

Section 4. Special Considerations

All *Safety First!* end-users should have basic familiarity with Sections I and II of the document and to have read **all** of Section 3, regardless of the type of activity/event planned.

Section 4 includes guidelines and information **supplementary to Section 3** that may be relevant to any given off-site activity, but will not likely be of concern for most or all. It very rarely repeats any Section 3 content, but rather, builds on this material. An end-user need not read this entire section, but, using the table of contents, **select out the subsection(s) of relevance to the particular situation.**

Facilities and Equipment

- Hazards should be identified and noted to students, or removed as appropriate and feasible. In a natural environment situation, the group must generally avoid or reduce its exposure to inherent hazards (e.g., weather, terrain features, wildlife) as opposed to removing them.
- All students should be required to use protective equipment when indicated (e.g., helmets, mouth guards, athletic cups and supporters, padding,) and it is an absolute requirement for several activities (e.g., minors are legally required to wear bike helmets for cycling).
- Protective equipment should be of good quality, appropriate for the demands of the activity, and suitably sized and fitted.
- Respect any legislated equipment standards, and where a school or board is purchasing equipment, select gear that meets or exceeds community and industry standard.
- Adults (teachers/leaders, service providers and volunteers) should serve as role models for the students and wear the appropriate protective equipment they expect the students to wear while engaged in the activity (e.g., helmets, hats, sunglasses).

Helmets

- Where appropriate for the activity, **require or strongly recommend to parents/guardians that they have the student wear a protective helmet.**
- Generally, except where a school or service provider is providing helmets as part of its contractual obligations, **selection and provision of helmets for school activities is the parents'/guardians' responsibility.** As appropriate, notify parents/guardians of this responsibility in the pre-activity/event information package and/or on the acknowledgement of risk and consent form.
- With the exception of some service providers, **few schools carry stocks of helmets.** **Those that do must assume responsibility** for selecting appropriate helmets (e.g., look for a CPSC, CSA, ASTM, ANSI, Snell, SEI, BSI, UIAA or other appropriate sticker), sizing the helmets for each student, adjusting them to the wearers, inspecting them, cleaning them (e.g., delousing), logging purchase and maintenance of them, and replacing them

according to manufacturers' specifications (e.g., if they have been impacted in a crash or otherwise damaged or at most after five years).

- Avoid selecting helmets with snag points sticking out, visors unless shatterproof, insufficient or excessive vents, and thin straps with complicated adjustments.
- **If the school is providing helmets, they should be approved** by an appropriate certifying body for the intended activity. If **providing helmets that are not sport-specific and/or approved by a relevant certifying body, inform parents/guardians** of this in writing and have them consent to their child/ward using the helmets available, or assuming responsibility for providing a helmet of their choice for the student.
- **Foam core helmets** are designed to crush upon impact to transfer and distribute the energy forces away from the skull. The shell helps keep the foam in place and helps the helmet skid to reduce the potential for neck injuries. These are **single-use devices** that must be disposed of once involved in a crash. Inspect (or have parents/guardians/older students inspect for themselves) students' helmets before use. **After a hard fall impacting the helmet, it must be replaced.** If the teacher/leader did not observe the fall, the student should be asked, in an age-appropriate manner, if the helmet was impacted. For example, young students could be asked "Did your helmet hit the ground? Clap your hands to show me how hard it hit the ground." Older students can simply be asked if they believe they would have hurt their head if they had not had the helmet on. If the young one claps hard vs. lightly or the older one says yes, they'd have been hurt but for the helmet, it's time to replace it. During any helmet inspection, if the shell is cracked or the foam visibly distorted, the helmet must be replaced (i.e., if a helmet is required for participation in the activity and a substitute one is not available, the student must sit out until it can be replaced). Use judgement and encourage safe participation. **Team sports (e.g. hockey, football) require multi-impact helmets, but most other activities require a single-use helmet;** the sort described above (e.g., multi-sport, cycling, downhill ski helmets).
- Where a single-use helmet is required or suggested, **it is not always essential that the helmet be sport-specific.** A good quality single-use helmet (e.g., multi-sport, cycling) offering reasonable coverage of the head will significantly reduce the potential for a head injury that was of the sort that a sport-specific helmet might also have reduced or prevented. Such a helmet can be used for many if not most introductory level recreational activities described in this document.
- **Why this guideline?** The vast majority of sports and recreation head injuries to children have involved those not wearing a helmet of any sort, so the most important thing to do or encourage is **'Get a lid on the kid'**. The importance of getting youth active outdoors, accessibility to sport-specific helmets, equity and cost issues must be considered in the equation when setting expectations. For example, very few students who don't play hockey own a CSA approved hockey helmet and few parents/guardians today are willing to spend the extra money for one for a school skating session or two. So, if that specific a standard is required for the activity of ice-skating, most students (particularly girls) may miss out on important educational and recreational opportunities (including instruction for safe participation) related to the highly accessible, lifelong activity of ice-skating. It is more important to get good-fitting helmets on the students and ensure they are properly

adjusted and secured. Exceptions will be noted in Level 2, where some activities involve significant speed, height and other considerations.

- **Encourage students to participate as if they weren't wearing a helmet.** Helmets help prevent or reduce the impact of head injuries in certain types of accidents, but they are of little benefit in high speed, head-on impacts and most offer little or no protection against neck and other types of injuries. Participating under control (of speed, direction and orientation) is the best protection from head injury.

Helmet Fit

A properly fitted helmet should be **snug, level and stable**.

- **Snug** – move minimally in any direction (front-to-back or side-to-side); chinstrap snug against the chin so when the user opens his or her mouth wide the helmet pulls down a bit;
- **Level on the head** – front rim barely visible to user's eye when looking upward; helmet not tilted back on top of the head or pulled too low over the forehead;
- **Stable** – a wide chinstrap should be securely buckled so that the helmet does not move or fall off during a fall or collision; the Y of the side straps should meet just below the user's ears.

Bike shops, ski hill staff or other service providers may be able to assist with the fitting at the point of purchase or rental. Teachers/leaders should still check helmets that have come from home as some students may show up with helmets they've borrowed from someone, or they may have grown so the helmet no longer fits, or perhaps, they own it but never had it properly fit in the first place.

Clothing

- **Cultural and/or religious dress** requirements may override the board's desire for students to wear a helmet for activities (e.g., helmets are not worn over a turban). Allow parents/guardians to make informed choices and document exceptions.
- Where cultural dress presents a safety concern, consider modifications to the activity; explain to student and parent. Avoid excluding a student from an activity (except temporarily if immediately required by safety considerations that have not been worked out beforehand) without consulting with the Principal.

Property Damage

Some equipment breakage is part of normal wear and tear. Property damage involves accidental or intentional breakage, destruction or defacing of property belonging to the school, its students, or the general public. What to do depends on who owns the property:

- Report damage related to **vehicular** accidental incidents as per the **Motor Vehicles Act** and insurer;
- Report to **Principal** or designate damage of **school property**/equipment that requires repair or replacement;
- Take reasonable steps to notify the owners of any property damaged by students;

- When property damage occurs that affects the safety of the group, alter or cancel the activity;
- Debrief incidents involving significant property damage with students and with staff/volunteers.

Walking Off-site/Sightseeing

Most motor vehicle incidents involving 5–9-year-olds (Grades K-3) involve pedestrian injuries. Some of these lead to fatalities and others to long-term disabilities. Causes include:

- driver speed,
- risky behaviour by children,
- lack of adult supervision, and
- crossing at a place without traffic controls.

Many off-site activities involve walking a group from the school meeting place, from a parking area to the venue of interest, and/or other walking-based activities and attraction visits (e.g., walking around the zoo). When walking with students, safety management approaches will vary somewhat depending on the age and maturity of the students.

Equipment for Walks/Sightseeing

- **Supervisors** of large groups in crowded environments (especially public) should be easily **identifiable** (e.g., bright clothing or hats, reflective vests).
- For large groups, consider an **auditory signal** (e.g., whistle) to get student attention.
- The weather forecast, duration of the walk and planned activities will determine what, if any, extra clothing and equipment is needed. Generally, **students should carry their own daypacks** (e.g., water bottles, snacks, extra clothing and/or other items).
- An appropriate **first aid kit** should be carried or **accessible** within five (5) minutes;
- A cell phone or other appropriate **telecommunications device** should be carried, especially if likely to be more than twenty 20 minutes from EMS (contact and arrival on site). A Family Radio Service (FRS) or walkie-talkie system may work. If unsure of range, check during a pre-walk/drive or in consultation with venue staff.

Route for Walks/Sightseeing

- Plan a safe, **appropriate route** (e.g., avoiding heavy traffic, dense crowds of people).
- For a lengthy walk on a new route, consider the value of a **pre-walk** (or drive, where appropriate) to allow for a safety check, communications device check, and time estimates.
- Cross at **intersections** (i.e., avoid jaywalking) and use crosswalks and pedestrian-activated signals where they are available.
- Where required to walk where there is no sidewalk, remember to **‘Leg on the left – Ride on the right’** (i.e., walk facing oncoming traffic; cycle with the traffic).

Instruction for Walks/Sightseeing

- **Obey all traffic rules** and regulations and trail signs.

- **Age/grade and situation-appropriate road safety instruction** must be provided and/or modeled if crossing roadways (e.g., with younger groups, can instruct in 4Ps: **Peer** around to see where traffic is coming from; **Point** across the road to indicate to drivers you want to cross; **Pause** until all vehicles are stopped; **Proceed** with arm extended and continuing to scan for moving vehicles).
- Instruct students in **what to do if they get lost/separated** from the group (e.g., stay put, find a venue staff, flag down a municipal bus).

Supervision on Walks/Sightseeing

- Ensure students are appropriately **supervised** (considering age, maturity and context).
- Use of a **buddy system** is recommended (See **Supervision** in this section).
- Larger groups of students (based on context; e.g., location, traffic, public) should be kept between a **lead** (supervisor at front) and **sweep** (supervisor at rear).
- Split large groups into **walking units** with a supervisor/unit; each unit functioning as a group (e.g., crossing intersections together, staying together in museum).
- The lead and sweep should be in **audible (and ideally, visual) range** of each other.
- If the group gets too spread out, **adjust the pace or urge dawdlers on**.

Transportation

Vehicular travel is generally the highest risk activity any school group undertakes. If assuming responsibility for transporting students to, from or during a program, schools must do so in a safe manner in accordance with Transport Canada regulations, the federal *Motor Vehicle Safety Act*, the *BC Motor Vehicle Act*, and board policy.

To ensure that insurable travel risks are appropriately covered, the following policies, procedures and practices should be considered.

Use of Public or Charter Buses

- Chartering school or coach buses (with professional drivers) is the most common preferred mode of transportation for taking students off-site.
- Public transportation (e.g., municipal buses, subways), where available and viable, is another common mode of motorized transport during school programs.
- A buddy system may be very valuable on a crowded public bus.
- Teachers/leaders should position themselves near the front and rear doors of public buses so none of their students get off prematurely.
- If using a school bus, consider the time needed for loading and unloading and the 90kph speed limit for school buses on the highway.
- Some bus regulations prohibit the carriage of backpacks taller than bus seatbacks, sharp items like unsheathed axes or saws, and long items like paddles or skis; check to ensure necessary personal and group gear can get to the trip destination.
- Establish and maintain appropriate safety procedures, including loading/unloading and supervision, for all vehicles (e.g., keeping students out of vehicle blind spots; 3 m away on all sides of vehicle, except when they are loading or unloading it).
- When loading a chartered bus, supervisors should sit at emergency doors/windows.

- For off-site trips involving school buses or other charter vehicles, the leader is responsible for maintaining discipline on the bus, not the driver.
- Supervisors and students should be made aware of behavior expectations (e.g., sitting, facing forward, keeping noise down).
- If using buses, all students should be familiar with basic bus rider-ship safety (see [YouthSafe Outdoors: RideSafe on the Bus](#) in the [Self-reliance in the Outdoors Instruction Resource](#)).

Insurance and Licensing

Insurance

- When securing chartered public transport, ask for confirmation that the service provider has third party vehicle liability insurance covering intended drivers as well as any required permits.
- If the vehicle can carry more than ten (10) persons, including the driver, and if it will be used to transport students on behalf of a school, the vehicle needs a school bus permit.
- Consult board policy or contact Principal or designate regarding who may rent vehicles on organization business and what auto liability insurance is required for a rented vehicle or charter.
- A volunteer drivers' insurance coverage on the vehicle is the primary coverage, under which incidental use of the vehicle is permitted. Staff or volunteers transporting students in private vehicles on school-related trips must carry vehicle liability insurance that meets or exceeds board requirements (generally, \$2,000,000 minimum third party coverage).
- Excess automobile liability coverage may be available for incidental transportation of students by persons (e.g., employees and volunteers) for sponsored/authorized school-related activities/events over and above that provided by the driver's primary auto liability insurance. Typically, this insurance applies as long as the driver is acting on behalf of the school and he or she has not breached policy conditions. Most boards have this coverage in place.

Licensing

- All drivers must confirm that they are appropriately licensed for the vehicle(s) and number of passengers. In BC, a Class 5 driver's license is sufficient for a vehicle with a seating capacity of up to 10 people, including the driver. A Class 4 license is required if the vehicle seating capacity is more than 10 people (including the driver), but less than 25 people (including the driver). A Class 2 license is required if the seating capacity is 25 or more (including the driver).
- Statistically, younger drivers are at higher risk for motor vehicle collisions. Use of mature, experienced drivers is preferred. Respect board policy and procedures and provincial graduated licensing requirements for students driving private vehicles on school business. If students are to be driving, written permissions should be sought from their parents/guardians, and the parents/guardians of students who are to ride with such drivers should be informed of this mode of transportation.

Private or Rental Vehicle Drivers

- If assuming responsibility for organizing transportation of students (e.g., facilitating car pooling to an activity/event site), schools generally require volunteer drivers to complete a Volunteer Driver Authorization Application form; a copy is kept on file in the office. This form requires the driver to assume responsibility for the road-worthiness and operation of the vehicle, to self-disclose any factors that may negatively impact on their eligibility to drive for the organization. Examples may include cases where the driver:
 - is not in possession of a valid, appropriate drivers license;
 - is not in possession of sufficient insurance;
 - has had excessive driving related offences, moving violations or collisions (considering frequency and seriousness);
 - has physical or medical restrictions or medications that impair driving ability;
 - has a recent history of alcoholism or drug use (prescription or recreational) that could affect driving;
 - is unable to read/comprehend written materials (e.g., road maps); and/or
 - is unwilling to commit to observing motor vehicle regulations.
- Volunteer driver applicants will typically be required to certify the truthfulness of all statements on the form, and agree to inform the organization of any changes that occur prior to or during the driving tenure with the organization.
- Volunteer driver applicants should expect to be asked to confirm that they have read, understood and accepted the transportation policies and procedures established by the organization.
 - Board policy should identify the period for which this authorization applies (e.g., trip-by-trip basis, annual).
 - Depending on the nature and frequency of the driving, drivers may also be required to undergo one or more screening processes (e.g., interview, driver's abstract, criminal records check).

Private or Rental Vehicle Equipment

- Considering options available and safety, minimize the number of vehicles used.
- The vehicle owner is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is roadworthy (e.g., functioning lights, turn signals, rear view mirrors, windshield, brakes, adequate tire tread depth, fluid levels).
- If private or rental vehicles are used, the driver is responsible for ensuring proper use of the occupant restraint systems; i.e., seatbelts, head restraints, and seat/passenger position relative to airbags.
- Appropriate car seats must be used for children under 40 lbs (18.2 kg). The child's parent(s)/guardian(s) must provide the car seat unless otherwise arranged.
- Children from 40-60 lbs (18.2-27 kg) (up to about age 8) should ride in a booster seat. Despite their proven positive contribution to reducing child passenger fatalities and permanent disabilities, only a small minority of Canadian families use booster seats for their children who fall within the weight range noted. The parent(s)/guardian(s) therefore generally retain the right not to provide a booster seat or to have their child ride in one. Neither the board nor the driver is responsible for providing a booster seat

unless this is a specific agreed arrangement. Consult board policy if transport of young children is to be frequent.

- Children over 60 lbs. (27 kg.) should be secured with a properly buckled seat belt. Use the shoulder belt as intended; not behind the child or under the child's arm.
- Rear-facing infant seats must never be placed on a front passenger seat with an airbag.
- Wherever possible, avoid transporting students in the front seat.
- Where a vehicle is equipped with a front passenger-side airbag, students under age 12 or of very small stature (e.g., under 45.5 kg/100 lb.) should not be transported in that seat.
- Keep children out of the way of all air bags, including side airbags, whenever possible. This includes keeping the area between a child and any airbag clear of objects (e.g., clothing, bedding, gear) and reminding children to face the front and not to lean on doors.
- Drivers must ensure all passengers are properly seated in the vehicle; never in open bed trucks or on top of piles of gear.
- Maximum vehicle capacities (determined by number of seatbelts) must be respected.
- Drivers should carry winter travel kits in that season (e.g., blankets, candles).
- Ensure proper storage of gear. Heavy items should be carried outside of the passenger compartment (e.g., in a trunk, trailer or rooftop carrier of vehicle except 15 passenger van), lashed down or stored under seats. Any hazardous materials (e.g., gasoline, white gas, propane) should be carried outside the passenger compartment.
- If using a trailer or roof racks, ensure that they are properly attached and that gear items are secured to them (e.g., 4-point tie down for canoes).
- Trailers must be equipped with safety chains and functioning lights. Magnetized stick-on lights that plug into the vehicle may be used.
- Trip teachers/leaders should consider bringing external communications technology (e.g., cell phone, satellite phone (see [External Communications](#) in [Section 6: General Considerations for Higher Care Activities](#))).

15 Passenger Vans and Multi-function Activity Buses

15 passenger vans, long the vehicle of choice for many schools and recreation organizations, have been implicated in a small number of high profile incidents. As a result, there has been some public and insurer pressure to reduce use of these vehicles. However, Transport Canada has not found a disproportionate number of incidents or fatalities related to this vehicle as compared to any other passenger vehicle in the country (including consideration of hours on the road per vehicle type). There is no legal restriction on the use of this vehicle in the country.

Some schools and organizations have moved to replace 12-15 passenger vans with Multi-function Activity Bus (MFAB) vehicles; similar to small school buses, but the lacking the traffic warning devices needed for on-highway stops (e.g., daily school commuting), a function not needed for most off-site school trips. These buses are CSA approved for transporting students. However, Transport Canada testing has found MFABs to have no significant differences in their stability and safety than 15 passenger vans.

Of note, newer 15 passenger vans have improved safety features like electronic stability control (2005 and newer, 2006 Ford), tire pressure monitoring systems, three-point restraints and side-impact airbags. All of these features will help reduce the potential for incidents and injuries involving these vehicles.

More than 80% of fatalities in the US have involved passengers who were not wearing seat belts. A 15 passenger van is not a bus and seat belt wearing is essential.

Many schools and organizations in Canada have continued their use of 15 passenger vans. Others have purchased MFABs. Parents/ guardians should be notified of the intention to use 15 passenger vans, MFABs or other specific types of vehicles prior to providing their acknowledgement of risk and consent.

Risks related to 15 passenger vans may be significantly reduced by taking the following precautions. This list can be copied and kept in the vehicle with the log book or in another handy location for reference.

- Ensure driver is familiar with the characteristics of the vehicle;
- Direct all passengers to wear their seat belts;
- Ensure adequate tire tread and pressure;
- Avoid carrying gear (especially heavy and/or high stacking) on the roof;
- Avoid pulling trailers;
- Load forward seats first and avoid using the rear seat and the cargo area if possible, or load these areas more lightly (consider passenger size – bigger people forward); and
- SLOW DOWN. Exercise caution on corners, on rural roads and other roads with soft shoulders; avoid driver fatigue and other factors that may lead to abrupt maneuvers/over-corrections. If wheels go off the side of the road, driver should know to slow down and steer back onto the roadway when safe to do so.

Route

- Check Internet, TV, radio or newspaper for weather forecast, or other reliable source for road conditions (e.g., www.drivebc.ca). If travel warnings have been posted anywhere along the intended route (e.g., heavy snowfall), delay, cancel or re-route trip.
- If relevant, check that proposed winter travel routes are plowed on a regular basis, or they can be cleared for your purposes.

Driving and Riding

- Drivers must focus on the essential trio: 1. Eyes on the Road, 2. Hands on the Wheel, 3. Mind on the driving.
- Drivers must commit to using defensive driving practices; e.g., use of occupant restraint system, following the rules of the road, not using earphones while driving, not driving when sleepy or under the influence of medication that causes drowsiness, and driving with the headlights on.
- Some districts require that students travel with the group to and from a site in order to be included in the activity. Others allow students to be transported by alternative means

and transferred to the Lead Teacher and/or driven home by alternative means. Consult board policy.

- Encourage the carriage of a cell phone (or other reliable communications technology) in each vehicle, but not to be used while driving, even hands-free. Have someone else in the vehicle handle calls or pull over and stop in a safe location to make or take a call. Talking on a hand-held is against the law, and hands-free phone conversations still contribute to distraction from essential elements of driving.
- Drivers should walk around the vehicle immediately prior to departure to ensure there are no obstructions or items left behind.
- If going to a location unfamiliar to one or more drivers, each driver should have the destination address, a road or sketch map, and a rendezvous schedule. It may be more hazardous to try to keep a number of vehicles in convoy (especially at night or in bad weather) than relying on relatively independent route-finding and/or occasional regroupings.
- Identify any known hazards of the route to the drivers (e.g., windy road with soft shoulders; known wildlife corridors).
- For long trips, consider the number of driving hours required and length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours). A second valid driver should be identified if the driver is at risk for driver fatigue.
- Consider using the "Switch Rule" where the second driver, upon noting the driver appearing tired or otherwise unsafe to continue, calls, "Switch". The driver must then pull over at the first safe opportunity to allow the alternate driver to take the wheel.
- Plan rest stops on long journeys (e.g., at least every two-three hours).
- Do head counts before departing from any interim stopover.
- If leaving vehicles in a parking lot or at a trailhead, drivers must secure them.
- In general, minimize use of reverse gear.
- Back into parking spots at trailheads or other remote locations to reduce the likelihood of becoming trapped or stuck.
- When backing up a trailer, a spotter should direct the driver. Keep students in the vehicle or well away from backing vehicles/trailers.
- Exercise extra care if it starts raining; a greasy film coats the road just after it starts to drizzle or rain, creating very slippery conditions.
- Adapt to winter driving (e.g., slow down; keep safe following distances; pump brakes versus slamming them on; use appropriate tires, chains or studs; keep windshield clear; take care on bridge decks and overpasses).

Emergency Planning for Time on the Road

- Bring a cell phone and/or other means of communication (accepting range limitations). It is ideal to have at least one per vehicle to enable communications between/among vehicles. Again, the phone may not be used by the driver while operating the vehicle.
- For trips into rural or remote areas, each vehicle should be equipped with a spare key(s), a spare tire, jack and tire iron. The group should have at least one set of basic tools, safety or emergency equipment as the trip dictates, and someone in the group who

knows how to use these. If the vehicles are not traveling within reliable communications contact, each vehicle should have a first aid kit, flashlight, and hazard flares/markers.

- For winter use, drivers should be confident that the vehicle will start in cold weather, and establish a backup plan (e.g., means of boosting, access to roadside assistance).
- Plan how and where the group can access emergency medical care en route.
- If forced to stop while on the highway (e.g., breakdown, someone sick), pull as far over to the right as possible, turn wheels to the right, leave running lights on, and turn on flashers. All people (including the driver) should exit by the right-hand door. Keep group members off the road. Avoid having anyone stand between the vehicle and traffic approaching from the rear. If pulling back onto the highway, watch for a safe gap, build up speed on the hard shoulder (watching for any narrowing of this lane) and signal intentions.
- If an accident occurs: care for the injured; protect the scene from further damage; contact the police; record other driver(s)' names, addresses and insurance information; and avoid conflict.
- Carry group members' health and medical forms in a sealed envelope.
- The driver, Lead Teacher and Principal or designated home contact person should have copies of the Passenger List for each vehicle. Students should not be allowed to change vehicles during a trip unless pre-arranged and represented on the copies of the respective lists. In the event of a motor vehicle accident, the Passenger List(s) allows the school to provide accurate, timely information to potentially distraught families.
- Each student should carry some form of ID.

Home Contact Person

When a group travels out of the community, whether a day trip, overnight or longer, a home contact person (HCP) should be designated in the school's home community.

- Parents/guardians and students should be provided this individual's contact information and information about the role and communications processes.
- The HCP assists in situations involving support of the group. For example, phone parents/guardians and/or email or text message (if/as appropriate and/or as back-up if unsuccessful reaching by phone), where:
 - the group has been delayed,
 - accommodations arrangements have changed,
 - consent is being sought to change a major component of the itinerary,
 - there is a change in pick-up time and/or location.
- The HCP may also support the group in an emergency situation, for example by:
 - contacting the authorities if the group is overdue returning;
 - contacting authorities if a group member is missing; and
 - sharing health and medical information with emergency services personnel to support care of a group member, where the group has lost its copy of this information or where it is otherwise not where the casualty(ies) are.
- The designated HCP should have:
 - Lead Teacher's name and contact info (e.g., cell phone number to reach group);

- the itinerary, including the estimated date and time of return, and start/finish locations;
- accommodation location(s) and contact information;
- description of the group (number of supervisors, students, vehicles);
- the school Principal or designate’s contact information in the event of an emergency; the HCP does not directly contact students’ parents/guardians or emergency contacts in the event of a serious emergency or crisis situation;
- list of students’ parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or emergency contacts and supervisors’ home contacts to call in the event of a significant change of itinerary or delayed return;
- sample script for how to initiate a call to a parent/guardian to reassure first and then provide detail. For example, “Hi, I’m John. I’m acting as the communication person for the xyz group. The trip is going fine and everyone is well. However, the bus broke down. The charter company is sending a replacement bus which should arrive by noon, so pick-up of the kids has been delayed till 3:00 this afternoon.”;
- copies of group members’ health and medical forms (may be provided in a sealed envelope to be retrieved by Lead Teacher or designate after the trip and destroyed if no longer needed); and
- time and contacts to initiate a search if the group is late.

Late Pick-up

Schools need a procedure in place to ensure the ongoing supervision of a student when a parent/guardian fails to arrive at the end of a outing and it is outside of school hours. Parents/guardians and students should be made aware of this procedure. Some elements might include the following:

- Ensure parents/guardians are aware of pick-up time.
- Notify all of the supervision grace period during which staff/volunteers will stay. Warn any parents/guardians who are chronically late.
- After a pre-determined time past the grace period, call parent(s)/guardian(s) at home or with the cell numbers as provided.
- If there is no answer, call the identified emergency contact.
- Leave messages at **all** numbers called.
- Notify all of the process past this time, e.g.,
 - a staff/volunteer will remain with the student;
 - another student’s parent/guardian the family knows will be asked to take the student home with them and keep calling the student’s parent/guardian; and
 - the student will be taken to a particular office or the nearest police station.
- Determine if the student of parents/guardians who are chronically late in picking up will be removed from the program.
- Determine if students of a certain age (e.g., 12 or older) are allowed to leave without a parent/guardian. Some boards have the parent/guardian sign a waiver to this effect.

See [Emergency Procedures in Section 3](#) and [Emergency Procedures for Higher Care Activities in Section 6](#) for other considerations.

Sports Events and Related Travel

Sports Events

- Sports events cover the range of indoor and outdoor sports performances and competitions (e.g., team sports, dual sports, individual sports, relays, etc.);
- Identify and assess venue and activity related risks as these arise and manage (e.g., by notifying the appropriate officials, warning the athletes one is responsible for or taking other appropriate action);
- Be informed, and as appropriate, inform one's athletes of:
 - the layout of the venue and where key personnel are stationed,
 - how any transportation within or between venues is being handled,
 - the location of emergency equipment and first aid (equipment and personnel),
 - safe areas to warm up or cool down without interfering with ongoing competition,
 - the rules and regulations governing the sport and the particular event, and the consequences of failing to follow them, and
 - other information, warnings, etc. of relevance to the athletes participating safely and allowing other athletes to do the same.

Sports Related Travel

- The Team Manager, if one is available, handles travel logistics as much as possible so the coach can focus on coaching.
- Determine what school and personal equipment will be provided and what will need to be brought. For larger equipment consider the possibility of borrowing or renting rather than transporting to avoid potential loss or damage.
- If driving, identify a safe, allowable way to transport equipment.
- Identify special equipment requirements (e.g., oversize items like hockey sticks or skis; items with knives, scissors or other sharps like a repair kit or first aid kit).
- Label each baggage item with the school's or individual's name, address and phone number and secure all latches (e.g., duct tape).
- If traveling by commercial carrier, make an equipment manifest of all major equipment including model numbers, serial numbers and weight.
- Plan to meet at the station/airport extra early if there is a lot of equipment to check in. Be aware of bag count/size/weight limits and potential extra charges.
- Consider all other activities the students will be involved in over the trip (e.g., sightseeing, cooking meals, swimming in hotel pool). Implement all relevant guidelines in sections 3–7 of this document.

See **Overnight Supervision** and/or **Billeting** in this section if/as relevant. If engaged in out-of-province or international travel, see **Section 8 Travel Excursions**.

Cultural and Performing Arts and Related Travel

Cultural and Performing Arts

- Cultural and performing arts includes a wide range of programs, activities and events related to music, art, drama, theatre, dance, etc.
- At a cultural or performing arts venue (whether at home or on the road), be aware of relevant emergency exits, emergency equipment and first aid (kit and personnel) and notify students of these as appropriate.
- Identify and assess inherent risks of the activity and environment (e.g., moving heavy musical instruments, moving heavy theatre sets, work at heights or from platforms, performing physical stunts, doing highly physical dance, risks related to electrical equipment and/or lights). For each identified risk determine an appropriate plan to manage it (e.g., identify and warn students, instruct in appropriate methods, supervise, make contingency plans).
- Establish rules and procedures related to preventing the spread of infectious diseases among students sharing musical instruments. Rules may include precluding students from using group mouthpiece equipment when they have visibly active cold sores, severely chapped lips or upper respiratory infections. Procedures may include:
 - systematic disinfection of mouthpieces on musical instruments used by more than one child (e.g., soak, wash with soap and water, rinse, immerse in an accepted disinfecting solution, rinse, and let dry);
 - cleaning brass instruments with a cleaning snake and warm water between users;
 - wiping woodwind instruments between users; and
 - disposing of reeds used by students who have a communicable disease.

Cultural and Performance Arts Related Travel

- Determine what equipment will be provided and what you will need to bring. For larger equipment, investigate the possibility of borrowing or renting rather than transporting your own to avoid potential loss or damage.
- Identify special equipment requirements (e.g., repair kit, percussion and other large instruments, theatre sets, etc).
- Label each instrument or major item with the school's and/or student's name, address and phone number and secure all latches (e.g., duct tape).
- If traveling by commercial carrier, make an equipment manifest of all instruments and technical equipment including model numbers, serial numbers and weight.
- Plan to meet at the station or airport extra early if there is a lot of equipment to check in. Be aware of bag count/size/weight limits and potential extra charges.
- Consider all other activities the students will be involved in over the trip (e.g., sightseeing, cooking). Implement all relevant guidelines in sections III and IV of this document.
- If billeting, see **Overnight Supervision** and/or **Billeting** in this section if/as relevant. If engaged in out-of-province or international travel, see **International Travel** in **Section 8 Travel Excursions**.

Farm/Industry Visits

Farm or industry off-site experiences offer valuable educational opportunities. However, these locations have inherent risks that must be considered in planning. Farming is one of the highest risk profession in BC, with many injuries related to working with livestock and tractors.

Farm Visits

A pre-visit is generally indicated, or consultation with other teachers/leaders who have used the site.

The risk assessment should consider risks associated with:

- farm machinery, farm vehicles or other apparatus;
- fire (i.e., precautions, alarms and procedures);
- falls (e.g., precautions for any use of ladders or high equipment);
- food poisoning;
- viral and bacterial infections;
- sanitation and hygiene (e.g., the presence of clean washroom facilities);
- on-farm water bodies (e.g., dugouts, sloughs, lagoons); and
- remoteness; distance to emergency medical services.

Check that the farm:

- appears well-managed;
- has safety procedures in place to address the risks noted above or others present;
- attends to animal welfare;
- has eating areas separate from those where there is contact with animals; and
- is clean and has adequate clean and well-maintained washing facilities.

Provide the students with clear boundaries and safety rules, including **instructing them not to**:

- place their faces against the animals;
- put their hands in their own mouths after touching or feeding the animals;
- eat or drink while moving around the farm;
- eat or drink until after they have washed their hands;
- sample any animal foodstuffs;
- touch animal droppings (if doing so, immediately wash and dry hands);
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities);
- ride on or operate tractors or other machines (except with appropriate training);
- go into areas that are out of bounds, manure pits or areas where chemical fertilizers or pesticides are kept;
- use matches or lighters;
- touch electric fences; or
- engage in horseplay in the farm area or play in out-of-bounds areas (e.g., sloughs, grain bins/silos).

Industry Visits

Risk assessment should be tailored to address unique risks of each visit site, but should generally include consideration of:

- fire (i.e., precautions, alarms and procedures);
- precautions around heavy equipment, machinery, or other apparatus;
- on-site vehicle safety;
- precautions for any climbing of ladders or steep stairs, walking on catwalks or otherwise being up at a height;
- sanitation and hygiene (e.g., the presence of clean washroom facilities); and
- rules and regulations regarding appropriate behavior, boundaries, etc.

Instruction of Physical Skills

- Where challenging physical activities are involved, plan lessons that allow for each student's progress and skill development, including lead-up activities and modification of tasks or rules. Ensure reasonable **mastery of lead-up progressions** before engaging in higher demand skill attempts. Where safety may be affected, give less capable students additional support as needed or direct them to more appropriate activities.
- Support **challenge by choice**. When a student displays, verbally or non-verbally, significant hesitation to attempt an activity, remove the student from the activity and discuss the reason(s) with him or her. If the student does not wish to attempt the skill and/or if hesitancy during the skill could pose a risk, the student should be directed toward a less advanced activity.
- **Guard against students being pressured** into trying skills or activities. Reassure visibly reticent students that they do not have to attempt any activity that they do not feel safe trying and no one will think any less of them for not doing it.
- **Assessment** should not be tied to completing skills that are likely to be physically or psychologically threatening to one or more students.
- Where activities carry higher levels of inherent risk, **consider assessing students' skill levels** to determine the level at which they will be allowed to participate and to identify groups of similar ability.
- **Review previously learned skills or information**, or start at a low enough level that the students are not placed at risk. Build in redundancy re: safety information; do daily briefings, including summaries of past safety content and information needed for the pending period.
- Consider the safe and appropriate **integration of a student** who arrives partway through a program or course, or who has been absent for one or more preparatory sessions.
- When a leader cannot attend and someone steps in to replace them, this person may be working in unfamiliar surroundings with students whose skills and limitations are unknown to them. **Stand-in leader led activities should be limited** to those where the risk of injury is low and individual skill levels are not a risk factor. The *Safety First! Guidelines* (with relevant sections flagged) should be left with the activity plan and the stand-in leader should be made aware of restrictions and/or modifications for students

with health or behavioral problems or cognitive impairments. Identify an emergency contact or the Principal.

- **Student teachers/leaders in training** should not teach/lead a group alone until the Lead Teacher or Principal is confident that the activity will be conducted safely.
- Where instructional/program units are short and activities include elements of risk, remind students that they have gained only entry-level understanding, skills and experience. **Encourage students to seek additional training and support** if they wish to pursue the activity further (e.g., take a course, join a club).

Service Provider and Volunteer Screening

This section follows on the information from Section III, and involves situations where screening of service providers or volunteers is suggested because of the extent and/or nature of interactions present with students. Often service provider organizations or companies working with vulnerable populations such as children and youth will do their own screening of their people and can provide evidence or declare in writing that this has been done. Where a board or school needs to conduct screening, following are some related guidelines:

A **background check** is simply a way of, in writing or orally, determining if the candidate has appropriate qualifications (knowledge, skill and experience) to contribute to a particular program, activity or event where this is relevant to the safety and success of the group (e.g., if the group is going winter camping, the volunteer candidate should have some experience in that activity).

A **reference check** is a means of assessing the candidate's relevant background experience and personal qualities relevant to the position (e.g., if the candidate will be doing some instruction of the students, they should have references and/or otherwise be able to verify that they know the content area and are organized and capable communicators).

A **security check** is a highly confidential investigation into a candidate's record of crime and/or child abuse, conducted prior to appointing the candidate to a designated position, for the purpose of assessing the reliability and fitness for the appointment (e.g., it would be unacceptable to appoint, as a volunteer, an individual who has a known history of child abuse).

- Background, reference and security checks may include, but not be limited to, requiring:
 - written applications from potential volunteers (asking questions about relevant background experiences, any criminal convictions they may have);
 - face-to-face interviews (discussing relevant background experiences);
 - provision of contact information of character references and notes from phone or in-person interviews with these references;
 - documentation supporting declared qualifications; and
 - criminal records checks (Police Information Checks).
- In most cases, individuals applying for staff positions involving working with students (e.g., a coach, after-school care staff) can expect to undergo full screening.
- A background or reference check may be more appropriate for minors (rather than a criminal records check) considering the information will not be disclosed to an organization.

- While a known history of convictions or pending cases involving child abuse (physical, emotional and/or sexual), trafficking drugs to minors or other serious crimes against the person are always grounds for refusing the services of a prospective employee or volunteer, presence of a criminal record involving other crimes is not necessarily a barrier to appointment. Consult Board policy.
- See the organization's forms and procedures to clarify which of the six types of checks noted above (e.g., written application, interviews, etc.) are relevant for the staff or volunteer position, who is responsible for securing each, and to whom completed forms or materials are to be submitted (e.g., submission to the organization office). The person screening the prospective candidate is responsible for protecting the information secured.
- Parents/guardians should be made aware of the parameters of the organization's program, including the limitations of screening processes used (e.g., only to help the organization select individuals to lead activities; only part of child protection strategy).
- It remains the parent(s)/guardian(s)' responsibility to notify the organization if anyone involved demonstrates an unusual interest in their child.

Child Protection

School boards have a zero tolerance policy with respect to any staff, volunteers, or students abusing children. Teachers, who see students many hours a week are uniquely positioned to observe warning signs that a child may be suffering abuse. The changes in routine an off-site activity offers, may yield additional insights.

Child abuse is defined in the province's *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. Child abuse may involve physical, emotional or sexual in nature or involve neglect of a minor (under 19 years of age).

- **Physical abuse** involves any physical force or action that results or could result in injury to the child. It is stronger than what would be considered reasonable discipline.
- **Emotional abuse** is a chronic pattern of destructive behaviour or verbal attacks by an adult on a child. It can include belittling, berating, isolating, terrorizing, rejecting, ignoring, exploiting or corrupting the child.
- **Sexual abuse** involves the use of a child for sexual gratification of an older child, adolescent or adult. It includes sexual touching and may also involve **non-contact forms** (e.g., flashing, seduction, showing the minor watching sexual acts).
- **Neglect** is the chronic inattention to the basic physical and emotional needs of a child such as nutrition, shelter, clothing, hygiene, supervision and medical care.

Requirement to Report Suspected Child Abuse

Any staff, volunteer, or member of a school who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a student may have been or is about to be abused or neglected **must** report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to the Ministry of Children and Family Development Childrens' Help line (phone 310-1234, local toll-free number anywhere in BC) or other appropriate government office, and the Principal. If physically violent action is observed or appears pending, call the police as well.

If a child discloses grounds for a teacher/leader to suspect child abuse:

- **stay calm;**
- **believe** the child;
- **listen** calmly and openly;
- **reassure but do not counsel the child** (reassure the child that he or she is doing the right thing and that it is not his or her fault, but do not promise that everything will be fine now);
- **be honest and transparent** about what you intend to do and that you are obligated to report the incident (even if the child requests that it be kept secret);
- **do not**, at any time, attempt to **investigate** or verify the child's statements (leave that to the authorities);
- **write down the child's statement** as soon as possible;
- **report** any suspected incident(s) of child abuse or neglect **to the authorities** (e.g., contact the Helpline for Children at 310-1234 (toll-free, local call anywhere in the province);
- **report to the Principal** and complete any required report as directed by that individual; and
- keep all information regarding the situation in **strict confidence**.

Responding to an Allegation

Board policies and procedures should be followed in response to an allegation of any criminal or abusive behavior/practices (physical, emotional or sexual), whether the allegations are made against a staff member or volunteer.

If an allegation is made, the staff or volunteer accused should:

- Contact the district head office immediately to inform them of the allegation;
- DO NOT respond to the allegation with anyone (including police, the insurer, the board, district or school administration, the alleged victim, and/or that person's family), orally or in writing, prior to obtaining legal counsel;
- Send a copy of third party correspondence, unanswered, to the insurer;
- Record immediately the circumstances of the alleged incident and continue to document everything relevant to the matter.
- See respectinschool.com

Supervision

The more effectively activities, equipment and environments are supervised and maintained, the safer they are.

- Any use of a facility (e.g., ropes course) or major equipment (e.g., kitchen stoves, downhill skis) should be supervised.
- Students should be made aware that unsupervised use of the facilities and equipment is prohibited. Deterrents should be in place (e.g., locks, signage).

See **Supervision of Higher Care Activities** in **Section 6: General Considerations for Higher Care Activities** for a tool for calculating appropriate supervision ratios and other relevant considerations for most adventure pursuit/aquatic activities. See **Section 7: Higher Care**

Activities for additional information relevant to specific activities.

Overnight Supervision

Overnight situations can include sleepovers at a school or community facility, a local attraction site (e.g., zoo, museum) or stays in another community as part of a travel excursion.

- Before hosting or taking students on an overnight, at least one teacher/leader should have had at least one overnight experience with a comparable group of students.
- Where students stay overnight in a hospitality accommodation (e.g., motel, hostel, bed and breakfast), gather information to help ensure that it is appropriate and preferably approved (e.g., Canadian Automobile Association or other reliable guide book, word of mouth, etc.).
- Pre-visit, review accommodation guides and/or contact the venue and ask questions prior to booking.
- Ensure that all members of the group are aware of the accommodation's layout, fire precautions/exits, regulations, routines and key staff. Conduct a fire drill if appropriate.
- Make provisions for students with special needs or those who fall sick.

Take care that students are appropriately supervised when overnighing.

- Supervisors should have sleeping accommodation on the same floor and adjacent to or as close to the students' accommodation as possible.
- Where motel/hotel/hostel reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in place to prevent unauthorized visits (e.g., doors locked, windows secure).
- Where possible, internal doors should be lockable, but staff must have reasonable access to the student accommodation at all times (e.g., master key at reception desk).
- Restrict access to pay per view movies or long distance telephone lines, if appropriate.
- Avoid booking rooms that have connecting doors.
- Segregate male and female sleeping and, preferably, bathroom facilities.
- A same-gender supervisor is required for single gender groups. At least one supervisor of each gender is required for mixed gender groups.
- No student should share one-to-one accommodation with an adult supervisor of either gender (e.g., teacher/leader, chaperone).
- Ensure supervisors understand that their supervisory role continues in the evening and through the night. While supervisors are not expected to stay up all night, they should know that they are "on call" from the start of the trip till the end and are expected to act appropriately (e.g., ensure the Lead Teacher knows where they are and can reach them).
- Clarify supervision responsibilities and schedules with any service provider who may be providing some supervision (e.g., overnight at a zoo, museum, science centre, etc.).

Billeting

Students, staff and volunteers may be billeted as part of a sports or performance related trip, an exchange trip or other travel-related excursion within or outside the province or country. Teachers/leaders should brief their students ahead of time, sharing as much information as they have about the logistics, behavioral expectations, etc. In addition, the Lead Teacher should:

- be familiar with the host organization and contact;
- make students aware and/or have host families notify students of the ground rules of the host organization and families and ensure the families are aware of the visiting organization rules and agree to support the student in abiding by these;
- make appropriate pairing arrangements, including informing host families of the age and gender of their guests and any special medical, dietary or other needs;
- share expectations with host families and accommodation, including at a minimum, child protection screening of hosts, single-sex bedrooms, and privacy in washing and toilet facilities;
- encourage students' parents/guardians to contact host parents/guardians prior to the trip to help ensure each child is adequately prepared (physically and psychologically) for the activities the host family and organization have planned;
- develop clear, commonly understood arrangements for collecting and distributing students to families and for all transportation over the visit;
- provide every parent, student and chaperone a written schedule of events, local emergency contact numbers and supervisor number;
- confirm that students living with host families have easy access to their teachers/leaders, usually by phone (e.g., the Lead Teacher should have a cellular phone or other appropriate communications device so they may be reached by a student, host family or the home or visiting school contacts at any time of day or night, and they should have a ready means of transportation so they could visit a student at a billeting home at any time of day or night);
- check in on the suitability of host families/sites through visiting the students at their billets and/or having a phone conversation. If a student sounds uncomfortable talking on the phone, the use of 'Yes'/'No' questions can allow the student to remain discreet while letting the leader know if there is a problem;
- while encouraging students to be flexible and try to adapt to their host family's living situation for the period of the exchange, assure students that their school will support them if they find particular expectations or behaviors disturbing and wish to change accommodation (reserve accommodations must be set up to handle a relocation); and
- notify parents/guardians that their children will be living with host families and will not always be under the teacher/leader's direct supervision.

Food Preparation and Cooking

If undertaking significant responsibility for providing food/meals to a group, secure and follow the relevant provincial health regulations for the preparation, cooking and storage of foods.

For infrequent, occasional food preparation and/or cooking (e.g., a potluck dinner, a hot dog roast), apply the following guidelines as relevant:

- Store perishable food appropriately.
- Require hand washing/cleaning prior to preparing food or cooking.
- Establish a safe and well-organized kitchen/cooking area. Consider the following:
 - Establish the cooking area in a safe location (e.g., minimize through traffic, and potential for cooks to trip, slip or otherwise be hindered).
 - If/as relevant, instruct cooks to manage hazards like loose clothing (e.g., roll up long sleeves) or long hair (e.g., tie back).
 - Set out and prepare cooking utensils and food as much as practicable before lighting stove to minimize last minute scrambling around a hot appliance.
- If students will be involved in food preparation/cooking, review relevant safety precautions (e.g., use of knives; use of stoves, microwaves or other cooking equipment).
- If cooking on-site, ensure foods are cooked appropriately (e.g., hamburgers, chicken fully cooked).
- If using a barbeque, follow manufacturer's directions and warnings for the unit.

For information regarding water treatment over longer trips in remote areas see [Water Treatment](#) in the [Adventure Leadership Resource](#)).

Cleaning Up

- Ensure food preparation and eating surfaces are properly cleaned up following use.
- Sterilize cooking/eating utensils daily to minimize potential for bacterial growth that can cause or contribute to intestinal illness. The following five-step process is recommended:
 1. sort, scrape, and pre-rinse if/as appropriate,
 2. wearing gloves, hot soapy wash (glasses and cutlery, then plates and serving dishes, and finally cooking equipment), changing water as needed,
 3. rinse in hot clean water, and then
 4. immerse for two minutes in hot clean water, or in warm water with at least 100 parts per million (ppm) of available chlorine (i.e., (15 ml (1 tbsp) bleach to 6 L (1.5 gal) or other acceptable chemical sanitizing agent, and
 5. Air dry if possible, or use clean towels and replace as they become wet.

Using Open Fires

- If open fires are to be used (e.g., wiener roast), precautions should include the following:
 - secure a fire permit, if one is required,
 - select a firesite that is safe from overhanging branches, the effects of wind or other hazards,

- if not contained in a firepit, keep the size of the fire manageable, the area around the fire clean, and a sufficient quantity of water, sand or soil handy to douse flames or contain the fire,
- keep flammable objects away from the fire to prevent sparks from damaging items (e.g., nylon clothing),
- NO HORSEPLAY rules must be shared and strictly enforced.
- Ensure students know what to do if their clothing catches fire (e.g., stop, drop and roll; smother flames with water or dirt), and extinguish fire before departing the site.

See **Camping in Section 6: Higher Care Activities** if using camp stoves or other camp appliances and/or for additional guidelines regarding campfires.

Behavioral Expectations Regarding Mind-altering Substances

Staff and Volunteers

- Teachers are professionals and few, if any, would contemplate compromising their ability to function at their best when they are responsible for supervising students.
- All permanent and contract staff should be aware that their eligibility for WorkSafe BC coverage might be negatively affected if they are injured at work (which extends to time spent on school-sponsored activities/events) while under the influence of alcohol or other mind-altering substances.
- If a student was injured while the responsible staff or volunteer was compromised in such a way, the board may claim that the individual was operating outside the scope of their employment/volunteer posting. In addition to losing his or her job/volunteer posting, the teacher/leader may be found personally liable for damages incurred by the injured student.
- In an emergency situation, all supervisors (staff and volunteers) may be needed to take responsibility for some or all of the students on short notice. If one or more supervisors are unavailable and cannot be reached, or if they have consumed alcohol or non-prescription drugs that affect their capacity to function, the group may lack sufficient teachers/leadership and supervisory resources to manage an emergency situation. Alcohol or recreational drug use is inconsistent with the high standards of conduct that the public expects of people assuming responsibility for supervising students in youth programs, whether professionals or volunteers.

Students

- On an off-site experience, where a serious infraction has been committed, specific consequences may include calling the parent/guardian of a student who will be held responsible for the costs associated with arranging immediate transport home of the student, including costs related to ensuring adequate ongoing supervision of the group and student involved.
- Students under the age of 19 may not legally consume or possess alcohol in a public place in BC. Therefore, schools and service providers must not permit minor students to consume alcohol.

- Parents/guardians and students should be notified that consumption of alcohol or other mind-altering substances increases the risk of injury to themselves and to others in the group and impairs one's ability to respond appropriately in an emergency situation, and is therefore not permitted.

Adult-Only and Family Activities

- Many, if not most, of the same considerations that are relevant to student programming have direct transference to adult-only and/or family programming (e.g., risk identification and management, providing instruction, emergency response planning). The approach to instruction may differ by context, the amount of responsibility given adult students may be more, etc., but novice adult students may or may not have much more experience to draw upon than novice adolescents.
- If participating in physically active and/or travel excursion programs, adult participants (students, volunteers) must provide relevant health and medical information and emergency contacts and/or carry this on their person should it be needed to facilitate care of that person in the event of an emergency.
- Adults (students or volunteers) participating in physically active and/or travel excursion programs should be required to acknowledge in writing, their awareness and acceptance of the inherent risks of the activity and environment.
- Some boards may permit limited consumption of alcohol (e.g., a glass of wine with dinner) at banquets or other events, as long as the individuals drinking are not responsible for supervising students during or in the hours following the alcohol consumption.

Equity and Inclusion of Students With Disabilities

Disability means the loss or limitation of opportunities to participate in the normal life of the school or community on an equal level with others due to physical or social barriers. Disability includes the following categories: physical impairments, sensory impairments, cognitive impairments, learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disabilities, and communication disabilities.

- As a general policy direction, **students with disabilities should have opportunities to learn in the company of their peers** while also being provided with appropriate supports to more effectively meet their needs. Wherever and whenever safe, appropriate and feasible, they should be included in school off-site activities, particularly where curricular connections are present.
- **Barriers to participation** in activities for students with disabilities may originate from **environmental** factors (physical access to the urban, rural or wilderness environment) or may exist solely in the **perceptions** of people (the student with a disability, parents/guardians, other students, staff and/or volunteers). Finally, identified potential issues involving insurance and/or legal concerns need to be reviewed and addressed.
- To plan effectively for a student with a disability, it is important to **learn about the particular disability** present and how it affects the individual, and what his or her abilities (e.g., mobility, fitness, skills), limitations (physical, cognitive and psychological), needs

(e.g., equipment, assistance) and interests are. This knowledge will facilitate appropriate preparation to support inclusion. The parent(s)/guardian(s) and student are a good start point for this information.

- Ensure the **parent/guardian** of the student with a disability is aware of the itinerary and activities and the modifications (environment, activity, group) that are planned to accommodate the child and that they provide **consent** on this informed basis.
- The teacher/leader and supporting **supervisors should be appropriately trained or briefed** regarding understandings and tasks they will likely be called upon to perform; e.g., use of wheelchairs, lifting techniques, etc. It is often ideal if the student's parent/guardian/attendant can attend the activity/event to help support the student.
- Allow for 'dignity of risk'; facilitating the person with a disability in learning and experiencing life.
- **Supervisory ratios** may need to be adjusted to provide sufficient assistance to a student with a disability and may include a need for specially trained assistants.
- **Instruction processes** may need to be modified such as appropriate goal setting, more/different progressions, and position of the student (e.g., a wheelchair, a walker, sitting on a chair, kneeling, etc.).
- Where a volunteer will be responsible for **assisting with toileting or other private functions** of a student with a disability, the individual should be of the same gender.
- Make behaviour expectations, rules and routines clear and enforce them, in an appropriate manner, for the student with a disability, considering the nature of the disability and its impact on emotional control, understanding of consequences, etc. Being given responsibilities and accountabilities (e.g., consequences) enhances self-esteem.
- Consider how to **group/buddy** the students so all can take an active role in learning how to support each other, regardless of their abilities and limitations. Encourage inclusive behavior and responsibility of whole group to ensure success of each student. Examples of other students helping may include them assisting the person with a disability by retrieving and/or putting on their gear, providing clarification of directions, offering encouragement, and serving as a role model.
- Don't assume all "wheelchair accessible" facilities actually are (e.g., there may be heavy doors, insufficient toilet transfer bars, etc.). Communicate with the student and encourage him or her to let the teacher/leader know when experiencing difficulty and ask for help).
- It may be appropriate to modify **equipment** (e.g., a racquet with a shortened handle, a bigger goal to shoot at, a sledge for ice activities, use of lifejackets vs. personal floatation devices (PFDs) as lifejackets will float the wearer face-up).
- **The physical venue** or area may need to be checked and/or modified if a student with a physical or sensory impairment will be present (e.g., stringing a rope around a picnic site so a blind student cannot wander too far away), or to ensure the student can get around/be gotten around and be removed quickly in the event of an emergency (e.g., wheelchair accessibility and safety).

- **Activities** must be appropriately planned to provide achievable yet enjoyable outcomes for the student with a disability and the rest of the students. Emphasize completion and enjoyment of tasks vs. speed.

Provide for the health, safety and comfort of the student with a disability. Some examples might include:

- Warm, wind-resistant clothing for a student who uses a wheelchair (the student can't generate their own heat the way students moving under their own power will);
- Identify or bring appropriate accommodations, sleeping systems and toileting equipment;
- Contingency plans and emergency procedures should be in place to handle foreseeable incidents related to the disability or affecting the student's ability to respond to emergencies of another origin; and/or
- Remain willing to say, 'No go' when an activity or environment is or becomes unsafe or inappropriate for the student with a disability.

Parent/Guardian Notification and Consent

Consent for Overnights or Travel out of the Municipality

This subsection supplements the generic list of information items parents/guardians should be given for all off-site programs/activities/events provided in Section 3. While expanding on some, this list does **not** repeat items noted in Section 3. It assumes all consent processes will include the Section 3 content. In addition, parents/guardians should be notified of, as relevant:

- program/activity/event (who, what, where, when);
- activities involved, particularly any of a higher care nature;
- supervision arrangements (e.g., number of supervisors or ratio, grouping, presence of unscreened supervisors/service providers, etc.);
- meal and accommodations arrangements (if overnight or longer);
- potential known risks of higher care environments and/or activities;
- existence of a safety plan (particulars of the plan for higher care activities);
- existence of an emergency plan in the event of injury, illness or other problem (particulars of the plan for higher care activities);
- any requirement for consents related to securing emergency medical services and agreement to assume any related costs of such services (e.g., international travel);
- student conduct expectations and consequences;
- contingency plan(s) (e.g., phone tree (fan out) to inform parents/guardians quickly – one person calls one or more people and then they each call one or more others);
- any requirements for health/medical or ability screening;
- any requirements for additional insurance;
- invitation to parent/guardian meeting, if one is to be held; and
- Lead Teacher name and number for more information.

See the *Forms File* for sample Off-site Activity(ies) Consent of Parent/Guardian and Acknowledgement of Risk forms for lower-risk (Form A) and higher care activities/environments (Form B)

Consent Process

- If the activity requires a pre-trip meeting with parents/guardians (e.g., three-day trip), share the logistics and a description of the safety and emergency plans.
- Consider alternatives for parents/guardians who cannot attend the meeting (e.g., video the meeting and post the information on the school website or You Tube and offer to answer questions after it has been watched).

Health and Medical Screening

The Lead Teacher needs to be aware of medical conditions (e.g., asthma, anaphylaxis, epilepsy) and physical limitations of the students they are to be responsible for prior to taking them off-site, particularly where overnighing and/or engaging in vigorous physical activity or higher care activities.

Screening

- Where a trip is of a higher care nature (e.g., involving adventure pursuits/aquatics, time in a semi-remote to remote environment, of overnight duration, out-of-province), a separate parent/guardian and acknowledgement of risk and consent form should be sent home (vs. seasonal local outings form). This helps ensure parents/guardians have an opportunity to consider the implications of any pre-existing or current health or medical issues in light of the activity and environmental context the student will be working in over the excursion.
- The form should include notification that the organization considers student health and well being a high priority, but cannot guarantee student safety or eliminate risk.
- Health and medical forms should be sent home with sufficient time for parents/guardians to ask questions (e.g., of the teacher/leader, of their child's doctor) and for alternative plans or processes to be implemented to accommodate students' needs.
- In both cases (general or trip-specific form) information collected should include:
 - conditions requiring regular medications (e.g., asthma, diabetes);
 - other physical or emotional disabilities or chronic conditions (e.g., poor eyesight, bad knees, severe allergies, phobias);
 - recent injury, illness or operation that may be complicated by physical activity, or may affect performance;
 - special health or dietary considerations;
 - activity restrictions; and
 - emergency contacts.
- Consider how to keep students' personal health and medical information secure unless and until needed (e.g., keep copies in a sealed envelope; fold each student's form and laminate or place in small glued ziplock baggie).
- If the group is to include off-site activities or excursions with a large number of students not familiar to all the teachers/leaders, it may be appropriate to request a photo of the student to be attached to the form.

See **Parental/Guardian Notification and Consent** in **Section 6: General Considerations for Higher Care Activities** for additional guidelines.

See **Health and Medical Screening** in **Section 8 Travel Excursions** for guidelines relevant to

travel.

Return to Activity After Injury

When presence of an injury is identified through the student screening process and/or where, during a program/activity a student has been sidelined by an injury, allow a return to physical activity only if there is **no**:

- visible swelling or deformity;
- persistent bleeding or infection;
- significantly reduced range of motion;
- pain when using the injured body part (e.g., ask, watch for grimacing on movement); and/or
- observable effect of a concussion or symptoms expressed by the student gone and written medical consent and individualized plan to gradually resume activity in place.

Medications

- Students who require medication administered while attending a school off-site activity may participate only after **communication with their parents/guardians**.
- A care plan should be in place within the scope of board policy to establish **who would administer the medication** (e.g., student, Lead Teacher, another staff person or volunteer present). The written plan should be brought on the outing.

In general, consideration should be given to:

- **Necessity:** If administration of a medication during an off-site activity can be avoided, this is desirable. The first dose of any new medication should be given at home to ensure it is well-tolerated prior to going to school and especially before going on a school off-site experience.
- **Care and Control:** Medication should be in the care and control of a responsible adult who has been informed/trained regarding its use. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate for a medication to be in the student's possession (e.g., asthma inhaler, Epi-pen).
- **Documentation:** If a teacher/leader is to administer the medication, that person will be responsible for recording such over the activity period. That individual will also remain in possession of the form signed by the parent/guardian that authorized the administration of the medication and which includes information about the dosage, required time of administration, potential side effects and emergency response to these. Note the date and time(s) the meds were actually administered.
- **Emergency Communication:** There should be reasonable and appropriate access to reliable external communications (i.e., a telephone, cellular phone, satellite phone or radio communication) over an activity involving one or more students on medications where complications related to these medications or the related health/medical condition may necessitate emergency medical services back-up.
- **Emergency Medical Response:** Sources of emergency assistance and time to medical support must be identified and parent/guardian, Lead Teacher (and physician, if appropriate) consent provided with this information in mind.

Where schools allow administration of students' vital medications during activities/events:

- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring the student has an **appropriate amount of current dated medicine** (i.e., not expired or due to expire over the trip with a need for renewal).
- Medication (including herbal remedies) should be in the **original container, and clearly marked** (patient name, date, prescription, dosage).
- Ensure **appropriate storage** for medications (e.g., leak proof container, temperature range maintained).
- Students should bring an **extra supply on extended off-site excursions**;
- The individual who is to administer the medication (whether student, staff or volunteer) and/or supervise its administration must know how to do so correctly (e.g., **dosage, application times, method**) and know what, if any, **side effects** need to be watched for and what to do in the event a **negative reaction** occurs. The parent/guardian is responsible for training this individual.
- It is generally **preferable for the student to administer his/her own medication**, in the presence of a designated and informed supervisor. The student may be asked to explain what he or she is taking and how so the teacher/leader can check for consistent frame of reference.
- Be aware if the medication is for therapeutic vs. emergency use. Some inhalers may be therapeutic and some may be emergency. Epi-pens are for emergency use only.
- First aiders can administer asthmatic medications and epi-pens or auto-injectors.
- Carry copies of each student's and teacher/leader's **health care number** (adults or adolescent students may opt to carry their own health care card), relevant medical conditions identified to the organization, and emergency contact names and numbers.
- **Medication is the property of the student's family.** Where medication that is normally administered at home has been provided for a school activity, it must be sent home with the parent/guardian (or student, if appropriate) at the end of the excursion.
- All supervisors provided written or oral information about any student's health or medical conditions or medications should be made aware that this information is provided for the sole purpose of supporting the health and safety of the student over the activity. With the exception of those with a recognized need to know, strict **confidentiality of personal health/medical information** before, during and following the program/activity/event is required. Any such volunteer may expect to be asked to sign a Pledge of Confidentiality.

Asthma

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the lungs characterized by episodes of difficulty breathing. It affects about ten to 15 percent of all school-aged children, so most teachers/leaders in schools can expect to see one or more students with the condition over time. During an asthma attack, the **airways react by narrowing**, making it more difficult for air to flow in and out of the lungs. While the symptoms are reversible, this depends upon prompt, appropriate treatment.

Triggers of an asthma attack are somewhat unique to the individual and can include a host of things; e.g., dust mites, molds, pollen, viral illness, colds, flu, cold air, exercise, carpets, scented markers/ stickers, pets, tobacco smoke).

Signs that someone is suffering an asthma attack include signs of shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chest tightness, coughing, wheezing, appearing withdrawn or agitated.

Serious warning signs include:

- Failure of available medication to relieve symptoms,
- Noticeably laboured breathing or breathless while at rest,
- A sudden worsening of shortness of breath or wheezing after using medication,
- Visible pulling of muscles at the base of the neck pulling in with each breath,
- A resting pulse of more than 120 beats per minute, and/or
- Bluish colour around mouth, nail beds or ear lobes.

Treatment by a doctor includes medications, dietary control and environmental control.

Dealing With the Participant With Asthma

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) of an asthmatic child are responsible to notify the school and Lead Teacher of an off-site activity of this condition.
- Upon learning a student has the condition, the Lead Teacher (or designate) must discuss the condition with the parent(s)/guardian(s), if and as relevant:
 - triggers affecting the particular student,
 - appropriate levels of physical activity for the student,
 - where the student will keep his or her medications (e.g., in a waist pack worn at all times), and
 - what to do if the medications do not appear to be working (engage Emergency Response Plan).
- In planning activities where one or more students with asthma will be participating, consider the following:
 - support active participation, within the student's limits,
 - long endurance activities may be more difficult than shorter intervals (bursts of activity),
 - inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any activities planned that involve food or animals,
 - endeavor to minimize exclusion of the student with asthma; modify or plan alternative activities as appropriate.

Allergies

Allergies can cause a systemic reaction that creates a life-threatening emergency by constricting the airway of the person affected. Typically, the student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) are aware of the allergy, but teachers/leaders of students with allergies need to be able to act quickly and decisively in the event of a related emergency.

- Parents/guardians and/or students are responsible for notifying the Lead Teacher (e.g., on Health and Medical form) of any allergies the student has.
- The Lead Teacher should follow-up, as necessary to ensure the following information has been collected on students known to have allergies:
 - the known **source(s)** of the allergy(ies) (e.g., insect bites or stings, food such as peanuts, tree nuts, seafood, milk products, soy products);
 - the known potential **severity** of the student’s reaction to the allergen;
 - any specific **dietary restrictions**;
 - **signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction** (e.g., laboured breathing/respiratory distress; rapid heart rate; low blood pressure; itching, redness or hives on the skin; swelling of mouth, face or neck; metallic taste in the mouth; sense of impending doom); and
 - **emergency procedures** if the student inadvertently comes in contact with and reacts to the allergen (treatment of anaphylaxis (i.e., injection of epinephrine to reverse systemic reaction; Benadryl (antihistamine to prevent continued allergic reaction) if awake and alert; CPR if necessary; comfort and monitor, evacuate to medical aid),
- The Lead Teacher is responsible for ensuring appropriate steps are taken to **minimize** potential for a student with a known allergy to come **in contact with the allergen(s)** of concern (e.g., establishing a Nut Free Zone program, informing all the parents/guardians and students of the presence of people with allergies).
- Consider potential for food allergy reactions due to cross-contamination from:
 - the student with a food allergy inadvertently consuming something containing the allergen,
 - someone else present consuming food containing the allergen, or
 - the student touching something (e.g., a table, a chair back, a door handle) that an earlier user touched after handling a food with the allergen.
- Teachers/leaders are not expected to spend time sterilizing furniture, doors and bathrooms before every activity. But, if a room or area they intend to use is found in a dirty state with a lot of food garbage/residues left around, they should relocate the activity or have the area cleaned up before bringing a student with known food allergy(ies) there.
- If/as appropriate, and with permission from the parents/guardians, discuss the situation with the group. If appropriate to the context (e.g., roommates on an overnight) provide appropriate training to the group/subgroups so they may assist the student in need in the event of a severe reaction.

Diabetes

Juvenile Diabetes

Juvenile, or Type 1 Diabetes, is a disease usually found in children whose pancreas does not produce enough insulin. Insulin is a hormone that processes sugar (glucose) to produce energy for the body. High blood sugar results when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin to use it up. A person with Type 1 Diabetes must test blood glucose levels daily and take insulin injections to maintain normal levels of blood glucose.

Children/youth with diabetes should be involved with school activities without drawing special attention. In order for a student with Type 1 Diabetes to travel, he or she must be able to manage blood glucose levels, or have someone present who can help. Adults responsible for a diabetic student must be able to provide informed support to administer corrective measures as necessary. Failure to act immediately could lead to life-threatening insulin shock, coma, or complications including blindness, nerve damage, amputation, gum disease, kidney failure, heart disease, and stroke.

Controlling Diabetes

Maintaining a balance of food, exercise, and insulin while monitoring and regulating consistent blood sugar levels can control diabetes. Simply put: food makes blood glucose levels rise, exercise and insulin make glucose levels fall. Testing involves putting a drop of blood on a chemically sensitive strip, and taking a blood sugar reading on a meter. When blood sugar gets too low, it is called hypoglycemia; if it gets too high, it is called hyperglycemia.

Hypoglycemia

Low blood sugar, also known as an insulin reaction or insulin shock, may be caused by eating too little, not eating soon enough, physical activity without eating, or from administering too much insulin.

Symptoms may include: headache, extreme/sudden hunger, fatigue/drowsiness, loss of coordination, weakness/dizziness, sweating, cold/clammy skin, rapid pulse rate, pale/moist skin, shakiness, blurred/double vision, shallow breathing, confusion/inattention, and/or seizures.

Treatment of Hypoglycemia

- **Sugar** – If the child can swallow, provide a fast-acting form of sugar such as glucose tablets, non-diet soda, juice, or sugar water. Treat again if the child does not improve in 10 minutes;
- **Carbohydrates** – Feed the child some type of complex carbohydrate: e.g., milk or half of a sandwich, once the reaction subsides. If a child cannot eat or drink, rub a high sugar content substance on the inside of the cheek (e.g., glucose gel, icing sugar, honey, jam, syrup);
- **Glucagon** – is a prescription drug injected to raise blood glucose levels if a child is unconscious or having a seizure. Only a person trained should administer glucagon. Position the child on his or her side in case of vomiting. A second dose may be

administered if the child does not respond quickly. A complex carbohydrate should be eaten right away once the child is conscious. Notify parent/guardian and doctor.

Hyperglycemia

Hyperglycemia, elevated blood sugar levels, can result from eating too much or too many simple carbohydrates, not enough physical activity, illness, overheating or dehydration, too little insulin, illness, or infection.

Signs and symptoms include: extreme thirst, drowsiness, lethargy, increased appetite, frequent urination, sugar in urine, heavy/labored breathing, fruity odor on breath, sudden weight loss, sudden vision changes, stupor, unconsciousness.

Treatment of Hyperglycemia

High blood sugars can be confirmed by testing with a glucose meter. If hyperglycemic:

- take insulin;
- check blood glucose for ketones;
- test blood sugar to ensure levels are declining;
- limit physical activity and avoid overheating;
- drink plenty of water or sugar-free fluids;
- avoid eating carbohydrates and fats; and
- notify the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Ketoacidosis

When the body is unable to process glucose, it uses stored fat for energy causing acid to build up in the blood. Ketones are excreted in the urine, and the child could lapse into a coma.

Signs and symptoms include: extreme thirst, fatigue/drowsiness, vomiting, weakness/dizziness, abdominal pain, heavy/ labored breathing, fruity odor on breath.

Treatment of Ketoacidosis

- some children have an insulin pump that mimics the pancreas, delivering a continuous rate of insulin through a needle inserted under the skin of the abdomen;
- on longer trips, be aware of storage requirements for insulin;
- if an insulin pump is not available, if uncertain what to do, or if unable to stabilize the child, call the child's doctor or take the child to an emergency room.

Diabetic Coma

Unconsciousness can result from severe hypoglycemia or some combination of severe hyperglycemia, dehydration and shock, and exhaustion. Diabetic coma is a medical emergency. Seek medical attention immediately.

Activity and Travel and Children with Diabetes

- Arrange a meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the student's needs and prepare a plan.
- Children with diabetes should eat a diet high in fiber, low in sugar, fat, and salt including breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables, beans, low-fat dairy foods, and lean meats – in other words, a healthy diet for all. Plan trip menu accordingly.
- A student with diabetes should carry convenient snacks, whether on-site or off-site.
- All supervisors, including drivers, should be notified that the student has diabetes and needs to be allowed to snack.
- The student should have an extra snack before planned exercise and before bed.
- For those participating in higher intensity activities (e.g., competitive sport, endurance events), test blood sugar levels before and after exercise and sometimes during the event or competition;
- Monitor the student's behavior.
- Meals or snacks need to be eaten on schedule.
- Keep a handy source of sugar available.

Concussions

A concussion is a generic term for a brain injury caused by a force impacting the head, face, neck or body (e.g., from a fall, collision with another person or a fixed object) and causing the brain to be jarred or move rapidly within the skull. The vital functions of the brain combined with the relative inability of brain tissue to repair itself, often results in long-term rehabilitation and sometimes in permanent physical, cognitive and/or emotional disability.

Any blow that could have caused a concussion must be taken very seriously. Signs (things that others observe) and symptoms (things the concussed person experiences) may vary among people and may appear immediately or may take hours or even days to appear. Signs and symptoms may not be as obvious with younger students as older, more mature ones. Signs and symptoms may include the following:

Physical signs: stopping or slowing down movement, poor coordination/balance, slurred speech, slowed reaction time, vomiting, dazed expression/blank stare, slow getting up, holding of head, amnesia, seizure/convulsion, loss of consciousness.

Physical symptoms: headache, pain, sense of pressure in head, feeling off or not right, ringing in the ears, blurry vision/double vision/loss of vision, seeing 'stars' or flashing lights, sensitivity to light, pain in neck or site of injury, dizziness or loss of balance, nausea/stomach ache, fatigue.

Cognitive signs: confusion, loss of memory of time around incident, slow to find words, can't name the day/date/time/place/person talking to him or her, problems concentrating, distractibility.

Cognitive symptoms: feeling dazed and confused, problems remembering things, can't concentrate.

Emotional/Behavioural signs: rapid mood swings evident, showing inappropriate behaviour for situation.

Emotional/Behavioural symptoms: moody, irritable, not in control of emotions, depressed, anxious.

Where an activity is known to result in more than an extremely rare incidence of concussions, parents/guardians and students should be informed and educated about this risk, causes, prevention, signs and symptoms, and what to do if noting these. Contact sports like football, hockey and rugby are examples where such training should definitely be provided.

If an incident occurs that suggests a concussion could have been suffered, stop the activity. Don't move the student until assessing for a possible concussion. If any signs or symptoms of a concussion (as above), initiate Emergency Action Plan. Don't move the individual more than necessary. Leave helmet or other clothing or protective equipment on unless there are airway/breathing problems.

The student must be examined by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner as soon as possible for a clinical diagnosis to determine whether a concussion was suffered. The results of the assessment must be shared with the principal. If a concussion was experienced, there must be a medically supervised, individualized, gradual plan for the student to return to school and to physical activity. The doctor or nurse practitioner, principal, teachers/leaders who work with the student, the student's parents/guardians and the student need to work on the recovery plan and its implementation together. Everyone needs to be patient as the process can take a long time. Great care must be taken to ensure complete healing before undertaking full activity levels.

This information is not intended to take the place of medical advice. For guidance, consult a health care professional.

Disaster Planning

Disasters are rare, but they can strike anywhere, indoors and out, by natural weather hazards (e.g., snowstorm, ice storm, tornado), fire, wind, rain, power failure, and intentional and unintentional events caused by people. Each has special considerations in how to manage, however most have similarities to be addressed. Response time can be critical and preparation for emergency can certainly contribute to a more positive outcome. Find out:

- What types of disasters are foreseeable in the area and how to prepare for each;
- Any community warning signals and what to do when they are sounded; and
- How to aid those in the area.

Creating a Disaster Plan

- Being aware and prepared with a simple plan will help the group work as a team;
- Warn students, without excessively alarming them (e.g., a disaster happens when nature give us too much of a good thing (such a rain, wind or fire), and people get hurt or damage occur);
- Explain the particular hazard and outline the response plan;

- Have a plan in place in case the group gets separated;
- Choose a place to meet;
- Choose someone in another area who can serve as a contact (e.g., Home Contact Person (HCP), Principal or designate);
- Have emergency phone numbers for group members;
- Be familiar with the school's disaster policy and plan;
- Have a plan in place for what to do if evacuation is required; and
- Familiarize students with escape routes, how to call for help and to call their family contact if separated from the group.

Fire

- Fires can occur just about anywhere: inside facilities, transportation and in the outdoor environment;
- Avoid leaving young students alone;
- Smoke alarms should be installed in all permanent sleep areas;
- Keep fire extinguishers near kitchen, fireplaces and furnace;
- Plan escape routes from facilities; and
- Instruct youth to treat fire with respect, as a tool, not a toy.

In Case of Fire

- Get everyone outside to a planned muster point.
- If in a building, do not stop to dress or put out the fire; most deaths occur from suffocation.
- Call the fire department or if in a remote area, gather group and evacuate together.
- If smoke is a problem, cover the mouth and nose with a wet cloth and stay low.

Evacuation

- Use the best route for evacuation.
- Wear/take protective clothing and good footwear;
- Listen for instructions on whatever communication device you have available;
- If in a building shut off services to it (e.g., water, gas and electricity) if directed to do so. A professional will be required to turn the gas back on;
- Contact the principal or designated emergency contact as soon as possible to inform of incident and whereabouts;
- Take emergency supplies if relevant and available; and
- Take students' health and medical forms and emergency contact numbers.

Crisis Management Plan

While intentional harm crisis incidents are very rare, each district should develop a crisis management plan to implement in the event of a serious incident (e.g., abduction of a student, weapons incident). This plan helps clarify protocols (which likely substantially overlaps with the school's Emergency Response Plan). The Crisis Management Plan should include, but not be limited to:

- clarifying lines of communication,
- identifying roles and responsibilities,
- identifying the media and public spokesperson and key messages (respecting student confidentiality), and
- other important steps to help manage the situation and minimize stress to all involved.

For more detailed information regarding [Emergency Procedures](#) and/or [Media Relations](#) see the [Adventure Leadership Resource](#).

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues are situations where, outside of and/or in addition to any legal considerations, a problem must be resolved that involves acting with respect, responsibility, integrity and honour. To resolve an ethical issue or dilemma:

- **gather facts** (who is involved, what happened, when, where, why (what rationale is given for what occurred) and how did what happened impact different people involved). Focus on facts (first-hand accounts, evidence) versus hearsay;
- **determine the nature of the ethical questions involved**; e.g.:
 - was it something someone did (outcome) or how they did it (means)?
 - were policies, procedures, rules or regulations broken, and if so, why (intentional or unintentional; problem with the policy/rule itself and/or misinterpretation of it)?
 - does the organization have a Code of Ethics that can be applied to the situation?
- **consider the most appropriate way to respond** (fair, equitable and empowering to all, respectful of confidentiality rights); and then
- **act** (e.g., choose to park it till emotions cool, resolve it an informal way, involve others in its resolution, establish a formal process to address it).
- **document** (write it down, keep notes).

Sexual Relationships

- It is essential that teachers/leaders are aware of the imbalance of power in an adult-student relationship and that they respect a **zero tolerance** policy with regard to anyone involved in the board, at any level, engaging in sexual intimacy with minors.
- Teachers/leaders must abstain from and refuse to tolerate in others any and all forms of harassment, including that of a sexual nature. This includes:
 - The coercive or charismatic use of power or authority to get another person to engage in or tolerate sexual activity (e.g., implicit or explicit promises or rewards for compliance, or threats of punishment/reprisals for non-compliance); and/or

- Engaging in intentional unsolicited sexually oriented comments, jokes (in person or on-line), gestures or physical contact that is offensive and unwelcome, that can be reasonably expected to harm the recipients or others, and/or that would lead to an inequitable or intimidating environment.

Post Program Procedures

Following the completion of a program/activity/event, the Lead Teacher should, if and as appropriate:

- debrief as a leadership team and/or with the students.
- ensure all school-owned equipment is checked over, repaired if broken, cleaned and/or dried as appropriate, and stored;
- restock the first aid kit if used (or notify re: what was used);
- submit any incident and/or near miss reports or forms, receipts, etc.; and
- write a brief summary report, including evaluating and recommendations for the next program.

Documentation

There is **no** expectation that every school staff or volunteer will spend every waking hour documenting everything they do, how they do it and evaluating the success of their actions and activities. This is an unreasonable expectation that will likely lead only to a severe decline in peoples' willingness to engage in these roles. However, in the normal course of planning and providing activities and adhering to board policies and basic risk management procedures, numerous pieces of documentation (on-line files or hard copy) will inevitably result and/or be available should they be needed following and incident or near-miss.

Good documentation can help teachers/leaders, schools and others learn from and prevent recurrence of incidents. It may also provide valuable evidence of appropriate practice in the event of an incident leading to a legal action and/or public inquiry. In the event of an incident that could lead to such an action, all staff and volunteers involved should take the time immediately to preserve and/or secure whatever documents are relevant and available, and to make notes on whatever else they can remember, but cannot secure support documentation for. By the time a case or inquiry gets to court or to settlement discussions (often several years), many potentially important details will be lost or rendered unsubstantiated without sufficient supporting documentation.

Some of the types of documents that should be retained in the event of an accident/incident that could reasonably lead to further investigation, includes, but is not limited to:

- any documentation related to the relevant training, qualifications and/or certifications of the staff and volunteers involved (e.g., professional development log, course or workshop notes, first aid/CPR certification cards or certificates);
- personnel policies, procedures and/or forms;
- agenda, notes or other documentation related to orientation and/or training of volunteers;

- program/activity outlines, instructional notes, audio visual materials and handouts (print or electronic based) used to prepare students for the activity;
- program/activity/event proposal submitted to the principal or office;
- information, notes from interviews with site/area officials and/or others who have used the venue;
- equipment logbooks (if using organization owned equipment);
- any contracts, agreements or notes from conversations with any service provider(s);
- list of supervisors (staff and volunteers);
- parent/guardian information packages provided;
- parent/guardian acknowledgement of risk and consent forms;
- student health/medical forms in effect;
- administration of medications forms;
- student insurance policy numbers, coverage and dates;
- list of students;
- any self, peer or incident assessments that have been done on the program or similar programs/ activities the school provides;
- incident report form;
- witness statements;
- post-activity summary evaluation, debriefing form or notes;
- assessment sheets if any related assignments or exams;
- program/activity/event evaluations completed by students or parents/guardians;
- safety/risk management review forms, committee notes, etc.;
- past accident/incident reports, statistical summaries, etc.; and
- any other information available that appears to be relevant.

Off-site Documentation

This subsection builds on the *Documentation* guidelines presented in Section 3 and in the subsection directly above; it does not repeat this content so the lists must be combined if/as relevant. Some of the **additional types of documents** that may be filed in the event of an off-site accident/incident that could lead to further investigation, if/as relevant to the particular off-site context (e.g., higher care activities or environments, out-of-province travel), may include but not be limited to:

- off-site experience/travel approval forms and organization reviews of proposals;
- detailed trip plan;
- passenger list(s);
- travel agent contracts, agreements or notes from conversations;
- itinerary/route card;
- maps/guidebooks/web pages used;
- location use permits, licenses;
- vehicle inspection(s);
- gear list;

- menu plan;
- trip application forms completed by students;
- insurance (accident, liability, travel, rental vehicle);
- agenda, notes, audio-visual materials used in parent/guardian pre-trip meeting;
- volunteer screening documents (e.g., application, reference checks, interview notes, criminal records checks);
- volunteer consent and acknowledgement of risk forms;
- staff and volunteer health/medical forms;
- volunteer driver authorization forms;
- trip log or journal (leader's and/or group's);
- any weather logs, snow profiles, road reports and/or other environmental records;
- any documented observations about students kept over the trip;
- witness statements;
- post-trip summary evaluation or notes;
- any documents relevant to international travel (See [Documentation in Section 8: International Travel](#)); and
- any other information that appears to be relevant.

Modifying plans after a session or trip for future offerings is expected as part of ongoing course evolution and is not an admission of legal liability. If questions arise, consult with the principal or designate.

See [Additional Resources and References](#).