

# CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN



Human Resources and Compliance

Version 4.0

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## Introduction

Any action taken in regard to a critical incident will be recorded to document outcomes or evidence if the incident is referred to another person or agency (e.g. Police or Child Safety Services).

If the critical incident is on campus, the first action will be to contact the Emergency Services. The Principal will also be contacted immediately. In the event of death or serious injury, or threat to life or property, the Principal will advise the College Council Chairman immediately.

If the critical incident involves a student or staff member and is off campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact the Principal, who will contact the College Council Chairman and communicate with other staff as appropriate.

Key details to report include:

- the time, location and nature of the critical incident;
- names and roles of people involved in the critical incident.

The staff member receiving the report will contact the Principal who in turn will urgently deal with the situation and then call a meeting of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) to implement the Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP).

## Student Protection

The College supports the rights of children and young people and is committed to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students. The College is therefore committed to responding to allegations of student harm resulting from the conduct or actions of any person including that of employees. This commitment includes the provision of a safe and supportive living and learning environment for all students and requires all employees, volunteers and visitors to model and encourage behaviour that upholds the dignity and protection of students from harm.

## CIMP Guidelines

A critical incident is defined as anything that is both extraordinary and beyond our normal ability to cope. Some examples of critical incidents include:

- the death of a student;
- an accident during a camp;
- illness or death of a staff member;



- Cyber Incident including Cyber Attack; or
- similar events that impact on members of the College community.

The specific nature of the critical incident will determine the actions the College will take. Actions taken will vary according to the degree the incident is public, the age of those affected by the incident and the extent of their involvement.

### 1. Plan the response

The Principal will take responsibility for organising and coordinating the College's response. This will involve calling together the CIRT. It may also be the Principal's role to contact families of those affected.

### 2. Provide information to those affected by the incident

The starting point in assuming some control over an event is understanding what happened. Students and teachers have a need to accept the reality of the event, and the inevitable discussions that follow are better based on fact rather than on rumour or supposition. It is important that rumours are discounted. Some important information channels for the CIRT to consider and manage are:

- College App;
- Emails;
- Facebook;
- IntelliHR;
- Parent Portal;
- SchoolBox;
- Staff Portal;
- Staff and Student Notices;
- Website;
- Twitter if required.

### 3. Resume normal routines as soon as possible

There is reassurance and safety in the predictability of normal routines. Once the event has been formally acknowledged - perhaps through meetings, a memorial service, or whatever is appropriate - the next step may well be to resume, as far as practicable, normal scheduled activities, so that any ongoing recovery strategies can take place against a background of predictability.

### 4. Assess the psychological/emotional needs of those affected

After a traumatic event, the people involved will need support. The nature of this support will vary among individuals but generally those closest to the incident will need more assistance than others. On advice from the CIRT, the Counsellor should determine the nature and degree of support needed. At a minimum level, this should mean providing opportunities for those involved to express and share with others the reactions that they had to the incident. Those in charge and those providing support also need extra consideration during this time. Some action of "closure" may need to be planned.

#### *Practical ideas for students dealing with the critical incident*

When something distressing has happened at the College or within the College community there is usually at least one class or year level, that is particularly affected and in need of support.



Some practical ideas for all age groups:

- Let the students explain what happened.
- Discuss what actually happened – give facts and sort rumours from facts.
- Allow discussion time:
  - Where were you when it happened?
  - How did you find out?
  - What did you feel?
  - How might others feel?

The notion of blame is difficult – instead try to incorporate what can be done now into the discussion.

- Some students like to write or draw – to recall events, people, and emotions – or to vent them.
- Talk to the students/class about how they will respond and support survivors/victims during their absence (e.g. letters, visits) and when they return to the College.

Some practical ideas for use with adolescents:

- Group discussions are important and useful. They allow time to express and normalise their reactions and it is helpful if teachers and adolescents share their reactions. "Crazy" thoughts, extreme emotions such as helplessness, frustration, anger and survivor guilt may need to be recognised and vented.
- It is important and useful to end discussions on a positive and practical note:
  - What heroic acts were observed?
  - What can we do right now – contribute to a memorial service, practical support for victims and families?
  - What can we do in the longer term? Discuss possible improvements to the way the situation was managed – what could we do better?
- Plan a follow-up time. Offer referral for individual counselling. Let students know what sort of help is available and that it is okay to seek help. Peer support can be valuable if peers are emotionally able to handle it.
- If moved to tears, don't be afraid to let students/adults see - it can be very supportive and empathic.

### *Staff affected by critical incidents*

When a critical incident affects the College community, those in the community will play various roles and encounter different experiences.

One of the difficulties from a staff member's perspective may include their own reactions to a shared critical incident. The way a person reacts may make it harder for him/her to respond to the reactions of students. Equally, sometimes a staff member's reaction may facilitate better understanding of a child's behaviour.

Individuals have a wide range of responses to critical incidents and may be surprised by their own reactions or those of others. An individual's memories or experiences, and/or the accumulation of critical incidents, may increase the likelihood of an incident triggering a personal crisis. Effects of critical events may include:

- physical effects such as changes in appetite and/or libido, sleep disturbances, increased susceptibility to illness, breathlessness, dry mouth, tremor, fatigue, increased sensitivity to noise, light and smell.
- a range of emotional responses which may include anger, irritation, sadness, hostility, aggression, feeling inadequate and denial.



- Altered thought patterns such as confusion, disorientation, forgetfulness, difficulty with tasks and normal routines, flashbacks, nightmares, poor judgment and inability to assess others and self realistically.

The longer-term effects may include burnout or exhaustion, lack of interest in work or life in general, withdrawal from family and friends, escapism and over work. These responses impact upon family, social and work relationships and activities.

It is important that teachers pay attention to their own mental and physical well-being and take time to ensure that they look after themselves, as well as their students, when a critical incident occurs.

## CIMP Process Steps

### 1. Allocation of responsibilities to the CIRT

Members of the CIRT are allocated tasks by the Principal that will be documented on an Action Plan. Overall members of the CIRT:

- monitor and protect the wellbeing of all members of the College community;
- ensure their tasks/responsibilities are undertaken appropriately and in a timely manner;
- ensure students, staff and parents are provided with accurate and consistent advice; and
- share responsibilities.

Responsibilities include:

- risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action;
- analysis of requirements to address hazards;
- establishment of liaison with all relevant Emergency Services (e.g. Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance, Poisons Information Centre, Child Safety Services);
- establishment of liaison with relevant staff within the Anglican Church, Brisbane Diocese; and
- establishment of flow of information using and managing information channels.

### 2. Critical Incident Response

The following provides a guide for responding to a critical incident.

#### *Immediate response*

Within hours of the incident being reported:

- ensure the safety and welfare of students, staff, parents and visitors to the College community;
- if applicable, secure or evacuate the area;
- liaise with Emergency Services, and medical staff;
- notify the Principal;
- liaise with relevant government agencies;
- ensure affected students, parents and staff are not left alone;
- identify the nature of the critical incident, look for reliable sources, do not ignore rumours,



investigate immediately, confirm facts with family and/or Police or other relevant stakeholders;

- immediately advise the College Council Chairman and the Anglican Church Brisbane Diocese;
- identify students, staff and members of the College community most closely involved and at risk;
- in the case of International students, liaise with the Department of Home Affairs and appropriate embassy; and
- contact and inform parents and family members.

### *First 24 hours*

- convene the CIRT;
- implement an appropriate CIMP;
- assess the need for immediate and ongoing support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved;
- provide students, staff and the wider College community with factual information as appropriate;
- manage media and publicity;
- prepare staff and students – no comment should be made to the media without advice and approval from the Principal;
- arrange debriefing for all students, staff and the wider College community most closely involved and at risk;
- complete the 'Critical Incident Report';
- notify WorkSafe Queensland as required.

### *24 to 72 hours after the critical incident*

- restore the College to a regular routine, program delivery and community life as soon as practicable;
- identify any other people who may be affected by the critical incident and provide access to support services;
- provide accurate information to students, staff and the wider College community;
- arrange memorial service and/or special chapel service as appropriate;
- maintain contact with affected parties to provide support and monitor progress;
- notify relevant areas within the College that may need follow-up, i.e. student records, Finance and Human Resources.

### *Ongoing follow-up response*

- monitor students, staff and the wider College community for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder;
- provide referral to specialised services as required;
- evaluation of critical incident management;
- plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries;
- manage any possible long-term disturbances; (e.g. inquests, legal proceedings)
- gather relevant information for a critical incident review;
- consider offering information/support sessions for parents;
- continue to document actions; and
- implement recommendations from the critical incident review.



### 3. Media Management

The College recognises that each critical incident is unique, and the dynamics of each situation will need to be assessed when it occurs. To protect the privacy of individuals and to ensure the provision of accurate information, the following media management strategy will be followed:

- The Principal will handle all media releases in consultation with the College Council Chairman:
  - The Principal gathers all information, checks facts and determines the official College response.
  - The Principal ensures training/advice is provided to all staff to respond to telephone or occasional enquiries following a critical incident.
- The Principal may delegate media liaison to the Manager Marketing and Enrolments or an appropriate member of the CIRT.
  - This may include management of access for media to:
    - the scene of the incident
    - students
    - staff
    - members of the wider College community.
- Where a media release is deemed appropriate, an email copy of the release will be provided to the Anglican Church Brisbane Diocese, all members of the College Council, members of the P&F and members of staff no later than the time of the release to the media.

### 4. Evaluation and Review of the CIMP

After each critical incident, a meeting of the CIRT will be held to evaluate the 'Critical Incident Report' and the effectiveness of the management of the plan to make any adjustments and improvements as deemed necessary. The evaluation will incorporate feedback gathered from students, staff and the wider College community. An evaluation report will be presented to the College Council for information and consideration.

## Sample Action Plans

TASKS ASSIGNED TO MEMBERS OF THE CIRT		
Date	CIRT Member	Task
	Principal	
	Deputy Principal	
	Head of Primary, Deputy Principal	
	Deputy Principal, Pastoral Care	
	Assistant to Head of Primary and PYP Coordinator	
	Heads of House	
	Chaplain	
	Middle School Coordinator	



	International Student Coordinator	
	Manager Human Resources and Compliance	
	Business Manager	

**FIRST 24 HOURS**

Date	Task	CIRT Member
	Gather Accurate Information	
	Contact appropriate government agencies/counsellors	
	Convene meeting with key staff and stakeholders	
	Arrange supervision of students	
	Hold staff meeting	
	Organise a schedule of activities for the day (timetable)	
	Inform parents	
	Inform students	
	Manage media	
	Other	

**24 to 72 HOURS AFTER THE CRITICAL INCIDENT**

Date	CIRT Member	Task
		Review the events of the first 24 hours
		Arrange support for individuals/groups/parents/students/staff
		Plan the reintegration of staff and students
		Plan visits to those affected
		Liase with family on significant matters
		School Closure
		Other

**ONGOING FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE**

Date	CIRT Member	Task
		Monitor students for continuing signs of stress
		Evaluate response to incident and amend CIMP as appropriate
		Formalise plan for the future
		Inform new staff and students
		Decide on appropriate way to deal with anniversaries of the critical incident
		Other



## Sample Response Statements

### 1. Response statement for an assembly

*A guideline for such an announcement might be:*

"Today we received tragic (*or sad*) news. We learned that one of our students, \_\_\_\_\_, died by \_\_\_\_\_ (*give basic appropriate elaboration with minimal detail*). When things like this happen, people have all kinds of reactions. They may experience shock, sadness, fear and anger. These reactions may rise and fall throughout the day and possibly for days to come. Some of us will want to have quiet time alone and others may want to talk with their friends or adults. Some of you who didn't know \_\_\_\_\_ may be ready for teachers to return to lessons sooner than others. We all need at a time like this to be practising patience and respect for each other.

We can take some time to talk about this. Those who want some time to think, talk or pray about this may go to \_\_\_\_\_ which we have set aside so you can gather together with friends and/or talk with the College Chaplain or one of the counsellors. We recognise the need for you to gather with friends to talk, so we are providing this place for you. (It is important that all students be in some setting where an adult is present). For those of you who wish to talk with the Chaplain or a counsellor, they will be available to see students during the day in this same place.

The school day will remain on schedule, but teachers in any class may choose to suspend regular lessons to allow you to talk about what's happened.

At this point we know the following about the memorial/funeral arrangements.

We will continue to keep you updated as this unfolds. Further news will come by \_\_\_\_\_ (*give details as on how this will be handled*).

### 2. Response to Parents/Homestay Providers in the College community

Dear Parents,

Yesterday two of our Year Nine students were tragically killed and two others injured during a sudden storm at the Year Nine camp at Lake Jerrybone. The students were struck by a sheet of roofing iron from an abandoned farmhouse as they sheltered in their tent.

I regret to inform you that X \_\_\_\_\_ and Y \_\_\_\_\_ were killed instantly. A \_\_\_\_\_ and B \_\_\_\_\_ received a broken arm and broken ribs respectively and were discharged from hospital after an overnight stay.

I have visited the parents of X \_\_\_\_\_ and Y \_\_\_\_\_ and offered them the condolences and prayers of our whole College Community, together with any support or help we are able to give.

Your children may be affected by the deaths of our students and we have made plans to provide support for them at school if needed. I will advise you further of these shortly.



College lessons and activities will continue as normally as possible and students should attend regularly. Reactions of students will vary and may include crying, not wanting to talk, or wanting to talk, wanting to be alone, anger, lack of concentration, sleeping or eating problems.

Should you or your child/student feel the need for specialised help or counselling, please contact me or our Chaplain, \_\_\_\_\_ who will be able to assist you in these difficult times.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

## The Needs of Children at a Time of Crisis

*Adapted from an article by Delia Halvorson - Faith Discovery Ministries, Christian Educator -Ft. Myers, Florida in response to the events of 11 September 2001.*

- 1. Love**  
They need to know your love - not showering with gifts, but your tangible love and care.
- 2. Assurance**  
They need to have assurance of their own safety but avoid being overprotective so that they are afraid to leave your side.
- 3. Conversation**  
Keep the lines of communication open. Take the lead from the child as to how much they need to talk about and know about the situation. Keep answers to questions simple, giving only what is needed. Listen to comments of children as they play - are there clues here that need further conversation?
- 4. Expression Of feelings**  
Use opportunities for children to express feelings, such as: toys, puppets, books, music, water play, play dough, painting, puzzles Let children know that you have some of the same feelings they have.
- 5. Prayer**  
Pray as a family. Keep prayers simple. Encourage them just to talk God. It's OK to tell God about your feelings too. Children may want to write out or draw prayers to God.
- 6. God's love**  
They need to know that God loves them all the time, and that sometimes God has a happy heart and sometimes God has a sad heart. God wants all people to be happy people who love others, but sometimes people make bad choices.
- 7. Focus**  
Children need something aside from the crisis on which to focus their attention.



**8. Reality**

Children may have trouble distinguishing between TV shows that blow up buildings and the factual news reports of this event. Yes, this really did happen. It is a sad time, but we will come through it with God's help.

**9. Stability**

There is something about routine schedule that helps us all to settle down. This can be an anchor to help the child realize that life can and will go on.

**10. Quiet times**

In the confusion of the crisis, children and adults alike need quiet times.

## Important things to remember

**1. In the event of any critical incident, the first thing to do is calm the affected party/parties down and offer hope.**

Communicate simply, take control and give clear and practical directions in order to reduce the anxiety and connect the logic of the affected party/parties.

**2. You are not superhuman.**

Managing a critical incident can be a very lonely time, especially if you are regarded as the central link with students. While you are busy providing care or support to those directly affected by the incident, your own health and emotional well-being may be at risk. Self-care should *NOT* be forgotten in your management strategy.

**3. Take time out each day to telephone or e-mail another colleague**

This will give you not only a chance to debrief, but also to compare notes with sympathetic colleagues who have had similar experiences and a real understanding of what you are feeling. You are helping others while you help yourself.

**4. Update the resources as necessary**

Enter as many local telephone numbers and contacts, and as much information as you can into your device so that you can refer to the resources thereby allowing you to take effective and immediate action when necessary.

Optimise your own personal traits. Remember that it is more than likely that the student has sought you out because of *who* you are, not *what* you are. So, follow your instincts and act accordingly.

### *Preparing yourself*

How does one prepare for dealing with a critical incident? The attitude you assume is of the utmost significance:

- Expect the unexpected. Not everything occurs between operational hours.
- Do not be easily upset or disturbed by even the most extreme situations.
- Convey empathy and respect for the emotions of those involved.
- Worry and fear should not be conveyed to the person.
- Provide a sense of stability and strength.
- Be able to alleviate tension and anxiety.



- LISTEN - to what is said.
- LISTEN - to what is not said.
- Create a personal equilibrium between your own values and those of a different value system but keep the values of those you are speaking to at the front of your mind.
- There will be times when you are unavailable. Don't be consumed by guilt. As long as policy and procedures are in place, there will be someone else who can step in and fulfil the required role.

## Privacy

Personal information that may be obtained, is stored and released in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988*. For further information please refer to the College's *Privacy Procedure*.

## Document information

### Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Author
4.0	30/04/2018	Procedure and associated documents review	Manager HR and Compliance