

PORT MACQUARIE STEINER SCHOOL

4.5 CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES POLICY

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Associated policies:	9.5 PMQSS Staff Code of Conduct 2.2 PMQSS Student Code of Conduct 6.1 PMQSS Parents, Guardians and School Community Code of Conduct 9.7 PMQSS Privacy Policy 4.2 PMQSS Child Protection Policy	
Associated Laws:	<i>Education Act 1990</i> <i>Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</i> <i>Commission for Children and Young People Act 1988</i>	

INTENTION

To clearly outline the measures in place to manage emergencies and critical incidents should they occur, in order to minimise impact on the students, staff, community and reputation of the School and to ensure the teaching and learning program is maintained or resumed.

INTRODUCTION

Emergencies and critical incidents can vary significantly in nature and duration. Some will be discrete and short in duration others may be protracted and last for days or weeks.

Effective emergency management involves coordinated actions based on line management principles and designated responsibilities. This will:

- reduce the likelihood of emergencies and critical incidents from occurring;
- minimise the impact on students, staff and site activities; and
- facilitate the return of the site to normal operations as soon as possible.

POLICY

Management of possible emergencies and critical incidents will involve consideration of, prevention and mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, recovery from and review of previous emergencies and critical incidents that have occurred.

This policy aims to provide discretionary guidelines to:

- develop a sense of control and responsibility over situations that may arise within the School community;
- ensure the optimal response to any incident involving students or staff;
- minimise any immediate harm or threat caused by any incident;
- alleviate any hurt and suffering accompanying such incidents;
- demonstrate support and care which exists within the School community;
- return to normal routine and a sense of cohesiveness within the School community

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following any incident;

- ensure the reputation of the School is not unfairly impacted upon by the occurrence or resolution of an incident; and
- ensure the chance of recurrence is minimised for the future.

DEFINITIONS

Critical incident - is defined broadly as a traumatic event, or the threat of such, which:

- Causes extreme stress, fear or injury;
- Creates significant danger or risk whether potential or actual;
- Causes disruption or impacts on the effective operation of the School ;
- Creates serious risk to the School reputation or that of Steiner education

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Serious injury, illness or death of a student or staff
- Students or staff lost or injured on an excursion
- A missing student
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Physical assault
- Student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence
- Natural disaster e.g. earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm or extremes of temperature
- Fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
- Social issues e.g. drug use, sexual assault

PROCEDURE(S)

1. Critical Incident Management Team

The School has a *Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)* to assist in the prevention and management of critical incidents at the School. The team may include:

- a) The Head Teacher (or their nominee) as the critical incident team leader

The CIMT may also include:

- b) staff members
- c) members of the School Board
- d) other members of the School Community

The responsibilities of the CIMT include:

- risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action in order to avoid, as much as possible, a critical incident from occurring;
- analysis of requirements to address these hazards via the Hazard Report Form;
- establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade,

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- ambulance, hospital, Poisons Information Centre, community health services;
- maintaining a 24 hour access data base of contact details for all students and their families;
- maintaining a 24 hour access data base of contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident e.g. School Counsellor, welfare officer, legal services, school security;
- in conjunction with the School Board, development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified and dissemination of planned procedures;
- organisation of practice drills;
- undertaking regular review of the critical incident plan;
- assisting with implementation of the critical incident plan;
- arranging appropriate staff development in this area; and
- recommending and managing a budget allocation for emergencies.

2. Critical Incident Plans

All critical incident plans assign responsibilities among relevant staff members, cover all the actions to be taken and timelines for doing so.

The Critical Incident Plans outline the following procedures:

- a. Immediate Action (within 24 hours)
 - Identify the nature of the critical incident;
 - Notify the critical incident team leader;
 - Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy;
 - Assign duties and resources to school staff;
 - Seek advice and help from any necessary emergency services/hospital/medical services;
 - Disseminate information to parents and family members;
 - Complete an incident report by using the Incident Report Form;
 - Prepare a media response if required (see section 4 below); and
 - Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved.
- b. Additional Action (48 – 72 hours)
 - Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing)
 - Provide staff and students with factual information as appropriate
 - Restore normal (or as close to normal) functioning and school delivery where possible
- c. Follow-up – monitoring, support and evaluation
 - Identify any other people who may be affected by the critical incident and

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access support services for affected community members

- Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties
- Provide accurate information to staff and students where appropriate
- Evaluation of critical incident management
- Consider any possible longer term disturbances e.g. inquests, legal proceedings

3. Resources

The nature of critical incidents is such that resources cannot always be provided in anticipation of events. The critical incident committee uses its discretion to provide adequate resources – both physical and personal – to meet the needs of specific situations. Staff will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

4. Managing the Media

As a result of some critical incidents or emergencies, it may be necessary to manage the media. It is necessary to ensure the reputation of the School is not unfairly impacted upon by the occurrence or resolution of an incident. The President of the School Board should normally handle all initial media calls or contact. The President may delegate media liaison to another Board Member where they see fit. All facts should be checked before speaking to or having any contact with the media.

The CIMT is also required to assist with managing access of the media to the scene, and to staff, students and relatives.

The CIMT will seek direction from the School Board to determine what the official response will be.

5. Evaluation and Review of Management Plan

After every critical incident, a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team and where appropriate, the School Board will be held to evaluate the incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications where required.

As best practice, and if appropriate, this process will incorporate feedback from all staff, students and local community representatives.

RESOURCES

Hazard Report Form
Incident Report Form

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.

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