

# Considerations for program planning

Last revised in June 2024

[Version history](#) →



## Health and Safety




06:12

[Show transcript](#) ▾

In Ontario, various laws, including the [Education Act](#), the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA), [Ryan's Law \(Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools\), 2015](#), and [Sabrina's Law, 2005](#), collectively ensure that school boards provide a safe and

productive learning and work environment for both students and employees. Under the Education Act, teachers are required to ensure that all reasonable safety procedures are carried out in courses and activities for which they are responsible. Teachers should model safe practices at all times; communicate safety requirements to students in accordance with school board policies, Ministry of Education policies, and any applicable laws; and encourage students to assume responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others.

Concern for safety should be an integral part of instructional planning and implementation. Teachers are encouraged to review:

- their responsibilities under the [Education Act](#) .
- their rights and responsibilities under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) .
- their school board's health and safety policy for employees;
- their school board's policies and procedures on student health and safety (e.g., on concussions; on medical conditions such as asthma; with respect to outdoor education excursions);
- relevant provincial subject association guidelines and standards for student health and safety, such as Ophea's [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education](#)  (formerly the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines);
- any additional mandatory requirements, particularly for higher-risk activities (e.g., field trips that involve water-based activities), including requirements for approvals (e.g., from the Supervisory Officer), permissions (e.g., from parents/guardians), and/or qualifications (e.g., proof of students' successful completion of a swim test).

Wherever possible, potential risks should be identified and procedures developed to prevent or minimize, and respond to, incidents and injuries. School boards provide and maintain safe facilities and equipment, as well as qualified instruction. In safe learning environments, teachers will:

- be aware of up-to-date safety information;
- plan activities with safety as a primary consideration;
- inform students and parents of risks involved in activities;
- observe students to ensure that safe practices are being followed;

- have a plan in case of emergency;
- show foresight;
- act quickly.

Students should be made aware that health and safety is everyone's responsibility – at home, at school, and in the community. Teachers should ensure that students have the knowledge and skills needed for safe participation in all learning activities. Students must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the equipment being used and the procedures necessary for its safe use. Health and safety resource guides for [Kindergarten to Grade 8](#) and for [Grades 9 to 12](#) provide the scope and sequence of Ontario curriculum expectations to assist teachers in bringing health and safety education into the classroom in every subject area. The guides identify expectations in the Ontario curriculum that can help students develop knowledge and skills related to health and safety (injury prevention and health protection), safe behaviours, and safe practices.

Learning outside the classroom, such as on field trips or during field studies, can provide a meaningful and authentic dimension to students' learning experiences, but they also take the teacher and students out of the predictable classroom environment and into unfamiliar settings. Teachers must plan these activities carefully in accordance with their school board's relevant policies and procedures and in collaboration with other school board staff (e.g., the principal, outdoor education lead, Supervisory Officer) to ensure students' health and safety.

The information provided in this section is not exhaustive. Teachers are expected to follow school board health and safety policies and procedures.