



CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

"A **Critical Incident** affecting a school is any event that causes a significant number of people to experience reactions that are beyond their normal emotional range. Each of us has a personal emotional range, within which we manage stressful situations." (Stephen King from, "Critical Incidents Affecting Schools" by Stephen Said).

A Critical Incident can be one of two things:

An **emergency** is an unforeseen occurrence; a sudden and urgent occasion for action. It includes events that are likely to significantly affect the physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing of staff and students. It also includes events which may be described as a disaster, a traumatic event, an incident or a critical incident.

An emergency may also be a **traumatic** event. A traumatic event may include any situation faced by members of a community which causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions or one which has the potential to interfere with their ability to function, either at the time, or later. Emergencies, including traumatic events can be experienced along, with others or as part of a broader community based experience.

Trauma and the Individual

Under normal circumstances, people feel that they have control over their lives and are safe from physical harm. Individuals are said to be traumatized when they experience a range of stress responses from the memory of an event which has shattered normal feelings of safety and their sense of control over their lives. The extent to which a particular event has an impact on an individual depends to some extent on how much it alters normal feelings of safety and control over what has happened.

Trauma may arise from:

- Direct exposure
- Witnessing the emergency
- Hearing about it

When trauma is experienced alone, an individual may feel:

- Helpless
- Terrorised
- Tearful
- Vulnerable
- Panicked

CRITICAL INCIDENTS OFFSITE

Prevention

- School Policies:
 - School Vision Statement
 - Student Wellbeing and Child Safety
 - Emergency Management e. evacuation & lock in
 - Safe practices e.g. Fire Education
 - Awareness of safety procedures for e.g. floor plans and exit signs
 - Duty of Care Policy
 - Supervision of Students
 - Staff Organisational Policy
 - Behaviour Management Policy
 - Offsite Policy/Risk assessment

- All staff have current First Aid training: Level 2 (To be completed January 2021)
- Anaphylaxis Training for all staff (Completed November 2020)
- Portable First Aid Kits for yard duties and offsite activities, which need to be checked and refilled *fortnightly*
- Class lists to be carried by teacher
- Medical information for all off-site activities, excursions, swimming and camp
- School records updated annually
- Personal staff mobile phones taken on all off-site activities
- Official Excursion Permission slip
- Appropriate student to adult ratio i.e 1:10

- Class list of children to be sent to the office **before** leaving the school grounds. List to include the teacher's personal mobile phone number.

- Student Activity Locator (S.A.L) filled in on CEVN by the Principal

Response

- Follow "Off-Site Emergency Procedures" of the venue
- Assess situation
- Follow Risk Assessment Procedures
- Dial emergency services 000 or 112 or 106 for Lockdown Emergency
- Contact the school
- School Office to notify parents and/or guardians though Updat-ed App
- Ensure the duty of care for all children, depending on the Critical Incident (teacher to use his/her own discretion)

- If possible, remove children from the incident and return to school as soon as possible.
- Teacher in charge to fill out an Incident Report on return to school.
- If parents turn up to an off-site incident, they have to follow the emergency procedures in place
- If parents arrive at the scene of a Critical Incident, they **must** report to the teacher in charge in order to **remove their child**.

Recovery

- Any queries from the media are to be referred to the Principal
- Communication to relevant groups — e.g. debrief, staff, parents and students
- Liaise with relevant support services — CEM for counseling and pastoral care
- Allocate space for recovery activities if required
- Follow up and referral to relevant programs as required
- Evaluate responses to Critical Incidents Off-Site and procedures on Risk Assessment

EVACUATION Prevention

Implementation of school policy should provide a safe environment which will not require evacuation except in the event of a Critical Incident/Emergency which requires all people to be evacuated from the school buildings immediately.

Factors which should lessen the likelihood of the need to evacuate include:

- Audit and correct storage of chemicals and other potentially dangerous items within the school.

Ensure that the building and equipment are maintained/serviced in an appropriate manner e.g. electrical checks and e-tagging annually, fire inspections quarterly, smoke alarms monthly etc. as per Essential Services requirements

Preparation

Adequate preparation/training of personnel and maintenance of equipment should ensure a swift and orderly evacuation as required.

This preparation includes:

- Evacuation Policy/DISPLAN
- Annual review of policy including allocation of specific duties (first staff meeting each year)
- Training of staff and children in correct procedures termly (Not in 2020 due to Covid restrictions and remote learning).
- Regular practice of Evacuation Procedures. Outside to Inside, Inside to Outside
- Training of regular users of the school building in evacuation procedures.
- All doorways and extinguishers to be kept clear at all times.
- Annual update and display of location map and fire equipment conducted by FES
- Emergency telephone contacts to be updated annually
- Fire blankets at each stove within the building
- Maintain and extend emergency response awareness within the curriculum e.g. Fire Education
- School Occupational Health & Safety Rep (O.H.S) appointed on staff

Response

Implement Evacuation Policy and Procedures per DISPLAN when required
Office staff to bring children's medications and necessary office records

Recovery

- Respond to the immediate and longer term needs of all involved, e.g. first aid, counseling.
- Evaluate response and update procedures if required after evacuation.

LOCK IN

Potential Incidents

- ABDUCTION
- ARMED ROBBERY
- CAR ACCIDENT
- DRUG OVERDOSE
- HOSTAGE TAKING
- MURDER
- UNFAVOURABLE MEDIA ATTENTION
- VIOLENT ASSAULT
- STRANGER IN SCHOOL
- HARASSMENT
- HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL SPILL

Prevention

- Working security and CCTV system
- Gates locked at 9.10am each day, unlocked at 3.20pm
- Ensure all boundary fences are intact and that gates are padlocked during the school day

Preparation

- Audible warning system through PA system
- Refer to DISPLAN Policy
- Practice "Lock In" procedure
- Maintenance checks (locks working, phone lines working, Intercom working in all classrooms etc.)

Response

- Allocation of duties to staff and communication with emergency services
- Documentation of response actions
- Safety actions and emergency first aid.

Recovery

- Recovery strategies for all involved e.g. counseling, pastoral care etc.
- Need of a liaison person (Principal)
- Review of emergency management procedure

SUDDEN DEATH - SERIOUS INJURY Prevention

- Regular risk assessment of areas/equipment (stairs, playground etc.) by Principal, adventure playground auditor, shade audit, arborist audit, OH&S person.
- Immediate action taken to rectify identified risks
- Potentially hazardous situations to be acted on immediately by staff e.g. spills, broken glass (refer School Policies)

- Safety rules to be highlighted and addressed on a regular basis e.g. visual posters, class talks, assemblies, parent newsletters
- Enforcement of safety rules, safe practices through Curriculum areas e.g. Fire Ed., Road Safety, Drug Ed., Swimming Program and Fire Drills.

Preparation

- Forming school-based emergency management team including roles and duties - P.D. for staff, OH&S training, First Aid trained staff
- Emergency telephone numbers in strategic areas along with information about evacuation points and other emergency procedures.
- Practice fire and evacuation drills - DISPLAN
- Emergency safety equipment e.g. fire blanket, fire extinguishers - regular P.D. and maintenance of equipment by F.E.S
- First Aid system in place e.g. room equipment, procedures, responsibility
- Update First Aid training every three years to achieve Level 2
- Liaison with emergency services
- Communication of emergency management policy and procedures to all members of the school community
- Setting up critical incident communication procedure
 - Red card system - Staff, Students, Parents, classroom, playground etc.
 - Intercom system used throughout the school
 - Mobile Phones

Response

- Clear any dangers - scanning the area and ensuring the safety of self and others
- First communication - to office - red card system is in place
- First Aid
- Call of emergency services and other relevant services
- Leadership Team Meeting - allocation of duties and formation of action plan
- Documentation of details of incident and response actions

Recovery

- Leadership Team meeting for evaluation of incident
- Pastoral care of community members (may include services from external organisations or personnel)
- Recovery strategies — self care, counseling, defusing and debriefing
- Communication to relevant groups — staff, students, parents and community
- Media liaison
- Rituals and Memorials
- Follow up and referral
- Review of Recover

Last Updated 1st December 2020