



Professional Advisory on Student Physical Safety in Learning Environments Backgrounder

Professional advisories support professional judgement and inform practice. This document provides additional information and a high-level summary of key updates.

This information may be useful for:

- system leaders, policymakers, and sector partners seeking a high-level overview of the advisory's evolution and update context
- federations, professional associations, and subject-matter organizations supporting communication, resource development, or professional learning
- school boards and professional learning providers developing system-level resources or implementation supports
- faculties of education and Additional Qualification providers situating the advisory within pre-service and in-service learning.

Purpose and context for the update

The original advisory was issued in 2013 and revised in 2016. The 2026 updated advisory maintains the core purpose of supporting student safety and well-being, while reflecting changes in legislation, Ministry of Education policy, educational practice, and the complexity of learning environments. Research and consultation indicated a need for clearer guidance on professional responsibilities related to student physical safety, greater attention to diverse learning contexts and individualized student needs, alignment with equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility principles, and illustrative examples to support professional judgement.

The updates reflect a shift in emphasis towards the following areas:

- prevention and proactive planning, including supervision, risk identification and mitigation, with attention to individualized safety considerations such as exceptionalities and medical conditions
- professional care grounded in trust, predictability, inclusive and responsive practices, and ethical responsibility, recognizing that students may experience safety situations differently due to identity, lived experience, disability, and environmental factors
- collaboration, ongoing learning, reflection, and the use of professional judgement.

Key updates at-a-glance

Area of Focus	Key updates
Scope of safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">refined focus on physical safety with connections to related advisories addressing psychological, emotional, digital, identity-affirming, and cultural safety
Structure and format	<ul style="list-style-type: none">streamlined structure organized around the 4Rs for Safety Framework (Recognize, Respond, Report, Reflect) with trauma-informed guidance
Learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">expanded references to learning spaces and supervised contexts such as off-site learning, excursions, technological education facilities, science labs, outdoor areas, and extracurricular settings
Student needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">explicit consideration of exceptionalities, disability, medical conditions, accessibility, mobility, and individualized safety planning
Professional lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">balanced approach combining legal responsibilities with professional judgement, reflection, collaboration, and inclusive and responsive practice
Equity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">professional care grounded in trust, foresight, and ethical responsibilitylanguage aligned with culturally responsive practices and equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
Legislative references	<ul style="list-style-type: none">updated and expanded references to relevant legislation and Ministry of Education policies.