spaces for all choristers. When possible, meals and snacks should be consumed outdoors.

When not possible, distancing between choristers should be strictly observed, especially during those periods when eating and drinking is taking place.

6. AFPC supports the efforts behind vaccinations and testing and encourages all involved in our festivals to be fully vaccinated, if able.

7. We ask that any festival participants (choristers, choir directors, chaperones, host location staff) who are feeling ill, have exhibited symptoms* of COVID-19 or tested positive for COVID-19 in the 5 days prior to the festival, to stay home and not attend the festival. Full refunds will be accorded on behalf of all paid participants affected.

*Symptoms include: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea (cdc.gov)

8. AFPC and our local hosts will remain nimble and respond to potential increased risk by increasing the rigor of these mitigation strategies as needed based upon local community level data. **Should an AFPC festival be located in a local country that has changed to a High level of COVID-19 infection, we will swiftly review our options to promote the safety of all festival participants.**

The American Federation of Pueri Cantores asks our conductors, coordinators, host church site personnel, singers, chaperones, and volunteers to join us in ensuring a safe and enjoyable Festival experience for all.

Thank you,

American Federation Pueri Cantores