

COVID-19 Considerations for Physical Activity (Updated September 2021)

Purpose

The COVID-19 Considerations for Curricular Activities (Health and Physical Education), Intramural Activities and Interschool Athletic Activities are not prescriptive in nature, rather, they are intended to support school boards and schools with:

- connecting the safety content from the Ministry of Education [COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools \(2021-2022\) Version 2](#) (updated August 13, 2021) to curricular (health and physical education), intramural, and interschool athletic activity opportunities for students; and
- providing sample strategies and considerations for COVID-19 safety that can support school boards with the implementation of school-based physical activity programs.

Consult the [Summary of COVID-19 Considerations for Curricular Activities/Summary of COVID-19 Considerations for Intramural Activities/Summary of COVID-19 Considerations for Interschool Activities](#), for an overview of the how the Ministry of Education direction (updated August 13, 2021), connects with the implementation of the curricular activities (health and physical education), intramural activities, and interschool athletic activities.

NOTE: The COVID-19 Considerations for Physical Activities (for elementary/secondary) is a living document whose content will evolve as the direction and recommendations from the Ministry of Education and public health advice are updated.

Approach

Returning to the school setting will require careful planning, opportunities for students to re-engage in a wide range of school-based physical activities, as well as, the implementation of new COVID-19 safety processes and procedures. “School boards and schools are expected to employ multiple protective strategies and a layering of controls to support healthier and safer environments for students and staff.” ([COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools \(2021-2022\)](#), Protective Strategies, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021.) School boards are encouraged to work with local public health units to reach out to families to promote vaccination.

Providing a wide-range of opportunities for students to learn, practice, participate in, and enjoy physical activity is an important part of all students' day to day education experience and can provide many positive benefits connected to achievement, mental health, well-being and overall student success. As part of the return to school planning process it will be important to prioritize the safety of students and allow them to re-engage in physical activities in a way that they feel confident, ready and prepared.

COVID-19 Safety Information

The COVID-19 safety considerations and practices for curricular (health and physical education), intramural, and interschool athletic activities can support school board and school staff, as well as outside volunteers (for example, volunteer intramural supervisors/coaches) with the implementation of COVID-19 safe learning environments. Establishing and maintaining a learning environment that is physically, socially and emotionally safe requires collaboration, careful planning and an understanding of safety considerations and practices specific to COVID-19. School boards and local public health units are encouraged to work together to discuss, establish and maintain policies/procedures/practices that meet the local COVID-19 conditions.

School boards should consider the following sources/documents when developing school/school board policies and procedures:

- **COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) Version 2** (updated August 13, 2021);
- local public health unit policy and direction;
- **Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE)** for the minimum safety standards for physical activities; and
- content from:
 - **COVID-19 Considerations for Curricular Activities (Health and Physical Education)**;
 - **COVID-19 Considerations for Intramural Activities**; and
 - **COVID-19 Considerations for Interschool Athletic Activities**.

COVID-19 Considerations for Curricular Activities (Health and Physical Education), Intramural Activities, and Interschool Athletic Activities

- **Planning: Considerations and Sample Strategies:** this section provides sample

considerations and tips to support the development of school board and school plans for COVID-19 safety.

- **Safety Considerations:** this section is a supplement to the safety standards already available in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE) and provides additional safety considerations specific to COVID-19.
- **Tools and Resources:** this section provides tools and resources to support school boards and schools with implementing the Ministry of Education's COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) Version 2 (updated August 13, 2021).