

Outdoor Education (Camping - Backcountry)

An Extended Overnight Camping Experience In An Outdoor Environment Where Students Use Tents And Prepare Their Own Food, More Than 2 Hours From The Arrival Of Emergency Medical Assistance.

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- 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

- 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 of the location and emergency access points. A copy of the map (photocopies are acceptable) and one compass per participant, if appropriate. A GPS to be used as a back-up only.
- One whistle per participant.
- Water purification system(s) (for example, water filter(s), iodine tablets), in quantity sufficient to hydrate students for the duration of the trip, plus one extra in case of malfunction.

- Where appropriate, propane or white gas campstove(s), or wood box(es) in quantity sufficient to cook enough food to feed all students in a timely manner, plus one extra in case of malfunction.
- Weather (for example, sun, cold, precipitation) and insect protection.
- Where appropriate, animal repellent (for example, bear spray, bear bangers, whistles).
- Shovel/trowel.
- One flashlight or headlamp per participant.
- Waterproof matches and/or matches in a waterproof container.
- Tarp(s) for shelter and ropes to secure.
- Saws and camp knives (if deemed appropriate by teacher).
- When using equipment that is not described on the activity page, care must be taken to determine that it is safe for use (for example, no sharp edges, sharp corners, cracks, or splinters).

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

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Determine that all necessary clothing and footwear are included prior to departing on the excursion.
- Clothing (in layers where appropriate) and footwear (for example, closed-toed shoes that provide traction) appropriate to the activity, location and environmental conditions must be worn. No bare feet outside of tents.
- 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

- Trip guide must check with local authorities to determine the level of potential hazards (for example, bears, forest fires).
- Routes into and out of the wilderness campsite must be commensurate with the age and abilities of group. Consult [Outdoor Education \(Backpacking/Hiking - Backcountry\)](#).
- Appropriate environmental and sanitary practices (for example, washroom routines, disposal of dishwater and excess food) must be taught.
- No open flame, of any sort, in or near tents.
- Situate tents after considering the presence of any hazards (for example, away from dead or dying trees).
- A designated cooking area must be established away from tents, and whenever possible away from the path between tents.
- An emergency escape route including safety procedures and/or a designated safe location, in case of bears or other hazards, must be established.

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 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.
- Students must be made aware of expectations as they relate to signal to assemble, a system for keeping track of students (for example, buddy system), and boundaries for activities.
- A trip plan must be developed and communicated to all involved with the excursion. A principal/designate in the school, each teacher (and trip guide [where appropriate]) on the excursion, and a local emergency contact (for example, park official, area police station) must have a copy of the trip plan (for example, a map of the route and/or campsite and an excursion itinerary, supervisory chain of command, emergency evacuation plan, emergency access points, provisions for inclement weather, local emergency contact phone numbers, health information for students, colours of canoes and tents, campsites).
- No open flame, of any sort, in or near shelters.

- Ensure an adequate supply of nutritious food appropriately for carrying to and from, and storing in the camp setting.
- Food must be hung, stored in bear-proof containers, or kept as far away from camp as possible.
- Camp stoves must be available, accessible, and appropriate for the activity, location, and duration of the excursion. Students must receive instruction on using the stove(s) prior to embarking on trip.
- Safety procedures for camp/cooking fires must be established (for example, water bucket in close proximity, safe movement when near fire, review of "stop, drop and roll").
- Ensure an adequate supply of safe water. Students must receive instruction on using the water purification system, and must be made aware of water sources prior to embarking on trip.
- Prior to using knives, saws or axes, students must receive instruction on their proper and safe use.
- All cutting and chopping tools must be sharpened and in good condition.
- 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

- 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.
- Constant visual supervision is required for:
 - filling and lighting of campstoves;
 - lighting of campfires;
 - use of saws and camp knives.

- At least one trip guide must have wilderness camping experience, and be familiar with the route to the site, and the campsite(s). If using tents, at least one of the trip guides must have tent-camping experience.
- For all overnight excursions, two adult supervisors are required as a basic minimum, one of whom must be a teacher.
- Where males and females participate on an excursion, both male and female supervisors are required.

Supervisor Ratio

- 1 supervisor per 8 students.

First Aid

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 one of the following current advanced wilderness first aid certifications:
 - WMA Wilderness Advanced First Aid
 - St. John Ambulance Wilderness First Aid Level 3
 - Canadian Red Cross Advanced Wilderness and Remote First Aid
 - Equivalent to any of the above.
- 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.

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

- **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.

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