

SERIOUS INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

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NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

With God's grace, we offer outstanding educational experiences founded on Catholic values, fostering partnership between parents and staff in the education of their children, creating communities of respect for each other, the wider society and the earth, encouraging active engagement in social justice issues, the service of others and the promotion of peace.



Serious Incident Management Policy

CONTENTS

1. Rationale	4
2. Aims.....	4
3. Definitions	





Serious incidents may impact on a few members of the school community or they can impact significantly on the whole school community. Consideration must also be given to other schools and communities that may be affected, and to the psychological impact that may occur after a significant tragedy in the wider community.

3.2 Characteristics of Serious Incidents

There are various characteristics of incidents that may have significant impact on a school, or on individuals in the school community. Serious incidents may display some of the following features:

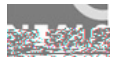
- are dangerous or distressing
- are sudden and unexpected
- occur following long-term exposure to a stressor(s)
- are disruptive to a person's sense of control of events occurring around them
- are disruptive to a person's beliefs and assumptions about the world, people and work
- include elements of physical or emotional loss, or the threat/risk of loss

It is important for school and CSO leaders to understand that an incident or situation that may not be regarded as 'serious' or 'critical' to one person, may present very differently to another. An incident may be escalated in 'criticality' because of unknown personal or environmental factors. This aspect of serious incidents directs CSO leaders to continually monitor the wellbeing of both students and staff.

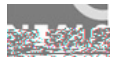
3.3 Examples of Serious Incidents

Serious incidents within school communities can include but are not limited to:

- Suicide of a student or staff member
- Serious illness or death of a member of the school community
- A student or staff member lost, killed or injured on a school excursion or camp
- A threat to life due to a medical condition, contagious or acute illness in the community
- Threats or actual harm caused to a member of the school community or the school itself
- Student explosive behaviour events, or student violence
- Injury and accidents to students or staff
- Negative attention from media and/or police
- Natural disasters (e.g. flood, earthquake, fire) that impact on the school or the local community
- Chemical spills
- Harm caused to school animals
- Property destruction or vandalism
- Theft of school property, student and staff work products
- Witnessing a traumatic event
- Threats to the school, resulting in lock-down or evacuation
- Enforced school closure
- Violent event in the community
- Violent world events



4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



In the event of a serious incident, the CSW is responsible for

- c. Liaising with the AD and the Principal regarding the response to the school's needs
- d. Communicating with the School Psychologist/Counsellors allocated to the affected school/s
- e. Communicating to the CSO Head of Services for Teaching and Learning and Senior Education Officer for the Student Support Unit
- f. Assessing the counselling needs of the school and coordinating additional School Psychologist/Counsellor(s) to attend the school/s if required
- g. Co-ordinating support for the School Psychologist/Counsellors who have provided counselling service to the affected school/s: this may include professional, external de-briefing and/or counselling, and consideration of their workload in unaffected schools
- h. Co-ordinating support for the Principal and affected staff members: this may include arranging professional, external de-briefing and/or counselling.

4.4 School Psychologist/Counsellor

is responsible for:

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Support Material, attached to this policy, will assist school leaders to establish school-based policies and procedures, and in the management of serious incidents in their schools. The Support Material is organised according to the 4 Phases.

5.1 PHASE 1 PREPARATION, MITIGATION AND TRAINING

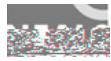
Although each serious incident will be unique and will occur in different circumstances, there are features common to all incidents for which preparation, mitigation and training can be developed. Planning provides for a co-ordinated, appropriate response and helps to minimise negative impacts on individuals and communities.

5.1.1 In Phase 1, the Principal will:

1. Communicate to all staff the importance of preparation, mitigation and training
2. Attend CSO provided training
3. Determine training needs of staff, if required
4. Form a Serious Incident Management Team (SMT), (using the CSO provided document as a guide) to guide the team's activities and processes
5. Develop a school-based Serious Incident Policy, accessing CSO support if required
6. Establish a budget for the SMT and Serious Incident Response

5.1.2 In Phase 1, the CSO will:

1. Provide training for school leaders on the management of a serious incident. This training will include the following features:
 - a. The use of scenarios and best practice and research
 - b. Management of disruption in short and longer timeg [()587.



For school leaders and CSO personnel, keeping calm and following the accepted plan will ensure that safety is maximised and that assistance will be most effective.

Phase 2 includes the initial incident and the



- a. *Summary Report After Serious Incident*
 - b. *Assessment of Serious Incident Proforma*
 - c. Any responses to legal and insurance matters that may be required
2. Continue to provide support to all school community members, especially students and those who have been identified as requiring additional support
 3. Refer to school calendar to identify key events that may have an impact on students and/or staff e.g. anniversary of event, graduation ceremonies, birthday
 4. Consider appropriate opportunities for liturgies, rituals and memorials, following established CSO protocols
 5. Review school policies and procedures with AD
 6. Access support for themselves, in relation to self-care, if required

5.3.2 In Phase 3 the actions of CSO personnel will be as follows:

1. AD will continue to support the Principal as needed. This may include the management of any ongoing matters such as media, legal and insurance implications or counselling needs
2. AD and CSW will assist the Principal to monitor the wellbeing of the school community, including the reactions of parents
3. AD will review serious incident response with the Principal using Summary Report After Serious Incident
4. AD will assist Principal to complete other documentation as required e.g. WHS report
5. School Psychologist/Counsellor will continue to monitor student wellbeing and liaise with the CSW and the Principal
6. CSW will monitor the needs of the School Psychologist/Counsellor and provide support as required
7. CSW and AD will liaise with the Principal regarding support requirements and debriefing for staff. This may include arranging professional, external de-briefing and/or counselling
8. AD will advise the Principal of CSO protocols on funerals, rituals and memorials as required.

5.4 PHASE4 THE LONG TERM

Usually, by approximately 3 months, any disruption to normal school business has been addressed and those individuals who have needed support have been attended to. However, some impacts may not become identifiable until a longer period of time



5.4.2 In Phase 4, the CSO will

1. Continue to support the Principal in relation to wellbeing of the school community
2. Continue to support the Principal regarding any ongoing matters (e.g. media, legal, insurance)
3. Provide opportunities for professional debriefing for Principal/school leader(s)
4. Continue to monitor the wellbeing of school leaders and staff

6. BUDGET

The Catholic Schools Office will make provision each year in its annual budget for:

1. Professional development for relevant CSO staff, school leaders and other appropriate support staff e.g. counsellors in relation to effectively managing serious incidents in schools. This could include, for



7. Staff Phone Contact Numbers
8. Emergency Contact List
9. Useful Phone Numbers
10. Students with Health Care/Mental Health Care Plans
11. Students with Medical Needs
12. Ten Steps to Protect Your School
13. Media Management for Serious Incident

PHASE 2 Serious Incident and Immediate Response

1. A general approach to the management of serious incidents
2. Serious Incident Immediate Response
3. Checklist: Serious Incident – Immediate Response Plan

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

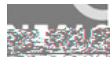
NB Appendix A for information from HEADSPACE relating to suicide www.headspace.org.au

1. Phase 2 Quick Checklist: Day 1, Next Day, Within A Week Postvention
2. Record of Serious Incident - Immediate Response
3. Staff Meeting Agenda - Sample
4. Announcement Guide for Roll Call/Class - Teachers - Sample
5. Staff Fact Sheet for Serious Incident - Sample
6. Guide to School Leaders to Communicate to Students and Staff – Sample
7. Supporting Staff
8. Self Care for School Staff
9. Serious Incident Support for Students – Information for Teachers - Sample
10. Correspondence to Parent/Carer – Sample 1
11. Correspondence to Parent/Carer – Sample 2
12. Correspondence to Parent/Carer – Sample 3
13. Correspondence from Principal to Staff after Serious Incident - Sample
14. Assisting Police
15. Managing Social Media
16. Serious Incident Report
17. Counsellor Brief Report

PHASE 3 POST INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

1. What to Expect
2. Assessment of Serious Incident Proforma
3. Phase 3 - Summary Report after Serious Incident
4. SIMP Postvention Checklist – Crisis Institute Model
5. Rituals of Remembering
6. Memorials

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS



The School Psychologist/Counsellor has available various resources for supporting students, families and staff following a serious incident

Web & Resource Links

www.KidsMatter.edu.au

www.mindmatters.edu.au

www.reachout.com.au

www.headspace.org.au – (provides school support following suicide)

PHASE 4 THE LONG TERM

1.



4 Phases of a Serious Incident

PHASE 1 Preparation, Mitigation and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Form a Serious Incident Management Team (SIMT). Define roles and responsibilities of team membersWrite school policy and proceduresComplete the document “Checklist – Preparation, Mitigation and Training”Conduct Risk Assessments and action plans to mitigate risksDevelop an action flowchart or procedural checklistEstablish a phone tree, staff contact numbers and emergency contact listComplete the document “Students with Health Care/Mental Health Care Plans”Complete the document “Students with Medical Needs”Adapt the document “Ten Steps to Protect Your School” and inform staff of their responsibilitiesDetermine training needs and arrange for this to occur
PHASE 2 Serious Incident and Immediate Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess the situation and gather the factsContact emergency services if requiredEnsure safety of students, staff, visitorsConvene SIMT and allocate roles and responsibilitiesCommunicate – contact relevant people on the phone treeMonitor situation and maintain communicationOffer & provide supportArrange appropriate reflection/prayersComplete Serious Incident ReportComplete required documentationReview schools response with SIMT
PHASE 3 Post Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Audit and evaluate using the Assessment of Serious Incident ProformaEnsure that response to legal and insurance proceedings is timely and accurateProvide education and support to all school community members who have been identified as requiring additional supportRefer to school calendar to identify key events throughout the year for example, anniversary of event and graduation ceremoniesConsider Rituals for remembering, memorial and liturgies for the school communityReview school policies & procedures
PHASE 4 Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue to monitor and support schools staff and students identified as requiring additional supportFacilitate further individual support for those experiencing traumaMonitor and respond to the cumulative effects of a series of incidents on staff/students