

This document is to be given to:
Teaching staff and
Administration staff

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CRITICAL INCIDENT

The College supports students to adjust themselves for living and studying in Australia, to achieve their learning goals and satisfactory academic progress towards meeting the learning outcomes of the course, by providing access to an appropriate assistance for the students as needed.

1. Principles

The College recognises the duty of care owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential.

2. Definition

A critical incident is defined by the National Code as ‘a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury’.

Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- missing students;
- severe verbal or psychological aggression;
- death, serious injury or any threat of these;
- natural disaster; and
- issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

It is reminded that the recovery activity which will determine the extent to which individuals and groups will cope with the long-term effects which can flow from a critical incident. The followings are essential:

- A speed of response
- Appropriateness of response
- The opportunity to talk about the event and personal reactions to it, and
- On-going support.

The above can help minimise distress or trauma and enhance the well-being of those involved in the incident.

Critical Incident Management Plan

In the event of a critical incident or crisis happening that affects our College community, the following procedures are to be implemented:

1. Upon receiving news of a critical incident potentially affecting the College community the staff who first became aware of the incident will contact the CEO and/or Principal/Academic Manager/Head of VET Department, the Accountant, Senior Teacher and Counsellor/s to form the Critical Incident Management Team.
2. The CEO and/or Principal will verify information about the event.

3. The Critical Incident Management Team will work out procedures and who could be contacted e.g. appropriate agencies etc. to provide personnel to assist the College with counselling of students, staff and families.
4. The Critical Incident Management Team will decide how and when to inform staff, students and families.
5. A Staff Meeting will be called as soon as possible. If possible and practical, all staff will be informed at the same time so that they receive the same information. Updates to staff on the current situation during the day are essential. Debriefing at the end of the day is crucial.
6. The Critical Incident Management Team will allocate tasks to staff.
7. Students will be informed simultaneously in class groups.
8. A support centre for students will be set up at an appropriate location in the College.
9. Changes may need to be made to timetables and duty rosters.
10. The CEO (Principal/Academic Manager/Head of VET Department if the CEO is not available) will deal with any media requests.
11. The Colleges' other faculties will be notified so they too are prepared.
12. Parents/guardians will be informed by letter, phone, text message or email which will be sent by the Principal or Counsellors advising them of the incident. Parents will be advised about signs of distress that students may display, what the College will be doing to cope with the crisis and the support channels available to them and their families.

The emergency number for Police, Ambulance and Fire Service at all times for all areas is 000.

Non-life threatening events could still be qualified as critical incidents, which include;

In the case of 'Evening Class';

- Transport system breakdown causes problems for a student returning home during the night.
- An absence of any family member or no one at home when student returns home in the night.
- Any type of assaults or injury to a student during school hours or travelling.

When a critical incident occurs, the CEO, the Accountant, Senior Teacher and/or Counsellor/s will attend the incident immediately and take necessary action. At the same time, in the absence of the CEO, the Accountant, Senior Teacher and/or Counsellor/s inform the CEO and/or Principal/Academic Manager by phone of the incident for the CEO's and/or the Principal/Academic Manager's instruction and carry on further procedures.

During Morning and Afternoon Class hours:

The Principal/Academic Manager, Senior Teacher, Registrar and/or Counsellor/s will attend the incident immediately and take necessary procedures and at the same time, reports the incident to the CEO and in the absence of the CEO, the Principal/Academic Manager for his/her instruction and perform further procedures.

a. Necessary procedures taken by any of the above staff members:

- assessing risks and response actions
- liaison with emergency and other services
- contact with students' relatives and other appropriate contacts
- liaison with other external bodies, such as homestays, carers or foreign embassies, and
- counselling and managing students and staff not directly involved in the incident.

b. Appropriate Further Action Plan:

A critical incident action plan is set by the CEO or the Principal/Academic Manager to manage various aspects arising from the incident, including communication strategies. This will include

- creating and disseminating a plan and its procedures
- a review of the plan, and
- staff development and training.

c. Media Management

A media management process will be included in the management plan to ensure the most positive and supportive response from the media.

d. Reporting and recording of incident and action taken

In the case of a student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance, the incident will need to be reported via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS). In the case of High School students, the College notifies the Ombudsman and/or Australian Government Department of Education and Community Services as soon as practical.

All aspects of the incident and its management will be recorded on the student files.

3. Follow-up and evaluation

The College staff will be made aware of the critical incident policy and procedures and be given appropriate training to ensure the duty of care for international students is uppermost in their minds.

A review and evaluation of the response to the critical incident will be conducted and the procedures reviewed by the above staff members and/or other stakeholders.

4. Resources

Changes to the policy and procedures, including updating resources, will be made as soon as practicable following the review and evaluation.