

# Use of Helmets in Physical Activity for Students, Staff and Volunteers

## Administrative Procedure

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<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Use of Helmets in Physical Activity for Students, Staff and Volunteers</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<b>Active</b>
<b>Effective:</b>	September 2007
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<b>Responsibility:</b>	Superintendent of Education, School Programs Superintendent of Education, School Operations

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### Intended Purpose

The Halton District School Board is committed to the health and safety of all students, staff and volunteers when participating in physical activities. There are many physical activities where helmets are a required piece of protective equipment, as identified through Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE) , provincial legislation and municipal bylaws, in order to safely participate. Examples of these types of activities may include, but are not limited to: climbing, cycling, football, ice hockey, ice skating, in line skating, skateboarding, ski/snowboarding and tobogganing/sledding.

To minimize the risk to students, staff and volunteers participating in physical activities, we adhere to the minimum standard set forth annually through the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE) in the Curricular, Intramural and Interschool Modules (Elementary and Secondary), as well as the HDSB Localized Minimum Standards (Elementary and Secondary) and all cross referenced HDSB Administrative Procedures.

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to:

- Maintain a safe learning environment for all students, staff, and volunteers participating in physical activities where the use of head protection/helmets will reduce the risk/severity of injury.

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- Provide procedures to support principals and school staff in ensuring a consistent approach to the use of head protection/ helmets during physical activities.
- Establish an environment that prioritizes the reduction of barriers related to student participation in physical activities where head protection/helmets are required.

### Procedures

#### 1. Helmet Requirements

When planning an activity/sport, check the 'Equipment' section in the appropriate Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE) activity pages for specific helmet requirements. These include the helmet type and/or examples of the Safety Standard Association, and/or certification standards required for the specific activity/sport. OPASSE includes:

- 1.1. Activities for which helmets have been developed (e.g. hockey, football):** Helmets designed for the type of hazards encountered in a particular activity will provide the optimal required protection for the activity. Select a helmet that meets the protection standards (certification) for the specific activity/sport as determined by a recognized Safety Standards Association.
- 1.2. Activities for which helmets have not been developed (e.g. ice skating, tobogganing/sledding):** The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE) lists on its activity pages the types of helmets that offer the best protection against ice skating/tobogganing injuries as recommended by the following safety organizations: Parachute Canada, Canada Safety Council, and the Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange.

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### 1.3. Multi-Purpose helmets (e.g., cycling, skateboarding, and in-line

**skating):** Some helmets are marketed as 'multi sport' meaning they meet the safety standard for more than one activity. For a multi-purpose helmet to be used for an activity/sport, the helmet must have an identification of a safety standard certification (e.g., sticker/identification on the package or on the helmet) from a recognized Safety Standards Association indicating that it meets the required safety standards for those activities the helmet will be used for.

In addition to referencing the OPASSE activity/ sport pages to determine specific helmet requirements, the following actions should also occur:

- Consult the sport governing body of the activity.
- Consult a reputable provider (retailer) of the equipment for information on the most suitable helmet.
- Review the guidelines provided by Parachute Canada.

If you are using an outside provider/facility, OPASSE requires the safety standards for the activity/sport must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed in the safety standards, including all standards related to helmets.

## 2. Ensuring Proper Helmet Fit & Position

Helmets come in a variety of sizes and are required to not only meet the safety requirements but also must be properly fitted and in the proper position. The helmet fit and position should be checked each time the helmet is in use.

2.1. Review the [2 v 1 rule from Parachute Canada](#) on how to ensure a helmet is properly fitted and follow these guidelines.

2.1.1. The helmet should cover the top of the forehead and should rest about two fingers' width above the eyebrows.

2.1.2. Side straps should fit snugly around each ear in a "V" shape.

2.1.3. Buckles on the side strap should fit right under the ear. Buckle the chin strap. Tighten it until you can fit only one finger between the

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strap and your chin.

- 2.2. There are special helmets for toddlers (under age five) that provide more protection at the back of the head. Some children may outgrow the “toddler” size helmet before age five and should use a bigger helmet.
- 2.3. Helmets come with extra padding that can be added to the inside of the helmet at the front or the back of the helmet so that it fits correctly.
- 2.4. When wearing a helmet, shake your head from side to side and front to back. If the helmet is fitting correctly, it should not move around.
- 2.5. Baseball hats, toques, big hair clips and headphones should never be worn under a helmet.
- 2.6. Ponytails should be worn low on the neck when wearing a helmet.
- 2.7. Some students, staff or volunteers may wear head coverings or articles of creed/faith over their heads. A helmet may or may not be appropriate to go over the head covering or article of creed/faith. If the student or parent agrees, ensure the helmet is carefully adjusted. In some cases, specialty helmets may be an option for some activities for those who wear their hair knotted on top of their heads. Examples for all of the above may include but are not limited to a yarmulke/kippah, hijab, or patka/joora.
- 2.8. For students with Special Needs, the Student Safety Plan, Plan of Care, and/or IEP should be reviewed for any specific requirements for a student to wear a helmet and any recommendations regarding the helmet type and/or Safety Standard Associations/certification standards required for the helmet.

### 3. Helmet Use

For all activities which require the use of a helmet, all students, staff and volunteers must wear a properly fitting helmet while engaged in the activity during school/ Board related events. HDSB owned head protection/ helmets should not be used by students, staff or volunteers outside of HDSB sanctioned events.

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#### 4. Helmet Access

Access to a helmet that meets the safety requirements and is properly fitted can be a barrier to student participation and schools should ensure all students have access to required head protection/ helmets required to participate in school activities. Options to access helmets may include:

- purchasing of school helmets that can be used during the activity (i.e. Football).
- students borrowing a helmet from a close friend or family member who can attest that the helmet has not been involved in an incident or injury and meets the current safety standards.
- accessing rental helmets through the activity site provider ( e.g. alpine ski/ snowboard, local arenas).
- seeking support from community partners (e.g. Halton Learning Foundation, grants or school Angel Funds) to purchase or access helmets.

If students are asked to bring their own helmets, communicate to parent(s)/ guardian(s)/caregiver(s):

- the specific Safety Standard Association, and/or certification standards for the helmet;
- how to determine if the helmet is properly fitted;
- to check that the helmet should have all its pieces (straps, adjusters and fasteners) and that they are in working order; and
- communicate to the teacher if they are not able to obtain access to a helmet.

Note: Most helmets that meet a safety standard will contain a Certification Sticker (special label) that indicates compliance. This is usually found on the liner inside of the helmet. Purchasing a helmet second hand is not recommended.

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### **Cross-Reference:**

#### **Legislation**

Occupational Health and Safety Act Reg 851 Sec. 80

Ontario Human Rights Commission: Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed

#### **Board Policies, Procedures & Protocols**

Concussion Identification Management

Day Field Trips and In School Presentations

Risk Management - Minimum Standards of Care for Interschool Athletics

Student Excursions

### **Revision History**

- October 2025 - Comprehensive review ensuring Administrative Procedure is in alignment with current updated language required by the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE) and additional language to ensure administrative procedure is inclusive to all students
- May 2021
- January 2016