

Key Considerations in the Development and Implementation of Student Injury Prevention Multi-Year Plans

A proactive and sustainable multi-year student injury prevention (SIP) plan is the critical foundation in promoting a culture of safety mindedness for staff and students in Ontario school boards. The following key considerations are designed to assist boards in the implementation of their SIP plans, recognizing that each board has unique additional internal processes that will guide their plan.

General Board Considerations:

- Maintain SIP designated lead(s) to oversee the implementation of the board SIP plan and to coordinate the plan with on-going staff health and safety initiatives. In addition, the SIP lead may regularly monitor the effectiveness of the plan and adjust, as needed, to ensure its successful implementation.
- Prioritize the allocation of the required resources for the implementation of the action items in the SIP plan (e.g., inspection, maintenance and upgrade of instructional equipment; training of staff on SIP initiatives).
- Review the SIP planning considerations in the *Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) “Creating a Culture of Safety Mindedness” Update#1, February 2017* to ensure they are adequately addressed in the board multi-year SIP plan.
- Use the Ontario Student Injury Prevention (OSIP) online interactive resource (launching in September 2017) to access SIP-related support resources, such as links to safety partners and samples of existing board SIP related policies and procedures. More information on this resource will be made available to the board SIP lead in September.

- Work collaboratively with students, teachers, school administrators, Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC), board managers and parents to ensure that a culture of safety mindedness is maintained across the board.
- Engage the teacher associations of higher risk subject areas to support teacher-related SIP initiatives. Examples include Science Teachers Association of Ontario (STAO), Ontario Council for Technology Education(OCTE), OASPHE (Ontario Association for the Support of Physical and Health Educators), Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators (CODE), and The Ontario Art Educators Association (OAEA).
- Ensure all required SIP-related training is provided to the teachers, occasional teachers, principals, members of the joint health and safety committee, and other relevant board department managers (e.g., facilities and maintenance). In addition, include SIP training in higher risk subject areas as a priority for new teacher induction programs (NTIP).
- Engage community partners supporting safety in the schools. Examples include the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea), Ontario School Boards Insurance Exchange (OSBIE), Theatre Ontario, Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA), Workplace Safety Prevention Services (WSPS), local emergency services and health care providers, and the Ministry of Labour.
- Have a process to review Ministry of Labour orders and take follow-up action as needed.
- Implement a process of communication for student injuries (serious and non-serious) with school administrators that supports the establishment of corrective actions to minimize the chances of a reoccurrence.

General Planning Considerations for Higher Risk Subject Areas

Considerations common to many of the higher risk subject areas include processes for:

- Maintenance and inspection of safety equipment and facilities in teaching and learning environments;
- Maintenance and inspection of all instructional equipment on a regular basis;
- Emergency medical response plans and training for staff on how to respond to student injuries;

- Working at heights training for students as required;
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for teachers and students as required, e.g., safety glasses, protective footwear;
- Clothing restrictions as required, e.g., no open-toed shoes during science experiments;
- Management processes for hazardous materials, e.g., purchase, storage, use, disposal;
- Management of donated hazardous equipment and materials;
- Training students on the use of hazardous materials and equipment, including a tracking system to record evidence that the student has been successfully trained (e.g., use of student safety passport);
- Approval process for all higher risk student learning activities;
- Controls to limit spread of diseases in instructional areas;
- SIPI-related safety training for subject-specific teachers/coaches, occasional teachers and co-curricular staff.

Specific Considerations for Higher Risk Subject Areas:

The Arts Gr. 1-12

- The four distinct Arts subjects (Dance, Drama, Music and Media/Visual Arts) each have unique and separate student safety concerns. However, it should be recognized that risks to injury are highest in Visual Arts and Drama, followed by Dance. The safety priorities in Music are hearing loss and hygiene.
- Board SIP safety considerations for the auditorium and cafeteria are necessary where these facilities are also used for school-wide events, such as assemblies and guest performances. In these cases, facility-specific safety protocols (like securing risers and working at heights) may be required at all times.
- Dance and Drama studio facility safety protocols, e.g., proper flooring, mirrors, drapery, lights, ventilation, safety chains on lights.
- Performance production protocols, e.g., use of fog machines, stage fighting, the use and control of weapon facsimiles, masks and makeup.
- Measures to protect students and teachers from 8-hour time-weighted average exposure to hazardous sound.

- Appropriate placement of fixed equipment in Visual Arts and Media Arts facilities, e.g., paper cutter, printmaking press, drying racks, kilns, laser printer, editing suite.
- The new Ontario Student Injury Prevention resource site (launching in September) will help share best practices in managing student safety in Arts classes as few boards have related policies and procedures in place.

Health and Physical Education Gr. 1-12

- All boards are encouraged to fully implement the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines managed by Ophea. These guidelines represent the minimum standards for risk management practice for Health and Physical Education in school boards.
- Ophea guidelines focus the attention of teachers, intramural supervisors and coaches on safe practices for students, in every activity, to minimize the risk of injury. The guidelines include concussion protocols to help prevent and identify suspected concussions and manage a student's safe return to learning and physical activity. Higher risk activities are clearly outlined along with corresponding protocols to manage this risk. Also included are appendices with sample emergency action plans, checklists for facility inspections, and protocols for donated equipment.
- Adhering to the Ophea guidelines is a key part of supporting a comprehensive approach to student safety.

Science Gr. 9-12

- Teacher training is an integral component of any SIP program. A resource that boards may consider incorporating in their training protocols is the online "Science Safety Mindedness" program, developed by the Science Teachers' Association of Ontario (STAO). This resource is available, free of charge, to all school boards.

Science and Technology Gr. 1-8

- Given the importance of hands-on activities and the inquiry focus of the curriculum, maintaining safety is a significant concern in Science and Technology.
- The use of hand tools (and power tools in some boards) in activities used to fulfil the technological problem-solving component of the curriculum also raises safety concerns.

- Protocols for the use of potentially hazardous materials purchased by the teacher and brought to school are an important consideration at the elementary level. Appropriate sizing of safety goggles is particularly important for younger students.
- A resource that boards may consider incorporating in their training protocols is the online “Science Safety Mindedness” program, developed by the Science Teachers’ Association of Ontario (STAO). This resource is available, free of charge, to all school boards.

Technological Education Gr. 9-12

- Personal safety considerations (such as clothing restrictions, personal protective equipment, and emergency medical response plans) are critical in technological education programs.
- An approval process for higher risk student activities is key to managing the risk of student injury, especially given serious accidents that have occurred in Technological Education programs in the past.
- Effective management and maintenance procedures of facilities, instructional equipment, and material storage and disposal are critical to student injury prevention in technological education programs.
- On-going teacher training is crucial to student safety.
- Boards are encouraged to incorporate safety resources developed by the Ontario Council for Technological Education (OCTE) into their technology teacher training programs.