

# Critical Incident Policy 2021

## 1. RESPONDING TO A TRAUMATIC OR CRITICAL INCIDENT IN WHICH THE SCHOOL IS INVOLVED

Southern Autistic School may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event. The incident may involve a loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance. The incident may occur in the school environment or outside of the school and may include staff, students or those close to them.

A Critical Incident plan should be implemented for any of the following:-

- When the subject is a student who is under the care or supervision of the school;
- When an incident impacting a student is brought to the attention of the school, regardless of when or where it occurred, provided it is impacting on the student or other students within the school setting
- Incidents that impact the continuity of school operations, including property damage and emergencies;
- Incidents that require a notification to police; and or
- Incidents impacting on the health, safety and wellbeing of staff where the incident also impacts on student health safety and wellbeing and/or continuity of school operations
- Principals may also elect to apply this policy to incidents that impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of staff in the event that additional support is required from the DET

Occupational aggression and violence in school including-

- students are physically fighting, and a member of school staff is injured when attempting to intervene
- a student displays behaviour(s) of concern that may, in certain situations, escalate to hitting or punching staff. This behaviour may not be intended to harm, but can still result in physical and / or psychological injury
- a student pinches or hits a teacher because they have not yet learnt how to communicate their needs in a prosocial way. This behaviour may not be intended to harm, but can still result in physical and / or psychological injury
- a parent or carer is upset about an incident involving their child and makes abusive or threatening calls and emails to school staff members
- members of the public intruding onto school grounds and behaving in an aggressive or violent manner, or calling a school and making threats
- parents making threatening statements about or towards a teacher on social media or email
- a school or Department employee is aggressive or violent towards a colleague in a school setting

Counselling and/or referral to Employee Assistance Program 1300361008 will be provided for those who need or require support. This may include those who do not seem to be closely connected to the event or the individuals involved. The school may be in a position to help grieving families at difficult times, eg through the school's participation in the funeral service.

Whilst school should operate as normally as possible, some degree of flexibility should exist. Clear and explicit, accurate information will be communicated to the school. A Critical Incident Recovery team will be formed to manage the short and long term effects.

Examples of reportable incidents involving schools include – sexual exploitation, loss of essential service, self-harm/injury or threats of suicide, death or suicide of a student, staff or member of the school community, incidents of a sexual nature, injuries requiring treatment by a doctor, transport by ambulance or hospitalisation, family violence, bomb threats, emergency situation and warnings, damage to parts of the school buildings or its content, alleged criminal activity, human trafficking, aggressive behaviour or actions or behaviours of concern, forced marriage or human rights abuse, online bullying, incidents of sexual nature.

## ACTION TO BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF A TRAGIC/TRAUMATIC EVENT, INCLUDING OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE AND AGRESSION WHICH INVOLVES THE SCHOOL

Incidents vary in complexity and the framework for action will depend on the Severity Rating. Please see the Severity rating Decision-Making Matrix.

**The Principal is responsible for the initial incident severity rating and reporting. SEE SEVERITY RATING INDEX.**

**The Principal or Assistant Principals will appoint a skilled Critical Incident Recovery Team to assist in the management of the incident.**

- The CIRT may involve staff members, psychologists, counsellors, DET personnel, first aid officers, Child Safety officers or support agencies. The composition of the team and the size will be related to the incident. Teams will be appointed and their roles will be appointed such as Media Officer, cordoning off area, establishing a contact list, messenger etc. etc.

## SIX STAGES OF RESPONSE FOR CRITICAL INCIDENT

### 1. **IDENTIFY & RESPOND** –

- Principal (Or AP's in absence of Principal) determines the severity of the incident and the Critical Response Team needed. This includes developing roles for the team.
- Ensure everyone is safe – removing students, identifying risk, administering first aide, seeking assistance if required, provide support to witnesses or student, if a staff member is accused or suspected of harming student separate them from alleged victim
- Keep a record of information. If many witnesses – separate until interviewed.
- If Child Abuse – follow the four critical actions
- Contact relevant parties – Worksafe, SEIL, Fire, Ambulance, IRIS report, Parents and community.

### 2. **REPORTING FOR SUPPORT**

- Refer to the Incidents reportable to the ISOC – See attachment 2.
- Edusafe for incidents involving the health, safety and well being of staff
- Reportable Conduct Scheme – via Employee Conduct Branch (ECB)

### 3. **ONGOING SUPPORT & RECOVERY**

- Critical Incident response team appraise the impact of the incident. The team leader identifies those most affected and addresses their physical and psychological needs.
- Take active steps to identify and promote and protect students safety and wellbeing
- Communication – communication to staff, students (in an appropriate way), parents and the school community with a note sent home if needed.
- Inform school Council
- Provide out of hours number,
- Develop ongoing risk management strategies
- Support students through any required action with authorities
- Provide ongoing support, communication, counselling, debriefing with staff and witnesses
- Manage incidents in accordance with all policies
- Document key actions on edusafe, compass, CASES or notes within Emergency Management or Child Safe
- For low level or medium level incidents, schools may seek assistance form region , SEIL, Employee Safety, Staff Well Being, Complex Cases or Legal Division
- **FOR HIGH OR EXTREME incident report, the AREA EX DIRECTOR or delegate will** contact the principal to ensure confidence in actions undertaken and planned, identify any needs and coordinate assistance to the school, update the incident report on IRIS. Consider referral to Student Support Service Officer (SSSO)
- Continue normal routines at school but acknowledge the impact of the incident on the school community and be flexible with those in need of help.
- Ensure incidents involving student injury are reported in CASES21.

### 4. **INVESTIGATE**

- An incident may require for Investigations such as a Child Safety Incident may require for investigations. A disciplinary action may require further investigation through Employee Conduct Branch. Refer to policy documents and legislative schemes.
- These preliminary investigations must be undertaken within 2 days of the incident being reported in IRIS to identify the investigative pathways.
- A principal may choose to conduct a school based enquiry for for Low level or Medium level incidents.
- Consider additional staff training in use of Behaviour Support Plans (BSP's).

### 5. **REVIEW & CLOSE**

- The CIRT will meet to review the plan within 2 days of the incident happening.
- Processes, procedures, communication, follow up and documentation will be reviewed. Strategies in the plan will reviewed and evaluated.
- A risk of similar events happening in the future may need to be identified and risk management strategies viewed

### 6. **ANALYSE & LEARN**

- Keeping data of the incidents and analysing how we can support this to not happen in the future.
- This may include OHS emergency management meetings, Principal review meetings as above.
- Data kept of Critical incidents and Iris reports to be reviewed regularly with Principal team. – may include OHS team.

## MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Links and Appendices (Including process relating to this policy)

To be read in conjunction with

- [Student Well being and Engagement Policy 2019](#)
- [Child Safe Policy 2019](#)
- [First Aid Policy and Procedures](#)
- [A guide to managing incidents in your school](#)
- [Emergency Management](#)
- [DISPLAN Procedures and policy](#)
- SEVERITY RATING INDEX

For responding to Child Sexual Assault or Child Abuse

- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Child Safety Reporting Obligations policy and Procedures](#)
- [Mandatory reporting flow chart](#)

## REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated on June 2018 and is scheduled for review in 2021.

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Author	Nat Proctor/Julia Sadler
Signature	
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