

# Outdoor Education (Backpacking/Hiking - Local)

## Single-Day Or Multi-Day Trips From School Or Base Camp, That Travel Within 2 Hours Of The Arrival Of Emergency Medical Assistance.

### SECONDARY - CURRICULAR 2023

- For multi-day trips, also consult [Outdoor Education \(Camping\)](#).
- 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 [Outdoor Education \(General Procedures\)](#).

## Equipment

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- Determine that all of the necessary equipment is included and is safe for use prior to departing on the excursion. Students must be encouraged to report equipment problems to the teacher.
- A complete set of maps for the route. A copy of the map (photocopies are acceptable) and/or one compass per participant. A GPS to be used as a back-up only.
- One whistle per participant.
- A means of hydration must be available, accessible, and appropriate for the activity, location and duration of the trip (direct access to potable water, filters, purifier, chemical).

- Where appropriate for the route and conditions of the day, a camp stove is to be accessible and appropriate for the activity, location and duration of the trip.
- Sun and insect protection.
- Waterproof matches and/or matches in a waterproof container.
- Where appropriate, animal repellent (for example, bear spray, bear bangers, whistles).
- When backpacks are used, backpacks appropriate for the torso size and weight of each student (for example, approximately 25% of body weight).
- Tarp(s) for shelter and ropes to secure.

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

## Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

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- Determine that all necessary clothing and footwear are included prior to departing on the excursion.
- Comfortable and durable closed-toed shoes or boots appropriate to the route (for example, hiking boots) must be worn. Students and parents/guardians must be informed of the importance of wearing footwear that has been broken in prior to the trip (for example, not wearing new footwear).
- Clothing (in layers suitable for season) appropriate to the location, activities and environmental conditions must be worn.
- Where conditions warrant, rain gear and/or a dry change of clothing kept in a watertight bag/container must be accessible.
- 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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- Check with local authorities for current information regarding route safety.
- Trip guide must be familiar with the route (for example, length of route, terrain)
- Only designated trails to be used.
- Appropriate environmental and sanitary practices (for example, washroom routines) must be taught.

## 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.
- 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.
- When backpacks are used, parents must be informed that backpacks are to be appropriate for the torso size and weight of the student (for example, approximately 25% of body weight).
- A principal/designate in the school, and each teacher (and trip guide [where appropriate]) on the excursion must have: a map of route and an excursion itinerary including an emergency action plan (for example, supervisory chain of command, emergency evacuation plan, emergency access points, local emergency contact phone numbers).
- Daylight hiking only, except in emergencies.
- A system for keeping track of students must be in place (for example, buddy system).
- Students that aren't required to take a swim test or students that have not passed the swim test without a personal flotation device (PFD) must not enter the water.

## Supervision

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- All activities must be supervised.
- 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.
- On-site supervision is required.

- The teacher must assign a leader to the front and back of the group. A leader could be a responsible student.
- The front and back of the group must be within whistle contact of the teacher(s)/trip guide(s) at all times.
- If the group is divided into two or more excursions, each excursion must have a trip guide with the required certifications.
- For all overnight excursions, two supervisors are required as a basic minimum, one of whom must be a teacher.
- Where males and females participate on an overnight excursion, both male and female supervisors are required.

## Supervision Ratios

- 1 supervisor per 15 students for single-day hikes within 2 hours of medical assistance.
- 1 supervisor per 8 students for multi-day hikes within 2 hours of medical assistance.

## 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, satellite or cell phone, or satellite GPS messenger) suitable for the activities/locations must be available. This device must be maintained, waterproofed, protected and dedicated for emergency communications only. The phone number for the device, and phone numbers for emergency services and school contact people (for example, the principal) must be included with the phone.
- At least one teacher, trip guide instructor or supervisor must have a minimum of a standard first aid course from a reputable provider (for example, St. John Ambulance, Canadian Red Cross, Lifesaving Society).
- 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.

## Information for Students

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- Prior to backpacking, students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to:
  - route for the trip, and the route for the day (reviewed each morning)
  - emergency procedures
  - signal to assemble
  - the importance of treating their feet for hot/sore spots
  - risks of the activity along with strategies to minimize those risks
  - an adequate supply of nutritious food preserved and packed to suitable weight for carrying
  - an adequate supply of safe water for one day (the group must have a water purification method and must be made aware of water sources prior to embarking on trip)

## 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
- **Instructor:**
  - An individual who provides instruction on skills and possesses the required certifications. This role could be fulfilled by a teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer or an employee of an outside

provider.

- **Outside Activity Provider:**

- An outside facility contracted by the school/board to provide activity services.

- **Parent/guardian/volunteer:**

- An adult who has been approved by the principal and has been instructed on responsibilities (for example, monitoring [supervision]).

- **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 a teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer, or trip guide. This term is used only in relation to supervision ratios.

- **Teacher:**

- A person with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers, under contract by the school/board. This person is legally responsible for the students.

- **Trip Guide:**

- An individual who has the required certifications and/or knowledge/skills of the route and activity. This role could be fulfilled by a teacher, a parent/guardian/volunteer or an employee of

an outside provider, and must be approved by the school/board.

- **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.