

Health and Safety In Schools

This January, the Ministry of Education initiated a student-injury prevention project for Ontario district school boards.

In his memorandum titled Student Injury Prevention Initiative Funding, George Zegarac, the deputy minister of education, informed directors of education, supervisory officers, secretary-treasurers of school authorities and the director of the Provincial Schools Branch that:

Ontario schools have been described as some of the safest in the world. When accidents do occur in schools, we are reminded of our obligation and ongoing commitment to safety mindedness as well as to compliance with relevant federal, provincial and municipal health and safety legislation and by-laws. This requires school boards to undertake activities that ensure injury prevention is the highest of priorities in schools.

To support school boards in this endeavour, the Ministry allocated one-time funding for student-injury prevention initiatives in the 2012-13 school year and engaged the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) to identify and collate a common set of provincial health and safety practices. To ensure the effectiveness and accuracy of such a valuable resource, CODE established a Health and Safety Team comprised of leaders in education and health and safety education.

I am pleased to announce that the CODE team has now completed a set of health and safety resource guides for administrators.

Each guide highlights the practices that should be in place to ensure the safety of students, and describes the characteristics of a safe learning environment. A reference list of “look fors” and “key questions” is also included, as is a detailed safety checklist.

The health and safety resource guides are:

- ◆ **Student Safety in Elementary Science and Technology Grades 7 and 8**
- ◆ **Student Safety in Secondary Science Education Grades 9 to 12**
- ◆ **Student Safety in Secondary Technological Education Grades 9 to 12**
- ◆ **Student Safety: A Guide for Supervisory Officers, Principals and Vice-Principals.**

These resources are designed to support principals, vice-principals and supervisory officers in the promotion and implementation of health and safety provisions and requirements in schools. Developed by a team of educators as a support to the Student Injury Prevention Initiative, these documents provide school leaders with greater understanding of, and engagement in, their responsibilities and duties regarding health and safety in science labs and technological facilities, and in the creation and sustaining of a positive safety culture within schools. The information contained in these resources was compiled through a series of consultations with school board health and safety representatives and with partner organizations supporting health and safety in schools.

The health and safety resource guides for administrators are now available at www.ontariodirectors.ca. Educators, health and safety officers and school and board administrators are encouraged to download any sections of the health and safety guides which may be helpful as school boards implement the requirements of the Student Injury Prevention Initiative.

By the beginning of the new school year in September, the CODE Health and Safety Team will have developed four training modules to complement the posted resource guides for administrators. These modules will be available to school board teams through regional training sessions scheduled for the fall of 2013.

Appreciation and thanks are extended to the following members of the CODE Health and Safety Team for the significant contribution they have made to enhancing health and safety in our schools throughout the province:

Robert Emptage, Health and Safety Team Chair;

Connie Devlin, Health and Safety Specialist (Standards and Legislation);

Dave Graves, Health and Safety Specialist (Technological Education);

Bill Keith, Health and Safety Specialist (Technological Education/Science);

Milan Sanader, Health and Safety Specialist (Science Education);

Ingrid Munson, Health and Safety Specialist (Elementary Science and Technology);

Robert Moulder, Health and Safety Specialist (Elementary Science and Technology);

Pat Campbell, Coordination Lead.

On behalf of the CODE team, I am confident that you will find these guides to be valuable additions to the range of health and safety resources available to educators, and that they will help you meet the requirements in our schools as we continue the very important work of preventing student injury and building a climate of safety in our classrooms.

Regards,

Frank Kelly

Executive Director

Council of Ontario Directors of Education

Using the Resource Guides



The four resource guides, while specific to individual curriculum areas, are also interrelated and complementary. These guides focus on both general and specific student safety issues pertaining to the classroom and related school activities. It is important to note that the information, activities, suggestions and safety checklists have been compiled by the CODE Health and Safety Team based on current board practices and health and safety requirements.

The resource guides have been posted to allow full or individual downloading and printing of each section of the guides. Boards are welcome to customize any section of the resource guide (including the checklist) to meet their individual needs. The guides will be updated and revised over the term of the Student Injury Prevention Initiative to reflect new information and strategies that support student safety and student injury prevention. These changes to the guides will be posted on the CODE website.

For further information regarding the resource guides and/or to contact any member of the **CODE Health and Safety Team**, please phone or email Janet Godber at the CODE office (905) 845-4254 or janet@opsoa.org.

CODE welcomes your comments, suggestions and recommendations regarding the health and safety in schools resource guides.