



Handbook for Safer BC3 in school environments

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1. Introduction: First Aid, Safety and Inclusion in School Sport and Boccia

First aid is a fundamental component of safe sport participation in school environments. Even in activities such as Boccia BC3, which are generally considered low risk, the presence of trained personnel and clear procedures is essential to protect students and ensure their well-being. In inclusive school settings, where students with and without disabilities participate together, safety planning becomes even more important. Students in the BC3 category may have complex physical needs, including limited motor control, increased fatigue, involuntary movements, or sensitivity to positioning, which makes prevention, preparedness, and appropriate response critical elements of any activity.

First aid in a school sport context is not limited to responding to injuries. It also includes the ability to recognize early signs of discomfort, fatigue, or distress and to act before a situation escalates into a more serious incident. In BC3 activities, where assistive equipment is used and where communication between players and assistants is essential, even small misunderstandings or delays in response can create unsafe situations. For this reason, first aid awareness should be understood as part of a broader safety culture that includes observation, anticipation, and immediate response.

In addition, the presence of students with severe disabilities requires a higher level of preparedness. Some students may not be able to reposition themselves independently, may rely on assistive devices for communication, or may require additional time to respond. This means that supervising staff must be attentive not only to visible incidents but also to subtle changes in behaviour or physical condition. Recognizing these early signs is often key to preventing more serious situations.

This handbook focuses on safety and first aid in the implementation of BC3 in schools. It is intended for teachers, physical education staff, and coaches who are responsible for organizing and supervising activities. The aim is to provide clear and practical guidance that supports safe participation, minimizes risks, and ensures that any incident is managed effectively, responsibly, and with respect for the needs of all students.

2. Safety in BC3 School Activities and Requirements for an Accessible Environment

Although Boccia does not involve intense physical contact or speed, risks can still arise during school activities. These may be related to the movement of wheelchairs, the handling and positioning of ramps, limited visibility of assistants, or lack of coordination between participants. In addition, school environments often involve multiple students moving in the same space, which increases the need for structured organization and supervision. Even small errors, such as incorrect positioning of equipment or lack of attention during movement, can lead to incidents.

Safety in BC3 should be approached as a continuous process that starts before the activity and continues throughout its duration. It includes identifying potential hazards, organizing the environment appropriately, guiding student behaviour, and being prepared to respond to any

incident. Particular attention should be given to transitions, such as when students move in and out of the playing area, when equipment is repositioned, or when roles change, as these moments often present increased risk due to reduced attention or coordination.

It is also important to consider the diversity of participants. Students may have different levels of experience, physical abilities, and understanding of the activity. This diversity requires careful management to ensure that all students can participate safely without being exposed to unnecessary risk. Activities should be adapted when needed, and expectations should be realistic and appropriate for the group.

A safe BC3 session is not only one where accidents are avoided, but also one where students feel confident, understand the boundaries of the activity, and trust that support is available if needed.

In this context, the space where BC3 activities take place must be accessible and safe for all students. Accessibility goes beyond physical access and includes the ability of each student to move, position themselves, and participate without unnecessary difficulty or risk. The environment should allow smooth movement for students using wheelchairs or mobility aids, with no obstacles, uneven surfaces, or narrow passages that could restrict movement. Entry and exit points should remain clear at all times, and emergency access routes should never be blocked by equipment or participants. At the same time, the playing surface must be flat, stable, and non-slip, as even minor irregularities can affect both safety and the control of equipment. The surface should be regularly checked for dust, moisture, or objects that may increase the risk of slipping, while lighting must be adequate so that all participants can clearly see the space and the equipment, reducing the risk of collisions or incorrect positioning of ramps.

Beyond the physical conditions of the space, its organization should further support both safety and clarity. The playing area needs to be clearly defined, with designated zones for students who are waiting, observing, or assisting, in order to reduce unnecessary movement and maintain order. Adequate distance between players is essential, especially when ramps are used, as these require space for positioning and adjustment. Staff should ensure that no participant enters another player's operational space while a shot is being prepared or executed. In parallel, equipment must be placed and used in a stable and controlled manner. Ramps should be positioned securely and checked for proper angle and height, as instability may lead to sudden or unsafe movement. All equipment should be inspected before each session for stability, cleanliness, and functionality, while any damaged or unreliable items must be removed immediately. Establishing regular maintenance routines is essential to ensure long-term safety in school environments.

However, safety is not only a matter of physical conditions but also of the overall culture of the activity. A respectful and inclusive environment reduces risks by promoting cooperation, communication, and responsibility among students. When students understand their roles and respect each other, unsafe behaviour becomes less likely. Staff play a key role in promoting positive interactions and addressing any form of exclusion or inappropriate behaviour immediately. Inclusion is therefore not only about participation but also about ensuring that every student feels valued and supported. A truly safe environment is one in which students feel comfortable expressing concerns, asking for help, and participating at their own pace, contributing both to physical safety and emotional well-being.

Alongside prevention and a positive safety culture, effective first aid response depends on proper preparation. Before any BC3 activity takes place, the necessary resources and procedures should already be in place. A well-equipped first aid kit must be easily accessible, known to all supervising staff, and regularly checked to ensure that all materials are available and in good condition, as missing or expired items can delay response in critical moments. Equally important is the existence of a clear emergency plan: staff should know how to contact emergency services, who is responsible for communication, and how to manage the group in case of an incident. Access to a phone or communication device must be ensured at all times, and staff should be familiar with the exact location of the activity in order to provide clear directions if needed.

This preparation also involves awareness of individual student needs. Whenever possible, staff should be informed about medical conditions, allergies, or specific requirements, as this information can be crucial in responding appropriately—for example, knowing that a student is prone to fatigue or has limited trunk control. It is also important to be prepared for less common but serious situations, such as breathing difficulties, loss of consciousness, or sudden medical conditions, so that staff can respond without hesitation. Finally, recording and reporting incidents is an essential part of preparedness, as accurate documentation helps schools monitor safety, identify patterns, improve future practice, and ensure transparency and effective communication with families and school authorities, ultimately contributing to the continuous improvement of safety standards.

3. Role and Responsibility of Supervising Staff in Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment

Teachers, coaches, and supervising adults are central to maintaining safety in BC3 activities. Their role is not limited to instruction, but extends to continuous observation, risk assessment, and intervention when necessary. They should have a solid understanding of first aid principles and be familiar with the specific needs of students participating in the activity.

Preparation before the session is essential. This includes reviewing the space, checking equipment, and considering the composition of the group. Staff should anticipate potential challenges, such as differences in ability levels, communication difficulties, or the need for additional time for certain students. By planning ahead, many risks can be reduced before the activity begins.

During the session, supervising staff should maintain active supervision. This means being attentive to all participants, not focusing only on the game itself. They should observe how students interact with equipment, how assistants follow instructions, and whether any unsafe behaviours are emerging. Early intervention is often key to preventing incidents.

In addition, staff should be prepared to manage unexpected situations calmly. This includes providing clear instructions, reassuring students, and making quick decisions when safety is at risk. Confidence and clarity in the response of the supervising adult can significantly influence how effectively a situation is managed.

Effective communication is a key factor in maintaining safety during BC3 sessions. Because the activity involves cooperation between players and assistants, as well as supervision by teachers, misunderstandings can lead to unsafe situations. Clear communication reduces confusion and ensures that all participants understand their role and responsibilities.

Supervising staff should provide clear and consistent instructions before and during the activity. These instructions should be adapted to the needs of the students and repeated when necessary. Visual demonstrations can support understanding, especially for students who may have difficulty processing verbal instructions.

During the activity, communication between players and assistants should be monitored to ensure that instructions are followed safely. Assistants should act only on the player's instructions, but at the same time must be guided by the teacher to ensure that actions remain safe. If unclear or unsafe instructions are given, the supervising adult should intervene immediately.

In addition, communication among staff members is essential, especially in larger groups. Clear coordination allows for better supervision of the entire space and ensures that no area is left unattended. When communication is structured and consistent, the overall level of safety is significantly improved.

All staff involved in BC3 activities have a duty of care toward the students. This responsibility includes ensuring that all reasonable measures are taken to prevent harm and to respond appropriately when incidents occur. Duty of care is not only a legal obligation but also an ethical commitment to the well-being of every participant.

In inclusive environments, this responsibility is particularly important, as some students may rely more heavily on support and supervision. Staff should be aware of the vulnerability of certain students and take additional precautions when necessary.

Maintaining confidentiality, respecting student dignity, and acting in the best interest of each student are essential components of this responsibility. A strong sense of duty of care contributes to a safe and trusting environment where students can participate confidently.

4. First Aid Preparedness and Basic Response Procedures

When an incident occurs, the response should follow a structured and calm approach. The first priority is to ensure that the area is safe and that no further harm can occur. This may involve stopping the activity, moving other students away, or stabilizing equipment. It is important that the response is immediate but controlled, avoiding panic or rushed actions that could worsen the situation.

The situation should then be assessed carefully. This includes observing the student's condition, identifying signs of pain, confusion, or distress, and determining whether the injury is minor or requires further assistance. Particular attention should be given to students who may have difficulty communicating their condition clearly. In such cases, non-verbal signs such as changes in posture, facial expression, or breathing should be taken into account.

If the student is conscious, communication should be established in a calm and reassuring manner. The student should be asked simple and clear questions to understand what has happened and how they feel. If the student uses assistive communication methods, staff should allow sufficient time for response and avoid interrupting.

First aid should be provided according to the needs of the situation. In cases where there is a possibility of head, neck, or spinal injury, unnecessary movement should be avoided. The

student should be kept as still as possible until further assessment is made. If bleeding is present, appropriate measures should be taken to control it using available materials from the first aid kit.

Throughout the process, it is important to remain calm, provide reassurance, and maintain clear communication. The goal is to stabilize the situation, prevent further harm, and ensure that the student feels supported until recovery or until additional assistance arrives.

5. Managing Common Situations, Emergencies and Secondary Support

In a school BC3 context, many situations that require first aid are minor but still need to be handled correctly. Small cuts or bruises may occur due to contact with equipment or movement within the space. These should be treated promptly to prevent discomfort or infection, and the student should be monitored to ensure that the condition does not worsen.

Falls may occur when students move in or out of position or when equipment is not handled carefully. In such cases, it is important not to rush to move the student, but to first assess their condition. Sudden movement can increase the risk of further injury. Staff should check for pain, discomfort, or signs of injury before assisting the student to move.

Situations involving wheelchairs or assistive equipment require particular care. Instability, incorrect positioning, or sudden movements can lead to unsafe conditions. Staff should ensure that brakes are properly applied when needed and that the student is supported before any adjustments are made. When repositioning is necessary, it should be done slowly and with clear communication.

Fatigue is also a common factor in BC3 activities, particularly for students with severe disabilities. Signs of fatigue may include reduced concentration, slower responses, or visible discomfort. If these signs appear, the activity should be adapted by allowing additional time, reducing demands, or providing rest periods. Ignoring fatigue can lead to reduced control and increased risk of accidents.

Other situations may include anxiety or emotional distress, especially in unfamiliar or demanding environments. Staff should recognize these situations and respond with patience and support, ensuring that the student does not feel pressured to continue if they are uncomfortable.

After an incident, attention should not be limited to physical care. Students may feel anxious, embarrassed, or uncertain about continuing the activity. Providing emotional support is essential to help them regain confidence and feel safe.

Staff should communicate calmly and respectfully, explaining what is happening and what will follow. Giving the student time to recover and involving them in decisions about continuing or stopping can help restore a sense of control. In some cases, adapting the activity or allowing the student to take on a different role may be appropriate.

A supportive environment contributes significantly to overall safety. When students trust that they will be supported, they are more likely to communicate discomfort early, which allows staff to intervene before problems develop.

6. Preventive Safety Practices, Group Management and Continuous Risk Assessment

Prevention is the most effective way to ensure safety in BC3 activities. Before each session, the space and equipment should be checked carefully, and students should be informed about the basic rules that support safe participation. Clear explanations at the beginning of the activity can reduce misunderstandings and unsafe behaviour. Demonstrations can also be used to show correct and safe use of equipment.

During the activity, supervision should remain active and consistent. Staff should monitor movement, communication, and use of equipment, intervening when necessary. Encouraging students to follow structured turn-taking and to remain aware of their surroundings helps maintain order and safety. It is important that students understand not only what to do, but also why certain rules exist, as this supports more responsible behaviour.

Preventive practices also include managing the pace of the activity. Allowing sufficient time for each action reduces pressure and helps students maintain control. Rushed actions often increase the likelihood of mistakes and accidents. Adjusting the activity according to the needs of the group contributes significantly to overall safety.

After the activity, equipment should be stored safely and the space should be cleared. Reviewing any incidents, even minor ones, allows staff to identify areas for improvement and to adjust future sessions accordingly. Reflection and evaluation are important tools for strengthening safety practices over time.

Group dynamics can influence safety in school BC3 activities. Differences in ability, experience, and behaviour can create situations where some students may feel uncertain or act unpredictably. Managing these dynamics is an important part of ensuring a safe environment.

Teachers should observe how students interact with each other and intervene when necessary to maintain respectful and safe behaviour. Students who are more confident or physically active may need guidance to adjust their behaviour to the pace and needs of others. At the same time, students who are less confident should be supported and encouraged to participate at a level that feels safe for them.

Organizing the group in a structured way helps reduce confusion and risk. Clear roles, predictable routines, and controlled movement within the space contribute to a more stable and safe environment. When students understand what is expected of them, they are less likely to engage in behaviour that could lead to accidents.

Safety in BC3 activities requires continuous monitoring and reassessment of potential risks. Conditions within the activity can change quickly, depending on student behaviour, equipment use, or environmental factors. For this reason, supervising staff should remain alert and ready to adjust the activity when needed.

Monitoring includes observing how equipment is used, how students move within the space, and whether any signs of discomfort or fatigue appear. Small issues, such as incorrect positioning of a ramp or reduced attention from a student, can develop into larger risks if not addressed early.

Continuous risk assessment also involves adapting the activity in real time. This may include modifying the space, adjusting the pace, or providing additional support to certain students. Flexibility in response is essential to maintaining safety without interrupting the flow of the activity unnecessarily.

7. Integration of Safety into School Practice

For BC3 activities to be consistently safe, safety practices should be integrated into the broader school system. This includes alignment with school policies, collaboration with other staff members, and regular review of procedures.

Schools should support ongoing training in first aid and safety for staff involved in physical activities. Regular updates and refreshers help ensure that knowledge remains current and that staff feel confident in their ability to respond to incidents.

Safety should also be reflected in planning documents, risk assessments, and evaluation processes. By embedding safety into everyday practice, schools can ensure that BC3 activities are not only safe in individual sessions but sustainable over time.

8. Final Considerations and Conclusion

Implementing BC3 in schools offers valuable opportunities for inclusion and participation, but these opportunities must be supported by strong safety practices. Attention to detail, consistent supervision, and preparedness for first aid response are essential elements of successful implementation.

By strengthening safety awareness and building capacity among staff, schools can create environments where all students, regardless of ability, can participate without unnecessary risk. A proactive and informed approach to safety ensures that BC3 activities remain both inclusive and secure.

The safe implementation of BC3 in schools depends on careful planning, appropriate preparation, and effective first aid response. By focusing on safety, accessibility, and support, teachers and coaches can create an environment where all students can participate with confidence.

Safety should be understood as an ongoing process that is integrated into every stage of the activity, from preparation to completion. With consistent attention to prevention and response, BC3 can be delivered as a safe, inclusive, and meaningful experience for all students.