

CRITICAL INCIDENT RECOVERY POLICY

Policy Statement

Kurnai College may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event.

The incident may involve loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance. The incident may occur in the College environment or outside. It may involve staff, students or those close to them. The network of those involved in a traumatic event can be wide, especially if it directly involves the College. Feelings of grief and loss may continue over long periods of time.

Counselling and other supports as identified will be available for those that need it and for as long as they need it. This may include many who do not seem to be closely connected to the event or the individuals involved. The College will do its utmost to assist and support families during and post crisis. While the College should operate as normally as possible, some degree of flexibility may be required.

People will be given clear, accurate information at all times. A Critical Incident Recovery Team will be formed to manage the short and long-term effects.

Our College will:

- At all times adhere to the DET emergency management guidelines.

Implementation:

Incidents vary in type and complexity. These guidelines provide a framework for action and would not necessarily be followed in all cases.

- The following 5 principles will be followed for every incident:
 - 1) Clear and accurate information will be provided.
 - 2) Key actions will be identified, described and documented, along with instructions to be followed.
 - 3) Help will be provided for all those affected/impacted.
 - 4) As close as possible to a normal school program will be followed
 - 5) Debriefings will be provided for any staff impacted and or involved, including the members of the Critical Incident Recovery team.
- Obtain accurate information. Deal only with substantiated facts.
- As soon as possible inform staff, especially those most directly involved. Inform close friends and family individually. Allow questions and discussion as they arise. Dispel rumours, respect and manage privacy.
- Establish clear processes for documenting any data and actions taken.
- Appoint a skilled Critical Incident Recovery Team to assist in the management of the incident. The team may include staff members, psychologists, counsellors, external DET personnel, support agencies etc. The size and composition of the team will be related to the nature of the incident. Distribute names of the Critical Incident Recovery Team members, and inform others of the role of the team.

- As soon as possible provide information to the community as to what has happened, and what is being done.

Appoint a skilled Critical Incident Recovery Team member to respond to media enquiries. A written press release may be useful. If necessary, protect others from contact with the media. Advice regarding this may be obtained from the DET Emergency Communications Centre and the DET Media Unit.

- Establish an open line of contact with the family or families directly involved.
- Provide out-of-school hours contact if necessary. This could be as simple as circulating the Principal's telephone number. In more complex situations it may mean maintaining telephone contact at the College.
- Continue contact with the family to identify their expectations of the College, e.g. student participation in funeral or memorial service.
- Try to identify those most likely to need help, e.g. classmates, teacher, special friends. Some students not directly affected may become distressed.
- Ensure that counselling help is available. Contact the Regional Office and/or DET if necessary. All emergency or criminal activity, in which the safety or well-being of staff or students is at risk, or where there is a threat to property, must be reported immediately to the Department's 24 hour Emergency and Security Management Branch on **(03) 9589 6266**.
- Continue to keep staff, students and parents informed, especially about what has happened and what the College is doing about it.
- As soon as possible call students together and provide information about what has happened and what the College is doing about it. A follow-up letter home may be important.
- Provide counselling services for all. Ensure that there are suitable places in which this can take place. Be prepared to modify the timetable and other arrangements so that people are free to make use of available help.
- The class teacher may be the person to whom students first turn for help.
- Children wishing to attend funerals should do so in the company of their parents. Provide meaningful participation for those not actually attending the service.
- Continue normal routines at school but acknowledge the effect of tragedy on the College community. Be flexible with those in need of help. Be aware that many people may be deeply affected, e.g. an event may cause a person to recall some traumatic event involving them in the past. The anniversary may also be a difficult time.

- Maintain links with the family. The College and family may wish to develop a memorial garden, erect a memorial plaque, or display a photo in a prominent position in the school.
- Be sensitive to staff and students' needs over a period of time.
- Conduct debriefings with relevant staff and Critical Incident Recovery Team to review experience and actions taken, and document feedback to inform future practice where appropriate.

Links:

- [DET Emergency Management Planning](#)
- [Emergency and Critical Incident](#)

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Critical Incident Recovery Plan (CIRP)
- Appendix B: Critical or Traumatic Incident Plan – First 24 hour Short Term Tasks
- Appendix C: Emergency Message Record Form – Template
- Appendix D: Missing International Student

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's four year review cycle.

Date Implemented	Week 3 – Term 2 -2014
Approval Authority (Signature and date)	 31 August 2021
Dates Reviewed	Week 7 – Term 4 -2014 Week 3 – Term 3 – 2017 Week 9 – Term 2 – 2018 Week 9 – Term 3 - 2021
Responsible for Review	College Principal
Next Review date	Week 7 – Term 3 - 2025

Appendix A

Critical Incident Recovery Plan (CIRP)

Responsibilities and Procedures

1. PLAN STATEMENT

This Plan is an integral part of the Emergency Management processes of the school.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 The Recovery Team will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the Plan (refer to **4.3** for the composition of the team).

It will need to consider:

- establishing the facts as soon as possible
- developing an action plan of short, medium and long term tasks
- contact with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DET)
- liaising with external bodies including the media
- communicating with the whole staff as soon as possible
- meeting with staff both as a whole and with individuals or groups for debriefing
- communicating with the student body
- meeting with students in groups or individually for debriefing
- contacting parents/guardians
- short term and long term counselling requirements for groups or individuals

The relevance of each of the above will depend on factors such as the nature and magnitude of the incident, the intensity of the impact on the School community and the number of people affected.

3. DEBRIEFING

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing has three components:

1. initial discussion about feelings and an assessment of the intensity of the stress responses,
2. detailed discussion of signs and symptoms of stress responses,
3. closing stage - provides overview and information with referral to an outside agency if required.

3.1 The Recovery Team will assist the Principal to facilitate the recovery of staff and students and those of the School community affected by the critical incident.

3.2.1 The debriefing meeting of the Recovery Team should include a mental health professional and one peer who were not involved in the incident.

3.2.2 The Recovery Team will decide the structure and composition of debriefing meetings; such meetings should be held within **eight hours** of the critical incident. These meetings will review the impressions and reactions of the persons involved during or following the incident.

3.3 Counselling support and referrals for students and their families will be provided initially by the Principal or their nominee and a Regional Guidance Officer.

4. REVIEW

4.1 The Recovery Team will meet to review the implementation of the Critical Incident Recovery Plan within **seventy two (72) hours** of the critical incident.

4.2 As part of the Critical Incident Recovery Plan, the Principal will set up a Recovery Team at the beginning of each year.

4.3 Following a critical incident, the Principal will convene the Recovery Team as soon as possible.

The composition of the Recovery Team will be:

- the Principal
- the Assistant Principals
- a member of the teaching staff
- a member of the Educational Support staff (first aid trained)
- other support staff as appropriate
- as necessary, psychologists, counsellors and DET personnel.

4.4 The Principal will convene the Recovery Team once each semester to review planning and strategies for the Critical Incident Recovery Plan.

5. EVALUATION

Evaluation of the Plans will follow any critical incident at the school.

Appendix B
Critical or Traumatic Incident Plan – First 24 hour Short Term Tasks

Responsibilities and Procedures

1. Ensure students and staff are safe from harm or injury

- student Managers and Year Level Coordinators cordon off any ‘crisis’ area and keep students away from there
- manage the grounds while staff are briefed and ensure media do not intrude
- check corridors, toilets etc for stray students - try to prevent students leaving on their own particularly if distressed
- send all very stressed students to the Recovery area in the Library
- ensure that students do not make hysterical calls out of school
- ensure the school continues as normally as possible

2. Emergency Record

Record Information

- nature of the incident
- location of the incident, number and names of persons involved
- name of the person reporting the incident
- time incident reported
- contact telephone number if away from school

Verify all Details

- confirm that the information given about the event is accurate

Record the Incident

- notify principal workplace coordinator
- ensure emergency services have been called notify the Department’s 24 hour Emergency Communications Centre on **(03) 9589 6266**

3. Establish Critical Incident Recovery Team

The composition of the Recovery Team will be:

- the Principal
- the Assistant Principals
- a member of the teaching staff
- a member of the Educational Support staff (first aid trained)
- other support staff as appropriate
- as necessary, psychologists, counsellors and DET personnel.
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4. Allocate responsibilities

- emergency message register
- emergency contact list
- evacuation and assembly of staff and students
- cordon off area of 'crisis'
- establish a Support Team and Communications Centre to:
 - manage information and phone calls
 - coordinate media requests for information
 - provide information to parents arriving at school
 - coordinate routine school activities – maintain where practical
 - notify students, staff and ancillary about the emergency
 - notify parents first, and then siblings in the school
 - establish a recovery room and supervisor for affected students
 - establish a waiting room for parents
 - inform students
 - inform School Council
 - inform School Community by newsletter
 - monitor School Community's reactions
 - liaise with outside agencies and emergency services
 - brief key personnel and review responses

4.1 Recovery Room(s)

Set Up Recovery Room

- set up Library, and if necessary the Staffroom
- empty adjoining rooms if possible and relocate to other rooms
- screen windows
- have available pens, textas, paper, scissors, envelopes, tissues

Appoint Recovery Room Supervisors

- First Aid staff

Recovery Room Supervisors' Responsibilities

- keep calm
- monitor students for shock reactions, provide first aid if necessary
- encourage students to gather in small friendship groups rather than bigger ones
- keep a list of students attending the recovery room
- give the students a task to undertake such as making a card or writing a letter
- contact parents of students who remain in the recovery room and alert them to possible concerns

5. Informing Staff

- provide teachers and ancillary staff with a brief outline of the incident
- Restate to ensure that staff understand and it sinks in
- outline recovery management arrangements
- discuss procedures to be followed by staff during the day
- discuss the general procedures that Critical Incident Team will be following

- discuss guidelines for informing students and ways of answering questions from them
- give staff time to discuss this among themselves
- provide a brief factual outline to others in the community on a need to know basis
- inform staff as soon as possible about a serious emergency involving death or injury which occurs after hours, on the weekend or during the school holidays
- inform staff as soon as possible about arrangements for holding a brief meeting before informing students at the start of the next school day
- review with staff afterwards any issues and needs
- provide staff with contact numbers for counselling or support services for themselves

6. Informing Students

Principal or senior staff

- contact the bereaved family or police to ascertain what information may be released within the school
- prepare a written factual statement, without graphic detail, for use as a reference by teachers when discussing the incident with students
- determine whether to tell students about the incident at a whole school assembly, by year levels or individual classes, depending on the nature of the incident
- discuss with teachers who feel uncomfortable raising the event with students and arrange for support from another teacher or a member of the recovery team
- identify staff who may be too distraught to take classes and arrange replacements
- inform students soon after briefing staff
- ask teachers to mark a roll to identify who has been informed and who has not

Teachers

- provide a factual account of the incident at the beginning of the first class in a way that ensures all students hears the same information
- limit speculation and rumours
- inform students about arrangements of counselling and recovery rooms
- inform students about arrangements for services, and appropriate ways to express condolences
- outline the arrangements for the day

Notifying close friends

- notify close friends especially girlfriends and boyfriends prior to making an announcement to other students
- take these students aside when they arrive at school and inform them privately
- consider contacting their parents
- prior to the start of the day
- ensure individual attention is given to intimate friends who are likely to have special needs beyond those of other students

7. Communication Centre

Organise the following to be on hand:

- telephone - dedicated line in case of jamming by incoming calls

- telephone message if necessary
- message records
- phone lists
- rolls
- excursion list
- timetable
- maps
- computer and printer
- photocopier
- display instructions

8. Media Coverage

- nominate a media coordinator, prepare the School Council President and Principal to provide on camera interviews
- contact DET Media Unit on 9637 2871 or 9264 5821
- prepare a three paragraph report:
 - briefly outline the facts
 - outline what the school has done to assist those affected
 - outline support and recovery arrangements
 - include a name and contact number for the school media coordinator
- liaise with the family about any statements made to media
- exclude discussion of policy matters, limit comment to the emergency and the school response
- set rules for persistent media
- keep a record of media enquiries
- offer scheduled interviews in return for media commitment not to seek uninvited access to staff, students, parents
- negotiate accepted areas for filming e.g. school/church boundary and not within
- check that information provided does not conflict with court requirements or police proceedings
- anticipate renewed interest arising from anniversaries, court proceedings

9. Long Term Actions

- monitor and support members of the school community, particularly on significant dates such as anniversaries
- consider longer term intervention activities such as counselling or specialist support
- consider establishing an area within the school as a place of remembrance
- reconvene key people at regular intervals to review the school response and effectiveness of planning arrangements
- review the school emergency management plan in light of experience gained
- consider a ritual of marking significant dates
- prepare for legal proceedings if necessary
- remove students name from the roll if deceased
- consider article in school magazine

10. Reference

- DET's *Managing School Emergencies - Minimising the impact of trauma on staff and students*



Managing School
Emergencies Booklet.

Appendix C
Emergency Record Form – Template

Date: / __ /

Time of notification: __ : __ am/pm

Name of person taking the call

Position:

Name of person reporting the incident

Contact telephone number

Details

Describe:

Where everyone is now

What action is being taken to help?

Who:

When:

Where:

How:

Nature and extent of injury:

Immediate Actions Required

Principal notified? 0408 948 028 Yes Time: _____ : _____ am/pm

Other school staff? Yes Time: _____ : _____ am/pm

Emergency Services notified? 132 500 Yes Time: _____ : _____ am/pm

Emergency & Security Management notified? (03) 9589 6266 Yes Time: _____ : _____ am/pm

Emergency Contact Telephone Numbers

POLICE 000

AMBULANCE 000

FIRE BRIGADE 000

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES (SES) 132 500

LOCAL HOSPITAL

Latrobe Regional Hospital 51738000

ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTOR (03) 9265 2400

EMERGENCY SECURITY MANAGEMENT (03) 9589 6266

Emergency Message Record Form

Time: ____ : ____ : am/pm

Message _____ from _____

Action required? Yes No

If 'YES', please detail:

Completed

Message _____ taken _____ by _____

Emergency Message Record

Time: ____ : ____ : am/pm

Message _____ from _____

Action required? Yes No

If 'YES', please detail:

Completed

Message

taken

by

Appendix D

Responding to a Missing International Student

Responding to a Missing International Student

It is difficult to set a specific time frame in which to consider a student as "missing." Each case must be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the circumstances of the case.

However, in a case in which a student is reported not to have come home for only one night but where she/he also sent concerning messages to family or friends or in other ways behaved unusually, it also would be necessary to investigate immediately. Even though only a short time has passed, the added concern based on behaviour that might indicate distress indicates that the student might potentially be in danger or at risk.

When information is received regarding a potentially missing student the following list of suggestions can help Kurnai College begin the search for the student and documenting the process:

ACTION ITEMS

- Phone call and/or send e-mail to Kurnai International Principals, indicating you are looking for the student immediately.
- Unless there is a way of quickly confirming the whereabouts of the student, a report should be made to Emergency Management / DET IED that the student is missing.

Create a case file, and include the following items:

- Copies of the student's records from the institution's information systems (contact info, immigration information, advising notes, class schedule, and emergency contact information).
- Contact page (a template in which you can quickly note every individual you contact regarding the case and notes regarding the conversations).
- Gather as much information as possible about the student from the individual who has reported the student missing. Determine the relationship of the individual to the missing student and inquire as to why the individual believes the student is missing. Determine the last time he or she had contact with the student. Note your impression of the credibility of the report received. While gathering information, make sure not to disclose information. Ascertain what actions, if any, the individual has already taken to locate and/or to contact the student.
- Attempt to contact the student directly, using several modes of communication (phone, e-mail, text). Request that the student contact you as soon as possible, giving a clear deadline (recommended 24 hours). Inform the student that you will make contact with DET IED if you do not hear from them by the deadline.

- Contact the Emergency contact, as determined by the student
- Contact the student's homestay family, roommate(s) or dependents the student lives with in the Australia (if not already involved)
- Contact Friends
- Local police (see if the student has been involved in any incidents)
- Research student's electronic footprint. Ask the school's IT department to check the last use of the student account and library transactions. Check social networking websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, QQ, WeChat.
- Family members (if not already involved)
- Local hospitals
- Student home consulate in the Australia

Once all reasonable efforts to locate the student have been made, and it has been established that an international student is verified as missing, immediate contact is to be made with DET Emergency Management, report incident through the IED Incident Reporting Information System (IRIS), notify Victorian Police and DET IED to confirm earlier phone call. Any additional action will be under direction from these parties.

If the student is found during the course of this investigation, there may be a variety of other protocols to consider. The student may need additional services including healthcare, mental healthcare, and legal assistance. Make sure to contact all entities involved in the search to let them know the student has been found and thank them for their support.

If the student has not been found after exhausting all resources, work with family members and local authorities to file an official missing person's report. Continue to keep records of all communication. If family members plan to come to Australia, as a significant investigation unfolds, offer assistance with letters to visa posts to help expedite their visas.