

CANOEING SKILLS FOR TRIP LEADERS, SUPERVISORS AND PARTICIPANTS

1. Canoe trip participants and supervisors must follow:
 - 1.1 OPHEA Curricular Supports
 - 1.2 Ontario Safety Guidelines
 - 1.3 Instructor must have one of Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association (ORCKA) Certification or Paddle Canada.
 - 1.3.1 for taking students canoeing ORCKA Basic Instructor or Paddle Canada is mandatory; and
 - 1.3.2 for taking students on an extended canoe trip ORCKA Tripping Level 3 Trip Leader is mandatory.
2. At least one trip guide, supervisor, teacher, volunteer, or instruction must have current certifications in one of Bronze Cross or Wilderness Water Safety to fill the role of Water Safety Supervisor.
3. Canoeing and canoe tripping is a high-risk activity, and thus superintendent or designate approval is mandatory.

<https://safety.ophea.net/elementary/curricular/outdoor-education-canoeing>
<https://safety.ophea.net/secondary/curricular/outdoor-education-canoeing>
4. Canoe trips are for students in Grades 7-12.

Outdoor Education (Canoeing)
Elementary Grades 4-8 and Secondary Grades 9-12

Canoe training and single day canoe field trips which travel within two hours from the arrival of emergency medical assistance and take place in a swimming pool or local bodies of water where there is no evidence of rapids, irregular waves, large waves or strainers, strong eddies, or powerful currents (source: International Scale of River Difficulty).

Swim Test

Prior to the activity, students must successfully complete the following swim test with or without a PDF:

- rolling entry into deep water;
- tread water for one minute; and
- swim 50 m continuously.

The test must be:

- administered by a certified aquatic instructor or lifeguard; and
- completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.

In lieu of the completing the swim test, students may provide proof of Bronze Star certification or higher.

Results of the swim test must be documented and communicated to the principal of the school.

Supervision

- 1 supervisor per 12 students in tandem boats.
- 1 supervisor per 8 students in solo boats.
- 1 instructor per 25 students. This individual possesses the required ORCKA or Paddle Canada certifications for canoeing. This role could be filled by a teacher, parent/guardian/volunteer / outside provider.
- 1 water safety supervisor per 25 students. This individual has the certification to supervise any swimming and wading activities which occur on the field trip.

Environmental Considerations

- Students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to environmental conditions and be made aware of ways to protect themselves (for example, sun burn, heat stroke).
- Trip guide, instructor and supervisors must:
 - be aware of and respond to changing weather and water conditions prior to and during canoe training and the trip; and
 - cancel, postpone, or alter the excursion if conditions put students' safety at an elevated level of risk (for example, wind, temperature, lightning storms, fog).
- If hazardous weather suddenly approaches, leave the water immediately.

Equipment

- Correctly fitting Canadian approved PFD with whistle attached must be worn by all participants and properly secured at all times near the water, on a dock, on the water.
- Parents/guardians must be informed that all students will wear a correctly fitting and Canadian-approved PFD/lifejacket, with whistle attached, when near, in or on the water.
- One paddle per person and two paddles per canoe.
- Check paddles and canoes for cracks and splinters and leaks.
- One safety craft which can be the craft that the instructor/guide is operating and must be in the water and accessible while students are canoeing.

Special Rules and Instruction

- Be aware of students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion, orthopedic device) may affect participation. Consult OPHEA [Medical Conditions](#) and LDSB policy.
- Refer to school board policies and procedures (i.e., transportation, excursion/field trip) for communication with parents/guardians, the location of an off-site activity, means of transportation, supervision ratios, and parent/guardian permission.

Planning

- The trip supervisor will submit the proposal plan at least two months in advance of the planned trip.
- All trips must have a clearly stated, reasonable, and attainable educational objective.
- Appropriate records must be maintained.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of trip details, location, activities, itinerary, and emergency contacts.
- Participants will have completed and returned necessary consent forms.
- Careful consideration has been given to strategies and safe practices. The supervisor has identified the risks of the activity and the strategies to mitigate those risks prior to and during the activity.
- Supervisors assuming responsibility must have or be assisted by a person who has qualifications as stated in the most recent/current Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE). When planning for learning in the outdoors, staff must meet the requirements of all Ministry policies.
- When an outside activity provider is used, the provider will adhere to the school board protocols.
- The supervisor(s) have access to all equipment needed to participate in the activity including PFDs. A first aid kit and an accessible communication device are readily available and an individual who takes responsibility for first aid is identified.