

# TSAC Ltd

## Duty of Care Policy No 1

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### Critical Incident Management Plan

## The Springfield Anglican College

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2019

Document Approval and Version Control	
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Contact Officers: Position: Manager Human Resources Name: Melanie Shuter	Next Review: 30.06.2020

## CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM (CIRT)

<b>Council Chairman</b>	Tim Reid	
<b>Principal</b>	Darren Pitt	
<b>Executive Leadership Team</b>	Head of Primary Head of Secondary Director of Teaching & Learning Director of Co-Curricular Engagement Director of Communications Business Manager	Tania Brewer Richard Clark Wendy Jurss Andy Holmes Remy Bamford Jackie McComb
<b>Personal Assistant to the Principal</b>	Melanie Ellis	
<b>Senior Leadership Team</b>	Chaplain Manager HR & Compliance ICT Manager Director of Student Activities	Erika Williams Melanie Shuter Emmanuel Edem Graham Swinton
<b>Psychologist</b>	Majella Dennis	
<b>Facilities Manager</b>	Craig Mason	
<b>Heads of Clan</b>	Sarah Pearce Hilton Whitehorne Patti Thompson Darren Sime	
<b>International Student Coordinator</b>	Stephanie McPherson	

The Critical Incident Response Team will vary depending on whether an incident affects both Primary and Secondary schools or is isolated to one or other. Other staff members may be co-opted to assist the CIRT as required.

## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (CIMP)

The Springfield Anglican College CIMP detailed below include:

- Appendix 1 – Critical Incident Management Plan Process Steps
- Appendix 2 – Roles, Responsibilities and Task Assignment
- Appendix 3 – Sample Response Statements to the Community
- Appendix 4 – Needs of Children in times of Crisis
- Appendix 5 - Staff training

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 (i.e. Police or Department of Children’s Services).

## **Definitions**

**A Critical Incident** is any situation faced by a school community causing its members to experience unusually strong reactions, which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the time the situation arises or later.

Examples of critical incidents include:

- the accidental death, serious injury or terminal illness of a student, staff member or family member
- the destruction of part, or the whole of the College
- major vandalism
- the murder of a student, staff member or family member
- a group of students lost or injured on an excursion
- students and/or staff members being taken hostage
- a natural disaster; e.g. flooding, earthquake, electrical storm damage
- student or staff suicide
- a sexual assault
- enforced school closure.

**CIM:** Critical Incident Management Policy approved by the Board

**CIMP:** Critical Incident Management Plan which provides for procedural application of the approved Critical Incident Management Policy

**CIRT:** Critical Incident Response Team

## **On Campus Incident**

If the incident is on campus, the first action will be to contact the emergency services – fire, ambulance or police. The Principal will be contacted immediately.

## **Off Campus Incident**

If the incident involves a student or staff member and is off campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact the Principal (if the Principal is unavailable a member of CIRT) who will communicate with other staff as appropriate.

## **Key Details to be reported**

Key details to report include the time, location, and nature of the incident, names and roles of people involved. The staff member receiving the news contacts the Principal. The Principal urgently deals with emergency situation then calls a meeting of the CIRT to implement the CIMP.

## **Accountability**

Under the direction of the Principal, the Critical Incident Response Team (**CIRT**) has direct responsibility for the implementation of the **CIMP**.

The **CIRT** will consist of:

- Principal
- Personal Assistant to the Principal
- Head of Primary
- Head of Secondary
- Director of Teaching & Learning
- Director of Co-Curricular Engagement

- Director of Communications
- Business Manager
- Chaplain
- Psychologist
- Manager HR & Compliance
- ICT Manager
- Heads of Clan, International Student Coordinator

### **The Principal**

As the Head of the **CIRT** is responsible for:

- Informing the College Board, College Council, Anglican Church Brisbane Diocese of the critical incident as necessary.
- Prepares statement for use with media, staff, parents and students (in consultation with Head of Primary, Head of Secondary and College Chaplain).
- Assumes responsibility as spokesperson to the Media for the school community.
- Convene the initial meeting of the Critical Incident Response Team (as a matter of urgency) to consider implementation of action plan.

### **Leadership Staff of the CIRT Team**

Are responsible for the logistical and administrative management of the crisis – as it applies to the engagement of emergency and counselling services, deployment of staff, timetable rescheduling, and as a “hub”/clearing-station for the carrying out of the Critical Incident Management Plan.

- Initiate, then supervise the Critical Incident Management Plan; including contact of appropriate Emergency Services
- Determine immediate course of action (in consultation with Principal).

### **Business Manager**

Is responsible for the financial management of a critical incident, particularly handling the fiscal infrastructure of the College following the incident and handling all insurance claims.

### **Manager HR & Compliance**

Provide direct support to staff who may need additional support. Maintains relevant personnel records relating to the response plan and the Human Resource or Industrial Relations impact on staff and the issues for the College.

### **Chaplain / Psychologist**

Will give leadership and direction to the welfare of students, staff and families affected by the crisis.

- Liaise with the Head of Primary and Head of Secondary.
- Management of pastoral proceedings in a designated “quiet room”, determining staffing needs with the Student Care Team and request staff from Principal.

### **Facilities Manager**

Is responsible for the physical infrastructure management of a critical incident, particularly in relation to coordination with Emergency Services, and determining whether it is safe to re-enter buildings evacuated or damaged or to use equipment damaged as a result of the incident.

### **Heads of Clan, Form Tutors**

Provide direct support to the students, providing opportunity for one on one discussion where appropriate and necessary.

### **Classroom Teachers**

Will be sensitive to the needs of students and monitor behaviour or reactions to the events that may require specific attention by the CIRT

### **Support Staff**

Are responsible for following the instructions and directions of the Critical Incident Response Team in the administrative management of the crisis. Establishing First Aid if necessary.

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN – SUMMARY**

A critical incident is defined as anything that is both extraordinary and beyond our normal ability to cope. Examples of critical incidents would include the death of a student, an accident on camp, illness/death of a staff member and similar events that impact on groups within the College or the whole College. Naturally, the specific situation will determine the actions the College will take. These actions will vary according to the degree to which the incident is public, the age of those affected by it and the extent of their involvement. Management of a critical incident will include both immediate and ongoing action which may continue for a considerable period of time, as required.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

#### **1. Plan the response**

The Principal will take responsibility for organising and coordinating the College's response. This will involve calling together 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 psychological beginning 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.

#### **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 be to resume, as far as practicable, normal timetables, 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 amongst 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. Finally, some action of "closure" may need to be planned.

#### **5. Assess and manage the reputational impact**

The credibility of the college, its staff and students may need to be protected, as appropriate, throughout and following the crisis.

### **SOME PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR FACING CLASSES**

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.

#### **Practical ideas to use with all age groups**

1. Let the students tell what happened.
2. Discuss what actually happened: give facts and sort rumour from fact.
3. 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.

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

### **PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR USE WITH ADOLESCENTS**

1. 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.

2. It is important and useful to end discussions on a positive and practical note as follows:

- 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 longer term? Discuss possible improvements to the way the situation was managed – what could we do better?

3. 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.

4. If moved to tears, don't be afraid to let students/adults see - it can be very supportive and empathic.

### **PEOPLE WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

When a critical incident affects the College community, those in that community will play various roles and encounter different experiences. The following classifies the various groups of people who may be affected by the incident. This is a useful guide for identifying those who are likely to need assistance.

**FOR STAFF: COPING WITH YOUR OWN REACTIONS TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT/EVENT.**

One of the difficulties from a staff member's perspective may be one's 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 a particular 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 and fatigue and 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 oneself 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.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE MANAGEMENT PLAN – PROCESS STEPS**

#### **THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM**

##### **The CIRT ensures:**

Allocation of responsibilities for members of the CIRT is attached as Appendix 2.

- The wellbeing of all members of the College community is monitored and protected
- All responsibilities are undertaken efficiently
- Accurate and consistent advice is provided to students, staff and parents
- No single member of staff assumes the full burden of responsibility.

##### **The responsibilities of the CIRT 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, community health centre etc
- Establishment of liaison with the relevant key personnel with the Anglican Church, Brisbane Diocese.

#### **CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE:**

The following presents a guide for a timeline for response to a critical incident.

##### **1. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE**

Immediate action to be taken within hours of the incident becoming known:

- Ensure the safety and welfare of students, staff and parents of the College community
- If applicable secure or evacuate the area
- Liaison with emergency services, medical and hospital services
- Notification of the Principal
- Liaison with appropriate Government Agencies (Department of Health)
- Ensure the affected student/parent/staff are not left alone
- Identification of the nature of the critical incident – look for reliable sources, do not ignore rumours, investigate immediately, confirm facts with family and/or police
- Immediately advise the Chairman of the Board and the Anglican Church Brisbane Diocese
- Identify students, staff and members of the College community most closely involved and at risk
- Contact and inform parents and family members.

##### **2. FIRST 24 HOURS**

- Convene the CIRT
- Implement the appropriate CIMP
- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly involved and indirectly involved (ongoing)
- 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 wider College community most closely involved and at risk
- Complete the Critical Incident Report.

### **3. 24 – 72 HOURS AFTER THE INCIDENT**

- Restore The Springfield Anglican College to regular routine, program delivery, and community life as soon as practicable
- Identify any other persons 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 which may need follow-up, i.e. student records, Finance and HR.

### **4. 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; providing referral to specialised services
- Evaluation of critical incident management
- Plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries
- Manage any possible longer term disturbances, e.g. inquests, legal proceedings
- Gather relevant information for a critical incident review
- Considering offering information/support sessions for parents
- Continue to document actions
- Implement recommendations from the critical incident review.

### **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:

1. The Principal will handle all media releases in consultation with the Chairman of the Board:
  - a. The Principal gathers all information, checks facts, may seek advice if necessary and determines the official College response.
  - b. The Principal ensures training/advice is provided to all staff to respond to telephone or occasional enquiries following a critical incident.
2. Where a media release is judged appropriate and email copy of the release will be provided to the Anglican Church Brisbane Diocese, all members of the Board, members of the staff no later than the time of the release to the media.

### **EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

1. After each critical incident, a meeting of the CIRT will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan to make modifications and improvements as deemed necessary.
2. The evaluation will incorporate feedback gathered from all students, staff and the wider College community.
3. An evaluation report will be presented to the Board for information and consideration.

**APPENDIX 2**

<b>KEY ROLES ASSIGNED BY THE PRINCIPAL</b>		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>NAME OF TEAM MEMBER</b>	<b>TASK</b>
	<b>Principal</b> Darren Pitt	
	<b>Head of Primary</b> Tania Brewer	
	<b>Head of Secondary</b> Richard Clark	
	<b>Director of Teaching &amp; Learning</b> Wendy Jurss	
	<b>Director of Co-Curricular Engagement</b> Andrew Holmes	
	<b>Director of Communications</b> Remy Bamford	
	<b>Business Manager</b> Jackie McComb	
	<b>Personal Assistant to the Principal</b> Melanie Ellis	
	<b>Chaplain</b> Erika Williams	
	<b>Manager HR &amp; Compliance</b> Melanie Shuter	
	<b>ICT Manager</b> Emmanuel Edem	
	<b>Director of Student Activities</b> Graham Swinton	
	<b>Psychologist</b> Majella Dennis	
	<b>Facilities Manager</b> Craig Mason	

**SHORT TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED  
1<sup>ST</sup> DAY**

DATE	TASK	NAME
	Gather Accurate Information	
	Contact Appropriate Agencies including Counsellors	
	Convene Meeting with Key Staff and Stakeholders	
	Arrange Supervision of Students	
	Hold Staff Meeting	
	Organise Time Table for the Day	
	Inform Parents	
	Inform Students	
	Dealing with the Media	
	Other	

**MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS AND ROLES ASSIGNED  
24 – 72 HOURS**

DATE	TASK	NAME
	Review the Events of the First 24 Hours	
	Arrange support for individual/groups/parents/students/teachers	
	Plan the reintegration of staff and students	
	Plan visits to the those affected	
	Liaise with family on significant matters	
	School Closure	
	Other	

## BEYOND 72 HOURS

DATE	TASK	NAME
	Monitor students for continuing signs of stress	
	Evaluate response to incident and amend critical incident plan as appropriate.	
	Formalise plan for the future	
	Inform new staff and pupils	
	Decide on appropriate way to deal with anniversaries	
	Other	

**SAMPLE RESPONSE STATEMENTS TO COMMUNITY**

**SAMPLE RESPONSE STATEMENT FOR A SCHOOL 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*).

Yours sincerely,

Principal

## SAMPLE RESPONSE TO PARENTS OF SCHOOL 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.

School routine will continue as normally as possible and students should attend school 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 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.

**STAFF TRAINING:**

**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 focal link with students at your institution. 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**

Insert as many local telephone numbers and contacts, and as much information as you can 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 9am and 5pm.
- 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 the client foremost in 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.