

# Section 1. Introduction

## *Intent and Purposes of the Guidelines*

A diverse education, including exposure to a wide variety of activities and settings, is one of the greatest gifts schools can offer their students. To support the development of students as self-directed and self-regulated active learners, schools must and will continue to introduce them to activities and situations that involve measured risk.

When students travel off-site or participate in activities such as outdoor pursuits and aquatics, there is risk of injury or incident. Schools must provide for students' safety to the best of their ability. The general intent of the *Safety First! Guidelines for BC School Off-site Experiences* document is to support schools in developing or supporting related policies, procedures and practices.

The document shares current, accepted common practices in BC schools identified through:

- Analysis of relevant policies, procedures and standard of care documents;
- Surveys of and interviews with people in district offices and schools;
- Review of relevant legal statutes, case law and public inquiry reports;
- National and provincial injury incident analyses;
- Risk management, social science, education and recreation literature; and
- Reviews and inputs of over 600 educators and activity specialists.

In every case herein, an effort has been made to identify procedures and practices that meet five key criteria:

**Safe** – avoiding catastrophic loss and managing other risks at an acceptable level;

**Reasonable** – proportional to the risks present; balancing benefits with risk exposure;

**Attainable** – with the human, financial and equipment resources available to end-users;

**Ethical** – supporting informed decision making and appropriate contracting;

**Sustainable** – maintaining accessibility of activities and availability of local teachers/leadership.

Content must be considered within the school authorities' overall context of policies and procedures. The document is not intended to serve as a final set of rules, and is most useful if it remains a flexible working version. **The document is not a substitute for remaining aware and prepared and using good judgement.**