

Skiing (Cross Country)

SECONDARY - INTERSCHOOL

- 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](#).
- For more information, consult OSBIE/OSRA's [School Board/Snow Resort Safety Guidelines for Out of school Trips for Winter Sports Education Program](#).

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 a portion off the back of mouth guards).
- Skis, boots and poles must be in good repair and appropriate size for skiers.
- When equipment is provided by the school/board or rented from a commercial facility, the following must be provided:
 - Skis and poles appropriate for the size and ability of the student.
 - Skis with edges in good condition.
 - Boots and bindings that are compatible.

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

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate clothing and footwear for outdoor activity must be worn (for example, use layering principles, hats, mitts or gloves). ([Comfort Tips](#) guidelines from the [Ontario Snow Resorts Association](#) can assist skiers in determining appropriate clothing for a comfortable outdoor snow sport activity.)

- 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.
- Prior to initial use of the trail, coach or convenor must do a safety check “ski through” in order to identify potential hazards which must be brought to the attention of the coaches, convenor, athletes and officials.
- In practices, define specific routes to the athletes so they are aware of the boundaries.
- When choosing a site the following conditions must be taken into consideration: sun, wind and snow conditions as well as suitability of terrain.
- When selecting a non-commercial site the facility must have:
 - practice tracks skied in by the coach/ convenor or competent student skiers under coach/convenor direction for traditional event
 - proximity to warmth, food, waxing and other facilities
- The competition route must have marshals stationed throughout, and all hazards must be well marked or padded.
- Trails must be clearly marked, intersections must be roped off for trails not in use, and turns must be wide and safe.
- 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.
- 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.

Natural Ice Locations (Lakes, Ponds, Rivers)

- Only Board/school approved natural ice locations are to be used.
- An approved natural ice location is one that is monitored and tested by a recognized organization (for example, local municipality, police, and snowmobile clubs) and/or a recognized knowledgeable individual (for example, winter camp supervisor) that measures ice thickness for activity safety.
- Prior to an activity on natural ice surface the teacher/supervisor must contact local authorities to determine with absolute certainty that the ice surface is thick enough to be safe. The ice thickness must be a minimum of 15cm (6") and must be measured in several places.
- The use of natural ice involves some risk. Here are safety criteria to minimize the risks:
 - Stay off the ice of any natural ice surface where conditions cannot be measured.
 - Stay away from unfamiliar paths or unknown ice, avoid traveling on ice at night unless necessary.
 - Obey all ice warning signs.
 - The teacher/supervisor must be in close proximity to students on the ice surface.
 - The teachers/supervisors must be knowledgeable of the procedures to follow for rescuing an individual who has fallen through the ice.
 - Students must be informed on ice safety and ice rescue procedures prior to the activity (for example, not to go on the ice surface alone).

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), coaches must take into consideration their school board/school's protocols and procedures related to:
 - environmental conditions (consult [Weather](#)); and

- snow conditions (for example, snow/ice storms) and visibility.
- Students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to environmental conditions and be made aware of ways to protect themselves (for example, frostbite, hypothermia).
- The school board's weather procedures are the minimum standards at all times. 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.
- 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.
- Coaches must determine that competitors are adequately prepared and all equipment is suitable

for the difficulty of the race and practice courses.

- Coach basic uphill and downhill manoeuvres on a very gentle slope.
- Review with students safety precautions to take when working close to others with their sharp-tip poles.
- Instruct participants to keep a safe distance from each other (for example, 2-3m) to prevent interference/tripping one another.
- Instruct students to check that boots are secure in bindings.
- Emergency procedures must be established and communicated to the students.
- A system must be in place to keep track of athletes during practice (for example, buddy system).
- Teachers must do a final sweep of the competition route in order to ensure all students are finished prior to removing any route markers or packing up.
- 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.
- In-the-area supervision is required for all sites.
- Duties of supervisors must be clearly outlined.
- 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](#).

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.
- An individual who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured students must be knowledgeable of the school board's concussion protocol and must follow the school's first aid emergency action plan, including accessibility to a vehicle for transportation of a student to hospital (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)) and be present during the entire practice/competition.

Information for Parents/Guardians

- When their students use their own personal equipment or borrows equipment their parents/guardians must be informed:
 - of the importance of an equipment inspection prior to the activity to ensure
 - that skis and poles are appropriate for the size and ability of the student
 - that all bindings are in working order and set to the proper tension

- that all bindings meet current approved guidelines
- that boots and bindings are compatible

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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