CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

This policy is designed to be implemented by the College Executive, when a critical incident may have occurred.

“A Critical Incident is an unusual or unexpected occurrence or event that has the capacity to trigger significant emotional reaction in individuals such that their coping mechanism can be overwhelmed, and/or cause significant disruption to the normal operations of the school.”


Examples of critical incidents include:

- A Death in the College Community (of a student, teacher, ex-student, friend, Parish Priest) through sudden death by accident, suicide, murder, following illness.
- A serious injury of a member of the College community.
- A group of students lost or injured on a retreat, camp or excursion.
- Students or staff being taken hostage.
- The destruction of the whole or part of the College.
- Break-in or vandalism of the College.
- Students witnessing serious injury or death.
- Unusual or unfavourable media attention.
- A natural or other major disaster in the community.
- Fire, Bomb Threat, Explosion, Gas or Chemical Hazard, Flood, Earthquake, etc.

Refer to Evacuation Policy & Lock Down/Lock Out Policy for College response to above.

What are our Primary Goals in Critical Incident Management?

- To assist the bereaved.
- Secure the safety of those affected.
- To inform relevant authorities of what has happened.
- To monitor those individuals most “at risk” as a result of the Critical Incident.
- To allow feelings in response to the Critical Incident to be ventilated and validated.
- To maintain a balance between Critical Incident Management and College Management.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS PROCEDURES

Rationale for the Team Approach in Response to a Critical Incident

Following a Critical Incident there is a significant diminishing of decision making skills and the ability to plan. Often the very people who need to implement the Critical Incident Management Plan feel intense trauma themselves. Added to this is a sense of immediacy to implement a number of system strategies with a high level of competency.
Two key strategies which facilitate the process are:

1. **The formation of a Critical Incident Management Team**

This allows for the sharing of the stress and demands. Each member of the team can focus on one area of need. Having stated this, it is important that Team members meet daily following the Incident to communicate to each other levels of effectiveness, areas of need and expressions of concern. While each Team member has a predetermined role there will obviously be overlap. The Headmaster may wish to be the Critical Incident Co-ordinator or he may decide to appoint someone else. This person may have a dual role in the Team eg: C.I.M. Co-ordinator and Staff Co-ordinator.

The Headmaster has the overall leadership role.

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**KEY ROLES**

1. **CI Co-ordinator**

   This person is the Headmaster, whose primary role is to determine whether there is a critical incident, and if so to inform the Catholic Education Office and convene the Critical Incident Management Team.

2. **Organisation Monitor**

   This person is the Deputy Headmaster. Much of this role involves communication to key personnel and facilitating change to normal routines. The aim is to create a balance whereby the College functions as normally as possible while still providing the support mechanisms required. Generally, students can be in one of the following places -

   - Normal classes.
   - In year group or whole school assembly areas.
   - The Prayer Reflection Room which is supervised.
   - The Counselling Centre.

   It is not advisable to allow students to gather in groups in the playground while lessons are on. The appropriate Year Co-ordinator is released from class to supervise and support the Counselling Centre, since this person would best know the students and their needs.

3. **Other Roles**

   All other roles in the Critical Incident Management Team take their direction from the CI Co-ordinator or the Organisation Monitor. Particular priority needs to be given to the issue of timely and appropriate communication.

4. **Team Members Duties**

   In term 4, 2011 the Critical Incident Management Team will meet to determine the possible duties to be performed by each team member.

   September 2011