

Benincasa School



Health & Safety Statement 2025

Introductory Statement

The Board of Management under the 'Safety, Health and Welfare Act 2005' sets out the policy and organisation of safety health and welfare in the school. The school seeks to make every effort to preserve the safety, health and welfare of our school community.

Rationale

It is a legal requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 for every employer, in conjunction with employees, to prepare a Health and Safety Statement. It represents the Board of Management (BOM)'s commitment to safety and health, and specifies the manner, the organisation and the resources necessary for maintaining and reviewing safety and health standards.

The BOM wishes to document their health and safety programme and make it available to all employees, outside services providers and Inspectors of the Health and Safety Authority.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

According to our Mission Statement, Benincasa strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and safe environment for our pupils. In keeping with this philosophy our Health and Safety policy emphasises the importance of the health and safety of our pupils and that of all school employees. The Board of Management of Benincasa recognises the importance of the Legislation enacted in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. This Safety Statement sets out the Safety Policy of the Board of Management of Benincasa and sets out the means to achieve that policy. The Board of Management's objective is to endeavour to provide a safe and healthy work environment for all our employees and pupils and to meet our duties to members of the public with whom we come into contact. This policy requires the co-operation of all employees.

It is our intention to undertake regular reviews of the statement in light of experience, changes in legal requirements and operational changes. The Board of Management will undertake to carry out a safety audit annually and report to staff. This inspection / safety audit will be carried out more frequently if requested by either staff or the Board of Management. All records of accidents or ill-health will be monitored in order to ensure that any safety measures required can be put in place, wherever possible, to minimise the recurrence of such accidents and ill-health.

1.3 Specifically, the Board of Management wishes to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable:

- The design, provision and maintenance of all places in a condition that is safe and without risk to health.
- The design, provision and maintenance of safe means of access to and egress from places of work.
- The provision of systems of work that are planned, organised, performed and maintained so as to be safe and without risk to health.
- The proper instruction of staff in dealing with pupils with challenging behaviour when such children are enrolled.
- The provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the safety and health at work of its employees.
- The provision and maintenance of suitable protective clothing or equivalent as necessary to ensure the safety and health at works of its employees.
- The preparation and revision as necessary of adequate plans to be followed in emergencies. e.g. fire evacuation, injuries etc.
- The safety and prevention of risk to health at work in connection with use of any article or substance.
- Obtaining where necessary, the services of competent persons for the purpose of advising on the safety and health at work of the employees e.g. Advisors from the HSE, Fire Officers, ICT Advisors re equipment, ergonomics etc.
- Regularly review of this *Health & Safety Statement* and remediate any issues raised.
- The provision of arrangements for consultation with employees on matters of Health and Safety

1.4 The Board of Management recognises that its statutory obligations under legislation extend to employees, pupils, and any person legitimately conducting school business and the public.

1.5 The Board of Management of Benincasa will endeavour to ensure that the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 are adhered to.

1.6 The Board of Management will form the Safety Committee to monitor the implementation of the Safety and Health policies of Benincasa and the requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

1.7 A Health and Safety Officer may be appointed to monitor the implementation of the Safety and Health Policies of Benincasa and to meet the requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare Act, 2005 The provision of arrangements for the selection from amongst its employees of a Health and Safety Representative.

HAZARDS

The hazards will be divided into two categories.

Those that can that can be rectified or minimised will be dealt with as a matter of urgency. Those hazards that cannot be rectified will be clearly indicated and appropriate procedures listed beside them. All hazards will be eliminated in so far as resources and circumstances allow.

The following hazards (in so much as can be identified) are considered by the Board of Management to be a source of potential danger and are brought to the attention of all concerned:

- Stairs/Steps
- Wet floors
- Climbing frames
- Swing garden surface
- Uneven surface to the rear of the school
- Trailing leads
- Computers
- Guillotine
- Projectors
- Fuse Box
- Electric Kettles
- Cooker
- Boiler House
- Flat roof of hall and Art Room
- External store to be kept locked
- Lawnmower
- Icy surfaces on cold days
- Mats in hall.
- PE Equipment in hall

To minimise these dangers, the following safety/protective measures must be adhered to (see duties of employee):

- Access to and operation of equipment is limited to qualified to members of staff whose job function is that of running, cleaning, and monitoring particular items of equipment in the normal course of their duties. Copies of this statement will be sent to all contractors prior to contract by the Principal/Board of Management. All other contractors entering the school must be shown a copy of the school's safety statement and adhere to its provisions. In addition, all such machinery will be used in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Precautionary notices, in respect of safety matters will be displayed at relevant points
- Ladders must be used with another person's assistance
- Use of glass bottles must be avoided
- PE equipment is to be neatly stacked
- Teachers and SNAs will check that PE equipment is in good condition
- The caretaker will check for uneven, cracked or broken paving slabs
- The caretaker will check that, as far as can be seen that guttering, drain pipes etc are sound and well maintained
- The caretaker will check that all play areas are kept clean and free from glass
- The caretaker will check that all external stores are secure.

In exceptional circumstances a pupil is temporarily unwell any medication e.g. pain relief, may only be administered following receipt of written permission from the pupil's parent/guardian on each occasion the relief is needed.

4. Wet Floors

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Benincasa that the washing of floors is conducted after school hours to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, elimination of danger of slipping. During heavy weather condensation can cause certain areas to become slippery.

5. The Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct in the school provides for a level of appropriate behaviour to minimise personal risk or stress to any employee.

6. Accidents and Injuries

However vigilant the school staff is in relation to pupil safety accidents will happen and correct procedures in the event of accidents can prevent or minimise injuries. Our accident/illness procedure is included as Appendix 5.

7. Bullying

The Benincasa Anti-Bullying Policy is a stand-alone policy, which provides a framework for dealing with instances of bullying among pupils. The procedures for dealing with Adult Bullying are in accordance with the INTO publication 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations (2024)' and our 'Dignity at Work Statement'

8. Access to Employees is by Consent/Appointment

When an employee feels at risk from or threatened by a particular person on school property, this must be drawn to the Board of Management's attention. The Board of Management will undertake to ensure that in such circumstances all appropriate measures will be taken to protect employees.

9. Trained First Aid Personnel

It is the policy of the Board of Management that: -

Some employees will be trained to apply First Aid to pupils and other employees.

All required remedies and equipment are made available for first aid function.

School to be informed in writing by parent/guardian of any allergies

There will be an adequate supply of properly equipped First Aid Boxes available at all times to staff which will contain:

Elastoplast plasters

Wasp Eze

Tape

Disinfectant (e.g) Savlon

Eye lotion(e.g) Optrex

Antiseptic cream

Cotton Bandage

Cream for First Aid treatment of Burns

Antiseptic Wipes

Scissors

First Aid Chart

Roles and Responsibility

DUTIES OF SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

- Conduct an assessment to identify all hazards on the appropriate form (Appendix 3). A Sample Checklist is included as Appendix 4.
- Assess the risks associated with these hazards.
- Detail arrangements made, resources supplied, and responsibility required to deal with the hazards and to keep them under review.

DUTIES OF SAFETY OFFICER

- To liaise with the Safety Rep on matters of Health and Safety.
- To make recommendations to the Principal for the alleviation of potential hazards.
- To monitor progress in relation to dealing with hazards.
- Report on all of the above at appropriate BOM meetings.

Timeframe for Implementation

The revised policy will be implemented from April 2025.

Timeframe for Review

This policy is reviewed regularly.

Responsibility for Review

The BOM will be responsible for reviewing the policy.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the 31/03/2025

Signed: Maighread Ní Ghabhlaiche, (Chairperson, BOM)

The policy is communicated to the members of the BOM and is available to the wider school community through the parents' representatives on the BOM and the Benincasa website. All Benincasa policies are available for inspection **in the school**.

The officer in charge of the Fire Brigade will be met on arrival and immediately informed whether or not all persons have been safely evacuated.

Attacking Fire

Circumstances will dictate whether fire-fighting operations will be attempted. Fire fighting will always be secondary to life safety. While small fires may be dealt with summarily, in the case of a sizeable fire, safe evacuation will be the primary concern.

Fire Drills and Testing Alarms

A Test fire drill will be held once per term. It will be carried out according to the above procedure with the exception of 'Calling the Fire Brigade' and 'Tackling the Fire'. A record of all fire drills will be kept. It will include details of drills including date, time, weather conditions, time taken for evacuation and any other relevant information. Fire Alarms will be tested once a term outside of school hours.

APPENDIX 3

HAZARD CONTROL FORM			
Hazard	Action Taken	Date Remedied	Person Responsible

- 3.9 fire extinguishers and fire blankets are checked and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions;
- 3.10 the firefighting equipment available is that recommended by the local authority's fire officer and is located in accordance with the fire officers' recommendations;
- 3.11 the fire alarm system is tested at regular intervals whilst the school is in session to ensure that it works and is audible in all parts of the building;
- 3.12 flammable substances e.g. cleaning fluids, photocopying chemicals etc. are stored correctly, away from any sources of heat.
- More detailed advice on fire safety is given in the next section.

4 ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

4.1 General

All electrical equipment should be maintained and checked regularly by a competent person. Such maintenance should include checking that:

- equipment is correctly wired and earthed;
- plugs are correctly wired;
- use ratings that are correct for the type of equipment being used (fuse ratings should be marked on the equipment and the plug).
- the mains supply is still capable of meeting the maximum demand;
- the distribution system (i.e. sockets, bench supplies etc.) is suitable for the type of work being carried out;
- the isolating switches are marked, well-sited, accessible and known to staff;
- residual current (earth leakage) circuit breakers are used where appropriate.

4.2 Lighting

Visually check that:

- 4.2.1 all the light fittings are working and are kept in a clean condition;
- 4.2.2 light switches are not broken and appear to be in a safe condition;
- 4.2.3 the lighting is adequate for the type of work being undertaken as specified in Circular 24/82.

4.3 Plugs/Sockets/Leads

Visually check that:

- 4.3.1 plugs are in good condition with no cracks or pieces missing;
- 4.3.2 sockets are in good condition with no cracks or pieces missing;
- 4.3.3 socket screws and mountings are secure;
- 4.3.4 sockets are situated in safe positions, convenient for the equipment to be used and not subject to damp;
- 4.3.5 indicator lights on sockets function correctly;
- 4.3.6 insulation on leads is not cracked or frayed;
- 4.3.7 leads are without knots or joins and are reasonably free of 'kinks';
- 4.3.8 Leads are the correct length for the equipment being used;
- 4.3.9 there are no trailing leads;
- 4.3.10 surge protection adaptors are being used and not overloaded;
- 4.3.11 leads and flexible cable are securely fixed at both equipment and plug ends.

4.4 Equipment

Check that:

- 4.4.1 fixed and portable electrical equipment is not damaged and, as far as you are aware, is operating correctly;
- 4.4.2 copies of manufacturers' instructions/operating manuals are easily accessible;
- 4.4.3 equipment is only being used for purposes for which it was intended;
- 4.4.4 where appropriate, all electrical equipment is switched off and, unplugged when not in use;
- 4.4.5 mains isolating switches are easily accessible and known to staff;
- 4.4.6 on/off indicator lights function correctly;
- 4.4.7 equipment incorporating heating has a thermal safety cut-out in addition to a thermostat;
- 4.4.8 equipment containing liquid has a leakage detector;

11.2 Kitchen Areas

- 11.2.1 the kitchen/dining area is kept clean;
- 11.2.2 the kitchen floors are sound and non-slip, especially when wet;
- 11.2.3 first aid boxes are available in the kitchen area;
- 11.2.4 equipment is adequately guarded.

11.3 Boiler Rooms

- 11.3.1 there is no combustible waste stored in boiler rooms or elsewhere (e.g. oily rags);
- 11.3.2 all safety devices in the boiler room are in proper working order;
- 11.3.3 the boiler is regularly maintained by a competent person;
- 11.3.4 all cleaning materials, particularly those which might be hazardous, are securely stored;

11.4 Staff Facilities

- 11.4.1 the staffroom is clean, warm and well lit;
- 11.4.2 there are adequate cloakroom facilities and storage facilities for personal belongings, books etc;
- 11.4.3 the staffroom is large enough for the numbers to be accommodated and sufficient seating is proved, both with upright chairs and tables or desks for working and with comfortable seating;
- 11.4.4 there is provision for tea and coffee to be made;
- 11.4.5 staff sanitary facilities are suitable, sufficient and properly cleaned.

11.5 Hygiene

Check that the following are available:

- 11.5.1 soap
- 11.5.2 hand drying facilities
- 11.5.3 hot water
- 11.5.4 toilet paper
- 11.5.5 litter bin per classroom
- 11.5.6 provision for disposal of sanitary towels
- 11.5.7 safe, suitable, sufficient and properly cleaned sanitary facilities.

11.6 Outside Areas

- 11.6.1 there are no uneven/broken/cracked paving slabs;
- 11.6.2 roofs, guttering, drain pipes etc. are, as far as can be seen, sound and well maintained;
- 11.6.3 all play areas, are kept clean and free from glass;
- 11.6.4 outside play/PE appliances are securely anchored;
- 11.6.5 all parking facilities for cars and cycles are safe in regard to the presence of pedestrians;
- 11.6.6 all builders' materials, caretakers' maintenance equipment etc are kept securely.

APPENDIX 6

Dignity at Work:

Building & Maintaining a Positive & Effective Work Environment

- The Board of Management of Benincasa has adopted The Working Together 2024 document following as part of the school's Health & Safety Statement.
- This document was formulated in light of a number of background documents, including the Health & Safety Authority's *Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work* (2007) and the Equality Authority's *Code of Practice*, given legal effect in the Statutory Instrument entitled *Employment Equality Act 1998 (Code of Practice) (Harassment) Order 2002* (S.I. No. 78 of 2002).

A. Core Principles

This school is committed to a positive work environment where work is done in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, openness and equality.

Adult bullying and harassment in the workplace are phenomena which this school will seek to prevent and will not tolerate. All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Management is committed to intervening in an appropriate manner - utilising one of the accepted Management/INTO procedures - to investigate and deal with allegations of bullying or harassment. The provisions of Circular 40/97 on *Assaults on Staff in Primary Schools* will be utilised as appropriate.

B. What is Workplace Bullying and Harassment?

The Board of Management adopts the definition of adult bullying as set out by the Task Force (2001):

"Workplace Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying".

Harassment is covered by Employment Equality legislation and is based on a person's standing within one of the nine categories (or grounds) specified in that legislation (gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation etc.) Harassment is defined in law as "*unwanted conduct*" related to one or more of the discriminatory grounds which "*has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.*"

It is recognised that bullying and harassment complaints may arise among work colleagues but may also arise in relation to visitors to the school. In either case, the commitment to a positive workplace, where dignity at work is respected, prevails.

E. What Happens if there is an Allegation of Bullying or Harassment?

Without prejudice to an individual's right to take such advice or steps as they themselves may decide, the Board of Management will take seriously any allegations or workplace bullying or harassment.

Supportive and effective procedures, in accordance with nationally-agreed practice, are in the place in this school. These procedures to address and investigate allegations will focus on the earliest possible resolution, will proceed as necessary from informal to formal stages and will have a stress on confidentiality.

F. Summary

Management has a duty of care towards employees. Similarly, employees have a duty of care towards one another. This policy seeks to set out principles and practices to support the exercise of that duty in our school.

Just as inappropriate and undermining behaviour among work colleagues is taken seriously, so is such behaviour when perpetrated against an employee or management of this school by any other person.

Together we are committed to building and maintaining a work environment where respectful, open and equal relationships are the norm.

In summary, we are committed to having a positive, happy place to work.

