

PUTTING PREVENTION INTO PRACTICE

A RISK MANAGEMENT
PRIMER FOR PHYSICAL
EDUCATION TEACHERS



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1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook for physical education teachers presents ideas and strategies for lowering the chance of injury to students who participate in P. E. activities. Lowering the chance of injury to students also reduces the chance of what sometimes seems to be the new national pastime – the lawsuit.

Society's tendency to blame someone else for an accident and the fact that 51% of the practicing attorneys in the world are in the U.S.A. add to this challenge. The U.S.A. is 6% of the world's population.

It's about ways to keep students in the gym and teachers out of court. Also commonly called risk management. It is knowing how to manage the various risks and challenges of your program, and being aware and prudently paying attention to those potential risks.

Risk management is not the same as safety although the terms are often used interchangeably. Safety involves freedom from risk, harm or injury. But the value of physical activity includes calculated risks, challenges and effort. Teachers can only be prepared and strive to create as safe an environment as is reasonably possible while offering a worthwhile and stimulating program.

There are many similar risk management duties and strategies required by the coach and the physical educator. There are also differences. These differences sometimes make the risk management tasks of the physical education teacher more difficult. Think about it:

- * Coaches work with a group of students who volunteer to join the team. These are motivated students. P.E. teachers work with students who have to be there! Some are and some are not motivated.
- * Social issues such as childhood obesity, cultural diversity, language barriers and inclusion are additional challenges for the P. E. teacher.
- * The coach works with students who are basically at the same skill level. The P.E. instructor faces a myriad of skill levels every day that could create a mismatch in competitive experiences.
- * Coaches generally deal with students of one gender. The P.E. instructor usually teaches co-gendered classes.
- * Coaches do not have to worry about players being unprepared to participate – physical educators do.
- * Athletes are generally in good physical condition. There are all kinds of physical fitness levels within the general physical education class.

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- * The coach generally has the best athletic facility as well as adequate time to coach. The teacher rarely has such advantages.
- * The coach is required to have knowledge in one sport. The explosion of new activities and the desire to include them in the physical curriculum requires today's teacher to be proficient in many activities. Wall climbing, in-line skating and cross-country skiing are three examples of relatively new activities.
- * We can never forget budget constraints. Coaches have gate receipts and parent's clubs. Physical Education has – the budget.

Please read each section and use the various checklists, forms and additional sources listed. Through implementing these, we strive to have fewer injuries and fewer lawsuits, saving time, energy and money.

Comments about Each Section

The purpose of this introduction is to get you to read the rest of the handbook. Section 2, The General Duties of a Physical Education Teacher, addresses a few legal terms and your teaching duties.

Section 3, Actions to Avoid, talks about the various actions and lack of actions that have caused an injury and/or caused a lawsuit.

Section 4, The Defensive Game Plan for the Physical Education Teacher, is a list of strategies and guidelines to lower the chance of injuries.

Section 5, The Baker's Dozen Safety Checklist for Physical Education, attempts to compress physical education risk management ideas in a checklist of 13 considerations.

Section 6, Activity Checklists for Physical Education, addresses common physical education activities for individual and team sports played and often adjusted for physical education.

Teachers can reproduce these checklists to use on a regular basis. We've included a blank checklist form appropriate for activities unique to each school. You may want to attach The Baker's Dozen Physical Education Safety Checklist to your clipboard.

Section 7, Additional Physical Education Risk Management Considerations, is a collection of various issues or "Everything we didn't learn in P.E. Safety 101." Locker room issues, bloodborne pathogens, challenged students, and insurance issues are covered here.

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Section 8, A Final Word, is a summary. Section 9 is an appendix of future readings and sources. Section 10 has a few related forms.

Limitations

This handbook is about risk management and safety. It doesn't address how to teach or what to teach in the physical education curriculum, or the evils of playing dodgeball or permitting tag games. It's not a review of statistics and it is not intended to make teachers locker room lawyers. This handbook cannot guarantee freedom from injury in physical education. This information is offered to help lower the chance of injury in physical education.

This handbook is also limited to the education, background, research and work, in the area of risk management of the author. Every effort has been made to be as accurate as possible. The author also realizes that each situation must be evaluated on its own merits, and that there are other strategies and options to lower the chance of injury.

About the Author

Richard P. Borkowski, Ed. D., is a Certified Master Athletic Administrator (C.M.A.A.) - the highest level bestowed by the National Federation of High School Associations.

He retired as the Director of Physical Education and Athletics at the Episcopal Academy in Merion, PA after 33 years of service. He taught physical education for those years as well as coaching football, wrestling, rugby and many junior level sports.

He remains involved in athletic risk management as a consultant, author, speaker, and expert witness. He's written almost 400 articles and four books on the subject of safety. He authored the well-received "Coaching for Safety - A Risk Management Handbook for High School Coaches" for ESD 112.

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2. THE GENERAL DUTIES OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER

No one entered the field of Physical Education to be an expert in legal issues. Being aware of your legal responsibilities, however, is an excellent way to lower the chance of injury to students and legal problems to your school and to you.

This section is designed to introduce you to some legal definitions and how they apply. You are held to a standard of care designed to appreciably lower the chance of harm to your students. This standard of care can be divided in a number of specific duties:

1. Offer appropriate activities
2. Properly plan the activity
3. Follow the appropriate rules of the activity
4. Appropriately prepare the student for the activity
5. Offer appropriate equipment
6. Offer appropriate facilities
7. Offer appropriate instruction
8. Offer appropriate supervision
9. Appropriately warn students and parents about the risks of the activity
10. Give appropriate post injury care
11. Maintain reasonable records

Meeting all your duties of care will not eliminate injuries but will appreciably lower the chance of injury. That is all you can do. That is what you should do.

The standard of care is based on published standards, consensus, the accepted practices, case law and what's reasonable under the circumstances.

There is not one standard of care for the beginning teacher and one for the experienced teacher.

A closer look at each duty of care

1. Offer appropriate activities

It is not only *how* to teach, it is *what* you teach. Is the activity educationally sound, listed in the curriculum, and within all reasonable risk control parameters?

Dodge ball, diving, running backwards, and tag have come under scrutiny in recent years. Know what activities your school considers appropriate and inappropriate.

“Boxing in a Barrel,” “Axe Throwing,” and “Kill the Cow” were all listed in vintage P. E. textbooks. Some new activities such as rugby and spinning are gaining

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popularity, but are unacceptable at present because of the lack of qualified teachers to teach them, and the risks associated with the activities.

2. Properly plan the activity

Planning a sequence of progressive lesson plans to offer a worthwhile educational experience for your students goes a long way in lowering the chance of injuries. Always address the potential risks of the class and eliminate all hazards prior to the class.

A “risk” in track and field might be falling. A “hazard” is falling because you tripped over a rack left out on the track.

3. Follow the appropriate rules of the activity

You are required to know the rules of the activities you teach. You are also required to know the safety rules of the activity.

Playing softball is a traditional worthwhile experience. The basic rules are well known. When the next batter stands too close to home plate, the catcher is without a mask and unused bats lie near the base paths – you are not following the rules of safety.

4. Appropriately prepare the student for the activity

This simply means to make sure your students are physically ready to participate. Avoid shortcuts. When a student arrives late to your class, make sure he/she goes through a warm up before joining the class activity.

5. Offer appropriate equipment

Purchase only from reputable dealers. Check the equipment you plan to use. Make sure the equipment is suitable for those that will be using it.

6. Offer appropriate facilities

You have a duty to inspect the facility you are going to use. The field you used previously and was free of ruts and holes may not be free of hazards today.

Use the area for its intended purpose. Lobbies and hallways are *not* appropriate for most activities. Moving an outdoor class indoors because of inclement weather becomes a problem when adjustments are not made. Indoor softball with regulation bats, balls and placing bases near walls could be hazardous.

Ask yourself - is this a reasonable site for the activity? If the answer is no, modify or change the activity.

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7. Offer appropriate instruction

Teaching students the correct way to do the activity/skill is a major risk management strategy. Following a sequential, progressive teaching pattern will decrease the chances of an accident. Demonstrations should be clear and accurate. Demonstrate the inappropriate execution of skills to explain and reduce the risk of doing the skills improperly.

Teach before you test the student. Teach the forward roll before asking the child to perform the forward roll.

Never confuse motivation with coercion. Try to match competitors. Consider the age, size, skill, experience and mental readiness of individuals. Always try to avoid a mismatch.

Adjust your instruction methods to make certain that all students clearly understand instructions, including students with learning disabilities and language limitations.

8. Offer appropriate supervision

The allegation of “failure to properly supervise” are words seen on many legal documents. Being present and aware of what is going on during the time you are in charge of a class is the first step.

Supervision does not mean seeing and hearing every student every moment. That is an impossibility. Supervision means controlling the situation, knowing the activity, and continually scanning the class. If you are helping one student, you do it in such a way that you can still scan the area. *Back to the wall supervision*, thereby keeping as many students in your view is a simple and effective strategy. Have a whistle when supervising.

Supervision is a matter of foreseeability, planning and vigilance.

9. Appropriately warn students and parents about the risks of the activity

Physical Education teachers are getting better at informing students about potential risks associated with activities, but there is still room for improvement.

Address the risks of the activity. Warnings should be a normal part of teaching. Never assume that students have prior knowledge or experience in certain skills.

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If there is a warning label on equipment – point it out. Warnings lower the chance of accidents. The duty to warn is not a one time, start of the year talk. It is on going. Include safety hints on written handouts.

You also need to remind the students of their responsibility for their own safety. This is a positive tactic too often neglected.

Check with your school concerning the need for informed consent forms and the physical examination policy. Legal counsel should review all written documents.

10. Give appropriate post injury care

Regardless of the quality of any program there will always be risks and injuries. A teacher should have the basic knowledge of first aid and know how to quickly access help for serious injuries or medical emergencies. Know the emergency plan.

Remember the golden rule of injury assessment and first aid care – always assume and treat for the worst possible injury. Treat for the worst and hope for the best. Do no further harm. Bring the first aid to the student.

Report all information to your immediate supervisor and complete an accident report. Avoid discussing the injury with others.

11. Maintain reasonable records

Keep records. You will be able to show that you planned and offered an appropriate program. Keeping documentation also saves you time. Last year's lesson plans can help you plan for the next year.

Some terms you should know

The Reasonable Person Standard – You are expected to act in the same manner that those in your profession would act under similar circumstances. Making sure the students are warmed up for the activity is reasonable. Failing to have a warm up phase is unreasonable.

Negligence – Lawsuits are generally filed because there is a claim of negligence. We failed to act as a reasonably prudent professional would have acted given the same circumstances.

The Test for Negligence - One is considered negligent if the test for negligence can be proven; all four criteria must be met:

1. First you must have a duty of care. Clearly teachers have a duty to lower the chance of injury to students.

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2. You failed to meet that duty of care. Lawyers say you *breached* your duty of care.
3. By failing to meet your duty of care, the student was injured.
4. There must be a connection between your duty, the breach of duty and the injury. It is called *proximate cause*.

A teacher has a duty to supervise his/her class (Test 1). The teacher leaves the gym to make a phone call (Test 2). The students, instead of sitting down as instructed by the teacher, pick up the near by floor hockey sticks and use them as swords. One gets a stick in the eye (Test 3). If the teacher was present, this would not have happened. That is the proximate cause (test 4).

A major contributor to lawsuits is often the anger of parents. A child gets hurt and the parents perceive the school and teachers are uncaring. No one calls them. No one asks about the condition of their child. Caring is not a legal duty, but it is important in decreasing the potential for lawsuits.

Foreseeability (predicting the predictable) – Another word for this is professional common sense. This includes planning ahead to eliminate hazards and any unnecessary risks. For example, not drying the wet spots under the basketball backstop could lead to an injury.

Several books address various defenses against lawsuits such as assumption of risk, comparative and contributory negligence, an act of God, and statute of limitations. They are listed in the appendix.

The best defense to lower the chance of injury to students and becoming part of a lawsuit is meeting your duty of care.

Note:

The information in this section is based on a consensus of opinions and 40 years of the author's risk management, coaching and teaching experiences. This is not legal advice. That can only be obtained from a lawyer. You should always seek the help of legal counsel.

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3. ACTIONS TO AVOID

What follows are actions and situations that have previously led to injuries and/or lawsuits in physical education. Avoiding these situations will lower the possibility of injury to students and lawsuits against teachers and schools.

1. Permitting students to participate without proper attire.
2. Teaching in non-activity areas such as a hallway, roadway or active parking lot.
3. Using homemade equipment.
4. Using acceptable equipment in a way other than its intended purpose. The bleachers are for sitting, not for climbing races.
5. Participating in an area that is too small for the activity. This often happens when a teacher has another class join his/her class in a space to be used for just one class. Watching two classes in study hall is one thing, supervising two classes in a beginning swimming class is another matter.
6. Failing to consider buffer zones. The wall should never be the out of bounds line or the goal line.
7. Leaving balls and other equipment on the playing area during activity.
8. Offering an activity that is considered hazardous. Examples include boxing, mud wrestling, ring hockey and tackle rugby.
9. Teaching something in which you do not feel qualified. With the increase of activities and budget cuts teachers are often pressured into teaching activities they are not qualified or certified to teach. If you don't know weight training, don't teach it. Just say "no."
10. Using physical activity such as laps and push-ups as a form of discipline.
11. Teaching an activity that is not listed in the approved curriculum. What was considered creativity in the past is often called negligence today.
12. Leaving the class unsupervised. Don't answer the phone when you know you should be teaching.
13. Leaving an activity room open and unsupervised. Leaving areas such as the pool, the gymnastic room and the wrestling room open without reasonable supervision are wrong.
14. Permitting students' access to the storage room without supervision.

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15. Asking students to move equipment without instruction or beyond their capabilities.
16. Leaving doors open so that the edge of the door extends out into the activity area.
17. Giving your keys to a student.
18. Placing a student in the role of supervisor while you leave the classroom.
19. Not having a plan to supervise the locker room.
20. Not establishing and/or explaining general and specific safety rules. You must address the potential risks of the activity.
21. Emphasizing the outcome of a game over the learning experience.
22. Skipping the warm up phase of a class.
23. Bypassing the teaching of fundamentals.
24. Permitting unequal competition or mismatching.
25. Not having or reviewing an emergency safety plan.
26. Not having and using a safety checklist.
27. Not checking the activity area prior to use. Is the gymnasium floor slippery? Did you check for holes in the field?
28. Failing to inspect the equipment to be used. Are the tumbling mats secured?
29. Not having an alternative or modified program for inclement weather. Flag football must be adjusted, if the class is held indoors
30. Failing to correct an unsafe situation immediately. Because a ball did not go through the hole in the screen one time doesn't mean it won't happen in the next softball class.
31. Being complacent. You know what the correct procedure is, but choosing to do something else because "no one got hurt last time and besides, no one is going to sue me."
32. Permitting young students to use equipment geared for older students. Is a regulation football or basketball appropriate for a fourth grader?
33. Permitting students to play with broken equipment.

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34. Permitting play without required protective equipment such as protective padding for softball catchers.
35. Introduction of unapproved equipment.
36. Teaching a skill incorrectly.
37. Waiting to repair or replace that broken piece of equipment.
38. Not teaching the safety aspects of the activity and/or game.
39. Giving games violent names such as bombardment, killer ball and Rambo ball.
40. Using a field made unusable because of weather conditions.
41. Permitting non-participants too close to the activity. A thrown bat or errant ball can create an unnecessary hazard.
42. Permitting or requiring the new student to participate at the same level as students who have been in the program for a considerable time.
43. Not maintaining records.
44. Permitting students to officiate a class game.
45. Failing to post appropriate information and warning signage.
46. Permitting a gymnastic skill or high-risk activity without demonstration of skills. Permitting performance of a gymnastic skill without spotters.
47. Competitively participating in a student activity or game.
48. Not having a way to communicate (e.g. - cell phone or walkie-talkie) in an emergency.
49. Not staying abreast of current information and rules.
50. Not regularly reminding your students of their responsibility in regard to their own safety.

Being aware of the above situations will not guarantee the safety of your students or the exclusion of litigation. But it will certainly help.

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4. THE DEFENSIVE GAME PLAN FOR THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER

We've covered those areas that cause potential injuries and lawsuits. This section addresses those positive strategies that will help lower the chance of injuries to students and subsequent lawsuits against you. I call it the *defensive lesson plan*.

These practical suggestions are based on research, the author's education and 34 years as a physical education teacher and administrator. These ideas are also based, unfortunately, on serving as an *expert witness* for the last 40 years.

These risk management ideas will:

- Help prevent an injury.
- Help prevent litigation when an injury occurs.
- Help demonstrate that you acted in a reasonable professional way if there is litigation.

As you review this list, remember:

You are measured by a standard of care, not by a standard of practice. A standard of practice at your school may be playing floor hockey without eye protection. That is not the standard of care. The standard of care and your standard of practice should be the same.

The best risk management plan is the teacher who is competent, caring and a vigilant professional who runs a worthwhile program. So:

1. If there is a top of the list suggestion – *it is make safety a priority*. Safety is not flamboyant. No one gives you a trophy or a raise for running a safe program. Most do not recognize risk management until there is an injury. Be pro-active.
2. Including ways and means to lower the chance of injury is a duty of care.
3. The topic of risk management (safety) should be a regular topic in your departmental meetings.
4. Have a safety committee that includes people from different departments such as the business manager, a coach, the school lawyer, the nurse and the maintenance manager.
5. Require safety checklists (see checklist sections in this manual).

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6. Maintain records. Lesson plans, attendance, material covered and achievement records all demonstrate your credibility as well as help you plan for next year. Keep records of instructional sequencing and practices.
7. Include a place for safety issues in your lesson plan. It helps you to remember to remind your students of potential risks.
8. Always warn and inform the class of the possible risks of participation.
9. Select activities that are within the ability of your students.
10. The responsibility of the student in regard to her/his role in lowering the chance of injury should be part of any orientation.
11. Always offer basic risk management (safety) instruction. Don't assume that students have prior knowledge or experience for the activity.
12. Make sure required performance levels reflect the age, maturity, ability, and experience of the student.
13. Always check the site before participation.
14. Check all equipment prior to participation. Is it appropriate for the age group? Is it in working order?
15. Check to see that all equipment that should have warning labels have them and those labels are clear.
16. Read the warning labels to the class at the beginning of the unit.
17. Protective equipment must fit correctly and be worn for those activities judged to require such safeguards.
18. Avoid the use of homemade equipment. Purchase equipment only from reputable dealers.
19. Store unused equipment, such as volleyball poles and hockey nets so they are away from activity areas.
20. Follow the state and school district guidelines as set forth in the curriculum. If you decide to deviate from a curriculum, be able to justify it.
21. Include safety tips in the curriculum. When the teacher reviews the skills to be taught, she/he will also be reviewing safety strategies.
22. Post signage addressing safety.

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23. Secure the activity area when you leave.
24. Have an emergency plan and practice that plan just as you practice a fire drill.
25. Some simple safety issues that can turn into risk management demons need to be addressed such as:
 - Students chewing gum.
 - Students wearing jewelry.
 - Students playing with long fingernails.
 - Students playing with free-swinging hood strings or necklaces.
 - Students participating in inappropriate attire.
 - Not immediately drying wet spots on the floor.
 - Permitting music during instruction.
 - Not utilizing a whistle.
 - Not taking the time to know the student's name. This demonstrates you care. Care adds to credibility. Credibility appreciably lowers the chance of being sued.
26. Teach only the skills and activities you are prepared to teach. The continual addition of new activities makes it difficult to be proficient in everything.
27. Ask for help from your peers and supervisors if unsure of the safety issues of an activity.
28. Make sure demonstrations are clear, accurate and include safety hints.
29. Pinpoint inappropriate executions of skills and make the necessary adjustments.
30. Be ready to modify a lesson because of inclement weather.
31. Avoid mismatches during competitive activities.
32. Maintain appropriate buffer zones during activity. The lack of unobstructed space outside the normal playing area is a major cause of accidents.

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33. Avoid overcrowding activity areas. When you have too many moving bodies for the size of space available you must sit some students down. That's not physical education, but it decreases the chance of injuries.
34. Learn to say "NO!" As in "no, you can't participate without proper attire"; "no, you can't stay in the weight room"; "no, you can't try that skill because you are not ready."
35. Contact the school's insurance carrier or school risk manager to answer your safety and risk management questions. Don't wait until an injury and/or lawsuit occurs.
36. Accidents happen even with the best level of the risk management. Have a first aid kit and communication system available in case there is an injury.
37. Avoid discussions following accidents. Report only to the appropriate supervisor.
38. Public relations count. Re-evaluate naming games and activities that suggest violence. Names such as *Bombardment*, *Kill the Cow*, *Do or Die* and *Suicide* do not add credibility to the profession.
39. Stay abreast of current information, methods and techniques. It is never too late to learn.
40. Visiting other schools and sharing concerns is an excellent risk management learning experience.
41. Remember – Striving to lower the chance of injury is not a one-time occurrence. It is not a one-time safety checklist review. It is a daily, important duty.

Walk into every class and go through this simple risk management test:

Are there any potential hazards? If so,

- Remove them.
- If the hazard cannot be removed then cover the hazard.
- If the hazard cannot be removed or covered then the class should be moved to another site.
- If the hazard cannot be removed, covered, or the class moved then adjust the activity.
- If none of the about can be done - cancel the activity.

A great deal has been written about risk management. Following the suggestions in this section will appreciably lower the chance of injury and lawsuits.

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5. THE BAKERS DOZEN SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION

	ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENTS/ACTION
1	Check your lesson plans Do your lesson plans address the activity, the risks, and how to lower those risks?			
2	Check the environment Have you inspected the area? Are the mats secured and clean? Is the playing surface free of debris?			
3	Check the equipment Have you inspected all the equipment to be used?			
4	Check the attire of the students Are the students wearing the appropriate attire for the scheduled activity? Are they wearing correct footwear?			
5	Check the physical readiness of the students Are the students physically prepared for the activity? Have they gone through an appropriate warm up?			
6	Check the skill readiness of the students Have the students received reasonable progressive instruction?			
7	Check for equal competition Are the sides reasonably matched? Have you avoided discrepancies in size, age and skill?			
8	Check for proper supervision Is student supervision appropriate for the activity? Do you know the best place to observe and control the activity?			
9	Check your records Do your records document attendance, skill achievement and material covered?			
10	Check the emergency plan Do you know what to do if a student is injured?			
11	Check and follow the curriculum Have you reviewed the current policies, rules and regulations for your school and district?			
12	Check the students understanding of their responsibility in regard to their own safety Do students understand their accountability and role in avoiding injury to themselves and others?			
13	Check yourself Are you prepared to teach the class? Have you done everything that is reasonable to lower the chance of injury in your class?			

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6. PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITY CHECKLISTS

The first section offers general risk management suggestions for the physical educator. The second section addresses the most common individual and team sport activities found in class activities. An indoor adjustment for outdoor activities checklist is also included.

General Checklist Suggestions

1. Remember you always have a duty of care to reduce the chance of injury.
2. When in doubt, err on the side of caution and safety.
3. Review the risk management rules at the same time you review the rules of the activity.
4. Remind the students of their responsibility for their own well-being. This simple risk management technique cannot be overemphasized.
5. Check the environment. Are there protrusions? Do you have safety glass in those doors?
6. Avoid playing on surfaces that are not acceptable for the activity.
7. Check the equipment.
8. Keep unused equipment, such as balls out of the activity area.
9. Equipment should fit the students.
10. Check the attire of the students.
11. Keep as many students in your view as possible.
12. Utilize the supervision skill of scanning.
13. Use a whistle to control and/or stop the activity.
14. Supervision includes watching the students in the bleachers.
15. If you are not in the activity area – your students should not be in the activity area.
16. Try to avoid interruptions that take your mind and eyes away from supervising.
17. The duty to supervise includes the locker room and the transition to and from the activity area. Does the school have a plan for this type of supervision?
18. Is the number of students participating a reasonable number to supervise?

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19. Never use a wall, column or any obstruction as a boundary line for the activity.
20. Never use common boundary lines for adjacent fields or courts.
21. Designate buffer zones to decrease the chance of injury.
22. Teach students how to fall. The National Wrestling Coaches Association includes teaching how to fall in their risk management manual. A 2006 study in Australia concluded that players had less chance of injury when taught landing and falling skills.
23. Equalize competition as much as possible.
24. Know the difference between coercion and motivation.
25. Set up activities so that glare is not a problem.
26. Instruct and supervise the moving of equipment.
27. Correct a potential risk management problem as soon as you see it. Don't hope "it'll go away." Not drying wet spots on a surface or re-taping protective mats are two examples.
28. Have an emergency plan.
29. Have water available.
30. Have an inclement weather plan. Injuries occur when an activity planned for the outdoors is taught indoors without modification for indoors.
31. Always use protective equipment when required.
32. Follow the risk management suggestions in the curriculum.
33. File an accident report as soon as possible after an injury occurs.
34. Some simple things - that were issues in lawsuits - to avoid:
 - Avoid distractions when you are teaching.
 - Keep non-active students, such as the "next batters" must be out of range of thrown bats.
 - Have drills going in the same direction.
 - If the field is in poor condition – don't use it.
 - Avoid running up and down steps and bleachers.
 - Make sure the late student warms up prior to full participation.
35. Always ask yourself:
 - Am I prepared?
 - Do I know the best way to supervise the students for this activity?

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- Have I prepared the students for the activity?
- Have I checked the facility and the equipment?
- Have I warned them about the potential risks of the activity?
- Is risk management part of departmental meetings?

Activity Checklists for Physical Education

Use with “The Baker’s Daily Dozen Safety Checklist for Physical Education”

- Aerobics
- Aquatics and Swimming
- Archery
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Biking
- Bowling
- Challenge Activities and Project Adventure
- Cross Country & Running Activities
- Dance
- Football (Flag)
- Field Hockey
- Floor Hockey
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- In Line Skating/Roller Skating/Skateboarding
- Lacrosse (STX)
- Play Days
- Racquet Sports - Paddleball, Handball, Squash
- Soccer
- Self Defense Type Activities
- Softball
- Speedball
- Spirit Team/Cheer
- Tennis
- Track and Field
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Volleyball
- Wall Climbing
- Weight training
- Wrestling
- Indoor Adjustments for Outdoor Activities
- Other activities (blank checklist form)

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AEROBICS CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Use a slow start and progression - this eliminates most of the overuse injuries.			
Use a "giving, shock absorbing surface."			
Include instructions, a warm up, warnings and a cool down in every class.			
Check the surface for debris, cleanliness, slickness and water. Wet spots are dried immediately.			
Maintain appropriate space between students.			
Students wear proper footwear and attire that does not restrict motion.			
Arrange the class for optimal supervision.			
Perform in a space free of other activities.			
Avoid ballistic exercises.			
Purchase equipment only from reputable dealers.			
Have water available, but do not permit water bottles on the activity area.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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AQUATICS AND SWIMMING CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
A certified lifeguard is present at all times.			
Instructors are qualified by a professional aquatic organization.			
All pool doors are secure at all times.			
All appropriate life saving equipment is available and in working order, including buoys, a crook, ropes, spine board, head brace, blanket, phone and first aid equipment.			
Pool rules are posted at eye level.			
Water is tested on a regular basis. Records are kept.			
Recreational swimmers use a buddy system or other safety system.			
There are no underwater hazards, including the slope angle between the deep and shallow end.			
The deck is non-slippery and free of obstacles.			
Starting blocks are at the deep end.			
Swimmers are removed from any diving areas.			
Signage includes no diving, no running, and no horseplay. Pool depth is marked,			
Deep and shallow ends are clearly marked with buoys.			

Note: Refer to Appendix for text by Dr. Tom Griffith.

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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ARCHERY CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Students are reminded of the following safety rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never point an arrow at another person. • Wait for commands before fitting, firing and retrieving. • Never cross the shooting line without permission. • Place your hand on the bow and not touching the arrow. • If arrow falls from the bow, and lands beyond the firing line – do not retrieve it. 			
A backstop is in place and students are shooting away from activity (parking lot, walkway, etc.)			
All equipment is checked.			
Arm guards are used.			
All non-shooters are behind a designated safety line.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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BADMINTON CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Set up court properly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have buffer zones at least three feet (five feet is preferred) between courts to avoid colliding with students on nearby courts. • Never use a common standard for two courts. • Provide at least 8' of clear space behind the base line. • Do not attach nets to a wall (this creates a potential hazard for students changing courts). 			
Inspect all equipment and surfaces prior to play.			
Students wear protective eye guards.			
There is proper spacing of students during stroke practice.			
Remind students to be careful when changing sides for play on the next court.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

Note: The shuttlecock speed has been measured up to 200 mph. Yellow colored shuttlecocks offer better visibility.

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

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BASKETBALL CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
The facility is checked for safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the backboard, rims, backboard padding and support cables. • Check for broken hooks on the basketball rim. • Check all wall padding - side backboards and the walls behind side courts should be padded. • Close all retractable bleachers to avoid trip hazards. • Court space is not overlapped during drills and play. • The court is not overcrowded. 			
Check the floor for debris, cleanliness and slippage. Wet spots are dried immediately.			
All balls not in use are stored on away. Loose balls are a trip hazard.			
The play area is secured to avoid unnecessary traffic.			
Drills that require play close to walls are avoided.			
Jewelry is not worn. Fingernails are trimmed.			
Outdoor courts have padded support poles if there is no buffer zone between the basket and pole.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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BIKING CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Require all riders to wear certified helmets.			
Keep bikes in good repair, especially the brakes.			
Be sure the bike fits the rider.			
Have students check pressure of the tires.			
Review and follow all traffic rules, including signals.			
Have students walk their bikes across any busy intersection.			
Have students wear bright colored clothing.			
Have students travel at least in pairs.			
Avoid heavy trafficked area.			
Evaluate skills and safety knowledge prior to biking off campus.			
There is adequate supervision.			
Maintain water bottles.			
Use warm ups and stretching exercises.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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BOWLING CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Bowl at a reputable center.			
Have an established transportation policy.			
Be sure that students know arrival and departure locations and times.			
There is a warm up and stretching period.			
Have students bowl at adjoining lanes for better supervision.			
Remind students of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid walking behind someone swinging a ball. • Avoid approaching the foul line at the same time as someone bowling in the next lane. Pause and let the adjoining lane bowl first. • Use two hands to pick up the ball without inserting the fingers. • Insert fingers while holding the ball cradled in the opposite arm. • Don't put your hand between the ball and the return. • Avoid crossing the foul line as the lane is generally oiled. • Use "mag" powder for better grip. • Wear bowling shoes. • No earphones while bowling. • Follow the rules of the bowling center. • Use proper bowling etiquette. Remember that you are a guest at the lanes. 			
Know the location of the emergency care station.			
Inspect bowling areas prior to use. Look out for wet areas.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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CHALLENGE ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
These activities are taught by a qualified teacher.			
Risk management (safety) issues are part off all instruction.			
Direct supervision is in place for this problem solving activity.			
Avoid activities in which participants are blindfolded, and those having students fall backwards into the arms of another student.			
Teach the skill of spotting.			
Shock absorbing surfaces are required.			
Warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

(See Appendix for further information regarding rope courses.)

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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CROSS COUNTRY AND RUNNING ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Specific running routes are assigned, and designed with planned points of observation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and streets are avoided as much as possible. • Areas that are busy or have obstructions and/or “blind spots” are also avoided as much as possible. • Notify parents if you plan to run off school grounds. 			
Running areas are checked prior to use.			
Students are taught how to run on various terrains.			
Students are reminded to run only in indicated areas. If running on roads and/or streets, always face traffic. Follow all traffic regulations.			
No student runs alone.			
No earphones are worn or permitted.			
Runners are encouraged to use reflective tape or attire as it adds to their visibility.			
Avoid running when inclement weather makes the normal running area hazardous.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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DANCE CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
The spring type floor is clean, even, splinter free, and clear of trip hazards. It is inspected on a regular basis.			
Protective mats cover sharp objects and protrusions near activity areas.			
All equipment, such as support rails, and mirrors, are checked.			
Students wear proper footwear and attire that does not restrict motion.			
The room is not overcrowded.			
Students are taught/reminded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of dance fundamentals and safety rules. • About the mechanics of safe lifting, how to fall, and how to spot. • To avoid activity if injured and to report all injuries. 			
Techniques and movements are demonstrated.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Rest and water breaks are provided.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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FLOOR HOCKEY CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Contact is not permitted.			
Have buffer zones. Avoid play near walls and other obstacles.			
Players may not play the puck while lying down on the floor.			
All players wear protective eye guards.			
The keeper wears a facemask			
Check all equipment and the playing area.			
Players keep the shaft of the stick below the waist at all times.			
Do not permit slap shots.			
Goalkeeper should remain in the crease.			
Warn players about a possible back swing when approaching the rear of an opponent.			
A quick whistle should be used as a warning signal, especially when players go near walls.			
Consider eliminating face offs.			
Do not permit jewelry and loose fitting clothing.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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FOOTBALL (FLAG) CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
End zones are large and have a buffer zone pass the end line.			
Avoid overcrowded fields.			
Inspect the site prior to play.			
Inspect the flags and belts.			
Check attire and athletic shoes. Jewelry is not permitted. Fingernails are trimmed.			
Remind students that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a non-contact activity. • Attempts to strip the ball from a student can be hazardous. • Attempts to guard the flag can be hazardous. • Fumbles are not permitted. • Only screen blocking is permitted. 			
Review all safety rules.			
There is enough supervision that the game does not become a contact activity.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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FIELD HOCKEY CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Both the field and all equipment are inspected prior to activity.			
The stick size matches each participant.			
Students are reminded to keep the stick below the waist at all times.			
Participants do not wear jewelry.			
The goalkeeper wears full-face and head protective equipment. Consider chest protectors.			
Participants wear goggles (similar to those worn in lacrosse). Shin guards and mouth guards are recommended.			
All drills are kept far apart to avoid errant balls becoming a hazard.			
The teacher emphasizes learning the skills versus competition.			
A softer ball is used during the learning phase.			
Avoid metal cleats.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Rest and water breaks are provided.			

Note: Being struck with a ball or stick accounts for almost 50% of injuries.

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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GOLF CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Students are reminded of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to stand behind someone swinging a club. • The use of word “fore” is a safety warning. • There is zero tolerance for horseplay. • To check before walking out of a hidden area. • To check that the 360-degree area around you is clear for five yards before swinging. • Practice shots are made at the practice area of the course. • To follow the courtesies of the game. • To wear sun visors on the course. • Don’t hit into the group ahead of you. 			
There is close supervision for indoor golf practice.			
Practice at school is done at sites free of all other activities and away from buildings and windows.			
Notify parents if you plan to go off school grounds.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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GYMNASTICS CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Warning labels are on the apparatus and protective mats and are reviewed with students.			
Mats are attached together with Velcro and are cleaned daily.			
Chalk or "mag" is available.			
Keep activity away from walls and other obstructions.			
All inversion activities require direct supervision.			
Apparatus is stored when not in use, and checked before put back into use.			
Students do not wear jewelry or loose fitting clothing. Long hair is tied back.			
Only trained spotters are used.			
The instructor serves as a spotter for all early and difficult skills.			
Students are reminded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to land and fall safely. • How to spot others safely. 			
Students do not attempt any skill without the approval of the instructor.			
Instructors are qualified and experienced in the sport of gymnastics.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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IN-LINE SKATING/ROLLERSKATING/SKATEBOARDING CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
A competent instructor is present.			
Check all equipment, including the breaks and bearings.			
Require helmets, wrist guards, elbow pads and kneepads. Hip pads are optional.			
Put on and remove skates away from the activity area.			
Inspect area for uneven, cracked or loose surfaces.			
Avoid activity near walls or other obstacles.			
Use "back to the wall" supervision.			
Enforce all safety rules, including skating in the same direction.			
Avoid areas that are common to cars or pedestrians.			
Have students wear bright clothes.			
Remind students to only pass on the left.			
Never allow earphones or anything that obstructs vision.			
Teach how to fall, emphasizing the "fall to the knees" technique.			
Notify parents if you plan to go off school grounds.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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LACROSSE (STX) CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Students are reminded that unlike the sport, STX lacrosse is non-contact.			
Protective eye guards are worn.			
Instruction is deliberate and progressive to avoid early frustration that may lead to unsafe play.			
Goalkeeper wears a facemask and throat protector.			
A crease (circle) around the goal area is maintained to avoid contact.			
If played indoors, there are large buffer areas between the area of play and walls.			
Jewelry is not worn.			
Rest and water breaks are provided.			

Note: This physical education variation of Lacrosse still requires a risk management sensitive teacher. Although the STX stick is lighter than the official lacrosse stick, it can still be a weapon without close control.

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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PLAY DAYS CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
There are written guidelines and schedules.			
All events and procedures have been practiced.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students are supervised by experienced teachers. • Athletic sites are supervised by qualified staff. • There is adequate supervision for spectators. 			
A public address system is used for general control.			
Immediate medical care is available.			
There is adequate room for each event and between the events.			
All safety rules are reviewed with students and supervisors.			
The joy and cooperation of participation and self-competition is emphasized.			
Water is available.			

Note: Advanced planning is the key to risk management and the success of these events.

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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RAQUET SPORTS - PADDLEBALL, HANDBALL, SQUASH CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Use a softer ball during the beginning of the unit, and appropriate ball for the skill level of the player.			
Avoid diving throws. If this is taught in an advanced class, use protective mats.			
Inspect the site and equipment.			
Check the floor for debris, cleanliness and slippage. Wet spots are dried immediately.			
Maintain buffer zones. The play area is secured to avoid unnecessary traffic.			
Have participants wear protective eye guards.			
Racquets have a safety wrist guard.			
Check all equipment prior to play.			
Remind participants that this is a non-contact activity.			
A crease in the front of the goal should be maintained to avoid possible collisions.			
Jewelry is not worn. Fingernails are trimmed.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

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SELF-DEFENSE TYPE ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Have strict and direct supervision by a competent instructor.			
Skills performed are only those taught by the teacher.			
Instruct how to fall prior to learning throws.			
Warn never to use full force. Students are reminded what activities are not permissible.			
Teach warning signals, such as tapping an opponent to stop action.			
Have dummies available for practice.			
Inspect the mat area prior to participation. Mats should be cleaned, disinfected and taped to avoid separation.			
All walls or columns near the area are padded to a height of at least 6' high.			
Partners are selected based on size, skill, experience and motivation.			
Participants do not wear jewelry or clothing with loose strings. Fingernails are trimmed.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

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SOCCER CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Closely supervise students as they move the goalposts. Goal posts must be anchored and have appropriate warning labels.			
Check the field and goal posts prior to play.			
Maintain adequate buffer zones between fields and obstructions.			
Maintain as much space as possible between drills to avoid balls from one drill entering another drill area to become a trip hazard.			
Remind students of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not play the ball when you are on the ground. • Do not kick above the waist. • Do not slide tackle. 			
Heading is taught with a light ball. Avoid heading in competition until at least middle school. When the skill of heading is permitted, don't head any ball below the waist.			
Participants wear shin guards.			
Participants wear only soccer shoes or athletic shoes.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Rest and water breaks are provided.			

Note: The best risk management strategy is instruction and emphasizing sportsmanship.

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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SOFTBALL CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Use batting helmets, gloves and catcher's equipment.			
Modify or play without a catcher if this position cannot be filled safely.			
With indoor softball, changes are made because of limited space.			
Bats and other equipment are kept out of playable areas to avoid trip hazards.			
Slow or moderate pitch versus fast pitch is preferred. Consider the use of a softer softball.			
The field, bases and batting cage are checked prior to the start of class.			
Bases are flat and movable.			
Students are reminded to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop a bat versus throwing the bat. • Avoid sliding. • Not use weighted donuts on bats for batting warm up. 			
All throwing drills go in a parallel direction with adequate space in between.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

Note: The game of baseball in a physical education setting is inappropriate.

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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SPEEDBALL CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Review ground to air ball conversion techniques.			
Defense should not try to kick the ball out of the hands of an offensive player during conversions.			
Consider eliminating heading, especially prior to high school.			
This is a non-contact sport.			
Check the field and goal posts prior to play.			
Maintain adequate buffer zones between fields and obstructions.			
Remind students of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not play the ball when you are on the ground. • Do not kick above the waist. • Do not slide tackle. 			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

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SPIRIT TEAM/CHEER CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
The floor is kept clean, even, and free of trip hazards.			
The floor is a shock-absorbing, giving floor. Avoid cement and tile surfaces.			
The instructor has a clear view of all participants.			
Use activity specific stretches, warm up and cool down exercises.			
Check all equipment.			
Encourage the use of a sweat suit or other clothing for "down time."			
Check for appropriate shoes.			
Avoid overcrowding.			
Teach proper fundamentals and mechanics such as how to fall, to lift and how to spot.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

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TENNIS CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Inspect the court for trip hazards, the nets for exposed metal cable and the net posts. Inspect the fencing for holes and protrusions.			
Check racquets for no cracks or loose or missing strings, and that there is proper grip.			
Check for appropriate and clean athletic shoes to avoid potentially hazardous grit on the surface.			
Insist on retrieving balls on the surface as soon as possible.			
Courts should have a minimum of 12' between sidelines and 15' behind the base line.			
Maintain towels to remove water or sweat from the courts.			
Do not permit horseplay such as jumping over the net.			
Do not permit non-participants inside the court area.			
Etiquette and self-responsibility of the game is emphasized.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Rest and water breaks are provided.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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TRACK AND FIELD CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
The site and equipment is inspected prior to instruction.			
Only one event at a time is taught.			
All equipment not in use is kept out of the activity area.			
Buffer zones are maintained to avoid collisions between active and non-active students.			
Students are reminded how to set up equipment, retrieve thrown implements and only to do so when instructed.			
Students are reminded to check that the throwing area is clear of people before throwing.			
A discus cage, discus area, and rubber discus is used when this event is included in the class.			
A softball is used as a substitute for a shot put during the learning phase of this event.			
Hurdles are checked for height, appropriate spacing and surfaces.			
Participation is limited on a wet track.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Rest and water breaks are provided.			

Note: This sport requires specific knowledge and supervision skills for each of the various events. Avoid the javelin, and pole vault. The special requirements for these events require extensive time and an athletic environment.

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

RECEIVED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Principal

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ULTIMATE FRISBEE CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Inspect the field for holes, debris and other trip hazards.			
This is a non-contact activity.			
Consider softer type discs for initial classes.			
Check discs for cracks and rough surfaces caused by contact with rough surfaces.			
Have ample space and buffer zones.			
If goal posts are used, they must be padded.			
Keep unused discs off the ground.			
Teach students how to fall.			
Indoor ultimate play is not recommended, but limited throw and catch drills are reasonable.			
Avoid jewelry and other hanging clothing.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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VOLLEYBALL CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
The site and equipment are inspected prior to participation, with special attention given to the floor.			
All wet areas are dried immediately.			
The buffer zones are maintained between courts and walls. There can be extensive activity outside the formal playing area.			
A common standard/sideline for two courts is never used.			
Guide wires are identified by bright colored material.			
Standards are padded.			
Unused balls are kept off the floor to avoid trip hazards.			
Diving for the ball during play is not permitted.			
Students are reminded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What areas are non-playable • To call for the ball to help avoid collisions 			
Portable goals with large heavy bases are padded and appropriate warnings given to students. Students are instructed on how to safely move portable goals.			
Students are reminded of blocking and spiking rules to help avoid collisions at the net.			
Air pressure in the ball is at the lower end of the acceptable range.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water breaks are provided.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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WALL CLIMBING CHECKLIST
 (Vertical Climbing Wall)

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
A qualified instructor is required.			
Inspect all equipment daily and keep written records of inspections.			
Climbers and spotters must wear safety helmets.			
Closed toed shoes or athletic shoes must be worn.			
No jewelry or hanging strings is allowed.			
Direct one-on-one supervision at all times.			
A harness must be worn for wall climbing.			
Floor has protective mats.			
Area for climbing must be appropriate for ability of students.			
Climbers must stay in their specific section of the wall.			
Avoid permitting multiple people climbing at one time without adequate supervision.			
Stretching and warm up is required.			
Water is available			
Follow all recommendations of the Wall Climbing Association. (See appendix for address.)			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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WEIGHT TRAINING CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Supervision is by a qualified instructor.			
Weight training area is locked when a class is not in session.			
All equipment, surfaces and protective mats are inspected prior to the start of class.			
There is adequate space between weight training equipment.			
Free weights and machine weights are in separate areas. Safety collars are available.			
Spotting has been taught and is required at all times.			
Disinfectant squeeze bottles are available as is "chalk" for added grip.			
All equipment is on a maintenance schedule.			
Students understand the concept of progression.			
Students have received safety instruction regarding how to make various lifts.			
Students know they may not proceed to a higher weight without permission.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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WRESTLING CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
If students are permitted to move wrestling mats, teachers closely supervise this.			
Mats are approved for wrestling activity and have warning labels. Mats offer the best shock absorbing value when placed over a base mat or on a wooden surface. Mats are taped.			
Inspect the mats and the general area prior to participation for cleanliness and obstructions. Disinfect mats daily and when soiled.			
All walls or columns near the wrestling area are padded to a height of at least 6' high.			
Students are reminded how to fall properly.			
Wrestling partners are selected based on size, skill, experience and motivation.			
Participants do not wear jewelry. Fingernails are trimmed.			
Participants wear ear protection for competition.			
Students know the size of their wrestling space during drills and stop immediately when they leave their space.			
The wrestling area is not overcrowded.			
Students have no uncovered open wounds.			
Students are reminded what holds are not permissible.			
Sport specific warm ups and stretching exercises are used.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

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INDOOR ADJUSTMENTS FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION
Have a "rainy day" program scheduled.			
Check the indoor facility to see what you can and cannot do.			
Avoid multiple activities at the same time.			
Ask yourself what are the hazards in trying to do those skills you planned to do outside?			
All finish lines, turning lines must be far from walls and other obstacles.			
Check doors to make sure they are completely closed.			
A "do not enter" sign on the door will help prevent visitors being struck for a ball.			
Keep throwing and catching skills away from doors and other students.			
Limit the number of participants if the size of the area is too small.			
If the class was initially outside, check athletic shoes before entering the indoor area.			
If you cannot safely do the activity planned for outside indoor – don't. Select a new activity.			
Water is available.			

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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_____ **CHECKLIST**

For other activities such as yoga, walking, etc -You fill in the ITEM/ISSUE blanks.

SCHOOL: _____ DATE: _____

COMPLETED BY: _____

ITEM/ISSUE	OK	Not OK	COMMENT/ACTION

OTHER CONCERNS OR COMMENTS: _____

Use other side for additional comments.

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7. ADDITIONAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

This section is a collection of suggestions and ideas that have not been addressed in earlier sections. They are offered in no order of importance because they are all important.

What You May Not Have Learned in Physical Education Risk Management 101

Our Current Legal Atmosphere

1. Today people sue at the drop of a hat. What was once considered an unfortunate accident is too often described today as negligence. Recall that 51% of the lawyers in the world live in the United States. Before blaming the current litigation program totally on the law profession remember, the lawyers must first have clients. Parents and students are those clients. Physical Education lawsuits and lawsuits in general are a growth industry.
2. Lawyers have made a major contribution to risk management. They have made the teachers sensitive to their role in lowering the chance of injury and safety issues.
3. Being part of a lawsuit is no fun. It saps your energy and sometimes destroys programs and friendships. It is unlikely you have to worry about financial loss. We may ask, "Why did the school settle the case against the P.E. teacher and give away money if the teacher wasn't negligent?" More people understand that settling a case is not as a matter of right and wrong, but rather a matter of money. If you can settle a case for less than the cost of the case – many insurance companies will settle.
4. You are not held to the standard of care as defined by the guidelines taught to you in your physical education courses. You are held to society's standard of care. Your actions or lack of actions will not be judged by other P.E. teachers. Your peers will judge them in a court of law.
5. The best way to lower the chance of injury and lawsuits is to be proactive. The more you do, the more you demonstrate your interest in safety – the fewer injuries occur and when they do – the less chance someone wants to sue you.

Potential Dangerous Activities of the Twenty-First Century:

King of the Hill, Bull in a Ring, and Buck-Buck were listed as unacceptable activities in the past. Today, because of litigation many states have added the following as unacceptable activities:

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- Dodgeball
- Running backwards
- Tag games
- Recess
- All combative activities such as “chicken fights” and “arm wrestling”
- Diving boards
- Touch football
- Trampolines
- Gymnastics
- Sledding

All the above, AND ALMOST EVERY OTHER ACTIVITY, can be dangerous if not taught and supervised correctly. This is true with any physical activity. Unfortunately, every time there is a lawsuit involving the above or any other activity, the immediate knee-jerk reaction is to eliminate that activity.

All programs must determine the worth of each activity they offer. Once establishing the educational value of the activity, establish risk management guidelines. Generally, it is not the activity, but rather how the activity is offered that causes concern.

Did any professor talk to you about the following?

1. What to do when your scheduled outdoor class must meet indoors because of inclement weather? Have a substitute rainy day program or modify your lesson plan to conform to the new conditions. Remember:
 - You have less space. Place markers to serve as buffer zones to keep students away from walls.
 - Keep the activity going in the same direction to avoid balls and projectiles flying in various directions.
 - Substitute students in and out of activities if necessary.
 - Keep activity away from windows and doors.
 - Check the area before the activity.
2. The excused student. – How do I supervise him/her while teaching the class? Ideally have an assistant. Pragmatically make them part of the class as an official or scorer. Place these students in your scanning site lines.
3. The unprepared student – The student wants to participate, but forgot his/her athletic shoes. In days gone by teachers would let the student play in “socks.” Today the student should sit with the excused students.

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4. The double class – your colleague must leave for a game and you must take his/her class. You now have to supervise 70 students. Ideally you should have an assistant. In the real world you will have to supervise twice as many students. To follow the scheduled lesson plan in a safe manner is probably impossible. Modify the period to offer as much activity as possible even if it means having inactive students. Then talk to your principal.
5. The curriculum calls for field hockey and you do not know the sport. – Ideally you switch classes with the teacher who knows the activity. In reality you ask a knowledgeable teacher to assist you while you learn as much as possible about the activity – especially the safety rules.
6. Facility issues - You are assigned a site that does not meet the safety requirements of the activity. You are scheduled to teach soccer but the field is being lined for the upcoming varsity game that afternoon. You have your choice of the parking lot or cancelling the class. The risk-free strategy is to cancel the class. From a professional view you modify your lesson and teach on the parking lot. Avoid competition and limit the activity to basic skill developments. Understand however that doing so in today's litigious environment makes you vulnerable.
7. How do I supervise the locker room and activity site at the same time?
You either:
 - Stay with the class in the locker room until everyone is ready.
 - Have another teacher/monitor/athletic trainer supervise the locker room while you supervise the activity area.
 - Have a plan. Locker rooms must be properly supervised.
8. The challenged student – Ideally the school system has an adapted physical education specialist to help. Seek support from qualified adaptive P.E. teachers. If the teacher feels ill equipped to safely incorporate a challenged student into the program, he/she should inform the administration. You must lower the potential risk to the challenged student – and of course the non-challenged student.
9. Can I participate with my students? The current feeling is if you are playing you cannot supervise. I believe this is good advice if participation means all out competition. Many experienced teachers however can use participation as a teaching tool without sacrificing supervision. It depends on the experience of the teacher, the number and age of the students, the activity and sight lines.

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10. In 1993, Brian Wynn of Canada wrote:
- Anything low children will climb on.
 - Anything high children will swing from.
 - If it was constructed, it can break.
 - If it's up, it can fall.
 - If it moves, it will collide with something.
 - If it's alive and under ten years old, it will be curious and adventurous.
 - If it's alive and over ten years old, it will be curious and adventurous.

Now that's the beginning of physical education risk management.

Other Considerations

1. Mixed gender classes – We have had boys and girls in the same class for many years. Our risk management duties do not change. We attempt to lower the chance of injury while offering a worthwhile program to our students.
2. Harassment Issues – Hazing, bullying and “just fooling around” can easily lead to a physical and emotional injury. Know and follow your school's written policy on such unacceptable behavior.
3. Working with substitute teachers – These individuals may or may not have a physical education background. Neither do they know the students, the facilities or the curriculum. Ideally have a substitute work with a permanent teacher. If this is not possible, take the time to orient the sub to the program and especially the risk management issues.
4. Lightning and inclement weather– Check the field prior to your class, especially when there is inclement weather. When in doubt - don't do it. We know the sound of thunder means lightning may be on the way. Don't attempt to gauge how far away the danger may be so you can finish the class. Get the students off the field.
5. Unmaintained facilities - If the school can offer athletes reasonable facilities, they can do likewise for all the students.
6. Security issues -The P.E. teacher, similar to other staff members, relies on the general school security system. P. E. teachers are often away from school buildings. Some have to escort classes to nearby parks. Always have a means of direct communication to the office when off school grounds.

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Medical Considerations

1. Basic - Make sure you have and are current on first aid strategies and procedures. Know the emergency plan. Know how to reach a higher level of medical care. Cell phones have helped keep the teacher assigned to a field several hundred yards from the main building, to get help.
2. Concussions – The chances of these medical concerns are very limited, but are still possible. Head to head contact is still a potential risk in games such as flag football and soccer. Emphasizing the no contact rule will appreciably lower the chance of concussions.
3. The asthmatic student and other medical issues – All special needs students should be cleared prior to participating in your class. Ask for specific information. You can only react to a situation when you know the specifics. Knowing a student is asthmatic and shows up without a prescribed inhaler enables you to prevent a potential problem. You don't let that child participate.
4. Heat injuries - Making water available during hot days will decrease heat injuries.
5. Communicable diseases - Send anyone with a skin disorder to the nurse. Don't allow children to play contact sports with uncovered open wounds.

Insurance Considerations

Your school district carries Comprehensive General Liability insurance which protects the school district (and its employees, while working within the scopes of their duties, as its agents) against claims and lawsuits brought against it by others for damage or injury that others have suffered as a result of the school district's negligence. The school district must be liable (or potentially liable) for this coverage to respond.

Student accident insurance, purchased by the student's family, pays expenses for medical services rendered due to the injury of a named student. Liability is not a consideration in this insurance. Student accident insurance offers specifically scheduled benefits, and limited catastrophic benefits, typically around \$25,000.

The district also has workers' compensation coverage if you as a district employee are injured on the job.

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1. What to do when a student is hurt
 - Never fail to give aid (err on the side of caution).
 - Do not move the student (due to the possibility of neck and spinal injury).
 - Summon professional medical attention. If 911 is called, let the school office know to expect emergency responders.
 - Report the accident to the school office.
 - Administer first aid as trained.
 - Make sure the injured child is always attended by an adult.
 - Contact parents as soon as possible.
 - Do not discuss who will pay for medical care and **do not admit liability**.
 - Complete an accident report promptly.
 - Be sure to follow school district policies and procedures!
 - Document any information you can think of and who was present.

2. Why complete a student accident report

A Student Accident Report is completed primarily to document the circumstances of the incident and the injury in case of a potential claim or lawsuit. Another reason to complete the report is to alert the school and building administrator of potential problems. In the report's "Follow Up" section, action taken to prevent similar accidents is documented.

3. When to complete a student accident report

For:

- All student injuries where 911, EMT, or other outside medical assistance is called to the scene.
- All student injuries where the student is taken from school or a school event to a doctor or hospital either by the school or a parent or guardian.
- All student injuries involving the head, neck or back, other than minor scrapes or bruises.
- All student seizures, whether related to trauma or medical condition. It is important to specify what action was taken by school personnel in dealing with the seizure.
- All drug-related incidents, whether overdose or reaction from prescription drugs or illegal substances.
- All student incidents involving loss of consciousness. Students suffering from a loss of consciousness should be examined by a physician.
- All student incidents where a student goes into shock.

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- All student injuries, other than minor scrapes and bruises, involving entering, exiting, or while riding on a school bus or other district provided transportation.
 - All student injuries that involve a defect in school equipment or facilities (actual or perceived).
4. How to complete a student accident report:
- Use the district's Student Accident Report form.
 - Write legibly.
 - Report all information that you have at the time; someone may need to complete it more fully later.
 - If you did not observe the incident yourself, say how you found out about it.
 - Report **just the facts** – no opinions.
 - In the injury description, do not give a medical diagnosis unless you are a trained medical professional. If the injury is suspected, state what you know about any injuries.
 - Be as specific as you can as to where the injury occurred.
 - List all persons involved including their names, phone numbers, and addresses if known, and how they are related to the incident.
 - List all responding authorities - fire, police, ambulance, etc. If possible get officers' names.
 - Detail what action has been taken (i.e. what equipment was taken out of service, what hospitals students were sent to, etc.).
 - If an incident form is not available, or does not request relevant information that you have, complete a report on a separate sheet, answering who, what, when, where, why and how the incident happened.

A Final Consideration

There was no attempt to include all the various responsibilities of the teacher, but rather to address risk management duties and strategies not covered in other sections.

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8. A FINAL WORD

You are the best manager of risks and eliminator of hazards. During your class time, you are the major risk management influence to keep students on the playing court and your district out of the legal court.

You cannot, however, prevent all injuries. That is impossible. Your job is to do all that is reasonable to lower the chance of an injury or a problem. The purpose of this book is to help you achieve that goal.

Some have suggested that the current explosion of litigation has added a new game to our society called Lawball.

Your job in regard to risk management is to identify and evaluate the risks of the activity to select and implement reasonable control strategies.

Remember to:

- Check the curriculum.
- Check the environment.
- Check the equipment.
- Check your supervision plan.
- Check your plan for inclement weather.
- Check the attire of your students.
- Check the readiness of the students.
- Check that competition is as equal as possible.
- Check that you inform your students about risks.
- Check that you inform all about their responsibility for their own safety.
- Check that you inform parents about your program.
- Check your plan for emergencies.
- Check your own preparation and readiness.

Walk into every class situation and:

- Look for and recognize a hazard.
- Remove the hazard. If you can't remove the hazard, then,
- Cover or pad the hazard. If you cannot do this, then,
- Adjust the activity. If this is impossible,
- Remove the class from the area.
- If it is impossible to do the above – then you don't do the activity.

It comes down to caring about those you teach and enjoying teaching. It's a matter of foreseeability and vigilance.

We hope this book will help you to continue to run a worthwhile and safe program.

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9. APPENDIX

Sources

Sources - These sources have been selected because they all offer risk management principles.

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10. FORMS

- P. E. Teacher Evaluation Form for Risk Management
- Emergency Plan Information Sheet
- P.E. Facility Inspection Form
- A General Letter to Parents About Physical Education

ps/Putting Prevention Into Practice F 0109

P. E. TEACHER EVALUATION FORM FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

(This form can be used to evaluate a P.E. teacher, or as a self-evaluation tool, or can be attached to a school's general evaluation.)

Name: _____ Position: _____

School: _____ Date of Evaluation: _____

Area	Acceptable	Needs Attention
Professional and Personal Relations		
Cooperates with administration		
Works well with peers		
Follows curriculum guidelines regarding risk management		
Offers appropriate warning and cautions prior to activity		
Communicates risk management continually		
Communicates to students their role regarding safety		
Communicates with school medical personnel		
Demonstrates professional/ethical conduct		
Keeps safety as a priority		
Knowledge and Performance		
Understands his/her legal duties		
Has an emergency plan in place		
First aid skills and certification are current		
Checks for appropriate student attire		
Checks equipment prior to use		
Checks the areas of activity prior to use		
Uses risk management checklists		
Maintains records and forms		

COMMENTS: _____

Signature of Administrator: _____ Date: _____

Signature of PE Teacher: _____ Date: _____

EMERGENCY PLAN INFORMATION SHEET

There is the potential for injury in all physical activities. The key to any emergency action plan is getting professional care to the student as quickly as possible.

1. Know the location of a nearby telephone or have a cell phone available.
2. Have access to a first aid kit.
3. Have the telephone number of an ambulance (or 911) and the hospital.
4. Know the best access route to the school.
5. Keep handy the phone numbers of:

	<i>Office #</i>	<i>Cell #</i>
Nurse	_____	_____
Athletic Trainer	_____	_____
Director of P. E.	_____	_____
Principal	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

6. Remember when an injury occurs:
 - Take control and assess the situation.
 - Remember the basic first aid rule: Do not move the injured student. If the student cannot move by himself/herself (unless in imminent danger), do not move the body part for him/her.
 - Tell bystanders to leave the injured student alone.
 - If an ambulance is not needed, seek help from the nurse/designee in how best to remove the injured student from the playing area.
 - If an ambulance is required:
 - Request assistance from another adult.
 - Have the other adult call an ambulance (or 911) and give the following information:
 - State that it is a medical emergency.
 - State what the emergency is.
 - Give the exact location and the closest cross streets.
 - Give the telephone # from which you are calling.
 - After the other adult has called the ambulance, he/she should report back to the person in charge, confirm the call and give the estimated time that the ambulance will arrive.
 - Have someone go to the entrance and wait for the ambulance.
 - When ambulance personnel arrive, tell them what happened, how it happened and what you have done.
 - Try to reassure the injured student until professional help arrives.
 - Stay calm. Keep an even tone in your voice.
 - Contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible after injury.
 - Complete an accident report and file it with the school administrator.

P.E. FACILITY INSPECTION FORM

School/Location: _____

Inspected by: _____ Date: _____

ITEM	OK	NOT OK	COMMENTS
All surfaces are free from debris, wet spots and trip hazards and are checked prior to use.			
Fields are free of holes and erosion. Field lining is done with non-hazardous substance			
All stationary and portable field equipment is in good repair. Equipment is properly labeled with information and warning messages.			
All unused equipment is safely stored and away from activity areas. Storage areas and facilities are secure.			
Equipment is checked prior to use and is in good repair.			
There are appropriate safety zones and protection between sidelines, fields and non-participants (including excused students). There are barriers between participants and spectators.			
Signage is in place, especially emergency information.			
There is proper lighting. Lights, exit signs and clocks are protected from balls and projectiles.			
All equipment is age appropriate.			
Areas are accessible for persons with disabilities.			
All doors open outward. Accessible gym windows are of safety glass.			
The use of homemade equipment and equipment brought from home follows district policy.			
All high-risk areas, such as weight training room and pool, are secured when not in use or unsupervised.			
Phone and other communication systems (such as P.A. and alarm systems) are in working order.			
Appropriate padding is in place behind backboards, and on columns and goals, according to regulations.			
All supportive cables and standard plates are properly installed in good repair.			
Bleachers are safe and in working order with no sharp edges.			

Check the facility prior to use. When in doubt, do not use. Keep this checklist on file.

Following is a suggested letter outlining general risks of physical education and a few ways that parents can help reduce the risk on injury in physical education. It can be sent it out as a letter at the beginning of the year, or included it in the Parents' Handbook.

A General Letter to Parents about Physical Education

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Regular participation in physical activity is essential for overall development. Active participation in various types of games, exercises, sports, dances have been proven to add to the overall physical, mental and emotional development.

The physical education program that your daughter/son will participate in during this school year will provide opportunities for them to experience the joy of effort, a feeling of fitness, cooperation and at times, valuable competitive experiences.

RISKS

The risk of injury exists in all physical activity. Injuries may range from minor strains and bruises to more serious and in rare occasions, catastrophic incidents. The managing of risk and well being of students, however, is and will always be a major concern of the physical education department. Every reasonable attempt will be made to lower the chance of injury, realizing of course that it is impossible to foresee every split second action and situation. An injury is possible, even when all reasonable precautions are in place.

To help make physical education a safer activity for your child we suggest:

- An annual medical examination for your child
- Making sure your child is in appropriate attire such as T-shirt, shorts or sweat pants/suit and athletic shoes
- Avoid hanging jewelry. Jewelry that cannot be removed must be taped.
- Glasses must be sport safety proof or the student should wear protective shields over his/her glasses.
- Please check your child's attire for cleanliness. Please also check any equipment that is going to be brought to physical education class (if allowed by district policy).
- Please remind children of their responsibility for their own safety.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's physical education teacher.