

# Snowshoeing

## SECONDARY - CURRICULAR 2025

- Consult [Disability-Centred Safety](#) if your groups of students include students with disabilities.
- A Teacher must be the one in charge of the snowshoeing trip/activity.
- A Monitor is an individual who is 18 years of age or older who is approved by the principal and has received instructions on their duties for the snowshoeing trip/activity.
- 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](#).
- [OSBIE/OSRA's School Board/Snow Resort Safety Guidelines for Out-of-School Trips for Winter Sports Education Program](#) is a resource that can assist in planning trips.

## Equipment

---

- 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.
- Equipment must be in good repair and appropriate size for the snowshoer.
- When equipment is provided by the school/board or rented from a commercial facility, snowshoes and poles appropriate for the size and ability of the student must be provided.

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 within the [Safety and Risk Awareness section of the Ontario Snow Resorts Association](#) website can assist in determining appropriate clothing for a comfortable outdoor snow sport activity.)
- 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

---

- Determine that all facilities are safe and accessible for the students participating. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the teacher.
- Prior to initial use of the trail, Teacher(s) must do a safety check in order to identify potential hazards which must be brought to the attention of students.
- When choosing a site, the following conditions must be taken into consideration:
  - sun
  - wind
  - snow conditions
  - suitability of terrain for student age and ability
- When selecting a non-commercial site the facility must include:

- a level practice/teaching area
- proximity to warmth, food, waxing and other facilities
- well-marked trails
- Where applicable, the facility provider must define specific routes to the students so they are aware of the boundaries and hazards for activity.
- Walls, stages, equipment, trees, and posts must not be used as turning points, finish lines, end zones, or boundaries. Establish a clearly delineated boundary line away from the hazards, using visual markers (for example, lines, pylons), to prevent contact/collision.

## Natural Ice Locations (Lakes, Ponds, Rivers)

- Only school 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 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/Monitors must be in close proximity to students on the ice surface.
  - The Teacher/Monitors 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), Teachers 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 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.
- 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.
- Teach basic uphill and downhill manoeuvres with very gentle slopes.
- Instruct students to check that boots are secure in bindings.
- Communicate to students the importance of being aware of the location of other skiers, around them, to avoid interference and collisions.
- A system must be in place to keep track of students (for example, buddy system).
- Teachers and Qualified Instructors must be familiar with applicable elements of this activity page and be aware of risks of the activity and the ways to minimize them and participate safely.
- A process must be in place by which Teachers/Monitors can contact students (for example, check-in time).
- 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.
- Students must be informed that the use of equipment and the gymnasium are prohibited without supervision. In addition to verbal communication, the doors must be locked or signs must be posted indicating that students are not allowed to use the gym unless appropriately supervised.

## Supervision

---

- 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 during the safety and initial skill instruction.
- On-Site Supervision is required for the duration of all other components of the activity (e.g., equipment setup and take down, warm-ups/cool downs, application of the skills and games).
- In-the-Area Supervision is required when the activities are situated at a combination of locations.
- 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

- The following ratios must be in place for day snowshoeing off school sites:
  - Grades 9-10: 1 Teacher/Monitor per 20 students
  - Grades 11-12: 1 Teacher/Monitor per 30 students

## 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.
- 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.☒

## Information for Parents/Guardians

---

- Parents/guardians must be informed of the following:
  - The location of activity is off school property
  - The means of transportation
  - The details of the activity
  - The importance of wearing suitable clothing for activity and weather of the day
  - The importance of sun protection

- That when their child/ward uses their own personal equipment or borrows equipment:
  - of the importance of an annual equipment inspection prior to the activity to ensure:
    - snowshoes and poles are appropriate for the size and ability of the student
    - all bindings are in working order and set to the proper tension
    - all bindings meet current manufacturer's guidelines

## Information for Students

---

- Review with students prior to the trip:
  - Possible risks of the activity (for example, the dangers of impact with obstacles, notably: trees, fences) and the ways to minimize them and participate safely
  - Emergency procedures
  - The importance of:
    - selecting proper clothing for the activity and weather of the day (for example, no jeans)
    - taking rest/breaks during the day and not getting overtired
    - Ways to protect themselves from environmental conditions (for example, use of hats, sunscreen, sunglasses, personal water bottles, appropriate clothing)
  - Safety procedures related to cold weather conditions (for example, temperature, wind chill) and methods for preventing frost bite and hypothermia



- An instructional component that includes the proper wearing and use of equipment, is mandatory for all students at must be provided for students in all levels of ability
- Safety precautions related to the use of sharp tip poles when in close proximity to other 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

- **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.

Last Published  
Tue, 07/22/25 12:29 pm