

Gymnastics (Bars, Rings, Beam, Floor, Vaults)

K-GRADE 8 : CURRICULAR/INTRAMURAL

Introduction

- Includes: Balance Beam, Parallel Bars, Still Rings, Table or Flatback Vaulting, Uneven Parallel Bars and body movement patterns with or without equipment.
- Consult [**Risk Management**](#) for additional general safety requirements.
- If the activity is happening with an Outside Activity Provider then they must be presented with this activity page prior to the activity taking place. The Outside Activity Provider must meet the minimum requirements listed on this page. Consult [**Outside Activity Providers**](#) for more information on planning activities/trips using Outside Activity Providers.

[**Equipment**](#)

[**Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery**](#)

[**Facilities**](#)

[**Special Rules/Instructions**](#)

[**Supervision**](#)

[**First Aid**](#)

[**Definitions**](#)

Equipment

- Determine that all equipment is safe for use (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters). Students must be encouraged to report equipment problems to the teacher.
- Equipment must be inspected and tested on a regular basis and repaired as required.
- A safety-check for proper set-up must be done prior to student use.
- Determine that all locking mechanisms are secure prior to use.
- Mats must be regularly checked for wear and tear.
- When creating a larger mat surface only mats with Velcro can be used. The mats must be attached together with no gaps or open spaces.

- All mats (general utility, landing and safety mats) must be properly placed for landings. Precautions must be taken to minimize movement of mats on impact.
- General utility mats (5cm/2") are to be used for floor work, for example, tumbling and landing on feet from a controlled low height. When general utility mats (5cm/2") are used a student must not jump from a height higher than their own hip height.
- General utility mats (5cm/2") must be:
 - placed around/under apparatus such that mats must not overlap or have open spaces.
 - composed of the following types of shock absorbing foams:
 - closed cell/cross-linked polyethylene foam 5cm (2")
 - open cell polyurethane foam (100 Indentation Force Deflection (I.F.D.) minimum) 5cm (2")
 - dual density foam 5cm (2")
 - mats of equivalent compaction rating as determined by manufacturer
- Landing mats (minimum 12 cm/5"), for example, hardside/softside mats, are to be used for controlled feet first landings (for example, vaulting (no inversions), dismounts from equipment higher than hip a height): Landing mats must be:
 - in place with hard-side up for each apparatus.
 - placed around/under apparatus as a landing area such that there is no overlap or open spaces.
- Safety mats (30cm–60cm/12"–24") are to be used for elevated inverted skills on all equipment. Safety mats must:
 - be of solid or cross-linked foam or equivalent.
 - be used in combination with landing mats (minimum 12cm/5"), for example, hardside/softside.
 - not be used as a landing area/surface for controlled landing (for example, landing on feet) off any piece of equipment.
- A landing area/surface (minimum height of 105cm and a maximum of 125cm - using 5cm increments) is to be used for handspring to flatback vaulting (with inversions) and without a vaulting table:
 - Mats must be stacked, roped together and the top mat must be hard-side up.

- Combination of vaulting board and box horse/utility box/horse/vaulting table to be used in grades 4-8 only
- Vaulting boards may be used in combination with uneven parallel bars, balance beam, parallel bars, still rings, etc., in grades 7-8.
- Vaulting boards must be a maximum of 20cm at the take-off end. Vaulting boards must have carpeted or non-skid top and non-skid feet. Only vaulting boards to be used for take-offs. Vaulting boards used to mount the apparatus must be removed immediately after use.
- No gap between vaulting board and landing area.
- Parallel bars/Still Rings/Balance Beams/Uneven Parallel Bars/Vault Table or Stacked Mats must be suitable in height for student's size and skill level (for example, beams at chest height maximum, hanging activities at stretch height maximum, support activities on top of bars at shoulder height when spotted by teacher).
- Box horses (composed of stacking sections) must not be used for vaulting.

Refer to the [**First Aid**](#) section for first aid equipment requirements.

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Activity appropriate clothing and footwear must be worn.
- Bare feet, running shoes, or gymnastic slippers must be worn.
- No sock feet permitted.
- All eyeglasses must either be removed or secured with a strap.
- Jewelry is not permitted.
- Tie back long hair and remove hair clips.

Facilities

- Teachers must determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility concerns to the teacher.
- The playing surface and the surrounding area must be free of obstacles and must provide safe footing and traction.

- Equipment must be properly secured to floor/ceiling/walls.
- There must be sufficient space from walls and between each apparatus to allow safe movement and dismounts/landings.
- Walls, stages, equipment, trees, and posts must not be used as turning points, finish lines, end zones, or boundaries. Use visual markers such as lines or pylons to establish clearly delineated boundary lines in advance of the hazards.
- Consult **General Safety Standards for Facilities** for information related to the safe operation of gym divider doors and/or curtains.
- When warm-ups (runs) take place off the school site:
 - Teachers must complete a ‘walk through’ of the route to identify any potential hazards.
 - Prior to the warm-up teachers must communicate the route to students and identify any hazards (for example, areas to approach with caution).
 - Teachers must directly supervise students if they are to cross busy intersections.

Special Rules/Instructions

- Prior to participating in the activity, students must be taught:
 - the safe use of all associated gymnastic apparatuses;
 - the adjustment procedures for the gymnastic apparatus;
 - the appropriate landing area(s) for each apparatus
- Students must demonstrate control of basic movement before moving to higher level skills (for example, rotations on mats before performing on apparatus, and perform landings before working on elevated equipment/apparatus).
- Mat work must precede apparatus work. Apparatuses must be introduced one piece at a time, working towards the development of a circuit.
- Elevated inversions require a 30cm–60cm/12”–24” safety mat to be in place.
- Students must not jump from a height higher than their own hip height onto general utility mats (5cm/2”).
- No inversions unless instructed by teacher after student has demonstrated lead-up progression.
- Handspring flatback vaulting is only appropriate for students in grades 5 to 8.

- Activities must be modified according to the students' age, ability, language skills, previous experience, the number of participants, and the facility/space available.
- When planning an activity, participant level of fitness, their previous training, and the intensity and length of time of the activity must all be taken into consideration.
- Skills must be taught in proper progression and all activities must be based on the skills that are taught.
- A proper warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- Be aware of students with a medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion) that may affect their participation. Consult **Medical Conditions** for additional information.
- Students must not participate until they receive concussion information specific to school board procedures/policies, activity specific information on concussion prevention, the inherent risks of the activity, how to minimize the activity risks, and rules/procedures for safe play.
- Students must be instructed on the importance of reporting suspected concussion symptoms.
- For all off-site activities refer to the school board's transportation procedures/policies related to appropriate methods of transportation, appropriate parent/guardian communication, and obtaining parent/guardian permission.
- Activities that require students to close their eyes or be blind-folded while moving are prohibited.
- Teach students how to walk and/or run backwards properly. Emphasize safe, controlled movement when students walk or run backwards. Backward-running races are not permitted.
- If a student displays either verbal or non-verbal hesitation about performing a specific activity/skill then the teacher must determine the reason for hesitation. If the teacher believes the hesitancy may put the student at risk during activity, then the student must be directed towards a more basic skill or be permitted to select a challenge that aligns with their comfort level (including choosing not to participate).
- Students with Additional Needs: The teacher must make appropriate accommodations/modifications to provide a safe learning environment which addresses both activity and student specific safety concerns. Consult OPHEA's **Disability-Centred Movement: Supporting Inclusive Physical Education** for supportive resources.
- To prevent dehydration, students must have access to water fountains or personal water bottles before, during, and after the activity.

Spotting

- Spotting is initially the role of the teacher, and then may progress to students who have been trained by the teacher.
- Responsibilities vary with the age, strength and experience of the student.
- Grades 1-3: students are involved in non-contact spotting only (for example, keeping approach and landing areas clear).
- Grades 4-6: students are involved in non-contact spotting as above, as well as giving verbal cues and checking placement of mats and stability of equipment. Students in grades 4-6 can also help peers maintain a non-inverted static balance on benches/boxes/mats.
- Grades 7-8: students can do all of the spotting that students in grades 1 to 6 can do, plus help peers maintain balance on mats and simple vaults on hip-high horses.

Supervision

- All activities must be supervised.
- On-site supervision is required for balance beam, parallel bars and uneven bars.
- All elevated inversions require constant visual supervision (including handspring flatback vaults to stacked mats, or, to a vaulting table plus stacked mats).
- Constant visual supervision is required for initial teaching on still rings. After initial instruction on-site supervision is required as long as inversions are not allowed.
- The level of supervision must commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, and environmental conditions.
- Volunteers are allowed to assist in the supervision of physical education activities. Examples of volunteers are educational assistants, retired teachers, co-op students, parents/guardians, early childhood educators, and teacher candidates. Refer to your school board's policy regarding volunteers. These volunteers must be accompanied by a supervisor/physical education teacher.
- Teachers must have experience or training prior to providing activity specific instruction. Teachers without recent experience or training should receive training or assistance from appropriately trained staff.
- Students must be informed that using equipment and/or the gymnasium without supervision is prohibited. In addition to verbal communication, the doors must be locked or signs must be posted indicating that students are not allowed to use the gym unless appropriately supervised.

First Aid

- A fully stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible. (Consult [Sample First Aid Kit](#))
- A working communication device (for example, cell phone) must be accessible.
- The school's first aid plan/emergency response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)) and the school board's concussion protocol (consult [Concussions](#)) must be followed.
- The school evacuation and lock down plans must be communicated to students and followed in the case of an emergency.

Definitions

- **In-Charge Person:**

- Some activity safety pages refer to an "In-Charge" person. The teacher is always "In-Charge" and responsible for the overall safety and well-being of students under their care. However, sometimes other personnel must be identified as "In-Charge" related to specific situations (for example, a pool lifeguard). In these situations where another "In-Charge" person is designated, that person in consultation with the teacher are to make final decisions regarding student safety.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity or sport for regulation or direction.
 - All facilities, equipment, and sports have inherent risks, but the level of risk decreases significantly with effective supervision
 - Manitoba Physical Activity Safety in Schools designate three categories of supervision: Constant Visual Supervision, On-Site Supervision, and In-The-Area Supervision. The categories take into consideration the activity specific level of risk, the participants' skills, and the participant level of experience. The three levels of supervision are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that an activity requires and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.

- **Supervisor:**

- A supervisor is defined as a teacher, vice-principal or principal with current Manitoba Teachers' Society certification and under contract by a school/school board. The supervisor is legally responsible for the students.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Constant Visual Supervision:**

- The teacher is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring "Constant Visual Supervision" may take place while other activities are going on.
 - Curricular example: During a track and field lesson, some students are practicing high jump, some practicing relay, and others practicing distance running. The teacher is at and is watching high jump.
 - Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. The intramural supervisor is at and is watching the parachute games.

- **In-the-area Supervision:**

- "In-The-Area Supervision" means that the teacher could be in the gymnasium while another activity is taking place in an area adjacent to the gymnasium. "In-The-Area Supervision" requires the teacher to be readily accessible.
 - "In-The-Area Supervision" occurs during activities in which students may be out of sight for periods of time and the location of the teacher is not nearby (for example, alpine skiing, cross-country running) or during activities where single or multiple "In-the-Area" activities are happening at the same time (for example, a gym divided by a curtain or wall with badminton or table tennis on either side of the wall).
 - The following criteria must be in place:
 - The teacher is circulating and is readily accessible
 - The location of the teacher has been communicated to students and volunteers;
 - Curricular example: During a track and field lesson, some students are practicing high jump, some practicing relay, and others practicing distance running. For distance running, the students are running around the school and at times may be

out of sight.

- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For the scavenger hunt, the students are running around the school grounds and at times may be out of sight.

- **On-site Supervision:**

- The teacher is present but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity. Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (for example, equipment room) to the gym is considered part of “On-Site Supervision”.
- Curricular example: During a track and field lesson, some students are practicing high jump, some practicing relay, and others practicing distance running. Students participating on the track (relay) can be seen by the teacher who is physically with the students practicing high jump.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For relay games, the students are participating on the playground and can be seen by the intramural supervisor.

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