

# Horseback Riding

## English/Western And Therapeutic/Adaptive

### ELEMENTARY - CURRICULAR 2025

- Consult [Disability-Centred Safety](#) if your groups of students include students with disabilities.
- Trail-Riding: Grades 7-8 Students Only
- 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](#).
- For additional safety guidelines, consult [CanTRA Risk Management Standards](#)/ [PATH International](#)

## Equipment

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- 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.
- On trail rides, a first aid kit must be carried by one of the guides for each group.
- Use horses suitable for beginner riders.
- Use appropriate, safe tack properly fitted to the mounts.
- Tack (girth, stirrups) must be adjusted for each rider and checked by the Qualified Instructor.

- For English and Western saddles, use appropriate stirrups. For therapeutic/adaptive riding use safety stirrups (for example, Peacock, Foot Free or Devonshires).
- Safety stirrups for all saddles.
- Riders must wear a properly fitted (as per manufacturer's guidelines) and properly worn riding helmet with chinstraps certified by a recognized safety standards association (for example, ASTM or SEI) when in barns, riding, grooming, tacking, and doing on ground activities. The riding helmets must be no more than five years old from the date of manufacture.
- Guides on trail rides need:
  - a communication system for all trail rides (for example, walkie-talkie, working cell phone);
  - a whistle;
  - a lead rope;
  - a sharp knife;
  - a hoof pick; and
  - an extra halter.

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

## Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

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- Appropriate riding attire (for example, boots with heels, loose or stretch pants). Footwear must be closed toed and appropriate to the type of stirrup used, and to the age and ability of the rider.
- No hanging jewellery is permitted.

- 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

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- Determine that all facilities are safe and accessible for the students participating. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the teacher.
- Any stable being used for the instruction of students with special needs must be a CanTRA/PATH International Accredited Centre.
- Riding areas (indoor or outdoor) must provide adequate space and good footing and are free of potential hazards, (for example, broken gates, roadways).
- An enclosed area for the initial instruction must be used.

## 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, poisonous plants).

- 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.
- Activities must be modified according to the age, ability level, language, and experience of students, number of participants, and the facility available.
- 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.
- Qualified instructors must be informed of all students who have medical conditions that present a risk.
- Students must be instructed on safe handling and riding techniques.

- Students must follow the established rules regarding riding areas, treatment of horses, allowable activities, etc.
- Discuss implementation of Emergency Action Plan with facility staff.
- Until a rider is able to demonstrate to a Qualified Riding Instructor how to stop, turn and ride in a balanced and controlled manner, they are not allowed to ride on the trails.
- Beginners are to be monitored by a knowledgeable employee of the facility during the pre-mount handling and tacking of the horse or pony.
- While riders are mounting, horse must be held by a teacher/monitor or use a 'mounting block'.
- Bareback riding is not permitted. For some special needs students, it may be appropriate for the student to ride on a pad with a surcingle and handle in therapeutic/adaptive riding activities.
- Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding:
  - Emergency Dismounts: Qualified Instructors must practice emergency dismounts appropriate for the size and special needs requirements of the students.
  - Grooming:
    - Horse to remain secured in a halter and tied with a means of quick release at all times.
    - A Qualified Instructor or trained Volunteer must be on the same side of horse as the students positioned at front or rear as appropriate.
    - For students in wheelchairs a plan of action must be developed to move the wheel chair quickly if necessary; for example, for manual chairs the brakes are off; for motorized chairs the power remains ON; and Monitor remains with hands on wheelchair for control.

- When changing side of the horse, students must pass in front of head (never walk behind rear, or under the neck).
  - When bridling, a Qualified Instructor/trained Volunteer must be in control of horse prior to student's skill being assessed as being proficient and independent.
  - During bridling and unbridling, the reins must be held so as not to be a safety hazard;
  - A student's skill at picking out front feet must be assessed by a Qualified Instructor/trained Volunteer before being permitted to pick out hind feet.
  - While the horses are tied there must be ample space for full movement around each horse. Additional space for ambulatory devices should be taken into consideration.
- While moving, students must not be required to close their eyes or be blind-folded.
  - Emphasize controlled movement when requiring students to walk or run backwards. Backward-running races are not permitted.
  - When a student displays hesitation (verbally or non-verbally) with participating, 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, or be permitted to select a role within the activity at their comfort level, including the choice to not participate.
  - Prior to participation, the Teacher must reference and apply their school board's policy on equity and inclusion as it affects student participation and makes appropriate accommodations/modifications to provide a safe learning environment. Consult the Intent subsection within the [About section](#).
  - Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
  - A trained Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding Volunteer is an adult who has received training to assist the Qualified Instructor with specific responsibilities (for example, grooming with groups of students, bridling, emergency dismounts)

## On Trail Rides

- For therapeutic/adaptive riding, accessibility to detailed medical information is critical.
- Trail ride guide must select trails appropriate to the ability of the students.
- No dismounting from the horse during the ride unless duration of ride exceeds one hour, and then only with the assistance of the trail guide.
- While riding uphill or downhill, all horses must be kept to a walk.

## Supervision

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- 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 by the Teacher when a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing safety and initial skill instruction, and monitoring.
- In-the-Area Supervision is required by the Teacher when the students are riding on trails while being monitored by a Qualified Instructor.
- A Volunteer, under the direction of a Teacher, can monitor students during physical education activities. Refer to your school board's policy on Volunteers assisting with students' physical activities.
- Responsibilities must be clearly outlined for additional Teachers and Volunteers who are monitoring the activity.
- Where a Qualified Instructor is used and the Teacher is not directly with the Qualified Instructor, 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.

## Supervision/Monitoring Ratios

- English/Western Riding Ratios:
  - 1 Qualified Instructor per 1 student for the initial instruction.
  - 1 Qualified Instructor per 5 students after the initial instruction.
- Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding - Additional Ratios:
  - Grooming:
    - 1 Qualified Instructor and 1 trained Volunteer per group of 4 students with one horse.
    - Only 2 students at a time may actively groom horse.
  - Riding:
    - 1 Qualified Instructor per 1 student for the initial intake assessment.
    - 1 Qualified Instructor per 4 students after the initial intake assessment.
    - When mounting, the number of Teachers/Monitors must be appropriate to the needs of the student.
    - When riding, the number of leaders and sidewalkers must be appropriate to the needs of the student.
- Trail Riding Guide Ratios:
  - English or Western: 1 trail guide per 5 riders
  - Therapeutic/Adaptive: 1 trail guide per 4 riders



# Qualifications

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- Qualified Instructors must have one of the following certifications (appropriate for the type of riding):
  - For Western Riding:
    - NCCP Certified Instructor – Western
    - NCCP Certified Competition Coach – Western
    - Equivalent approved by Ontario Equestrian (OE)
  - For English Riding:
    - NCCP Certified Instructor – English
    - NCCP Certified Competition Coach – English
    - NCCP Certified Competition Coach Specialist – English
    - Equivalent approved by Ontario Equestrian (OE)
  - For Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding:
    - Canadian Certified Therapeutic Riding Senior Instructor (CTRSI) Certificate or PATH Advanced Therapeutic Riding Instructor (ATRI)
    - Canadian Therapeutic Riding Intermediate Instructor (CTRII) Certificate or PATH - Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor - CTRI + 35 additional clocked hours of instruction of a group of 3 or more riders.
  - For Trail Guides:

- Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) Trail Guide Certification
- NCCP Certified Coach
- Equivalent Trail Guide Certification Program Certificate approved by Ontario Equestrian (OE).

## First Aid

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- For English/Western Riding:
  - At least one Teacher/Monitor 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.
- For Therapeutic/Adaptive Riding:
  - At least one Teacher/Monitor responsible for providing first aid must have current First Aid qualifications equivalent to or exceeding St. John Ambulance Standard First Aid with CPR Level C + AED.
- 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.
- 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 lockdowns, including specific direction for participants with accessibility needs, must be followed and communicated to all students.☒

## 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

- **Monitor:**

- An individual who assists the Teacher with a group of students, (e.g., Volunteer, Qualified Instructor) and has a responsibility to monitor student behaviors for the duration of the activity.

- **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 teacher for management and direction.

- **Outside Activity Provider:**

- A commercial company, volunteer organization, or individual, not associated with the school board, who possess the required qualifications to provide safety and initial skill instruction, and monitoring for the duration of an activity.

- **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:**

- A person with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board (i.e., teacher, vice-principal, principal). This person is legally responsible for the students and has the authority and responsibility to supervise.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Direct Supervision:**

- Direct Supervision requires that the Teacher 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 Teacher 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 Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for one activity and requires the Teacher to be present at that activity for management and direction.
- 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 Teacher 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 Teacher is circulating between the activities occurring at separate locations, and is readily accessible, or the location of the Teacher is communicated to the student.
      - Where a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and skill and instruction and is monitoring at a combination of locations, the Teacher is located in proximity to where the student activities take place, is circulating between the

activity locations, and is accessible for management and direction.

- 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., Fitness activities);
  - 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 separate location from the teacher (e.g., Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine), Cycling, hiking on trails);
  - When the 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 Teacher is present at one location where the student activity takes place (e.g., gymnasium, sports field, climbing wall at an Outside Activity Provider's facility, campsite) 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 Teacher is circulating between the activities and is accessible for management and direction.
    - Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (e.g., equipment room, outdoor storage shed, boathouse, staff tent) is considered to be On-Site Supervision.
    - Where a Qualified Instructor(s) is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for an activity or a combination of activities at one

location and the Teacher is present and is circulating and accessible for management and direction.

- 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 Teacher is circulating;
  - When combining two or more activities at one location while the Teacher 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 Teacher and has been instructed on their monitoring responsibilities. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with student's physical activities.

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