

Dragon Boat

SECONDARY - INTERSCHOOL 2025

- This activity includes additional safety standards specific to Qualifications and First Aid (previously designated High Risk).
- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- The safety standards for this activity must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed in the safety standards. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).

Equipment

- Determine that all equipment is safe (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters) and all assistive devices (e.g., a walker) are in good working condition and properly adjusted for the height and mobility needs of the student prior to participation.
- Protective equipment must not be altered (for example, cutting a portion off the back of mouth guards, adding padding to a protective helmet).
- Students must wear a correctly fitting, properly secured/fastened and Canadian approved personal flotation device (PFD) or lifejacket, with whistle/signaling device attached, at all times near the water, where the depth of the water poses a risk, in and on the water.
- Coaches/Community Coach Liaisons and all individuals who assist with the watercraft activity (for example, Qualified Instructors, Volunteers) are required to wear a correctly fitting, properly secured/fastened and Canadian approved PFD or lifejacket, with whistle/signaling device attached, at all times near the water, where the depth of the water poses a risk, in and on the water.

- Paddles and boats must be checked to assess that:
 - there are no splinters or cracks
 - the head, tail, drum, drummer's seat, and steering oar are securely fitted
 - the boat is not leaking and bailers are in it
 - the centre seat is in place if it is a split boat
 - the buoyancy compartments are functional and sufficient to create positive buoyancy
 - the boat meets [Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide](#) requirements for small crafts.
- 1 audible alarm signal (for example, whistle, air horn) must be carried by the helm (boat steersperson).
- A safety boat must be equipped with a bull horn/megaphone.
- A correctly fitting properly fastened and Canadian approved personal flotation device (P.F.D.)/lifejacket must be worn at all times during dragon boating.

Refer to the [First Aid](#) section for first aid equipment requirements.

Watercraft

- Paddles and boats must be checked to assess that:
 - the boat meets Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide requirements for small crafts;
 - there are no splinters or cracks;
 - the head, tail, drum, drummer's seat, and steering oar are securely fitted;
 - the boat is not leaking and bailers are in it;
 - the centre seat is in place if it is a split boat; and
 - the buoyancy compartments are functional and sufficient to create positive buoyancy.

- One audible alarm signal (for example, whistle, air horn) must be carried by the helm.

Safety Craft

- A safety craft is a designated craft that is rescue-capable, taking into consideration necessary factors (for example, distance from shore, weather, water and wind conditions), and contains at least one Coach, Community Coach Liaison, or Qualified Instructor who meets the first aid certification.
- The safety craft must be motorized and equipped as per Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide requirements.
- The operator of the motorized safety craft must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card, experience in navigating the craft, and knowledge of the waterway in which the activity takes place (for example hazards, rocks, shoals).
- The motorized safety craft must not pose a risk to the safety of the participants (for example, maintain a safe distance from the watercraft, operate at a speed that minimizes boat wake unless responding to an emergency).
- The motorized safety craft must be the first craft in the water with occupants aboard and the engine running before Students leave the beach, dock, or mooring and while Students are on the water.
- A reboarding device is required where the vertical height that a person must climb to reboard the boat from the water (freeboard) is over 0.5m (1'8").
- The motorized safety craft must be equipped with a bull-horn/megaphone.

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Students must wear clothing and securely fastened foot protection appropriate for open-water dragon boat racing. A dry change of clothes must be available on shore.
- Coaches are required to wear personal flotation devices (P.F.D.) while on the water at all times.
- The wearing of jewellery during practices and competitions must meet the rules of the governing body of the sport/activity, [OFSAA](#), and local athletic association. Consult the [General Safety Standards for](#)

Clothing, Footwear, and Jewellery when jewellery is not addressed by the governing body of the sport/activity, OFSAA or the local athletic association.

- Glasses, if worn, must have a safety strap.
- When long hair poses a safety risk it must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, elastics and barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.
- Students must not participate when the length of fingernails poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

Facilities

- Determine that all facilities are safe and accessible for the students participating. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the coach.
- Water and weather conditions must be appropriate for the skill level of the group.

Controlled Area

- A confined location, such as a pool, lakefront, or slow-moving river must be available for the teaching of basic stroke skills.
- The Coach is familiar with site and/or site is commonly used for dragon boat racing.

Environmental Considerations

- When environmental conditions may pose a risk to student safety (for example, thunderstorms [lightning] or student(s) with asthma, triggered by air quality), Coaches must take into consideration their school board/school's protocols and procedures related to:
 - environmental conditions (consult [Weather](#)); and
 - insects (for example, mosquitoes and ticks [consult the school/school board's protocols and/or regional Public Health Department's website]).

- Students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to environmental conditions and be made aware of ways to protect themselves (for example, sun burn, heat stroke).
- At all times the school board's weather and insect procedures are the minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (for example, outside activity providers, facility/program coordinators), the higher standard of care must be followed.
- Before involving students in outdoor activity, Coaches must take into consideration:
 - water conditions (for example, temperature, currents, tides and wave conditions).
 - visibility of 500 m (1640') is required
- Dragon boating practices and competitions must be cancelled in adverse weather conditions.

Special Rules/Instructions

- Be aware of students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion, orthopaedic device) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).
- Prior to participation students must receive concussion information through the appropriate Ministry of Education's Concussion Awareness Resource or the school board approved concussion resources. Students must also receive information on:
 - the Concussion Code of Conduct;
 - concussion prevention strategies specific to the activity and inherent risks of the activity (that is, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks);
 - procedures and rules for safe play; and
 - the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Students must confirm their review of the concussion awareness resource and Concussion Code of Conduct prior to participation.

- Refer to school board policies and procedures (i.e., transportation, excursion/field trip) for communication with parents/guardians, the location of an off-site activity, means of transportation, supervision ratios, and parent/guardian permission.
- Students must be informed that they are not to share water bottles.
- Parents/guardians must be informed of the school board's policy related to initiation/hazing activities.

Steersperson

- Every boat requires a qualified steersperson.
- Steersperson may sit or stand while steering.
- Steersperson is the in-charge person outranking all persons in the boat.
- Steersperson for each boat must demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:
 - steersperson must read and understand the Transport [Canada's Boating Guide](#)
 - be able to manage the team and exercise authority over team members
 - load the boat
 - balance the boat
 - maintain a straight course at full racing speed with a full crew of 18-20 paddlers plus drummer
 - steer a figure eight course around two buoys at normal speed with a full crew, in both directions, or in the absence of buoys, steer a set course which includes both left- and right-angled turns
 - execute sideways maneuvers without going forwards
 - turn the boat through 360 degrees in both directions without the use of paddlers

- guide the boat forward in a straight line without the use of paddlers
 - guide the boat in reverse for 50m (164') with the use of paddlers
 - execute an emergency stop (from racing speed to full stop)
 - execute safe approaches to a jetty/pontoon/dock in still and windy conditions
 - manage the unloading of the team members
 - secure the boat and determine that gear is put away correctly
- Students must be informed that the use of equipment and the gymnasium are prohibited without supervision. In addition to verbal communication, the doors must be locked or signs must be posted indicating that students are not allowed to use the gym unless appropriately supervised.

Safety Rules and Emergency Procedures

- All Coaches/Qualified Instructors must be knowledgeable of the established safety rules and emergency procedures (for example, capsize/swamp procedures).
- Prior to participation, Students must be familiar with safety rules and emergency procedures specific to the watercraft activity in which they will participate. (for example, PFD/lifejacket requirements, buddy responsibilities, capsize/swamp procedures, staying with the boat to use it as a life raft).
- After initial instruction, Students must demonstrate the ability to select a correctly fitting PFD/lifejacket and to properly secure/fasten it.
- Students must be informed of the location of available safety equipment and how to use it.
- Should the team require assistance at any time during the practice session, the drummer or Steersperson must raise their hands, accompanied by a series of three short bursts through the sounding device provided to signal the first aid provider/safety boat.
- Before the start of each practice session, all paddlers are required to pair up with the paddler beside them, in case of emergencies (buddy system). The first pair is also responsible for the drummer and

the last pair for the Steersperson.

- Before the start of each session, the Coach must inform appropriate personnel (for example, facility's staff member) of the beginning and ending time on water.
- Steersperson must be able to use, and crew must be able to correctly respond to, common dragon boat racing commands.
- Coach/Community Coach Liaison must be aware of the site's Emergency Action Plan (EAP), including the site specific rescue plan, and share with all monitors and participants.
- In the event that a boat is swamped, the following procedures must be followed:
 - steersperson must be aware of any special conditions that may apply to an individual paddler
 - steersperson must take charge of the crew until the motorized safety boat arrives
 - the crew must hold on to the boat (team members must be instructed not to swim to shore)
 - each team member must determine that their partner is in view (buddy system)
 - each team member must inform the steersperson if partner is missing (buddy system)
 - the approach of the safety boat must not endanger (for example, trap) any participants in the water
 - each team member must follow steersperson's instructions
 - if boat has sufficient flotation, crew must get into boat and paddle to shore. If not, hang onto boat and follow instructions of steersperson.
- In case of an emergency, a predetermined return route must be established.
- In case of emergency, procedures must be in place to ensure accountability for all boats, Coaches/Coach Liaisons/Qualified Instructors and Students on the water.

Coach/Coach Liaison Awareness/Preparation

- Previous training, fitness level, and the length of time and intensity of physical activity must be taken into consideration.
- Activities must be based on skills that are taught.

- Skills must be taught in proper progression.
- A warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- Fair play and rules of the sport must be taught and strictly enforced.
- The presence and location of spectators must not present a safety concern. A school is responsible for supervising its own spectators. The ratio of supervisor to spectators must address safety concerns.
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Demonstration of proficiency of skills must occur in a pool, shallow water, calm lakefront or sheltered bay.
- Prior to participation all Coaches/Coach Liaison/Qualified Instructors must be aware of all Students' swimming ability, comfort and experience in water, and the water environment in which the activity takes place (for example, lakes, ponds, rivers) (Refer to [Sample Swim Ability and Swim Comfort Assessment Questionnaire Form](#)).
- The Coach/Community Coach Liaison and all individuals who assist with the watercraft activity (e.g. Qualified Instructors/Volunteers) must be aware of Students who have none or limited swim ability/experience in the environment in which the activity takes place (Refer to [Sample Swim Ability and Swim Comfort Assessment Questionnaire Form](#)) and/or display or express hesitancy in the watercraft. The Coach/Coach Liaison/Qualified Instructor must include additional program modifications (for example, consider the placement of Students based on their experience and comfort level, placing student with or near the Steersperson, and/or outfitting the student in a PFD or lifejacket with increased buoyancy).

Swim Ability and Swim Comfort Assessment Questionnaire

- Prior to the activity, the Sample Swim Ability and Swim Comfort Assessment Questionnaire Form must be completed (Refer to [Sample Swim Ability and Swim Comfort Assessment Questionnaire Form](#)).
- The Sample Swim Ability and Swim Comfort Assessment Questionnaire Form must be completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.

- Results of the Sample Swim Ability and Swim Comfort Assessment Questionnaire Form must be documented and communicated as per school board policy (for example, to the student, Teacher, Principal, Parents/Guardians, Trip Guide(s), Volunteers, Lifeguards, and Outside Provider [as applicable]).
- The Sample Swim Ability and Swim Comfort Assessment Questionnaire Form must be completed and submitted, or the student must not participate in the activity.

Supervision

- All activities must be supervised.
- The type of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, and environmental conditions.
- On-Site Supervision is required during the safety and initial skill instruction.
- On-Site Supervision is required when students are moving and handling equipment (e.g., lifting, portaging carries, launching and removing watercraft(s) to and from the water).
- On-Site Supervision is required for the duration of all other components of the activity (e.g., equipment setup and take down, warm-ups/cool downs, application of the skills and games).
- The Community Coach Liaison must be accessible to the Community Coach and students (at practices and competitions). The level of support will be commensurate with the expertise and qualifications of the Community Coach as determined by the Principal/Designate.
- As a minimum the Community Coach Liaison will provide In-the-Area supervision for all practices and competitions. Direct Supervision is required if a Community Coach is under the age of 18.
- When students are competing outside their school district (e.g., travel tournaments, regional/ provincial competitions):
 - a Community Coach Liaison from the same school board must be accessible to the Community Coach; and

- consult school board and local athletic association rules and regulations with regard to Coach, Community Coach, and Community Coach Liaison duties and adhere to the higher standard of care.
- Where a Qualified Instructor is used, the Qualified Instructor must provide safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for the safe application of skills and student behaviour for the duration of the activity.
- A Volunteer, under the direction of a Coach, can monitor students during practices and competitions. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with students' physical activities.
- Responsibilities must be clearly outlined for additional Coaches and Volunteers who are monitoring the activity.

Supervision/Monitoring Ratios

- For initial on-the-water instruction ratio, 1 Coach/Qualified Instructor to 10 athletes.
- After initial instruction, 2 Coaches/Monitors per dragon boat.
- One Coach/Monitor must be on the dragon boat. The other could be on land, in a motorized safety boat, or in the dragon boat.

Qualifications

Coaching Qualifications

- Game/match official(s) must be certified and/or experienced in officiating the sport.
- The Head Coach must demonstrate knowledge of the sport, skills, and strategies to the Principal or Designate.
- All Coaches must be familiar with and implement, where applicable, the criteria outlined in [Coaches Expectations](#).

- At least one Coach must possess one of the following coaching qualifications:
 - **Dragon Boat Canada**'s Coaching Community Dragon Boat - Level 1 with a Pleasure Craft Operators license
 - Attendance at a clinic or workshop within the last three years provided by an instructor who is knowledgeable of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
 - Past experience within the last 3 years as a coach in dragon boat racing, having knowledge of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
- For more information on sport-specific NCCP training please visit coach.ca.

Steersperson Qualifications

- The steersperson must possess one of the following qualifications:
 - **Dragon Boat Canada**'s Steering Accreditation Course
 - Attendance at a clinic or workshop within the last three years provided by an instructor who is knowledgeable of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
 - Past experience within the last 3 years as a steersperson in dragon boat racing, having knowledge of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
- For more information on sport-specific NCCP training please visit coach.ca.

Lifeguard Qualifications

- A Lifeguard must be 18 years of age or older and possess a current (the date on the certificate must not be older than two years) Lifeguard certificate issued by one of the following organizations:
 - Lifesaving Society – National Lifeguard – Pool/Waterfront
 - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- A student may not act as a Lifeguard if they are participating in the activity.

First Aid

- A fully stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible. (Consult [Sample First Aid Kit](#))
- A working communication device (for example, cell phone) must be accessible.
- A Coach/Monitor who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured students through the entirety of a practice and/or competition and must follow the school board's concussion protocol and the school's First Aid Emergency Response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)).
- The designated individual who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured students must:
 - as a minimum, have a current first aid certification from a recognized first aid provider (for example, St. John Ambulance, Red Cross) that includes CPR B or C and training in head, neck and spinal injury management;
 - be in the area and readily accessible during the entire practice/competition;
 - be aware of the school's first aid emergency action plan and follow their first aid emergency response (consult First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response) including specific direction for participants with accessibility needs, and use of assistive devices or medications;
 - follow their school board's concussion protocol for a suspected concussion;
 - and not be a participant in the activity.

Safety Craft

- If instruction is taking place in a pool, no safety craft is required.
- A safety craft is a designated craft that is rescue-capable, taking into consideration necessary factors (for example, distance from shore, weather, water and wind conditions), and contains at least one Coach/Monitor who meets the first aid certification.
- A motorized safety craft must be in the water and accessible while students are dragon boating. The operator of the motorized safety craft must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Card and must have experience in navigating the craft. The motorized safety craft must not pose a risk to the safety of the dragon boats (for example, create a wake).
- Safety boats are optional when in a controlled area (for example, a confined location, such as a pool, shallow waters, lakefront, or slow moving river). Other procedures for rescuing in a controlled area must be developed and in place with appropriate rescue individuals prior to dragon boating. Safety boats are required at all other times.

Definitions

- **Coach** (i.e. Teacher Coach/Community Coach):
 - An individual who volunteers to coach a school team and is approved by the Principal/Designate.
- **Community Coach:**
 - An individual approved by the principal who volunteers to coach a school team. An individual acting in the role of a Community Coach must be assigned a Community Coach Liaison.
 - Examples of a Community Coach are:
 - teachers not under contract by the board;
 - retired teachers;

- early childhood educators, teacher candidates, educational assistants;
- co-op students, other secondary students;
- parent/guardian;
- individuals/coaches from the community.

- **Community Coach Liaison:**

- A Teacher, Principal, or Vice Principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school board who is responsible for carrying out all the duties required of a Teacher pursuant to the Education Act and the safety standards. The level of support will be commensurate with the expertise and qualifications of the Community Coach and will be determined by the Principal or Designate.

- **Instructional Time:**

- Time during which there is formal instruction and/or instructor led activities. Examples of instructional time are lessons, events, practice, and games.

- **Lifejacket:**

- Canadian-approved lifejackets are designed to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water. Lifejackets are available with varying amounts of flotation and turning ability. Canadian approved Lifejackets are stamped or labelled indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Monitor:**

- A Volunteer and/or Qualified Instructor who assists the Teacher Coach with a group of students and has a responsibility to monitor student behaviors for the duration of the activity.
- A Community Coach who has a responsibility to coach and monitor student behaviors for the duration of the athletic season and/or a Qualified Instructor(s)/Volunteer(s) who assists the Community Coach during practices and competitions.

- **Monitoring:**

- The role of monitoring is to observe, identify, act, and report:
 - Observe: Observe with attention to detail the actions of the students.
 - Identify: Identify the student and the unsafe behaviour.
 - Act: Take appropriate actions to safeguard students and others (e.g., stop the activity).
 - Report: Provide the name of the student and the unsafe behaviour to the Coach for management and direction.

- **Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.):**

- Canadian-approved P.F.D.'s are designed for use in recreational boating and are generally smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They may have less flotation than lifejackets and may have no or little self-turning ability (the ability to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water). Canadian approved P.F.D.'s are stamped or labelled indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Qualified Instructor:**

- An individual who provides safety and skill instruction, and monitoring for an activity, and possesses the required qualifications (e.g., experience, certifications). This role could be fulfilled by a teacher, volunteer, or an employee of an outside provider. An instructor does not have the authority to supervise.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for management or direction. Activities, facilities, and equipment have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.
- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education includes three Types of supervision, Direct Supervision, On-Site Supervision, and In-the-Area Supervision. These types of supervision take into consideration the level of risk, which is related to the number of participants, the skill

level of the participants, the type of equipment used, the environmental conditions, the age, and developmental stage.

- The three types of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that activities require and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.
- Some activities in OPASSE transition from one type of supervision to another type of supervision (e.g., Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision OR On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision).

- **Teacher Coach:**

- A Teacher Coach is a teacher, principal, or vice principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school board.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Direct Supervision:**

- Direct Supervision requires that the Coach is physically present at the activity, providing visual and verbal oversight for management and direction of both the activity and student safety.
 - **Provisos:**
 - No other activity can occur when part of the activity or the entire activity is under Direct Supervision when there is only one Coach supervising.
 - The Supervision section of the relevant activity safety standards page in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education describes when parts of an activity are under Direct Supervision.
 - Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
 - An activity may be under Direct Supervision:

- During the entire duration of the activity;
- During the set up and take down of equipment;
- During the safety and initial skill instruction;
- During the performance/practice of the activity skill; and
- When the activities transition from Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision.

○ **In-the-Area Supervision:**

- The Coach is located in proximity to a combination of locations where the student activities take place, is circulating, and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.
 - **Provisos:**
 - The Coach is circulating between the activities, occurring at separate locations, and is readily accessible, or the location of the coach is communicated to the student.
 - Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and is monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
 - Students may be out of sight for periods of time.
 - An activity or a component of the activity is under In-the-Area Supervision:
 - Where the same activity is located in separate locations. (e.g., Track and Field, Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine));
 - Where two or more activities under In-the-Area Supervision occur in separate locations (e.g., Badminton, Table Tennis, Handball (Wall));
 - Where the skill application of the activity takes place at a different location from the Coach (e.g., Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine), Cycling);

- Where activities occur in double or triple gymnasiums; and
- Where more than one Qualified Instructor is providing activities at a combination of locations.

○ **On-Site Supervision:**

- The Coach is present at one location where the student activity takes place (e.g., gymnasium, sports field, tennis courts at an Outside Activity Provider's facility) and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.
 - **Provisos:**
 - Where more than one activity occurs in one location, the Coach is circulating between the activities and is accessible for management and direction.
 - Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (e.g., equipment room, outside storage shed, boathouse) is considered to be On-Site Supervision.
 - Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
 - An activity may be under On-Site Supervision:
 - During the entire duration of the activity;
 - During the safety and initial skill instruction;
 - With activities using multiple stations while the Coach is circulating;
 - When combining two or more activities at one location while the Coach is circulating; and
 - When activities transition from On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision.

● **Volunteer:**

- A responsible adult (e.g., Educational Assistants, Retired Teachers, Co-op Students, Parents/Guardians, Teacher Candidates) approved by the Principal/Designate who is under the direction of a Coach and has been instructed on their monitoring responsibilities. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with students' physical activities.

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