



Critical Incidents Policy

Related Policies

Student Welfare and Management Policy
Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy
Internet Policy
Evacuation Policy
Lockdown Policy

Purpose and Definition

The following procedures are to act as a guide for the school in times of critical or serious incident. A critical or serious incident can be broadly defined as an event which;

- causes disruption to an organization,
- creates significant danger or risk that could traumatically affect individuals within the organization,
- Impacts on the effective operation of the school,
- Attracts negative media attention or a negative public profile for the workplace or the Catholic Education Office.

Examples of this may be;

- the death of a student or teacher,
- students or staff being witnesses or victims of assault or abuse,
- students or staff being involved in an accident, e.g. bus crash,
- threats to the safety of students or staff, including the presence at the workplace of an individual behaving in a dangerous or threatening manner,
- a break-in accompanied by major vandalism,
- a natural or other major disaster in the community.

Policy

During the Event

The Crisis Team Chairperson is to initiate emergency procedures only after a prepared statement has been readied.

In the event of an emergency occurring during the school day, pupils and staff will be notified to go to classrooms or other designated places.

Support may be needed for pupils and staff in a private manner who may be seriously affected.

All adults in the school are to assist with pupils (available staff members are to assemble in the Staffroom for directions).

Normal parent collection of pupils will apply. Staff members are to monitor any pupils leaving school without parents, e.g. roll call. There may be a need for extra staff on playground duty.

Classes may need to be shared to allow teachers to support the Crisis Team. Ensure that parents of distressed pupils are promptly contacted and pupils are given support until ready to leave.

After the Event

Contact CatholicCare to provide counseling for all parties. Provide appropriate material to media after the event re 'Coping with Grief' etc. this should be coordinated by the Crisis Team and CatholicCare

Definitions

Crisis Team Membership

Principal (Chairperson)

Assistant Principal (Alternate Chairperson)

R.E.C.

Parish Priest

School Counsellor

Primary Coordinator

Class Teacher (if necessary)

CEO Representative (if available)

Responsibilities

The role of the Principal

The coordinator of the plan and the person responsible for the initiation of the plan is the Principal or the Principal's replacement. The Principal will:

- Initiate and supervise the Crisis Management Plan.
- Determine immediate course of action depending on circumstances.
- Gather factual information on the crisis.
- Arrange for contact with emergency services if required.
- Arrange and chair a brief meeting of Leadership Team and School Crisis Team (as a matter of urgency) to consider implementation of action plan.
- Formulate a statement for staff and pupils.
- Arrange and chair a meeting of all staff to inform them of the situation and to advise re action to be taken.
- Be the only school contact with the media.
- Contact parents of pupils directly involved.
- Contact Parish Priest.
- Contact Director of CEO to relate details of the crisis and strategies in place.
- Contact the school counselor (CatholicCare).
- Make arrangements for extra casual staff where necessary.
- Arrange for ancillary staff to contact parents where required.
- Directly supervise the involvement of the Leadership Team in the implementation of the action plan.
- Supervise/brief ancillary staff.

The role of the Assistant Principal

- Arrange meetings in roll groups to enable staff to speak to pupils about the incident.
- Chair meeting with school Crisis Team (and Community Health representatives if appropriate).
- Record "affected" pupils nominated by Crisis Team and/or class teachers.
- Supervise welfare aspects of the action plan.
- Arrange staff assistance as requested by Crisis Team.
- Arrange debriefing at end of day for staff.
- Immediately arrange for the Primary Coordinator/REC to be relieved from classes.
- Mobilise extra staff (not teaching at the time) where possible to assist in any way required.
- Be mobile around the school throughout the day to assist staff in handling any problems arising.
- Arrange relief for any teachers not coping in the class situation.

The role of the Primary Coordinator and REC

- Meet with other Crisis Team members to consider management of crisis.
- Counselling and coordinating activities where required.
- Determine staffing needs in Library with Crisis Team and to request staff from Assistant Principal accordingly.
- Ensure all Classes have a teacher.
- Provide copies of the statement of fact to all teachers.
- Be available to pupils or refer to Counsellor.
- Meet with other Crisis Team members to consider management of crisis in short and long term.
- Identify with teachers the affected pupils, record names and supply to Assistant Principal.

The role of Class Teachers

- Pass on information to pupils in their class regarding the incident (as provided by the Principal through Assistant Principal).
- Answer questions; listen to issues that are raised (see - Advice for Teachers).
- Observe pupils in their group and contact Assistant Principal or Counsellor if concerns that they may need assistance.

The role of Ancillary Staff (briefed by Principal shortly after the statement is ready)

- Refer all media enquiries to the Principal.
- Answer parent enquiries by reference to the prepared statement.
- Assure enquirers that school is proceeding normally, that pupils should come and/or stay.
- Thank people offering help and take a contact number if the offer needs to be taken up.
- Continue with routine duties and offer to assist at counter as required, to handle personal enquiries.

The role of the School Counsellor

- Meet with other Crisis Team members to consider management of crisis in short and long term.
- Determine staffing needs in library with Crisis Team and ensure appropriate counselling support is available.
- Counselling and coordinating activities where required.
- Contact Community Health to inform them of the crisis and, if appropriate, arrange for them to visit the school to discuss needs/assist in management of the situation.
- Assist other Community Support Services in arranging long term service provision to individuals (both pupils and staff) and families (These services are listed on the next page).
- Work with Community Health staff in assessing readiness of students involved to return to school.
- Assist Crisis Coordinator with debriefing.
- Contact other Counsellors for support, if necessary.

Procedures

- Principal is told or confirms the facts about the incident.
- Principal calls meeting of Leadership Team and school crisis team. Principal and Assistant Principal prepare a statement for use with media, staff and parents (input from counsellor may be useful, in conjunction with the CEO).
- Emergency procedures are started.
- Director of CEO is informed.
- Principal calls meeting of whole staff (including all ancillary staff).

- Pupils and teachers meet.
- Crisis Team meets with representatives of Community Support Agencies.

- The Library is designated as the location for "affected" children.
- Staff members are relieved if required.

- Selected staff rostered for support duty.

- Playground duty roster is strengthened.

- Affected pupils are directed to Crisis Team members.

- Arrangements made for pupils needing to go home.

Primary Coordinator/REC to take note of all affected pupils who may require additional support.

At the end of Day 1:

- Debriefing opportunity available to all staff.
- Leadership Team and Crisis Team meet to plan longer term procedures.
- Counselling and information made available after normal school hours

Meetings to be arranged

Meeting of **Leadership Team and Crisis Team** members as soon as possible after the incident occurs - Principal or Assistant Principal to chair

Aims:

- To provide factual information.
- To prepare and distribute a statement to be read by Principal.
- To confirm management plan.

Meeting with **staff** - Principal to chair - Primary Coordinator/REC to supervise pupils

Aims:

- To provide factual information.
- To suggest methods of handling problems arising in class.
- To inform of any changes to school routine.
- To assess staff capacity to cope.

Meeting with **pupils** - class teachers in charge

Aims:

- To provide factual information.
- To direct affected pupils to available Crisis Team staff.
- To monitor pupils' behaviour.

Meeting between **Crisis Team and Community Support representatives** – Crisis Team Chairperson to chair

Aims:

- To agree on Community Health role.
- To arrange intervention procedure.
- To decide if school closure is required.

References

Advice for Teachers

- When a critical incident occurs involving the whole school community, an already organised procedure will be followed.
- Class teachers will have the responsibility of informing their group of pupils about what has happened and what is being done about it.
- Class teachers will be the first line of contact with pupils who collectively may be frightened, grieving, confused, inquisitive or disinterested.
- In this situation it is best to use certain responses and to avoid others, see over page;

Try to Avoid

You'll all feel better about it tomorrow.
now.

Something like this happened to me once
believe.

Try not to be so emotional about it.
the library.

Forget it. It's nothing to do with you.
like this.

It is only a one in a million accident.

Leave me out of it. I can't cope.
group.

Do something to take your mind off it.
at times.

Try to Use

It's OK to feel shocked and helpless

You must be finding it really hard to

You would be more comfortable in

We all feel the shock of something

It did happen and this is the result.

I'll get someone else to take the

The thoughts will keep coming back

SIGNIFICANT CONTACTS IN SCHOOL CRISIS SITUATIONS

CEO	6234 5455
CatholicCare	6239 4094
Parish Priest	6231 9219
Canberra Hospital	6244 2222
Calvary Hospital	6201 6111
Emergency	000
Police	11 444
Ambulance	6207 9900
Fire Brigade Kambah	6207 8550
Greenway	6207 8580
Poisons Information	131 126
Community Information & Referral	6248 7988
Youthline	6257 2333
Alcohol & Drug Service	6205 4545
Rape Crisis Centre	6247 5567
ACT Family Services Branch (Tuggeranong)	6207 1466

References

nil

Forms

Nil

Approved by: Principal

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