



Safety, Health and Welfare Policy Scoil Bernadette 2025

The Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette brings to the attention of its staff the following arrangements for safeguarding the safety, health and welfare of those employed and working in the school.

This policy requires the co-operation of all employees. It shall be reviewed every two years or more frequently, if necessary, in the light of experience, changes in legal requirements and operational changes. All records of accidents and ill-health will be monitored in order to ensure that any safety measures required can be put in place to minimise the recurrence of such accidents and ill-health.

Other relevant policies:

- Administration of Medicines
- Supervision
- Code of Behaviour
- Manual Handling
- Child Protection
- Working Together Policy

The Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette wishes to ensure that as far as is reasonably practical:

- ◆ The design, provision and maintenance of all places in the school shall be safe and without risk to health.
- ◆ There shall be safe access to and from places of work.
- ◆ Plant and Machinery may be opened safely in so far as is possible.
- ◆ Work systems shall be planned, organised, performed and maintained so as to be safe and without risk to health.
- ◆ Staff shall be instructed and supervised in so far as is reasonably possible so as to ensure the health and safety at work of its employees.
- ◆ Protective clothing or equivalent shall be provided as is necessary to ensure the safety and health at work of its employees.
- ◆ Plans for emergencies shall be complied with and revised as necessary.
- ◆ This statement will be continually revised by the Board of Management as necessity arises and shall be re-examined by the Board on at least an annual basis.
- ◆ Employees shall be consulted on matters of health and safety.
- ◆ Provisions shall be made for the election by the employees of a safety representative.

The Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette recognises that its statutory obligations under legislation extends to employees, students, to any person legitimately conducting school business, and to the public. The Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette undertakes to ensure that the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989/ 2005, are adhered to.

Duties of Employees:

It is the duty of every employee while at work:

- (a) to take reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare, and that of any person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work.
- (b) to co-operate with his/her employer and any other person to such extent as will enable his/her employer or the other person to comply with any of the relevant statutory provisions.
- (c) to use in such manner so as to provide the protection intended, any suitable appliance, protective clothing, convenience, equipment or thing provided (whether for his/her lone use or for use by him/her in common with others) for securing his/her safety, health or welfare at work.
- (d) to report to the Board of Management without unreasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place or work, or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare of which he/she becomes aware.

No person will intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any appliance, protective clothing, convenience or other means or thing provided in pursuance or any of the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise, for securing safety, health or welfare or persons arising out of work activities.

Employees using available facilities and equipment provided, should ensure that work practices are performed in the safest manner possible (see section 9 of safety, health and welfare at Work Act 1989).

Consultation and Information:

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette to consult with staff in preparation and completion of hazard control forms, to give a copy of the safety statement to all staff, and to convey any additional information or instructions regarding health, safety and welfare at work to all staff as it becomes available. Health, safety and welfare at work will be considered in any future staff training and development plans.

Fire:

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette that:

- (i) The Board of Management will ensure that an adequate supply of fire extinguishers, suitable for the type of fires likely to occur in each area, is available, identified and regularly serviced by authorised and qualified persons. Each fire extinguisher shall have instructions for its use.
- (ii) The principal will ensure that fire drills shall take place at least once a term.
- (iii) Fire alarms shall be clearly marked
- (iv) Signs shall be clearly visible to ensure that visitors are aware of exit doors and routes.
- (v) All doors, corridors, and entries shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall be able to be opened at all times from within the building. Each teacher who has an exit in her classroom must ensure it is kept clear. P.E. hall and main door – Principal will see they are free of obstruction.
- (vi) A plan of the school shows assembly points outside the school.

- (vii) Assembly areas are designated outside each building, and the locations specified.
- (viii) Exit signs shall be clearly marked.
- (ix) All electrical equipment shall be left unplugged when unattended for lengthy periods and when the building is empty. Teachers are responsible for their own classroom. The Principal and Secretary are responsible for their own offices. The staff room is the responsibility of every staff member. Cleaners will also check when cleaning.
- (x) Principal / Deputy Principal shall be responsible for fire drills and evacuation procedures.
- (xi) All recommendations made by a Fire Officer in addition to these provisions shall be implemented.

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.

1. Wet corridors
2. Climbing frames
3. Trailing leads
4. Computers
5. Guillotine
6. Data Projectors
7. Fuse Board
8. Electric kettles
9. Boiler house
10. Ladders
11. Excess gravel around school
12. Protruding units and fittings
13. Flat roof of hall and flat roof of school
14. External store (to be kept locked)
15. Lawnmowers in use by maintenance staff
16. Slabs around perimeter of school
17. Garden stores
18. Icy surfaces on a cold day
19. Mats in hall
20. Windows opening out
21. Blood and body fluids

To minimise these dangers the following safety/ protective measures must be adhered to:

- (a) Access to and operation of plant/equipment is restricted to qualified members of the staff, whose job function is that of running, maintaining, cleaning and monitoring particular items of plant in the course of their normal duties. Copies of this Safety Statement will be sent to all contractors prior to contract by the Principal/Board of Management. Any other contractors entering the school must be shown a copy of the schools Safety Statement and shall adhere to its provisions.
- (b) In addition all such plant and machinery is to be used in strict accordance with the manufactures instructions and recommendations.
- (c) Where applicable Board of Management will ensure that members of the staff will have been instructed in the correct use of plant, machinery and equipment.
- (d) All machinery and electrical equipment are fitted with adequate safeguards.
- (e) Precautionary notices, in respect of safety matters are displayed at relevant points.
- (f) Ladders must be used with another person's assistance.
- (g) Avoid use of glass bottles where possible by pupils. Remove broken glass immediately on discovery

(h) The Board of Management will:

- Check that floors are clean, even, non-slip and splinter-proof.
- Check that all PE and other mats are in good condition.
- Check that all woodworking material is serviced and in good condition.
- Check that there are no uneven/broken/cracked paving slabs.
- Check that roofs, guttering, drain pipes etc as far as can be seen are sound and well maintained. The Board of Management shall minimise the danger arising from broken glass. Staff are asked to report broken glass to the Principal so that it may be immediately removed
- Check outside lighting works and is sufficient.
- Check refuse is removed from building each day and is carefully stored outside.

Constant Hazards:

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette that machinery, kitchen equipment and electrical appliances are to be used only by competent and authorised persons. Such appliances and equipment will be subject to regular maintenance checks.

Electrical Appliances:

Arrangements will be made for all appliances to be checked on a regular basis at least annually by a competent person (i.e.) maintenance person, the supplier or agent. Before using any appliance the user should check that:

- ◆ All safety guards which are a normal part of the appliance are in working order
- ◆ Power supply cables/leads are intact and free of cuts or abrasions.
- ◆ Unplug leads of appliances when not in use.
- ◆ Suitable undamaged fused plug tops are used and fitted with the correct fuse.
- ◆ Follow official guidelines issued by the health and Safety Authority.

Chemicals:

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette that all chemicals, photocopier toner, detergents etc be stored in clearly identifiable containers bearing instructions and precautions for their use and shall be kept in a locked area, and protection provided to be used when handling them.

Drugs And Medication:

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette that all drugs, medications, etc be kept in a secure cabinet, locked at all times and the key kept in a separate and secure place and used only by trained and authorised personnel. The school has a specific Administration of Medications Policy for students who have medical needs.

Welfare:

To ensure the continued welfare of the staff and children, toilet and cloakroom areas are provided. A staffroom separate from the work area is provided, where tea and lunch breaks may be taken. A high

standard of hygiene must be achieved at all times. Adequate facilities for waste disposal are available. An adequate supply of hot and cold water, towels and soap and sanitary disposal facilities are available.

Members of staff and students are reminded:

- (a) A person who is under medical supervision or on prescribed medication and who has been certified fit for work, should notify the school of any known side effect or temporary physical disabilities which could hinder their work performance and which may be a danger to either themselves or their fellow workers. The school will arrange or assign appropriate tasks for the person to carry out in the Interim.
- (b) Staff and students are not allowed to attend the premises or carry out duties whilst under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol. Any person found breaking this rule will be liable to disciplinary action.

Highly Polished Floors:

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette that every attempt will be made to avoid the creation of slippery surfaces. The washing of floors shall be conducted, as far as is possible, after school hours to eliminate as far as possible, the danger of slipping. Where floors are wet, warning signs regarding wet floors shall be used. Attention is drawn to the possibility of outside floors and surfaces being affected by frost in cold weather, and staff and pupils shall be told to use handrails when going up or down stairs. Step edges shall be fitted with clearly marked edges of a non-slip nature wherever practical.

Safeguarding and Child Protection:

Scoil Bernadette is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care, in accordance with the *Children First Act 2015*, the *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, and the *Education Act 1998*. All staff have a statutory obligation to report concerns about a child's welfare or potential abuse to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP Mr . Don Golden) and, where appropriate, to Tusla – the Child and Family Agency.

The school maintains a comprehensive Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, which are reviewed annually. Staff receive regular training in child protection procedures, and the school fosters a culture of vigilance, ensuring all concerns are taken seriously and acted upon promptly and appropriately

Staff Welfare: Debriefing and Support Following Serious Incidents or Assault:

The school is committed to supporting staff wellbeing, particularly after serious incidents such as physical assaults, verbal abuse, or traumatic events. Immediate debriefing will be offered to affected staff members, led by a trained senior leader or external professional, to provide emotional support and help process the incident. Staff will also be informed of and referred to additional support services, including occupational health, counselling, and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), where available. Where appropriate, temporary adjustments to duties or time off may be offered to support recovery. The school aims to foster a culture where staff feel safe reporting incidents and are confident they will be supported without stigma or judgment.

Duty of Care Regarding Mental Health:

In line with its legal and ethical duty of care, Scoil Bernadette recognises the importance of supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all students and staff. Under the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005*, employers — including schools — are required to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare of employees, which includes mental health.

The school is committed to creating a safe, supportive environment that fosters mental wellbeing through preventative education, early intervention, and access to appropriate support services. Staff are trained to recognise signs of distress and to respond appropriately, while students experiencing mental health challenges will be supported in line with the school's pastoral care, safeguarding, and critical incident policies. Confidentiality will be respected in line with GDPR and child protection requirements.

Risk Assessment for Violent or Aggressive Students on School Outings:

When planning off-site visits or educational trips, the school will conduct thorough risk assessments that take into account the individual needs and behaviours of all participating students. If a student is known to exhibit violent or aggressive behaviour, a specific behavioural risk assessment will be carried out prior to the outing. This will consider the likelihood of incidents occurring in unfamiliar or less controlled environments and identify strategies to manage potential risks. Measures may include additional staffing or 1:1 support, clear behaviour plans, pre-visit preparation with the student, and, where necessary, the decision to exclude a student from the outing if their participation presents a significant safety risk. All planning will be done in consultation with staff, parents/carers, and where appropriate, the student.

Smoking/ Vaping:

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Scoil Bernadette that the school shall be a non-smoking area to avoid hazard to staff and pupils of passive smoking. This includes vaping and relates to staff, students and visitors entering the schools grounds and premises also.

COVID-19 and Infectious Disease Control:

The school is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all pupils, staff, and visitors during outbreaks of infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Preventative measures will be guided by public health advice and government regulations.

These may include hygiene protocols, enhanced cleaning, social distancing, ventilation, and, where necessary, remote learning arrangements. Staff will receive regular updates and training on infection control practices, and contingency plans will be reviewed and adapted as guidance evolves. Clear communication with parents and carers will be maintained to ensure transparency and cooperation in keeping the school community safe.

First Aid

All staff have received training in First Aid.

First Aid kits are in the Principal's Office, Woodwork Room, Home Economics Room and Staff Room. A school nurse is available on call.

- (1) An Accident Report File is to be maintained for the recording of all accidents and incidents by the Principal.
- (2) Internal Incident Reports are available from the Principal or Secretary for the purpose of recording incidents that do not require medical attention.

Student Medical Needs – GDPR Compliance:

The school is committed to providing appropriate first aid and medical support to students while ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Personal medical information, including

details of allergies, chronic conditions, or care plans, is collected and processed only where necessary to safeguard student health and wellbeing.

This information is stored securely, accessed only by authorised personnel, and shared strictly on a need-to-know basis, such as with first aiders, teaching staff, or emergency responders. Parents/guardians are informed of how their child's medical data is used and are asked to provide consent where required. All medical records are handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy

Use of Restraint in Our School:

The use of physical restraint is considered a last resort and is only permissible when it is necessary to prevent serious harm to a pupil, staff member, or others, or to prevent significant damage to property. Any use of restraint must be reasonable, proportionate, and in line with current legal guidance and safeguarding procedures. Staff who may be required to use physical intervention will receive appropriate training in approved techniques (e.g., Team Teach, MAPA, or equivalent). All incidents involving restraint must be recorded in the school's incident log and reported to senior leadership and, where appropriate, the pupil's parents or carers. The welfare and dignity of the child must always be respected, and follow-up support will be provided for both pupils and staff involved.

Responding to Behaviours of Concern:

Scoil Bernadette is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community. In line with the Department of Education's *Guidelines for Supporting Students with Behaviours of Concern (2023)*, the school adopts a proactive and positive behaviour support approach, rooted in understanding the underlying causes of challenging behaviours. The school recognises that certain behaviours may pose a risk to safety, and appropriate steps will be taken to assess, manage, and reduce these risks through collaborative planning, staff training, and consistent implementation of behaviour support plans.

Scoil Bernadette upholds and adheres to the protocols and best practices outlined in the national guidelines, including the use of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS), multidisciplinary involvement, and the rights-based, least-restrictive approach to any form of intervention. This commitment forms part of the school's broader duty of care to ensure the wellbeing and dignity of all students and staff. Please click on link to access full guidelines.

<https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/understanding-behaviours-of-concern-and-responding-to-crisis-situations.pdf>

Bereavement Protocol for Students and Colleagues:

Scoil Bernadette recognises the profound impact that bereavement can have on students, staff, and the wider school community. In the event of a death affecting a member of the school or a student's family, the school will respond with compassion, sensitivity, and professionalism. Language used in communication around bereavement will be age-appropriate, clear, and respectful, avoiding euphemisms that may confuse younger students.

The school follows protocols aligned with its Critical Incident Management Plan, which may include informing staff in a timely and respectful manner, offering support to the bereaved individual(s), and, where appropriate, communicating sensitively with the school community. Support structures such as pastoral care, counselling referrals, or access to NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) will be offered as

needed. Scoil Bernadette is committed to fostering a caring environment where grief is acknowledged, and where both students and colleagues are supported through loss with dignity and understanding.

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Access To School

Inasmuch as is compatible with the practical layout of the school premises, anyone entering the school premises shall be required to identify themselves to the Principal or the Secretary as relevant before gaining admittance to the school. Any contractor must make direct contact with the Principal before initiating any work on the premises and shall be shown a copy of the safety statement applying to the school and shall agree to its provisions.

While work is in progress, any noise shall be avoided wherever possible during school hours and shall at all times be reduced to the minimum necessary. The contractor and his workmen shall not create any hazard, permanent or temporary, without informing the principal or his nominated agent and shall mark such hazard with warning signs or other suitable protection.

Revision Of This Safety Statement

This statement shall be regularly revised by the Scoil Bernadette in accordance with experience and the requirements of the Health and Safety Act and the Health and Safety Authority.

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____
(Date)

Signed: _____
(Chairperson, BOM)

To be reviewed by _____

Prepared by representatives of the Board of Management, in consultation with parents and staff members of Scoil Bernadette in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare Act at Work Act 1989/ 2005.