

# Climbing (Bouldering/Traverse Climbing Wall)

## ELEMENTARY - CURRICULAR 2023

- Portable Installation on School Site, Permanent Installation on School Site, Permanent Installation on Commercial Site.
- Bouldering Walls: Students combine vertical and horizontal movement on relatively low, artificial climbing walls, un-roped, protected by thick matting, which may include large overhangs and caves. In situations where the falling climber may injure a spotter (for example, the wall angle is steep and/or the climber is high), a spotter must not be used.
- Traverse Walls: Students move mainly horizontally rather than vertically on relatively low, mainly flat, artificial climbing walls, un-roped, protected by matting, and may be assisted by spotters.
- Outdoor bouldering on natural rock is not permissible.
- 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](#).
- Also consult [Climbing \(General Procedures\)](#).

## Equipment

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- 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 teacher.
- All equipment must be inspected by qualified personnel prior to activity.

## Mats

- **Bouldering Mats:** A mat surface (solid or cross-linked foam or equivalent) must be in place under the bouldering area. The mats must extend a minimum of 6 feet (approx. 1.83 m.) from the outward most point from the wall (minimum mat thickness is 6"). Where the height increases and/or angle of the wall (for example, overhangs or caves) increases, the thickness of matting must also increase accordingly (for example, 12"-24").
- **Traverse Wall Mats:** A mat surface (solid or cross-linked foam or equivalent) or an impact attenuating surface as per the manufacturer recommendations must be in place under the traverse area.
- **Mat thicknesses:**
  - cross-link foam 5 cm (2")
  - open-cell foam 5 cm (2")
  - polyurethane 5 cm (2")
  - dual-density 5 cm (2")
  - mats of equivalent compaction rating as determined by the manufacturer.

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

## Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

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- Clothing and footwear appropriate to the activities and environmental conditions must be worn.
- Exposed jewelry is not permitted.
- Medic alert identification and religious articles of faith that cannot be removed must be taped or securely covered.
- Long hair 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

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- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the teacher.
- The climbing area must be appropriate for the ability levels, age and size of the students.
- All providers must follow the [Ontario Building Code Act](#), and all applicable By-Laws and Regulations.
- All of the walls must be installed by a qualified professional (for example, instructor/provider). The initial installation of a bouldering or traverse wall must be inspected by qualified personnel upon completion of the installation and at least once a year thereafter by qualified climbing inspection personnel. This inspection must be documented with a written report. Necessary changes noted in the report must be addressed.
- When running takes place off school site for a warm up:
  - Teachers must do a safety check ‘walk through’ in order to identify potential problems prior to initial use of route or course.
  - Teachers must outline to the students the route or course (for example, notice of areas to approach with caution) before the start of the run.
  - Teachers must determine that students are not crossing busy intersections unless directly supervised.

## Environmental Considerations

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- When environmental conditions may pose a risk to student safety (for example, thunderstorms [lightning] or student(s) with asthma, triggered by air quality), teachers 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.

## Special Rules/Instructions

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- 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 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.
- Previous training, fitness level, and the length of time and intensity of physical activity must be taken into consideration.
- Skills must be taught in proper progression.
- A proper warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Completed medical forms for each participating student must be accessible.
- Prior to the first lesson, teachers must inform climbing instructors of students who have special needs.
- Risks involved with each activity and how to lower the risk of an injury from occurring must be communicated to the students.

- An introductory lesson must be an integral part of the program for all students.
- Activity and course elements that are introduced must be based on skills that are taught and appropriate for the age, ability level, language and and experience of the students.
- Teachers, instructors and students must be aware of safety procedures.
- Students must be allowed to select a challenge at their comfort level, including the choice to not participate.
- Instructors must ensure that the landing zone under climbers is free of people and objects.
- A trained adult must be instructed in the safe and correct way of moving and handling the Bouldering/Traverse Climbing Wall (e.g., lifting, setting up/taking down/adjusting).
- When dismounting the wall, students must attempt to climb down from the wall rather than jumping or falling.
- *Grades 6 and below*: the hands of the students must not be more than 2.4m (7'10") above the landing surface.
- *Grades 7 and 8*: the hands of the students must not be more than 3.5m (11'6") above the landing surface.
- In order to minimize the risk of injury to both climbers and spotters, activity provider must consider use of down-climb holds; instruction on proper falling technique and conscientious route planning; and seamless floor padding.
- Teachers, instructors and supervisors must be aware of the possibility of peer pressure and make sure no student is coerced into participating.

## Traverse Wall Spotting

- Prior to the activity, instructor must determine whether a spotter is to be used.
- During initial instruction, a spotter may be used. The spotter's role is that of breaking or interrupting the fall of a climber, moving with the climber as he/she progresses; it is not to fully absorb the fall of a climber. A student may fulfill the role of the spotter, provided instruction has been given.

## Bouldering Spotting

- Prior to the activity, instructor must determine whether a spotter is to be used.
- Prior to the use of spotters, instruction must be provided to spotters on proper technique.
- In bouldering situations where a falling climber may injure a spotter (for example, the wall angle is steep (for example, the climber is in a non-vertical position) and/or the climber is high (for example, climber's feet are more than 90cm/3 feet off the ground), a spotter must not be used.
- Students must not walk under anyone bouldering.

## Supervision

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- All activities must be supervised.
- Constant visual supervision by teacher/instructor during initial skills.
- On site supervision after skills have been taught.
- A teacher must be present for all aspects of the program.
- Students who have demonstrated the required instructor skills and who are 16 years of age or older can assist with instruction but must be directly supervised by a qualified teacher instructor.
- The level 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.
- A volunteer could assist in the supervision of physical education activities. Examples of volunteers are educational assistants, retired teachers, co-op students, parents/guardians, early childhood educators, and teacher candidates. Refer to your school board's policy regarding volunteers. These volunteers must be accompanied by a supervisor.
- 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.

## Supervision Ratios

- Bouldering:
  - Grade 6 and below: 1 supervisor per 8 students
  - Grade 7 and 8: 1 supervisor per 12 students
- Traverse Walls:
  - Grade 6 and below – 1:8 (not including spotters)
  - Grades 7 and 8 – 1:12 (not including spotters)

## Qualifications

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### Outside Provider Instructor

- Instructors must be trained in, understand, demonstrate, and adhere to a directly relevant skill set for bouldering/traverse climbing. A relevant skill set is a described set of skills developed by recognized climbing professionals.
- All instructors must be 18 years of age or older to teach the introductory lesson and/or be an instructor.
- After initial instruction, an individual (for example, teacher) who is trained in the skills and safety elements of bouldering/traverse wall climbing can supervise students who are bouldering/traverse wall climbing.

### Applicable to Permanent School Traverse Walls

- Teachers must have attended and successfully completed training on the safe use of the elements of the school site's traverse wall by a climbing professional (for example, climbing companies).

## First Aid

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- 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.

- On school site: Follow the school's first aid emergency response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)) and the school board's concussion protocol (consult [Concussions](#)). An emergency action plan and response to deal with evacuations and lock downs must be followed and communicated to students.
- Off school site: At least one instructor or an individual responsible for providing first aid must have current First Aid qualifications equivalent to or exceeding St. John Ambulance Emergency First Aid with CPR Level C + AED.

## Definitions

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- **In-charge Person:**

- Some activities refer to an "In-Charge" person. While the teacher is in-charge and responsible for the overall safety and well-being of students under their care, sometimes there are other personnel who must be identified as "In-Charge" related to specific situations (for example, a pool lifeguard). In activities where an "In-Charge" person is designated, that person, in consultation with the teacher, must make final decisions regarding safety of the students

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for regulation 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 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.

- **Supervisor:**



- A supervisor is defined as a teacher, vice-principal or principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board. The supervisor is legally responsible for the students.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Constant Visual Supervision:**

- 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.
- Curricular 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. For high jump, the teacher is at the high jump area and is observing the activity.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For parachute, the intramural supervisor is at the event and is observing activity.

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

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

- The location of teacher 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 teacher must be circulating between the activities and readily accessible
      - The teacher informs students of the location of the activities
  - Curricular 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. For distance running, the students are running around the school and at times may be out of sight.
  - Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For a scavenger hunt, the students are running around the school grounds and at times may be out of sight.
- **On-site Supervision:**
- On-site supervision entails teacher 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”.
  - Curricular 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. For a relay, the students are practising on the track and can be seen by the teacher who is with the high jumpers.
  - Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For relay games, the students are participating on the playground and can be seen by the intramural supervisor.

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