

# Climbing (Aerial Parks)

## ELEMENTARY - CURRICULAR 2023

- Grades 1-8, where accommodated by the activity provider.
- Required minimum age, height, and weight may vary between and within aerial parks. Please contact your activity provider for clarification.
- Portable installation, or a permanent installation on a commercial site.
- This page applies to aerial parks that have ziplines, and are therefore regulated by [TSSA](#), or aerial parks that do not have ziplines (not regulated by TSSA) but do use a continuous lanyard system.
- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- This activity page must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed on this page. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).
- Also consult [Climbing \(General Procedures\)](#) and [Climbing \(Zipline/Tyrolean Traverse/Equivalent\)](#).

## Equipment

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- 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.
- All of the equipment must be inspected by qualified on site aerial park personnel prior to the activity to determine that all of the equipment is safe to use.
- All of the equipment must meet the current ACCT ([Association for Challenge Course Technology](#)) standards or equivalent.

- Helmets that are commercially and specifically manufactured for climbing must be properly fitted (as per manufacturer's guidelines) and properly worn by all students who are leaving the ground or are under any activity in use.
- A qualified instructor must check the harness and connection to the fall protection operating system for any student prior to them leaving the ground.
- Climbing harnesses (sit, sit/chest, or full body) appropriate to the age and/or body size of the climber must be used.

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

## Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

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- Clothing and footwear appropriate to the activities and environmental conditions must be worn. Open-toed shoes (for example, sandals) are not permitted. Loose clothing is not permitted (for example, scarves). Tops with drawstrings are not permitted. Sharp objects are to be worn or carried in pockets.
- Exposed jewelry is not permitted.
- Long hair must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, elastics and barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.
- Students must not participate when the length of fingernails poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

## Facilities

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- All aerial park elements must meet the [ACCT](#) Standards, or equivalent, that are in place at the time of installation.
- All of the aerial park elements must be inspected by qualified on-site personnel prior to use to determine that all of the facilities are safe to use.

- All of the aerial park elements must have been installed, or have passed an annual professional inspection by a qualified aerial park inspector. This annual inspection must be documented in a written report in accordance with the ACCT Standards, or equivalent. Necessary maintenance/ changes to the elements noted in the report must be addressed.
- The aerial park must be managed and operated in accordance with the most current ACCT Standards, or equivalent, including having a designated aerial park manager who is responsible for overseeing the staffing and operations of the aerial park.
- The aerial park must be used in accordance with the original equipment manufacturers` (OEM) recommendations.
- On aerial park elements installed in trees, all dead limbs and any live branches that might be considered hazardous must be removed.
- Treed courses must be inspected annually by a professional arborist and all recommendations must be performed.
- The activity provider must have a written Policies and Procedures Manual for the management and operation of all aerial park activities. This manual must include an Emergency Action Plan consistent with the most current ACCT Standards or equivalent.
- When running takes place off school site for a warm up:
  - Teachers must do a safety check 'walk through' in order to identify potential problems prior to initial use of route or course.
  - Teachers must outline to the students the route or course (for example, notice of areas to approach with caution) before the start of the run.
  - Teachers must determine that students are not crossing busy intersections unless directly supervised.

## **Environmental Considerations**

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- When environmental conditions may pose a risk to student safety (for example, thunderstorms [lightning] or student(s) with asthma, triggered by air quality), teachers must take into consideration their school board/school's protocols and procedures related to:
  - environmental conditions (consult [Weather](#)); and
  - insects (for example, mosquitoes and ticks [consult the school/school board's protocols and/or regional Public Health Department's website]).
- Students must receive instruction on safety procedures related to environmental conditions and be made aware of ways to protect themselves (for example, sun burn, heat stroke).
- At all times the school board's weather and insect procedures are the minimum standards. In situations where a higher standard of care is presented (for example, outside activity providers, facility/program coordinators), the higher standard of care must be followed.

## Special Rules/Instructions

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- Be aware of students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion, orthopaedic device) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).
- Students must not participate in the activity until they receive information on concussion prevention specific to the activity, inherent risks of the activity (for example, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks), and procedures and rules for safe play. Students must receive instruction on the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Refer to school board policies and procedures (i.e., transportation, excursion/field trip) for communication with parents/guardians, the location of an off-site activity, means of transportation, supervision ratios, and parent/guardian permission.
- Previous training, fitness level, and the length of time and intensity of physical activity must be taken into consideration.
- Skills must be taught in proper progression.
- A proper warm-up and cool-down must be included.

- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Completed medical forms for each participating student must be accessible.
- Prior to the first lesson, teachers must inform climbing instructors of students who have special needs.
- Risks involved with each activity and how to lower the risk of an injury from occurring must be communicated to the students.
- Teachers, instructors and students must be aware of safety procedures.
- Students must be made aware of expectations as they relate to:
  - behaviour (for example, park rules)
  - emergency procedures
  - signal to assemble
  - boundaries for activities
  - proper use of equipment
- A method of rescuing a tired/stuck climber must be available (for example, ladder, scaffold, top-rope belay).
- Activity and course elements that are introduced must be based on skills that are taught and appropriate for the age, ability level, language and and experience of the students.
- Students must be allowed to select a challenge at their comfort level, including the choice to not participate.
- Teachers, instructors and supervisors must be aware of the possibility of peer pressure and make sure no student is coerced into participating.
- Individuals who have been trained and can demonstrate the required instructor skills and who are 16 years of age or older can assist with instruction but must be directly supervised by a qualified instructor.

## Fall Protection Operating Systems

- Programs may be offered utilizing:
  - **Continuous Lanyard Systems:**
    - Students must participate in a ground school which prepares them for the course.
    - Students must be directly supervised at all transfer points.
  - **Individual Lanyard Systems:**
    - Students must participate in a ground school which prepares them for the course.
    - Students must be supervised at all transitions between elements and each transfer of lanyards, unless using a mechanical control system
- Programs are required to follow the ratios related to the Grade Level and fall protection operating system as indicated in the Supervision Section.
- A qualified instructor must check the harness and connection to the fall protection operating system for any student prior to him/her leaving the ground.
- The fall protection operating system utilized must be one that was installed and recommended by a qualified aerial parks professional.

## Supervision

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- All activities must be supervised.
- On-site supervision by both a teacher and qualified instructors, as per supervision ratios, who must be present for all aspects of the program.
- Constant visual supervision must occur during ground school.
- Students must be directly supervised at all transitions between elements and each transfer of lanyards, unless using a mechanical control system.
- The level of supervision must be 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.

- A volunteer could 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.

## Supervision Ratios

- After ground school, for aerial parks that include ziplines and are regulated by TSSA, supervision ratios will be in accordance to the TSSA-stipulated zone guiding requirements for each individual activity provider.
- After ground school, for aerial parks that use a continuous lanyard system, the following supervision ratio applies to 1 instructor/guide per 10 actively participating students
- Students must be informed that the use of equipment and the gymnasium are prohibited without supervision. 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.

## Qualifications

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- Instructors must be trained in, understand, demonstrate, and adhere to a directly relevant skill set for Aerial Parks. A relevant skill set is a described set of skills developed by recognized climbing professionals.
- All instructors must be at least 18 years of age or older to teach ground school and/or be an instructor.

## First Aid

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- 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.

- On school site: Follow the school's first aid emergency response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)) and the school board's concussion protocol (consult [Concussions](#)). An emergency action plan and response to deal with evacuations and lock downs must be followed and communicated to students.
- Off school site: At least one instructor or an individual responsible for providing first aid must have current First Aid qualifications equivalent to or exceeding St. John Ambulance Emergency First Aid with CPR Level C + AED.

## Definitions

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- **Continuous Lanyard System:**

- A Continuous Lanyard System is a system where the student is connected to the anchored safety cable continuously.

- **Individual Lanyard System:**

- An Individual Lanyard System is a system where the student is directly connected to the anchored safety cable via a pair of lanyards. There are two types of control systems:
  - Human control system: is used to manage continuous connection to the life safety system
  - Mechanical control system: is used to manage continuous connection to the life safety system (for example, SmartBelay, Clic-it, Bornack)

- **In-charge Person:**

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

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for regulation or direction. Activities, facilities, and equipment have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.
- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education designate three categories of supervision, Constant visual supervision, On-site supervision, and In-the-area supervision. The categories take into consideration the risk level of the activity, the participants' skill level and the participants' maturity. The three levels of supervision described 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 a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board. The supervisor is legally responsible for the students.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Constant Visual Supervision:**

- Constant visual supervision means that 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 session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For high jump, the teacher is at the high jump area and is observing the activity.
- 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 parachute, the intramural supervisor is at the event and is observing activity.

○ **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:
  - in 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). At least one of the following criteria must be in place:
    - The teacher is circulating
    - The location of teacher has been communicated to students and volunteers
  - in single activities and those that may be combined (for example, other in- the- area activities such as badminton, table tennis, handball – wall) with the following criteria in place:
    - The teacher must be circulating between the activities and readily accessible
    - The teacher informs students of the location of the activities
- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. 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 a scavenger hunt, the students are running around the school grounds and at times may be out of sight.

○ **On-site Supervision:**

- On-site supervision entails teacher presence 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 session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For a relay, the students are practising on the track and can be seen by the teacher who is with the high jumpers.
- 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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