

Climbing (General Procedures)

ELEMENTARY - CURRICULAR

- 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](#).

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 teacher.

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

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate clothing and footwear must be worn.
- 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.

Facilities

- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the teacher.
- 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

- 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

- 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.
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Teachers, prior to first lesson, must inform climbing instructor of students who have special needs (for example, behavioural management) or medical conditions that may influence full participation (for example, seizure disorder).
- Risks involved with each activity and how to minimize the risk of an injury from occurring must be communicated to the students.
- Teachers, instructors and students must be aware of safety procedures.

- Prior to using a climbing activity provider for either on-site or off-site activities the following must take place:
 - Teacher must address school board policies
 - Activity provider must provide evidence of knowledge, expertise, certification (where applicable) in activity to be provided.
- When students are participating in more than one activity, teachers/supervisors must refer to the activity page for each activity.
- Students must be allowed to select a challenge at their comfort level, including the choice to not participate.
- Teachers, instructors and supervisors must be aware of the possibility of peer pressure and make sure no student is coerced into participating.
- Students who have been trained and can demonstrate 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.

Climbing Activity Descriptions

- Aerial Parks: A supervised independent aerial experience where students travel from platform to platform while connected to a safety line. May include elements such as: tarzan ropes, suspension bridges, cargo net, ladders, climbing walls, ziplines, mechanically-operated descent. Required minimum age, height, and weight may vary between aerial parks. Please contact your aerial park provider for clarification. (Portable installation, or a permanent installation on a commercial site.)
- Ascending Lines: Where students climb or ascend and descend single lines suspended from anchors. (portable installation on school site, or permanent installation on school or commercial site). Grades 4 to 8 only.
- Bouldering: Where students climb relatively low walls, un-roped, protected by matting.(portable installation on school site, or permanent installation on school or commercial site)
- Challenge Course/Towers – High Elements: An element that requires the use of a belay in normal operation. (permanent installation on a school or commercial site). Grades 1, 2, 3 – low elements only (consult [Climbing \(Challenge Courses - Low Elements\)](#)). Grades 4-8 climbing and belaying permitted.
- Challenge Course - Low Elements: Where students perform a series of activities, either while working with others on initiative tasks or responding to personal challenges close to the ground. No rope belay system is required for fall protection and where spotting is needed. (portable or

permanent at commercial or school/board site)

- Climbing Wall and Related Activities: For wall climbing programs where a belay is required. (portable installation on school site, permanent installation on school or commercial site).
- Outdoor Rock Climbing: Climbing the side of a rock face. (This is NOT outdoor ascending lines, ziplines or bouldering.) Grades 6 to 8 only.
- Traverse Climbing Wall: 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. (portable installation on school site, or permanent installation on school or commercial site)
- Zipline, Tyrolean Traverse: Where students move in a horizontal or descending manner along a fixed rope/line, installed in an elevated fashion (portable installation on school site, permanent installation on commercial site). Grades 1 to 8 where accommodated by the activity provider. Required minimum age, height, and weight may vary between ziplines. Please contact your activity provider for clarification.

Fall Protection Operating System Definitions

- Climb Only: in such cases, only the instructor belays students.
- Full Belay: in such cases, students belay other students using a top rope belay.
- Participatory/Team Belay: in such cases, students participate in a belay team with an instructor belaying other students using a top rope style belay.
- Auto Belay: mechanical fall protection system where student is connected to a self-retracting lanyard that controls their descent.
- Continuous Lanyard System: a system where the student is connected to the anchored safety cable continuously.
- Individual Lanyard System: a system where the student is directly connected to the belay cable via a pair of lanyards. There are two types of control systems:
 - Human control system: is used to manage continuous connection to the life safety system
 - Mechanical control system: is used to manage continuous connection to the life safety system (for example, SmartBelay, Clic-it, Bornack)

Primary Fall Protection Operating Systems by Climbing Activity

- (Not all operating systems are appropriate for all grade levels. Consult individual activity pages for specific information.)
- For climb only:

- Ascending Lines
- Challenge Course – Towers/High Elements
- Climbing Wall
- Outdoor Rock Climbing
- Zipline
- For full belay:
 - Ascending Lines
 - Challenge Course – Towers/High Elements
 - Climbing Wall
 - Outdoor Rock Climbing
 - Zipline
- For participatory/team belay:
 - Ascending Lines
 - Challenge Course – Towers/High Elements
 - Climbing Wall
 - Zipline
- For auto belay:
 - Aerial Parks
 - Ascending Lines
 - Challenge Course – Towers/High Elements
 - Climbing Wall
 - Zipline
- For individual lanyard human:
 - Aerial Parks
 - Challenge Course – Towers/High Elements
 - Zipline
- For individual lanyard mechanical:

- Aerial Parks
- Challenge Course – Towers/High Elements
- Zipline
- For continuous lanyard system:
 - Aerial Parks
- For mats:
 - Bouldering/Traverse Wall Climbing
- For spotting:
 - Bouldering/Traverse Wall Climbing
 - Challenge Course – Low Elements

Supervision

- 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.
- All activities must be supervised.
- Type of supervision: Refer to the activity page for each climbing activity.
- Ratios: Refer to specific climbing activity pages for instructor to student ratios. Where multiple activities are taking place at the climbing site, ratios for each specific activity must follow the specific activity page requirements.
- 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.

Qualifications

Applicable to All Installations

- Instructors must be trained in, understand, demonstrate, and adhere to a directly relevant skill set for their respective activity. 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 ground school and/or be an instructor.

Applicable to Permanent School Sites

- Instructors for permanent school sites must hold a current certificate (within the last 3 years), demonstrating successful completion of a training workshop that directly addresses the climbing activities they are teaching.

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.
- 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

- **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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