



EDUCATION HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

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A. REVISION HISTORY

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a comprehensive governing framework for health and safety within all Education Department programs, services, spaces, and activities. This policy affirms the Education Department's commitment to maintaining safe, prepared, and responsive learning and working environments for all individuals engaged in education-related activities. This includes staff, students, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and external service providers.

Health and Safety are a shared responsibility across the Education Department, guided and supported by management and program leadership. This policy emphasizes both proactive prevention and effective response to emergencies, incidents, and safety concerns. This is achieved through continuous planning, training, preparedness, and improvement.

This policy is intended to empower staff, and program leads to act responsibly and decisively when safety concerns arise, including the ability to pause or suspend programming and activate emergency procedures where necessary. In all circumstances, the health, safety, and wellbeing of individuals take precedence over program delivery.

This policy recognizes the unique contexts in which education and education programming occurs, including on-reserve and off-reserve environments, land-based learning, transportation, and community-based programming. It further acknowledges the importance of trauma-informed approaches to emergency preparedness and response. This includes considerations for the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of students and staff.

This policy is implemented in alignment with the Wahnapiitae First Nation Emergency Response Plan (Operations), which provides the overarching framework for emergency management, coordination with emergency services, and incident response across the community.

2. Scope & Application

2.1. Applicability

This policy applies to all persons engaged in Education Department-authorized activities, including but limited to, staff, students, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and external service providers.

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all individuals and entities operating within its scope.

2.2. Operational Environments

This policy applies equally to permanent, temporary, casual, and contract-based staff, as well as third-party service providers engaged by the Education Department.

Where contractors or third-party service providers maintain health and safety policies or practices that exceed the requirements of this policy, those higher standards may be applied. Program Leads are responsible for ensuring third-party services comply with this policy or approved equivalent standards.

2.3. Locations and Environments

This policy applies to all Education Department Activities conducted in any location, including:

- On-reserve education facilities, including the band office
- Off-reserve schools and post-secondary institutions
- Education-owned or contracted vehicles
- Outdoor, land-based, and community-based learning environments
- Temporary or non-traditional programming locations

This policy applies regardless of ownership, operation, or control of the facility or environment in which education activities occur.

2.4. Activities Covered

This policy applies to all Education Department-authorized activities, whether scheduled, unscheduled, formal, informal, or ad-hoc. This includes but is not limited to instructional programming, transportation, events, outings, and land-based learning.

2.5. Transportation

All transportation services provided, arranged, or authorized by the Education Department fall within the scope of this policy. This includes daily transportation, field trips, community travel, and emergency transportation.

2.6. Relationship to Procedures

This policy establishes minimum requirements for education health and safety. Approved procedures may impose additional, more specific, or more restrictive requirements and must be followed where applicable.

3. Policy Authority and Governance

3.1. Policy Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of Chief and Council and the Education Department, and serves as the governing framework for health and safety across all Education Department-authorized activities.

This policy applies department-wide and establishes mandatory standards for the planning, delivery, and oversight of education-related programs and services.

3.2. Procedural Framework

This policy does not contain detailed operational procedures. Instead it aims to mandate the creation, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of standalone health and safety procedures, including but not limited to:

- Fire Safety Procedure

- Shelter-in-Place Procedure
- Lockdown Procedure
- Emergency Response and Incident Reporting Procedures
- Gas Leak Response

All Education Department health and safety procedures shall be consistent with and, where applicable, support the Wahnapiatae First Nation Emergency Response Plan (Operations), including its incident command structure, communication protocols, and coordination with external emergency services.

3.3. Authority to Act

Authority to activate emergency procedures and suspend programming due to safety concerns is delegated to Program Leads. This authority may be exercised without prior approval where immediate action is required to protect health and safety.

Following the exercise of this authority, documentation must prove that acting was a necessary action.

3.4. Related Documents

- 004.01-PRO-GOV-Binoojinh_Gamig_Fire_Safety
- 004.02-PRO-GOV-Binoojinh_Gamig_Shelter-in-Place
- 004.03-PRO-GOV-Binoojinh_Lockdown
- 004.04-PRO-GOV-Emergency_Response_and_Incident_Reporting
- 004.05-PRO-GOV-Gas_Leak_Response
- 004.06-PRO-GOV-Pre-Trip_Inspection
- Wahnapiatae First Nation Emergency Response Plan (Operations)

Other procedures and forms may be created and added to this document without the need for Chief and Council approval.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. Contractors, Volunteers, and External Service Providers

All contractors, volunteers, and external service providers engaged in Education Department-authorized activities are responsible for:

- Complying with this policy and applicable procedures
- Following all safety instructions and requirements while engaged in education activities
- Cooperating with emergency procedures and response measures

Program Leads are responsible for ensuring awareness of and compliance with these requirements.

4.2. Students and Participants

Students and program participants are expected to:

- Follow safety instructions provided by staff
- Participate appropriately in drills and emergency procedures
- Conduct themselves in a manner that does not compromise the safety of others

4.3. Staff

All Education Department staff, and other WFN staff using Education Department spaces are responsible for:

- Complying with this policy and all approved procedures
- Participating in required training and drills
- Using required personal protective equipment
- Reporting unsafe conditions, incidents, near misses, and safety concerns in accordance with this policy

4.4. Program Leads

Program Leads are responsible for day-to-day implementation of health and safety requirements within their programs and shall:

- Activate emergency procedures when required
- Suspend programming where health or safety concerns are present
- Ensure required safety and emergency and equipment is present, maintained, and accessible
- Identify and report equipment deficiencies or safety concerns to the ESM
- Document equipment checks and compliance activities
- Ensure staff and participants follow approved health and safety procedures

4.5. Education Services Manager (ESM)

The Education Services Manager is responsible for departmental oversight of education health and safety and shall:

- Jointly approve all education health and safety procedures with the Education Director
- Ensure required emergency drills, training, and preparedness activities occur
- Ensure compliance with this policy and associated procedures
- Maintain records of training, drills, and compliance activities
- Address reported safety deficiencies and ensure corrective actions are taken

4.6. Education Director (EdD)

The Education Director is responsible for senior oversight and accountability and shall:

- Jointly approve education health and safety procedures

- Provide executive oversight of emergency response and incident management
- Ensure appropriate parent and guardian communication following emergency incidents
- Support enforcement of this policy across Education Department

5. Emergency Preparedness and Response

5.1. General Requirements

The Education Department shall maintain a state of readiness to respond to emergencies, incidents, and safety concerns across all education programs and activities.

Emergency preparedness shall include proactive planning, risk identification, training, drills, and the availability of appropriate emergency equipment, in accordance with approved procedures.

These activities shall be planned and carried out in a manner that is consistent with the Wahnapiatae First Nation Emergency Response Plan (Operations).

5.2. Activation Authority

Emergency procedures may be activated by a Program Lead when a situation presents an actual or potential risk to health or safety.

Program Leads are authorized to pause or suspend programming where safety concerns exist. Such decisions shall be supported by the Education Department and do not require prior approval when immediate action is necessary.

5.3. Training and Drills

All Education Department staff shall:

- Receive health and safety orientation training upon hire
- Participate in ongoing training relevant to their role
- Participate in scenario-based emergency drills where appropriate

Training and drills shall be conducted in a manner that is age-appropriate, context-specific, and trauma-informed where possible.

5.4. Communication and Coordination

Emergency response shall include timely internal communication and coordination with appropriate leadership and, where required, external emergency services.

Notification, documentation, and follow-up requirements shall be defined in approved emergency response procedures.

Communication, notifications, and coordination with external emergency services shall follow the structures and protocols outlined in the Wahnapiatae First Nation Emergency Response Plan (Operations).

5.5. Continuous Improvement

Following emergencies, incidents, or drills, the Education Department shall review outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement. Corrective actions shall be implemented where necessary to strengthen preparedness and response.

6. Emergency Procedures

The Education Department shall maintain approved, documented emergency procedures addressing the emergency scenarios outlined in this section, developed and implemented in alignment with the Wahnapiṭae First Nation Emergency Response Plan (Operations). All procedures must align with this policy and be implemented across applicable education programs and activities.

6.1. Fire Safety

Fire safety procedures shall be developed and maintained for all education facilities and applicable programming.

Fire safety procedures shall address, at minimum:

- Evacuation planning and routes
- Designated roles and responsibilities during fire emergencies
- Fire drills and frequency requirements
- Use and maintenance of fire safety equipment
- Coordination with emergency services where applicable

6.2. Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-place procedures shall be developed for situations where remaining in place is the safest course of action.

Stay-and-hold procedures shall address, at minimum:

- Conditions under which shelter-in-place may be initiated
- Supervisions requirements, including a minimum of one supervisor
- Headcount and accountability requirements
- Communication protocols during shelter-in-place situations

6.3. Lockdown

Lockdown procedures shall be developed for situations involving immediate or potential threats to personal safety.

Lockdown procedures shall address, at minimum:

- Authority to initiate lockdown
- Notification and documentation requirements

- Internal escalation to the ESM, EdD, and ED
- Parent and guardian notification responsibilities
- Trauma-informed considerations for drills and real incidents, where possible

6.4. Emergency Response and Incident Reporting Procedures

All emergency procedures outlined in this section shall be supported by training and drills in accordance with Section 5 of this policy.

6.5. Gas Leak Response

A gas leak response procedure shall be developed and maintained for all education facilities and applicable programming where natural gas, propane, or other gases are present or may be reasonably be encountered.

Gas leak response procedures shall address, at minimum:

- Recognition of potential gas leak indicators
- Immediate response actions, including evacuation or sheltering decisions
- Prohibitions on ignition sources and equipment use
- Early detection system use
- Communication and notification protocols
- Coordination with emergency services and utilities where applicable

7. Duty to Report

7.1. General Duty

All Education Department staff have a duty to report concerns related to health, safety, and wellbeing that arise in the course of their work.

This duty applies to both internal reporting within the Education Department and external reporting to appropriate authorities or family wellbeing organizations, as required.

7.2. Internal Reporting

Staff must report concerns through the following internal reporting pathway:

1. Program Lead, if applicable
2. Education Services Manager
3. Education Director, where reporting to the ESM is inappropriate
4. Executive Director, where reporting to the EdD is inappropriate

Internal reporting supports oversight, documentation, and follow-up but does not replace external reporting obligations.

7.3. Child, Youth, and Elder Safety Concerns

Staff have a duty to report concerns related to the safety or wellbeing of a child, youth, or an elder when:

- Harm is directly observed
- A disclosure is received
- There is reasonable suspicion of harm or risk

Certainty or confirmation is not required to report a concern.

No one may prevent or dismiss a person's Duty to Report, including staff, administration, Chief, or Council.

Reporting obligations apply regardless of:

- Where the concern occurred
- Whether the concern involves a family member, staff member, or third party

7.4. External Reporting and Family Wellbeing Organizations

Staff must report concerns to appropriate family wellbeing organizations or authorities when required. **Contacting the Social Services Department does not consist of completing the duty to report.**

Concerns requiring external reporting may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological harm
- Neglect
- Exposure to violence
- Unsafe living conditions
- Substance misuse impacting care or supervision
- Sexual harm or exploitation
- Chronic absenteeism in school

These examples are not exhaustive. Specific reporting thresholds and agencies shall be defined in approved procedures.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, staff must inform Education Department leadership after making an external report.

7.5. Emergency Situations

Where there is immediate or imminent risk to health or safety, emergency services must be contacted without delay.

Emergency actions taken under this section shall be consistent with the Wahnapiatae First Nation Emergency Response Plan (Operations), including any site-specific procedures established under that plan.

Emergency response takes precedence over internal reporting requirements.

7.6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Confidentiality does not override the duty to report.

Information shared in the course of reporting shall be limited to what is necessary to address the concern and comply with reporting obligations.

Staff are not to investigate concerns independently.

7.7. Staff Support and Accountability

Staff who report concerns in good faith shall be supported and protected from retaliation.

Failure to fulfill duty-to-report obligations may result in corrective action in accordance with applicable policies.

7.8. Cultural and Trauma-Informed Considerations

Reporting and response shall be guided by trauma-informed principles and cultural awareness. These considerations do not negate or delay reporting obligations and do not replace required reporting actions.

7.9. Scope Beyond Child Safety

Duty-to-Report obligations also apply to serious safety risks involving adults, including disclosures or observations related to domestic violence, threats of self-harm, or other significant health and safety concerns encountered during Education Department-authorized activities.

This does not lead to a Child and Wellbeing Agency being involved, instead it is used to prevent any future near-misses or impacts that have occurred or could potentially occur.

8. Personal Protective Equipment

8.1. PPE Requirements

Appropriate personal protective equipment shall be used for all Education Department-authorized activities where there is a reasonable risk to health or safety.

PPE requirements apply to all staff and, where applicable, to volunteers, contractors, and external service providers.

8.2. Scope of PPE Use

PPE use may be required for activities including, but not limited to:

- Outdoor and land-based programming
- Transportation and vehicle-related duties
- Maintenance and facilities-related tasks
- Emergency response and preparedness activities

Specific PPE requirements shall be defined in approved procedures.

8.3. Provision of PPE

The Education Department is responsible for ensuring required PPE is explained, provided, and utilized.

Program Leads are responsible for ensuring PPE is available for activities under their supervision and that staff are informed of PPE requirements.

8.4. Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

Staff may refuse to perform work where required PPE is unavailable or where health and safety risks cannot be adequately mitigated

Refusal of unsafe work shall be managed in accordance with applicable procedures and does not constitute misconduct.

8.5. Compliance

Failure to use required PPE or to comply with PPE requirements may result in corrective action in accordance with applicable policies.

9. Emergency Equipment

9.1. General Requirement

Emergency equipment shall be available, accessible, and maintained for all Education Department-authorized activities to support effective response to emergencies and safety incidents.

9.2. Education Facilities

All education facilities used for Education Department programming shall be equipped with appropriate emergency equipment, including but not limited to:

- First aid kits
- Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)
- Fire Extinguishers appropriate to the location
- Fire blankets
- Burn kit

- Emergency contact information

Specific equipment requirements, placement, inspection, and maintenance standards shall be defined in approved procedures.

9.3. Vehicles

All vehicles owned, leased, or operated on behalf of the Education Department shall be equipped with appropriate emergency supplies, including but not limited to:

- First aid kits
- Fire extinguishers
- Emergency supplies relevant to travel and weather conditions
- Communication equipment

Vehicle emergency equipment requirements shall be defined in approved procedures.

9.4. Outings, Field Trips, and Land-Based Learning

All outings, field trips, and land-based learning activities shall be supported by appropriate emergency equipment based on risk and context.

Emergency equipment for outings shall be determined through risk assessment and defined in approved procedures.

9.5. Responsibility

Program Leads are responsible for ensuring emergency equipment is present and functional for activities under their supervision and for reporting deficiencies to the Education Services Manager.

10. Transportation Safety

10.1. General Requirement

All buses and general vehicles owned, leased, operated, or authorized by the Education Department shall be subject to pre-trip safety inspections and logbook requirements to support the safe transportation of students, staff, and program participants.

Transportation safety requirements apply to all Education Department–authorized transportation, including routine transportation, field trips, community outings, and emergency transportation.

10.2. Buses

All buses used for Education Department–authorized activities shall undergo a pre-trip inspection prior to operation.

Bus pre-trip inspections shall, at minimum:

- Assess vehicle safety and roadworthiness

- Identify mechanical or safety defects
- Confirm the presence and condition of required emergency equipment

Buses with identified safety deficiencies shall not be operated until concerns are addressed.

Bus logbooks shall be maintained and shall document:

- Pre-trip inspections
- Defects or safety concerns identified
- Corrective actions taken

10.3. General Vehicles

All general vehicles used for Education Department–authorized activities shall undergo a pre-trip inspection prior to operation.

Vehicle pre-trip inspections shall, at minimum:

- Assess vehicle safety and operational readiness
- Identify visible defects or safety concerns
- Confirm required emergency equipment is present

Vehicles with identified safety deficiencies shall not be operated until concerns are addressed.

Vehicle logbooks shall be maintained and shall document:

- Pre-trip inspections
- Reported defects or safety concerns
- Actions taken to address identified issues

10.4. Responsibilities

Drivers and vehicle operators are responsible for:

- Completing pre-trip inspections
- Recording inspections and concerns in the appropriate logbook
- Reporting safety concerns immediately

Program Leads are responsible for:

- Ensuring inspections and logbooks are completed
- Ensuring unsafe vehicles are not operated
- Reporting unresolved transportation safety concerns to the Education Services Manager

11. Documentation & Compliance

All Education Department–authorized activities subject to this policy must be supported by appropriate documentation.

Documentation requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency training and orientation records
- Emergency drills and preparedness activities
- Equipment checks and maintenance records
- Incident, near-miss, and emergency response reports

Documentation shall be completed and maintained in accordance with approved procedures and departmental record-keeping practices.

12. Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy or any associated procedures may result in corrective action in accordance with the WFN HR policy, agreements, or contracts.

Non-compliance by contractors, volunteers, or external service providers may result in suspension or termination of services or access to Education Department programs.

13. Related Documents

This policy applies across and informs all Education Department policies, procedures, guidelines, and operational documents.

All Education Department policies and procedures must be interpreted and implemented in a manner consistent with this policy.

This policy shall be interpreted and applied in conjunction with the Wahnapiatae First Nation Emergency Response Plan (Operations), which governs community-level emergency management and response.