

PURPOSE

The *OUT-of-Class Safety Handbook* has been developed to

- promote safe participation for OUT*-of-class physical activity** in Grades 9 to 12 Physical Education/Health Education (PE/HE)
- assist schools/divisions in developing local policy regarding risk management for PE/HE OUT-of-class physical activity
- provide schools/divisions with a listing of possible physical activities, including general and activity-specific safety information, to help guide students and parents† in choosing physical activities and managing risk for chosen OUT-of-class physical activities
- provide schools/divisions with sample sign-off forms for the OUT-of-class component of Grades 9 to 12 PE/HE courses

* OUT refers to OUT-of-class time that is student-directed and based on learning outcomes from the curriculum that promote participation in physical activity. For more detail about the term "OUT-of-class" and other key terms used in this document, please refer to the Glossary of Terms in Appendix F.

** In this document the term "physical activity" refers to all forms of large-muscle movement, including sports, dance, games, walking, and exercise for fitness and physical well-being. It may also include physical therapy or mobility training for students with special needs.

† In this document the term "parents" refers to both parents and guardians and is used with the recognition that in some cases only one parent may be involved in a child's education.

INTRODUCTION

This safety handbook has been designed to support the development of local risk management policies for Grades 9 to 12 PE/HE OUT-of-class physical activities. With this document, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is proposing a risk management approach that is consistent with departmental policy for implementing these courses, suggesting that for non-school-based* OUT-of-class activities that are not being directly organized by the school/division, parents (or students 18 years and older) are responsible for ensuring, to the extent reasonably possible, that their children receive the appropriate level of instruction and/or supervision while participating in these activities and that the facilities and equipment they use are safe. This approach also assumes that parents and students will receive safety information and risk management strategies for students' chosen activities.

However, school boards may still decide to adopt risk management policies that differ from the proposed approach. For example, a local policy may require the school/division to investigate, to some degree, community-based programs to ensure that students receive the appropriate level of instruction and/or supervision and that the facilities and equipment they use are safe.

In the case of school-based** OUT-of-class activities, the school board would continue to assume responsibility for managing risk.

While all physical activities have an inherent level of risk and there is no way to completely avoid it, this risk can be minimized through safety awareness and risk management. As part of the PE/HE OUT-of-class component, students are provided the opportunity to take greater ownership of their physical fitness and to choose physical activities suited to their own interests. The choice of activities is subject to acceptance by the school and then approval by the parent when the student is under 18 years of age. Therefore, students are participating at their own risk, responsible for their own safety, or sharing this responsibility, when applicable, with their parents (students under 18 years of age) and/or the leaders of their chosen physical activity program.

Risk management is the process of identifying inherent or potential risks involved with any activity and then identifying strategies to minimize the risk of injury during participation in the activity, whether it is school-based or non-school-based. Managing the risk and safety of school-based activities selected for OUT-of-class programming continues to fall primarily under the jurisdiction of the school board and its employees.

* Non-school-based activities are home-, community- or independently based activities that are not directly organized by the school or school division, such as community sports, classes and clubs, and exercising at home. Students may at times be involved in these activities during regular school hours.

** School-based activities that may be selected for the OUT-of-class component of PE/HE are organized by the school/division. These activities include those related to sports teams, intramurals, clubs, field trips, as well as others.

For OUT-of-class, school-based activities, as for IN-class delivery of the program, schools continue to follow local policies and procedures. They may also continue to use *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Manitoba Schools* and *YouthSafe Manitoba: School Field Trip Resource* when further developing or revising local policy and procedures, as well as when obtaining information related to equipment, facilities, supervision, teaching progressions, and risk management. Alternatively, for non-school-based activities, safety and risk are managed independently from the school by students, parents, community members, and/or community organizations. The school and its staff are still responsible for informing students and parents of the risks involved and the ways in which physical activity can be made safer, but they are not providing direct supervision. Informing students and parents of the recommended safety practices for participating in their chosen physical activities (and being able to demonstrate that they have received this information) will help to ensure minimal risk for students.

Students, parents, the school, and the community are all involved in managing risk during the OUT-of-class component of PE/HE programming. As a result, students not only learn how to engage in healthy physical activities, but they also learn how to engage in them safely.

Background

As part of the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force Report* (June 2005), the following recommendations were accepted by the Government of Manitoba:

- To not just recommend but mandate the amount of time that Grade 9 and Grade 10 students spend in PE/HE classes. Schools can choose to meet the mandated times within the timetable or use an OUT-of-classroom model for up to 20 hours of the mandated 110 hours. This should be implemented before the fall of 2007.
- To develop a PE/HE curriculum for Grade 11 and Grade 12 students. This should be implemented before the fall of 2008.
- To require all Grade 11 and Grade 12 students to complete two PE/HE credits for graduation in addition to the two credits required in Grade 9 and Grade 10. Schools may choose to include the PE/HE credits in the timetable or use an OUT-of-classroom model.

Furthermore, the *Task Force Report* encourages parents, students, and schools to work together to determine what will work best in their community to

- help youth take greater ownership of their own physical fitness
- promote the discovery of activities suited to their own individual interests
- encourage active lifestyles that persist into their futures

The choice of the OUT-of-class model was provided to allow more flexibility for schools based on the availability of facilities. It gives families, students, and schools more options in their efforts to increase physical activity. As well, schools, local recreation and sports-related organizations are encouraged to explore how schools and community facilities could be jointly used.

As per *Implementation of Grades 11 and 12 Physical Education/Health Education: A Policy Document* (p. 13):

Schools and school divisions are required to develop a risk management policy related to the OUT of Class Physical Activity Practicum, as well as provide risk management measures and a teacher and parent/guardian sign off process that aligns with government policy.

Organization of the Document

This document is intended to assist schools/divisions in developing their risk management policy. It outlines suggested roles and responsibilities for managing risk in OUT-of-class physical activities as part of Grades 9 to 12 PE/HE courses. It describes a suggested sign-off process that may be used to ensure that the student and parent (or only the student if 18 years or older) have chosen physical activities that are as safe as possible and are appropriate to meet the learning outcomes. It also discusses the legal responsibility for safety and protection and liability. Furthermore, it provides a suggested step-by-step process for establishing local policy and regulations. Much of the risk management content of the document is based on information from *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Manitoba Schools* and *YouthSafe Manitoba – School Field Trip Resource**.

The following appendices provide additional information and tools for planning, teaching, and assessment:

- **Appendix A: Sample Local Policy & Regulations** includes a sample policy for managing risk in OUT-of-class physical activities at the local level.
- **Appendix B: Sample Parent Declaration and Consent & Student Declaration Forms** includes sample forms for the pre-sign-off process.
- **Appendix C: Physical Activity Inventory** includes an inventory of possible physical activity choices for the OUT-of-class component of Grades 9 to 12 PE/HE courses.
- **Appendix D: General Safety Guidelines** includes general safety guidelines that schools and divisions may use to help guide students to manage risks in any physical activity they may choose.
- **Appendix E: Physical Activity Safety Checklists** includes specific safety information provided through a collection of activity-specific safety checklists that recommend strategies that may be applied to chosen physical activities.
- **Appendix F: Glossary of Terms** includes definitions of specific terms used in this document.

* **Disclaimer:** Safety information and recommendations contained in the present document are believed to reflect best practice. The suggested risk management strategies are considered minimum standards for physical activity in an organized or formal setting. They may not apply to all situations (e.g., home-based, recreational, or modified activities), and more stringent safety standards may be applied by instructors/coaches/program leaders of OUT-of-class physical activities in organized programs.