

Gymnastics (Bars, Rings, Beam, Floor, Vaults)

Balance Beam, Floor, High Bar, Parallel Bars, Pommel Horse, Still Rings, Table Or Flatback Vaulting, Uneven Parallel Bars

SECONDARY - INTERSCHOOL

HIGH RISK ACTIVITY

- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- This activity page must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed on this page. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).
- Also consult [Gymnastics \(General Procedures\)](#) for student spotting.

Equipment

- Determine that all equipment is safe for use (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters). Students must be encouraged to report equipment problems to the coach.
- Protective equipment must not be altered (for example, cutting apportion off the back of mouth guards).
- Equipment must be inspected on a regular basis and repaired as necessary.
- Vaulting boards that are higher than 20cm at the take-off end are not allowed. Only vaulting boards to be used for take-offs. Vaulting boards used to mount the apparatus must be removed immediately after use.
- Box horses must not be used for vaulting.
- Coach must do a safety check for proper set-up prior to student use. Determine all locking mechanisms are checked prior to use.
- Balance beams for competition must be padded and stable.
- General utility mats to be used:

- cross-link foam 5cm (2")
 - open-cell foam 5cm (2")
 - polyurethane 5cm (2")
 - dual-density 5cm (2")
 - mats of equivalent compaction rating as determined by manufacturer
- Hardside softside landing mats (minimum of 12cm [4.5"] for each apparatus) must be in place when the student is in an elevated inverted body position, and for landings on the feet from a height.
 - Mats joined together side-by-side must be of uniform thickness and composition (for example, all carpet or all vinyl).
 - For handspring flatback vaulting on stacked mats and on vaulting table, the mats must be roped together to a minimum height of 105cm (42") and a maximum of 125cm (50"), using 5cm (2") increments. The top of the mat must be hard-side up.
 - For skill acquisition, equipment must be adapted to the size and ability of the athlete.
 - Equipment must be stored in a safe and secure manner.
 - Proper hand grips and chalk must be available.
 - 30-60cm (12"-24") thick mats must not be used as a landing surface for landing on feet off any piece of equipment.

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

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate clothing and footwear must be worn (for example, bare feet, running shoes or gymnastic slippers). No sock feet permitted.
- Secure or remove eyeglasses.
- 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.
- When long hair poses a safety risk it must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, clips and

barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.

Facilities

- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the coach.
- Playing surface and surrounding area must be free of all obstacles and must provide safe footing and traction.
- Mats must be situated around/under apparatus as a landing area.
- Precautions must be taken to minimize the movement of mats on impact.
- Velcro® mats must be attached.
- Minimum distance between equipment must be 1.5m (5') beyond mats.
- Minimum distance from wall must be 1.5m (5') if padded with vaulting.
- Additional matting must be placed beyond the corners of the competitive floor area, extending out 60cm (2') around the corner of either side.
- When a spring floor is not available for competition and/or when there is insufficient space around the floor area, consideration must be given to modifying the composition of the routine.
- Turning points, finish lines, end zones, and boundaries must be a safe distance away from walls, stages, equipment, trees, posts, natural hazards, and holes. Walls, stages, equipment, trees, and posts must not be used as turning points, finish lines, end zones, or boundaries. A marker (for example, line or pylon) must be designated and be properly identified.
- Consult [**General Safety Standards for Facilities**](#) for the opening and closing of gymnasium divider doors/curtains.
- When running takes place off school site for a warm up, conditioning run and/or is an integral part of the activity:
 - Coaches must do a safety check 'walk through' in order to identify potential problems prior to initial use of route or course.
 - Coaches must outline to the students the route or course (for example, notice of areas to approach with caution) before the start of the run.
 - Coaches must determine that students are not crossing busy intersections unless directly supervised.

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](#).
- Students must not participate in the activity until they receive information on concussion prevention specific to the activity, inherent risks of the activity (for example, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks), and procedures and rules for safe play. Students must receive instruction on the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Refer to the school board's transportation procedures related to communicating with parents/guardians the location of an off-site activity and the means of transportation used as well as to the need for obtaining parent/guardian permission.
- 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 proper warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- Emphasize controlled movement when requiring students to walk or run backwards. Backward-running races are not permitted.
- When involved in practice drills, students must not be required to close their eyes or be blindfolded.
- Fair play and rules of the sport must be taught and strictly enforced.
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Students must be informed that they are not to share water bottles.
- Coach must be aware of the physical limitations of the athletes.
- Utilize a safe and sequential skill development program that includes a conditioning component for flexibility and strength.
- Students must not be encouraged to perform skills beyond their physical and psychological capabilities.
- Students must be instructed on safety related to gymnastics and all associated apparatus, including adjusting equipment, prior to using any equipment.
- Parents/guardians must be informed of the school board's policy related to initiation/hazing

activities.

- 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.

Supervision

- All activities must be supervised.
- The level of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk increases with the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, and the type of equipment used.
- On-site supervision is required.
- Constant visual supervision is required for the initial learning stages of difficult moves.
- Students must be trained to spot each other appropriately.
- Only coaches shall spot inverted vault and aerial moves.
- Coach must supervise the set-up and take-down of equipment.
- 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.
- As a minimum the designated coach liaison will provide in-the-area supervision for all practices, games, and competitions.
- When a school team is travelling outside of their school district, a coach liaison from the same school/school district must accompany the team, must be accessible and at least one of the following criteria must be in place:
 - coach liaison is visible;
 - coach liaison is circulating on the same site;
 - location of coach liaison is at the same location and whereabouts is known;
 - if a coach is a high school student and under the age of 18, the coach liaison must be visible at all times.

- Consult school board and local athletic association rules and regulations with regard to coach and coach liaison duties and adhere to the higher standard of care.

Qualifications

- 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 gymnastic coach must possess one of the following coaching qualifications:
 - NCCP Community Sport coach – Gymnastics Foundations Course
 - Completion of gymnastic NCCP level 1 and/or level 2 certification in the past
 - Accreditation as a NCCP Gymnastics Learning Facilitator
 - 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 gymnastics, having knowledge of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and current safety practices as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
- For more information on sport-specific NCCP training please visit coach.ca.

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.
- The 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](#));
- follow their school board's concussion protocol for a suspected concussion; and
- not be a participant in the activity.

Definitions

- **Coach:**

- Any individual approved by the principal or designate (consult [Coaches Expectations](#)). All new coaches must go through an approval process by school administrator/designate to determine the coach's knowledge, experience and, where appropriate, qualifications (for example, higher risk sports) to safely coach the sport.

- **Coach Liaison:**

- A teacher, principal, or vice-principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board. Consult [Coaches Expectations](#) for more information.

- **Constant visual supervision:**

- The coach is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring "Constant visual" supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
- For example, during a track and field practice, some students are involved in high jump, some in relay, and others in distance running. For high Jump, the coach is at the event and is observing the activity.

- **In-the-area Supervision:**

- The coach could be in the gymnasium while another activity is taking place in an area adjacent to the gymnasium. In-the-area supervision requires the coach to be readily accessible.
- For example, In-the-area supervision occurs:
 - in activities in which students may be out of sight for periods of time and the location of the coach is not nearby (for example, alpine skiing, cross-country running). At least one of the following criteria must be in place:

- The coach is circulating
- The location of the coach has been communicated to students and volunteers
- in single activities and those that may be combined (for example, other in- the- area activities such as badminton, table tennis, handball – wall) with the following criteria in place:
 - The coach must be circulating between the activities and readily accessible
 - The coach informs the students of the location of the activities

- **On-site Supervision:**

- Entails coach presence but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity. Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (for example, equipment room) to the gym is considered part of “on-site supervision”.
- For example, during a track and field practice, some students are involved in high jump, some in relay, and others in distance running. For the relay, students are participating on the track/field and can be seen by the coach.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of a sport for regulation or direction. All facilities, equipment, and sports have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.
- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education designate three categories of supervision, Constant visual supervision, On-site supervision, and In-the-area supervision. The categories take into consideration the risk level of the activity, the participants’ skill level and the participants’ maturity. The three levels of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that an activity requires and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.

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