

Generic Section**Background:**

This document is a revision of the 1999 version of the Physical Education Curricular Safety Guidelines. These 2012 Physical Education Safety Guidelines were developed with the support and encouragement of the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea), the Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE), the Ontario Association for the Supervision of Physical and Health Education (OASPHE), the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA), and the Canadian Intramural Recreation Association – Ontario (CIRA).

Intent of the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines:

The primary responsibility for the care and safety of students rests with the school board and its employees. An important aspect in fulfilling this role is to recognize that there is an element of risk in all physical activity and to take action accordingly. To this end, the safety guidelines writing team and physical educators across Ontario have identified and analyzed reasonable foreseeable risks and have developed these guidelines to reflect a consensus among qualified persons about procedures that help minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the risk of a preventable accident or injury. A guideline alone does not eliminate risk regardless of how well it is written or how effectively it is implemented. Safety awareness, practised by the teacher, based on up-to-date information, common sense observation, action, and foresight, is the key to safe programming. The intent of the Curricular Safety Guidelines is to provide a reference document that will assist the teacher to focus on safe instructional practices for each class activity in order to minimize the inherent element of risk. By implementing safe instructional practices, such as use of logical teaching progressions, as well as inclusion of age-appropriate activities in program preparations, planning and daily teaching, the educator will guard against foreseeable risks. It is hoped that through this implementation process, this document will assist educators in fulfilling their obligation to provide the safest possible environment in which all students, regardless of physical, mental, emotional abilities/challenges or cultural background, can be physically active.

Impact and Scope of this document:

The Safety Guidelines statements are mandatory. An activity must not occur unless these statements have been addressed.

This document delineates minimum guidelines that must be met by physical educators and administrators in addressing the safety component of the physical education core program. This module focuses on classroom instruction in physical education. Intramural and interschool activity guidelines can be found in the second and third modules.

Risk Management**The following elements of risk must be taken into consideration by the teacher:**

- The activity is age-appropriate for the students' physical/mental abilities and behavioural patterns.
- The teacher has the knowledge and ability in accordance with the safety guideline pages to teach/supervise the activity safely.
- When considering an activity which is not addressed in the physical education curriculum or the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines, the educational value vs. the entertainment value of the activity must be determined (e.g., Is going to a wave pool educational or entertainment?). Once the activity has been approved by a board official as having educational value, the inherent risks must be identified and minimized.

A. Generic Issues

Please Note:

- the following guideline statements are not listed in any order of priority
- lists of examples in these guidelines are not exclusive
- all guideline statements are mandatory

There are many common guidelines for safety which apply to all class activities. Some commonalities are:

1. At the beginning of the school year, teachers need to be aware of the medical background and physical limitations of their students. This includes knowledge of students with heart disorders, asthma, diabetes, severe allergies, anaphylaxis, etc. Each school needs to develop a process by which medical information is made available to teachers, e.g., a process is developed where medical information is communicated to all relevant teachers, at the beginning of the school year and throughout the year as needed. (see Appendix A).

For students with medical conditions (e.g., asthma, life threatening allergies, diabetes) check that:

- There is an emergency action plan in place for the medical condition in case of an emergency (see Appendix C).
- Medical support is readily available when needed or in case of an emergency.
Follow Board Policy related to administering:
 - life threatening allergy (anaphylaxis) – epinephrine auto injector
 - diabetes – hyperglycemia – blood testing kit and a fast acting sugar
 - asthma – asthma relief medications

If a student experiences one of the following episodes at school, or at a school sponsored activity, it may be a warning sign of Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndrome (SADS), call 911:

- fainting or seizure during physical activity
- fainting or seizure resulting from emotional excitement, emotional distress or being startled (e.g. a sudden loud noise such as a school fire alarm system)

The student must seek medical attention before he/she returns to play.

2. Many different situations may arise involving the transportation of students away from the school for activities. It is important that parents are made aware of the mode of transportation and student expectations. The means and frequency of communication required must be established with the school principal. A signed parent/guardian acknowledgement/permission form must be received from each participant. The form must contain details of the activity and its inherent risks including transportation risks. Consideration must also be given to informing parents of activities which take students off the immediate school property, where transportation is not required, e.g., cross-country running. Refer to individual school board's field trip procedures related to the need for obtaining parent/guardian permission.
3. Parents/guardians must be made aware of safety precautions related to environmental factors (e.g., effects of sun, hypothermia, frostbite, dehydration, viruses transmitted by insects) (see Appendix A).
4. A fully-stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible to the gymnasium. For a sample listing of first-aid items, see Appendix B.
5. When activities are offered off campus, a working communication device must be readily accessible.

6. An emergency action plan to deal with accidents in physical education must be developed and applied in all schools. For details on an emergency action plan, see Appendix C.
7. **Concussion Definition:** A concussion is a brain injury where the brain makes contact with the inside of the skull that causes changes in how the brain cells function, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g., headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., memory problems, decreased concentration), or emotional (e.g., feeling depressed). The brain injury cannot be seen on X-rays or CT scans. Concussion can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness; in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness. A concussion can occur from a direct blow to the head but may also occur from a major physical trauma to other parts of the body (e.g., a sideways check to the body) that causes a whiplash effect on the head and neck. (Adapted from ThinkFirst Position Statement on Concussion.)

Concussion Protocol and Procedures Information: Safety protocols and procedures must be developed and communicated to students to minimize and manage potential concussions. To assist in the development of concussion safety protocols and procedures, administrators, teachers and coaches are to reference the appropriate concussion information located in the Appendices section of this module. At all times the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines are the mandatory minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (e.g., a Board's protocols or procedures) the higher standard of care is to be followed.

Teachers, coaches and volunteers supervising physical activities, where a student/athlete sustains a possible concussion, must be able to identify and properly manage a suspected concussion.

Minimizing the Risk of Concussions

Education is a prime factor in supporting the prevention of concussion.

Any time a student/athlete is involved in a contact sport, there is a chance of sustaining a concussion.

Therefore it is important to take a preventative approach when dealing with concussions. Prior to activity the teacher/coach meets with student/athlete to go over the following information on concussion:

- The definition and causes of a concussion, signs and symptoms, and dangers of participating in an activity while experiencing the signs and symptoms of a concussion
- The risks associated with the activity/sport for a concussion and how to minimize those risks
- The importance of immediately informing the teacher/coach of any signs or symptoms of a concussion, and removing themselves from the activity
- The importance of respecting the rules of the game and practising fair play
- The importance of wearing protective equipment that is properly fitted (e.g., with chin straps done up according to the one-finger rule [only one finger should fit between the strap and chin])
- Where helmets are worn, inform students that there is no such thing as a concussion-proof helmet. Helmets are designed to prevent major brain injuries such as bruises to the brain, blood clots, facial injury and skull fractures. However, helmets do not prevent all concussions.

Teacher/coach responsibility in minimizing the risk of concussion:

- Skills and techniques must be taught in the proper progressions.
- Students must be instructed and trained in the appropriate body contact skills and techniques of the activity/sport prior to contact practice/game situations.
- Students who are absent for concussion safety lessons must be provided with the information prior to the next activity session.
- The rules of the sport must be enforced. Emphasize the principles of head-injury prevention (e.g., keeping the head up and avoiding collision).

- *Eliminate all hits to the head*
- *Eliminate all hits from behind*
- Check protective equipment is approved by a recognized Equipment Standards Association (e.g. CSA, NOCSAE) and is visually inspected prior to activity and well maintained.
- Check (where applicable) that protective equipment is inspected by a certified re-conditioner as required by manufacturer (e.g., football helmet). If students are permitted to bring their own protective equipment (e.g. helmets), students and parent/guardians must be informed of the importance of determining that the equipment is in good working order and suitable for personal use.
- Document safety lessons (e.g., date, time, brief content, student attendance).
- Many resources are available at www.thinkfirst.ca including videos and Concussion Cards. An excellent video "Concussions 101, a Primer for Kids and Parents" by Dr. Mike Evans is available on YouTube.

Management Procedures for a Suspected Concussion:

1. Initial Response

A. Unconscious Student:

For a student who is unconscious or there is/was a loss of consciousness (concussion should be assumed and medical attention must be sought):

- Initiate Emergency Action Plan and call 911.
- Assume there is a possible neck injury and, only if teacher/coach has been trained, immobilize the student before ambulance transportation to hospital.
- Do not remove athletic equipment (e.g. helmet) unless there is difficulty breathing.
- If the student regains consciousness, encourage him/her to remain calm and to lie still. Do not administer medication.
- Even if the student regains consciousness, he/she must be taken to the hospital for examination.

OR

B. Conscious Student:

If there is no loss of consciousness, but a concussion is suspected due to a direct blow to the head or a major physical trauma to other parts of the body (causing whiplash effect on the head and neck):

- Remove the student from the current activity or game immediately.
- Conduct an initial assessment of the student (i.e. check signs and symptoms).
- Do not leave the student alone and continue to monitor signs and symptoms.
- Do not administer medication.
- Do not allow the student to return to play in the activity, game or practice that day even if the student states that he/she is feeling better. **(If in doubt, sit them out.)**
- The student must not leave the premises without parent/guardian (or emergency contact) supervision.

2. All students with a suspected concussion (brain injury), even if there was no loss of consciousness, need to be evaluated by a physician as soon as possible.
3. Parents/guardians must be informed of:
 - the injury;
 - the importance of monitoring their child during the initial hours following a suspected concussion;
 - the importance of the head injury being evaluated by a physician as soon as reasonably possible.
4. Provide parents/guardians with the concussion form "Sample Request to Resume Physical Education - Concussion Related Injuries" (Appendix D-2).
5. Following medical examination the student must be monitored by a responsible adult for the next 24-48 hours for signs of deterioration. If any signs of deterioration occur, the student needs to be immediately re-evaluated by a physician.

6. After the student has been symptom free and has received medical clearance, he/she can begin a medically supervised Return to Physical Activity Process (6 Step Approach) (see Appendix D-1 and D-2).
7. Return-to-physical activity following a concussion in a physical education class, intramural activity or interschool team must only occur after medical clearance (in writing) by a physician (see Appendix D-2).

A student who has suffered a physician-diagnosed concussion outside of school time must be diagnosed symptom-free by a physician before returning to activity.

It is critical to refer to the following Appendices for important information on concussion:

For procedures/steps to be followed for a student suspected of a concussion refer to Physical Activity and Sport Related Concussion (Appendix D-1).

For the sample form to be used for a student with a suspected concussion refer to Sample Request to Resume Physical Education - Concussion Related Injuries (Appendix D-2).

(Adapted from "Identification and management of children with sport-related concussion", Paediatrics & Child Health 2006; 11 (7):420-428).

Concussion-Related Issues

When teachers/coaches are faced with the following scenarios or similar ones, they are to refer to school board policies on concussion management protocol:

- a) A student has suffered a physician diagnosed concussion outside of a board/school sponsored activity (e.g. a fall at home, playing on a municipal hockey team at a tournament). The student must be diagnosed symptom free by a physician and provide a physician's note of such before returning to physical activity.
 - b) A parent/guardian disagrees with the identification of sign(s) and symptom(s) of a suspected concussion by the teacher/coach/trainer, refuses to have the child examined by a doctor, and expects the child to participate in next activity/practice/competition.
8. Universal precautions (e.g., using impermeable gloves), must be followed when dealing with situations involving blood and other bodily fluids (see Appendix J). Teachers must refer to School Board protocols that address blood and bodily fluids procedures.
 9. Students must be made aware of the locations of the fire alarms, the fire exits and alternate routes from the gymnasium or other large indoor room used for activity.
 10. Lightning is a significant weather hazard that may affect outdoor activities. Safety precautions and protocols **must** be developed and communicated to participants in response to potential lightning risk factors. At all times the Board's lightning procedures are the mandatory minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (e.g., trip guides, facility/program coordinators) – the higher standard of care is to be followed. For lightning procedures, (see Appendix E).
 11. Prior to teaching the skills of the activity, the teacher must outline the possible risks of the activity (warnings of possible dangers); demonstrate how to minimize the risks, and set procedures and rules for safe play.
 12. If students are involved in an activity or sport (e.g., a low organization game) which is not described in this guideline, refer to the guidelines of an activity that it most resembles.
 13. Any modifications teachers make to guideline statements must raise the level of safety, not lower it.

14. Where an incident occurs that increases or could increase the risk of injury, corrective actions must take place to help prevent its reoccurrence.
15. At the beginning of the school year, teachers must instruct students in appropriate change room conduct as well as emphasize the need to change quickly and proceed to the gym. Reinforce this guideline as necessary during the school year.
16. Approval from the appropriate school board official must be received if a teacher wishes to include activities that are not in the guidelines and do not resemble guideline activities. As part of this process, the teacher must demonstrate that all appropriate precautions will be taken in the interest of student safety.
17. Individuals wishing to make additions and/or modifications to the curricular safety guidelines need to contact Ophea to initiate the process.
18. When taking students off-site for an activity organized by an outside provider (e.g., camp activities), the appropriate safety guidelines must be shared with the activity provider prior to trip confirmation. The outside provider must agree to abide by the mandates described in the Safety Guidelines.

B. Introduction to Sport / Activity Page Components

1. Guidelines:

- a) Guidelines for each class activity are outlined according to the following critical components:

Equipment Clothing and Footwear Facilities	Special Rules/Instructions Supervision
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- b) All statements found on activity pages and supporting Appendices A-J are mandatory. An activity must not occur unless these guidelines have been addressed.
- c) With some exceptions, appropriate age divisions are not described on activity pages. It is the responsibility of each School Board to determine the age appropriateness of these activities. Where ages are determined in activity pages (e.g., Rowing: “Grades 6 to 8 only”), the standard has been determined by experts in the field.

2. Equipment:

- a) To provide a safe environment for class activities, the teacher must make a pre-activity check of the equipment to be used. This could be done visually or recorded on a check list (see Appendix H-2, Gymnasium Equipment Checklist). Hazards must be identified and removed or isolated as a factor in the activity.
- b) When using equipment that is not described in the document, care must be taken to determine that it is safe for use, (e.g., no sharp edges, cracks, or splinters) and that it is size, mass and strength appropriate.
- c) Protective equipment. Prior to participation teachers and supervisors are to check that the protective equipment, mandated under the Equipment Criteria section on the activity page, is being properly worn by the students (e.g., properly fitting cycling helmet with chin straps done up).

Where appropriate, teachers and supervisors, when participating in the activity with the students are encouraged to wear the protective equipment not only for personal protection, but to act as a role model for students (e.g., CSA approved ice hockey helmets when ice skating).

- d) All balls must be properly inflated.
- e) No home-made equipment is to be used, e.g., personal ball hockey sticks, plastic bleach bottle scoops. Equipment can be made at school by Board employees, adult volunteers and by students who are under direct supervision. See guidelines for “School-Made Equipment”, Module II: Physical Education Intramural Safety Guidelines.
- f) If students are permitted to bring their own equipment (e.g., badminton racquets, skis, in-line skates), students and parents/guardians must be informed of the importance of determining that the equipment is in good working order and suitable for personal use.
- g) Helmets. Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines:

Helmet requirements, Safety Standards Associations and/or certification standards, can be found in the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines (Curricular – Interschool Modules) on the specific activity/sport pages under the safety criteria – Equipment.

Recognized Safety Standard Associations for Helmets:

The Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines recognizes the following safety standard associations in its guidelines:

- Canadian Standards Association – CSA
- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission – CPSC
- American Society of Testing and Materials – ASTM
- National Operating Committee on Standards in Athletic Equipment – NOCSAE
- Snell Memorial Foundation – Snell Standard
- British Standards Institute – BS
- Standards Association of Australia – AS
- Common European Norm – CEN
- Safety Equipment Institute – SEI

Selection of helmets for activities where specific helmets have been developed:

Helmets designed for the type of hazards encountered in the activity will provide the optimal required protection for the activity.

Select a helmet that meets the protection standards (certification) for the specific activity/sport as determined by a recognized safety standards association.

Selection of helmets for activities where specific helmets have not been developed (e.g. ice skating, tobogganing/sledding).

The Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines lists on its activity pages the types of helmets that offer the best protection against ice skating/tobogganing injuries as recommended by the following safety organizations: Thinkfirst Canada, (Sport Smart programs, head injury prevention and concussion awareness), Canada Safety Council, Safe Kids Canada and the Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange.

Selection of Multi Purpose Helmets:

Some helmets are marketed as ‘multi sport’ meaning they meet the safety standard for more than one activity (e.g. cycling, skateboarding and in-line skating).

For a multi-purpose helmet to be used for an activity/sport, the helmet must have an identification of a safety standard certification (e.g. sticker/identification on the package or on the helmet) from a recognized safety standards association indicating that it meets the required safety standards for those activities the helmet will be used for.

Select a suitable helmet for the activity:

- i) Reference the specific activity page in the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines
- ii) Consult the sport governing body of the activity.
- iii) Consult a reputable provider (retailer) of the equipment for information on the most suitable helmet.
- iv) Consult ThinkFirst's information document, "Which Helmet For Which Activity?"
http://www.thinkfirst.ca/documents/ThinkFirst_WHWA_English_2011.pdf

Certification sticker's location: To be sure that the helmet meets the safety standard (certification) for your particular activity/sport:

- Most helmets that meet a particular standard will contain a special label that indicates compliance usually found on the liner inside of the helmet.

CSA Standards: Where a Canadian Standard Association standard becomes available for an activity helmet, the CSA approved helmet is to be the choice for use.

- h) Students must be encouraged to report equipment problems to the teacher.
- i) When equipment (e.g. fitness equipment) is purchased second hand or donated to your school/school board, follow the guidelines for new/donated equipment in Appendix G.

3. Clothing and Footwear:

- a) Appropriate athletic footwear must be a minimum uniform requirement. Appropriate athletic footwear is defined as a running shoe with a flat rubber treaded sole that is secured to the foot. Running shoes with higher heels, wheels, rubber, plastic or metal cleats, open toes, open heels are not appropriate. Students must also wear appropriate clothing for physical education classes. Shorts or sweat pants and T-shirts/sweat shirts are examples of appropriate clothing. Deviations from this minimum are listed on activity pages. Some ill-fitting clothing, jewelry, hard-soled shoes and socks without shoes can inhibit movement and possibly cause injury during active movement. Where religious requirements present a safety concern, modifications to the activity must be made.
- b) Hanging jewelry must not be worn. Jewelry which cannot be removed and which presents a safety concern (e.g., medical alert identification, religious requirement jewelry) must be taped or securely covered. Deviations from this minimum are listed on activity pages.
- c) Parents/guardians must be made aware of safety precautions with eyeglasses for some activities, including an eyeglass strap and/or shatterproof lenses or removal of glasses if vision is adequate (see Appendix A).
- d) Long hair must be secured so as not to block vision.

4. Facilities:

- a) To provide a safe environment for class activities the teacher must make a pre-activity check of the facilities and equipment to be used. This could be done visually or recorded on a check list (see Appendices H1-H3). The minimum requirement is a pre-use visual check. Hazards must be identified and removed as a factor in the activity. Potentially dangerous and immovable objects (e.g., goalposts, protruding stage) must be brought to the attention of students and administration. All equipment must be checked regularly to determine it is in good working order. Equipment listed in the document applies only to safety. Students must be encouraged to report equipment or facility problems to the teacher. For more information on the role of the student in safety, see Appendix I.

- b) In an emergency situation (e.g., lightning, severe weather, medical emergency) the supervisor in charge of the excursion must follow School Board protocol. If the excursion takes place at an outdoor education facility whose emergency protocol has a higher standard of care than the School Board protocol, then the outdoor education facility protocol must be followed.
- c) Facilities and major equipment must be inspected and a written report completed by a reputable third party on a regular basis.
- c) Any use of a facility must be supervised.
- d) Equipment/furniture which is hazardous to the activity must not be stored around the perimeter of the gymnasium or any other large indoor room used for physical education. A reasonable number of benches as well as mats secured to the wall are exceptions to this statement.
- e) For all indoor activities, walls and stages must not be used as turning points or finish lines. A line or pylon could be designated in advance of the wall or stage.
- f) Foreseeable risks must be identified and precautions taken to minimize risks. For safety precautions when using non-gym areas (e.g., concourses, hallways, classrooms, stages) for gym classes, see Appendices F and H-3.
- g) Playing fields must be free from hazards, e.g., holes, glass, and rocks. Severely uneven surfaces must be brought to the attention of the principal, students must be made aware of them, and modifications made when necessary. Field/outdoor playing areas must allow for sufficient traction.
- h) Regarding the opening or closing of gym divider door/curtains:
 - elementary teachers/staff members only are in charge of opening/closing
 - check that path is clear (no obstructions and /or students in the way)
 - remove key after door closes
 - inspect divider door/curtain on a regular basis for anything that would hinder effective operation

Noise can be a problem in gymnasiums where curtains divide teaching areas. Determine that students are able to hear and follow instructions/signals. Use strategies to enhance communication to students.

A teacher/supervisor who is not familiar with the operations related to divider doors/curtains must seek assistance from appropriate support staff and/or refrain from opening/closing divider doors/curtains until instructional support is received.

- i) Where running takes place off school site for a warm up or conditioning run and/or is an integral part of the activity:
 - Prior to initial use of route or course, teachers must do a safety check 'walk through' in order to identify potential problems.
 - Before initial attempt, teachers must outline to students the route or course (e.g., notice of areas to approach with caution).
 - If route is off school property, determine that students are not crossing busy intersections unless directly supervised.

5. Special Rules/Instructions:

- a) Class activity must be modified according to the age, ability level, language and experience of students and the facility available.
- b) Teachers must be encouraged to stay current with respect to safe exercise techniques.
- c) All class sessions must include appropriate warm-ups and cool-downs.

- d) Skills must be taught in a proper progression. Refer to skill progression resources (e.g., School Board's core curriculum documents, commercial resources).
- e) Games and activities must be based on skills that have been taught.
- f) Before involving students in outdoor activity, teachers must take into consideration:
 - the temperature;
 - previous training; and
 - length of time students will be vigorously active.
- g) Students must be made aware of ways to protect themselves from UV rays (e.g., use of hats, sunglasses, sunscreen),
- h) Students must receive instruction on the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- i) Students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to severe weather conditions (e.g., lightning, funnel clouds, severe winds, tornados). (see Appendix E).
- j) Adequate liquid replacement must be accessible for students.
- k) Modify activities which involve students with special needs to address safety issues for all students. Teachers need to refer to resources designed to maximize safe opportunities for students with physical, intellectual, and behavioural exceptionalities (e.g., Moving to Inclusion-PHE Canada).
- l) Many activities address the issue of body contact, stick-on-body and stick-on-stick contact. In an effort to promote common understanding of the term, this document views contact as an intentional contact with the purpose of gaining an advantage in the specific activity.
- m) Some activities refer to an "in charge person". While the teacher is "in charge" and responsible for the overall safety and well-being of persons under his/her care, sometimes there are other personnel who must be identified as "in charge" related to specific situations (e.g., a pool lifeguard). In activities where an "in charge" person is designated, that person must make final decisions regarding the safety of the participants.
- n) While moving, students must not be required to close their eyes or be blind-folded.
- o) Emphasize controlled movement when requiring students to walk or run backwards. Avoid backward-running races.
- p) Any student with a cast must provide a doctor's note or parent/guardian signed permission indicating it is safe for him/her to participate.
- q) Casts/orthopedic devices must not present a safety concern to students or other participants. Modifications to the program might have to be made.

6. Supervision:

Definition of Supervision: Supervision is the vigilant overseeing of an activity for regulation or direction. All facilities, equipment and activities have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.

- a) A supervisor, as referred to below, is defined as a teacher, principal, or vice-principal employed by the school board. A volunteer (not necessarily a teacher) could assist in the supervision of physical education activities. Examples of volunteers are: instructional assistants, educational assistants, retired teachers, co-op students, parents/guardians and teacher candidates. Refer to your School Board policy regarding volunteers. These volunteers must not be the sole supervisors of any activity.

- b) Students must be aware that the use of equipment and the gymnasium are prohibited without the appropriate type of supervision. In addition to written or verbal communication, at least one of the following deterrents must be in place:
- locked doors
 - signs on doors indicating that students are not to use the gym unless supervised staff scheduled and present in the area of the gym (e.g., an adjoining physical education office) in order to see students entering the gym without authorization.
- c) All activities must be supervised. The Safety Guidelines designate three categories of supervision: **“Constant visual”**, **“On-site”**, and **“In-the-area”**. The categories are based on the principles of general and specific supervision which take into consideration the risk level of the activity, the participants’ skill level and the participants’ maturity. The three levels of supervision described below are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that an activity requires and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.
- **“Constant visual”** supervision means that the teacher is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring constant visual supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
 - **“On-site”** supervision entails teacher presence but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity. Momentary presence in adjoining rooms to the gym is considered part of “on-site supervision”.
 - **“In-the-area”** supervision means the teacher must be readily accessible and at least one of the following criteria is in place:
 - teacher is circulating;
 - exact location of teacher is known and location is nearby; or
 - teacher is visible.

“In the area” supervision is applied to activities that characteristically put students out of sight for periods of time e.g., alpine skiing, cross country skiing, cross country running. “Constant visual” and “On site” supervision would not be possible in these situations.

Example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school.

- **“Constant visual” supervision** – High Jump – Teacher is at high jump area and is observing activity.
 - **“On-site” supervision** – Relay Passing – Students are practising on the track and can be seen by the teacher who is with the high jumpers.
 - **“In-the-area” supervision** – Distance Running – Students are running around the school and at times may be out of sight.
- d) Teachers must establish routines, rules of acceptable behaviour and appropriate duties of students at the beginning of the year and reinforce throughout the year. Teachers must sanction students for unsafe play or unacceptable behaviour, and must exercise that responsibility at all times. Refer to Appendix I for more information on student behaviour.
- e) Students must be made aware of the rules of activities or games. Rules must be strictly enforced and modified to suit the age, physical, emotional, social, and intellectual abilities of the participants.
- f) The teacher must be vigilant to prevent one student from pressuring another into trying skills or activities for which he or she is not ready.
- g) When a student displays hesitation verbally or non-verbally, the teacher must determine the reason(s) for doubt. If the teacher believes that a potential hesitancy during the skill could put the student at risk, the student must be directed toward a more basic skill.
- h) Co-op students or other secondary students must not be the sole supervisor of any activity.

i) Occasional Teacher Coverage:

- The occasional teacher must have students participate in activities that are commensurate with his/her experience or qualifications.
- Include the Safety Guidelines sheet for the activity with the lesson plans.
- Inform the occasional teacher of the whereabouts of a contact teacher or administrator in case of an emergency.
- Specify restrictions/modifications for students with health or behavioural problems.

Introduction to the Appendices

Information in the appendices addresses the required elements previously described in the generic section.

It is mandatory that School Boards address all these safety elements (e.g., parental permission, medical information).

Each appendix was developed as a sample for School Boards to localize as needed.

Safety Guidelines - Daily Physical Activity (DPA)

The responsibility for addressing a safe learning/activity environment rests with the school board and its staff. This responsibility applies to all aspects of the school day, including DPA. Daily physical activities may take place in a variety of locations, such as gymnasiums, the outdoors, classrooms, hallways, concourses, large stages and multipurpose areas. There are many common or generic guidelines for safety that apply to all of these locations, and they are outlined on the following pages.

Generic Safety Guidelines for DPA:**Medical Information**

- A process must be in place by which staff is made aware of any limitations (e.g., physical, intellectual, emotional) that students may have that would prevent full participation in daily physical activities.
- Be well prepared to respond to emergency situations that might arise from such conditions as asthma, diabetes, and life-threatening allergies.
- Follow board policies regarding the collection and storage of student medical data.

First Aid

- Be aware of the school's first-aid emergency action plan, the identity of the first-aid providers, and the location of the first-aid kit(s).
- When conducting off-site activities, plan how to access emergency medical aid.
- Follow board policies prescribed for Universal Precautions for Blood and Bodily Fluids.
- A first-aid kit must be accessible to all areas used for DPA.

Activity Risks

Before engaging in physical activities, inform students of the following:

- possible risks associated with the activity
- ways of minimizing the risks
- procedures and guidelines for safe participation.

Emergency Situations

Inform students of the locations of fire alarms, fire exits, assembly areas, and protocols for emergency situations for every location where daily physical activity takes place.

Off-site Activities

When activities are taking place off the school site, refer to school board policies, protocols, and forms.

Change-Rooms and Traveling to DPA Activity Area

At the beginning of the school year, and throughout the year, inform and remind students of appropriate change-room behaviour and safe procedures for going to and from the DPA area.

Equipment

- Equipment must be appropriate for the facility or location used (e.g., classroom, outdoors).
- Equipment must be checked regularly to determine that it is in good working order.
- Balls must be properly inflated.
- Mats must be placed on all designated landing areas (e.g., under chin-up bar, peg board, climber rungs).
- Encourage students to report equipment problems to the teacher.

Clothing and Footwear (Ways to implement and communicate the following are included at the end of the DPA section)

- Running shoes are a minimum requirement, regardless of where DPA takes place (see Outdoors activity page for exceptions when DPA is outdoors). Running shoes must have flat rubber soles with a tread and be secured to the feet. Running shoes with higher heels, wheels, open toes, open heels, cleats and sandals are not appropriate. Remind students to tie shoelaces securely.
- When DPA takes place as part of a Physical Education class, shorts, sweat pants, T-shirts, and sweatshirts are examples of appropriate clothing.
- When DPA takes place in any setting other than as part of a physical education class, students must wear clothing that does not inhibit movement (e.g., not tight clothing) and is appropriate for bending, stretching, etc.
- When religious requirements present a safety concern, modifications must be made to the activity.
- When DPA takes place, no hanging jewelry can be worn. Refer to Physical Education Safety Guidelines individual activity pages related to the topic you are teaching in order to determine the appropriateness of other types of jewelry. Hanging jewelry that cannot be removed and that presents a safety concern (e.g., medical alert identification) must be taped / covered.

Facilities

- Visually check the activity area prior to the activity to determine that hazards are identified and removed.
- Classrooms must provide enough space that is unobstructed by furniture and other equipment that will allow for free movement by students (i.e., enough space to move freely without touching others or furniture).
- Remove excess equipment and furniture from the perimeter of the gymnasium, hall, concourse, stage (e.g., tables, chairs).
- Bring potentially dangerous and immovable objects (e.g., goalposts, protruding stage) to the attention of students. Where there are immovable objects (e.g., trophy cases), create a “safety zone” of at least one metre around the perimeter of the activity area. Mark out these types of areas (e.g., with pylons, mats etc.).
- The activity surface, whether indoors or outdoors, must provide good traction.
- Make students aware of the boundaries of the activity area.
- Encourage students to report safety concerns regarding the facility to the teacher.

Physical Activities: Special Rules and Instructions

- Activities must be appropriate for the age and ability levels of the students and the facility where the activity is taking place.
- The number of students participating in DPA in any location must not present a safety concern.
- Establish routines, rules of acceptable behaviour, and appropriate duties for students at the beginning of the year, reinforce these throughout the year, and determine that students adhere to them.
- Games and activities must be based on skills that have been taught previously.
- Instruct students regarding the proper use of equipment before allowing them to use it.

- Students must be instructed to keep a safe distance from one another, from furniture/equipment and structures (e.g., walls, doors, windows).
- Clearly outline all rules to students. Rules must be strictly enforced. Modify rules to suit the age and ability of the participants.
- Make students aware that body-on-body contact and equipment-on-body contact are prohibited.
- Daily physical activities must include an appropriate warm-up, moderate to vigorous physical activity, and cool-down.
- Encourage each student to work at a level of intensity that is appropriate for him or her.
- Determine that the temperature and weather conditions are appropriate for participation in moderate to vigorous physical activity outdoors.

Supervision

- Determine that supervision of DPA is in accordance with all board policies and protocols.
- While students are physically active, be present at, in control of, and fully attentive to the activity area at all times.
- Inform and periodically remind students that use of equipment and of the gymnasium and multipurpose rooms is prohibited without teacher supervision. Deterrents must be in place (e.g., announcements, signs on doors, locked doors).
- Be vigilant to prevent one student from pressuring another into trying activities for which he or she is not ready.
- When a student displays hesitation, verbally or non-verbally, during an activity, discuss the reason(s) for the hesitancy and, if appropriate, provide the student with a different activity.
- Share DPA safety standards with occasional teachers.

In the following charts, safety guidelines are provided for activities conducted in specified areas. In cases where sport-specific activities are being done (e.g., soccer), refer to the **Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines: Elementary Curricular Module**. In this document there are activity-specific safety standards for a full range of activities.

DPA Locations	Equipment	Clothing & Footwear	Facilities	Special Rules & Instructions	Supervision
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment must be appropriate for age and ability of students and size of classroom. • All equipment used in DPA must be in good repair. • Location of nearest first-aid kit must be known and accessible. • DPA equipment must be safely stored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running shoes must be worn. • No hanging jewelry. • Clothing appropriate for freedom of movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually inspect and check for hazards specific to classrooms (e.g., floor surface must not be slippery and is free from all obstacles, such as books, backpacks, and extension cords). • Carpets must be flat and secured to the floor and not present a tripping hazard. • There must be enough room between students and furniture and walls to allow for freedom of movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include activities that have a controlled amount of movement (e.g., running on the spot, chair exercises). • Students must be instructed in the proper use of equipment before using it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site supervision

DPA Locations	Equipment	Clothing & Footwear	Facilities	Special Rules & Instructions	Supervision
Multi-Purpose Area Concourse Hallways Stage Library Stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment must be appropriate for age and ability of students and size of facility. All equipment used in DPA must be in good repair. First-aid kit must be accessible. DPA equipment must be safely stored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running shoes must be worn. No hanging jewelry. Clothing appropriate for freedom of movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visually inspect and check for hazards specific to the location (e.g., proximity of drinking fountains, glass doors and trophy cases to the activity). Mark off areas where there are immovable objects (e.g., sinks, water fountains). Floor surfaces must provide good traction. Walls and doors must not be used for turning points or finish lines. A line or pylon must be used instead. Where a hall or stair activity involves passing through a doorway, the door(s) must be secured open. There must be enough room between students and equipment and walls to allow for freedom of movement. Large stages can be used, but the edge must be marked off and students kept back from the markers. Locker doors must be closed when DPA occurs in hallways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include activities that have a controlled amount of movement, based on the size of the area (e.g., aerobics, mat work, fitness stations, skipping, dance). Students must be instructed in the proper use of equipment before using it. If the activity area is a common open area (e.g., an atrium, a forum, a library, hallway), students who are not involved in DPA must walk around the outside of the area or must be redirected to take another route. Take precautions to guard against doors opening into the activity area (e.g., keep DPA participating students far enough away from a door that could swing open into the DPA area). No racing or end-to-end activities. When students are ascending or descending stairs, they must be in control and must have access to a hand rail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-site supervision

DPA Locations	Equipment	Clothing & Footwear	Facilities	Special Rules & Instructions	Supervision
Gymnasium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment must be checked regularly and repaired as needed. • First-aid kit must be accessible. • Equipment must be appropriate for age and ability of students. • DPA equipment must be stored safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running shoes must be worn. • No hanging jewelry. • Clothing appropriate for freedom of movement. • Scarves, drawstrings, and belts must not present a safety concern. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually inspect for hazards. • Walls and stages must not be used for turning points or finish lines. A line or pylon must be used instead. • Floor plugs must be used to cover the holes in which poles for nets are usually placed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must be instructed in the proper use of equipment before using it. • When involving students in circuits, there must be enough room between stations and between the station activity and the wall for safe movement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site supervision

DPA Locations	Equipment	Clothing & Footwear	Facilities	Special Rules & Instructions	Supervision
<p>Outdoors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment must be appropriate for age and ability of students. • Equipment must be safely transported to the outdoor location. • First-aid kit must be accessible. • When using creative playgrounds, follow board/school policies for their use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footwear must be appropriate for the requirements of the activity (e.g., running shoes, snowshoes, and boots). • Clothing must be appropriate for the activity and weather conditions (e.g., hats, mitts). • No hanging jewelry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually inspect outdoor area for potential hazards (e.g., holes, glass, rocks). • Immovable obstacles, such as trees and goalposts, must be identified to students. • Severely uneven surfaces must not be used. There must be sufficient turf for proper traction. • Warn students to be careful on wet grass. • When engaging students in an activity in the school neighbourhood (e.g., a power walk), teachers must familiarize students with the route before the initial attempt (e.g., note areas to approach with caution). Students must not cross intersections unless directly supervised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take weather conditions into consideration (e.g., heat, cold, smog, rain, lightning) when planning activities. • Attention must be given to temperature, length of time students have been outside, and intensity of activity. • Inform parents and students of the importance of sun protection (e.g., sunscreen, hats) and insect repellent. • Remind students of the importance of hydration. • Inform school office whenever a class will be held outdoors and determine that an appropriate means of communication is available (e.g., student runner, walkie-talkies). • Determine that there is easy access into the school building from the location. • Students must stay in pairs or groups (the buddy system) if they are going to be out of the teacher's sight for any reason. • For winter activities, discuss with students how to prevent, recognize, and treat frostbite and hypothermia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site supervision • In-the-Area supervision for power walks, neighbourhood run/walks • For activities in the school neighbourhood, one supervisor must be at the front of the group and one at the back of the group (primary). A responsible student must be at the front of the group and a teacher at the back of the group for junior and intermediate students.

DPA Locations	Equipment	Clothing & Footwear	Facilities	Special Rules & Instructions	Supervision
Community Facilities (e.g., arenas, parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use equipment appropriate to the size and condition of the facility. • Equipment must be safely transported to the community facility. • First-aid kit must be accessible. • When using off-site facilities, follow board policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothing and footwear must be appropriate for the activity (e.g., running shoes, skates). • No hanging jewelry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visually inspect community facility for hazardous conditions. • For outdoor community facilities, see Outdoors section above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow rules and etiquette as outlined by the facility. • Be familiar with the emergency safety procedures of the facility. • Determine that there is a suitable means of communication with the school in case of an emergency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site supervision

Sample Letter to Parents/Guardians (or Newsletter Item)

(Name of school or letterhead)

(Date)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Ministry of Education requires every elementary student across Ontario to participate in a minimum of 20 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity during each instructional day (Grades 1 to 8). The School Board and our school are committed to helping our students benefit from this requirement.

Research shows that providing elementary students with opportunities to be physically active on a daily basis has a positive impact on their physical, mental and social well-being. In particular, recent studies have cited that physical activity has had a beneficial impact on students' achievement, readiness to learn, behaviour, and self-esteem.

Each 20 minute Daily Physical Activity (DPA) session includes a warm-up, sustained physical activity, and a cool-down. On days that students are participating in physical education, DPA may be planned as part of the lesson in the gym. On days that your child does not have a physical education class, it will occur in another manner (e.g., outdoors, in the classroom, at another location in the school or at a school-wide event such as an assembly). Students with limitations will be accommodated so that all students can participate as best they can.

Therefore, a minimum safety requirement is that students must wear appropriate footwear and clothing on a daily basis. This means running shoes and comfortable, loose fitting clothing with no hanging jewelry, which is already a requirement for physical education classes.

Running shoes must have flat rubber soles with a tread and be secured to the feet.

- No running shoes with wheels
- No sandals
- No running shoes with a higher heel
- No slip-ons
- No cleats
- No open toe or open heels
- Shoelaces must be tied.

This program is only one step to helping students attain a healthy active lifestyle. As parents/guardians, you can play an important role by encouraging your child's participation in physical activity at school, by participating in physical activities with your child, and by talking to your child about Daily Physical Activity and about the importance and benefits of healthy, active living.

Please look for details of activities related to DPA in upcoming communications throughout the school year. If you have any questions, please contact us through the school office.

Yours truly,

Principal

Sample DPA Communication Strategies

A. The minimum student safety requirements for DPA are as follows:

- running shoes
- when DPA takes place in any setting other than as part of a physical education class, students must wear loose fitting clothing that does not inhibit movement (e.g., not tight clothing) and is appropriate for bending, stretching etc.
- no hanging jewelry
- jewelry that cannot be removed must be taped/covered

There are a variety of ways that this information can be communicated to parents:

- in the school newsletter
- on the school's web site
- in the student handbook
- as an attachment to the June report card to prepare students and parents for the next school year (sample attached on previous page)
- as part of the Physical Education Safety Guideline Appendix A which goes home to all parents/guardians in September (attached)
- letter to parents

These requirements could be included in the school's dress code and shared as part of any of the above strategies. The following is a sample dress code description:

B. Sample Dress Code

School policy requires that students meet acceptable standards of dress and grooming. Student dress should promote a safe, respectful, learning environment.

Please assist your child in making the appropriate dress choices each day. Students need to be prepared every day to be active, to sit on the floor and to move around the classroom

The following guidelines should help define “appropriate” and “respectful”:

- no profanity on clothing including shirts and hats
- no hats worn inside the school
- no suggestive cartoons or drawings on clothing
- no slogans promoting the use of drugs, alcohol or violence on clothing
- no derogatory, gender-based or racial comments on clothing
- no revealing clothing such as short shorts/skirts, tube tops, halter tops, muscle shirts, spaghetti straps on tops, clothes that expose the midriff and chest
- no shorts under short skirts
- no underwear showing

Participation in the DPA Program requires that every day students:

- wear running shoes

Running shoes must have flat rubber soles with a tread and be secured to the feet

No:

- running shoes with wheels
- running shoes with a higher heel
- open toes or open heels
- cleats
- sandals

- no hanging jewelry.
- hanging jewelry which cannot be removed must be taped/covered.
- wear loose fitting clothing that does not inhibit movement (e.g., not tight clothing) and is appropriate for bending, stretching etc.

For physical education classes, intramurals, and inter-school activities:

- running shoes are mandatory.
- students may also need to wear specified gym clothes, which are a necessary safety requirement (i.e., during gymnastics: shorts, T-shirts and running shoes).

Thank you to Halton Elementary Schools: Post's Corners, River Oaks and C.H. Norton for your input into the above sample dress code.