



Critical Incidents Procedure and Responding to Student Safety

Rationale:

The 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 school 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 school. Feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time. Kambrya College is committed to providing a supportive environment for all and may involve liaising with Government agencies, including the Department of Education and Training, Victoria Police and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Aim:

- To provide guidance to school staff on handling a reported critical incident.
- Creating a collaborative approach between school, home and the community
- All students shall have access to school welfare and support services.
- Clearly defined and appropriately shared communication processes and protocols are critical to the effectiveness of student welfare support.

NB: *To ensure the safety of all students and staff; students exhibiting signs of psychological distress / stress / imbalance / anxiety / refusal to comply with instructions/dangerous behaviour to self or others may not be permitted to attend excursions / camps; at the discretion of the principal or their representative.*

To ensure the safety of all students and staff; in the event that the student has been admitted to a treatment facility for issues associated with mental health, the school will require the treating physician/s to provide a current effective Safety Plan prior to the student's return to school.

Implementation:

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

The following 4 principles must be followed:

1. Provide clear, accurate information.
 2. Describe the actions to be followed.
 3. Provide help for all affected.
 4. Maintain a normal school program as close as possible.
- 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.
 - 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. Liaise with the SEIL and Security Services Unit as required.
 - 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 school.
- Continue contact with the family to identify their expectations of the school, 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 Security Services Unit on **(03) 9589 6266**.
- Continue to keep staff, students and parents informed, especially about what has happened and what the school is doing about it.
- As soon as possible call students together and provide information about what has happened and what the school 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 school 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.
- Be sensitive to staff and student's needs over a period of time.

Critical Incident Recovery Team

1. Critical Incident Team Leader: *Principal. Deputy 1: Assistant Principal Deputy 2: Assistant Principal*

If no Principal class member is on site, the head of student wellbeing (on site) will be deputised to the role.

Oversee the direct management of the school's response including informing staff of the suicide or attempted suicide, chairing staff meetings and ensuring the critical incident reviews occur. The team leader should be made aware of all activities occurring in relation to the response to ensure co-ordination and efficiency.

2. Liaison with family, police and management of social media *Assistant Principal (depending on existing relationship with the family) Deputy 1: Wellbeing team member with existing relationship with the family.*

Ideally the person assigned to this role should have an already existing relationship with the family, while also being confident in the area of social media. Following a suicide or attempted suicide, the family may be involved with social media and may need support from the school in managing this. Similarly, liaison with police during a reported critical incident or following a suicide (or attempt) is a matter which needs to be handled with the utmost sensitivity.

3. Liaison with mental health services and identification of vulnerable staff/students: *Head of wellbeing on site. Deputy 1: wellbeing staff member on site.* Holder of the role will liaise with the APs, SSLs and other relevant staff.

4. Liaison with Department of Education/relevant school body and mainstream media contact: *Principal: Deputy 1: Assistant Principal.* This role must be carried out by one person who already has a connection to the relevant education body.

Preparation of written information for students, staff, parents and/or community: *Principal or their delegate.* This person may also be the primary contact point for parents and community members who have questions or concerns following the suicide or attempted suicide.

Responding to Student Safety around Critical Incidents - *Response to a reported incident or threat of:*

1. Self-harm
2. Suicidal ideation
3. Attempted suicide
4. Notification to school of reported real time incident or threat to student safety by self

1: Self-Harm (actual or threatened) *Response:*

- Staff member who becomes aware of student self-harm must notify the head of student wellbeing (on site) asap.
- In the event that the head of student wellbeing is unavailable, one of the Assistant Principals (APs) will be notified.
- The Assistant Principal will liaise with the wellbeing team.
- The parent(s) will be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable by either the Assistant Principal or the wellbeing team member, depending upon the consultation between them.
- Psych triage may be called for advice depending on the severity and or frequency of the self-harm; the potential need for this should be assessed by the relevant assistant principal and the wellbeing team member and, where possible, the parent(s).
- A Safety plan will be developed for the student in consultation with the wellbeing team member, SSL and / or AP.
- Physical evidence of self-harm such as cuts and scrapes must be covered at all times during school.
- Any staff involved in a self-harm incident can seek counselling via the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP service is provided by Converge International and staff can call directly on **1800 337 068** to make a free counselling session appointment. Staff can also contact Headspace on **1800 650 890** or **eheadspace.org.au** Headspace is a free and confidential service where you can speak to a qualified youth mental health professional.

2. Suicidal Ideation *Response:*

- Staff member who becomes aware of student self-harm must notify the head of student wellbeing (on site) asap.
- In the event that the head of student wellbeing is unavailable, one of the Assistant Principals (APs) will be notified.
- The Assistant Principal will liaise with the wellbeing team.
- The parent(s) will be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable by either the Assistant Principal or the wellbeing team member, depending upon the consultation between them.
- Psych triage may be called for advice depending on the severity and or frequency of the self-harm; the potential need for this should be assessed by the relevant assistant principal and the wellbeing team member and, where possible, the parent(s).
- A Safety plan will be developed by the treating physician and the student in consultation with the wellbeing team member, SSL and AP as required. Students are NOT able to attend school without a current safety plan.
- Any staff involved in an incident of suicidal ideation can seek counselling via the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP service is provided by Converge International and staff can call directly on **1800 337 068** to make a counselling session appointment. Staff can also contact Headspace on **1800 650 890** or **eheadspace.org.au**
- Students exhibiting signs of psychological distress/stress/imbalance/anxiety/refusal to comply with instructions or dangerous behaviour to self or others may not be permitted to attend excursions/camps; at the discretion of the Principal or his representative.
- If a student is at an excursion/camp and exhibits any signs of the above, the parent will be required to collect the student from the excursion or camp and will incur any such cost associated with such.

3. Attempted suicide (notification to school of real time critical incident) *Immediate response to report of student attempted suicide on site:*

- The school Principal and/or Assistant Principal and/or relevant member/s of the well-being team should take all responsible steps to ascertain the whereabouts of the student.
- 000 must be called immediately, not the local police station.
- Principal or representative to be immediately notified.

- Parents/guardians notified as soon as is practicable by a member of the wellbeing or the principal team.
- Principal team member to inform other members of principal team and head of wellbeing on site.
- Head of wellbeing to liaise with principal team member and seek direction as required.
- Principal class notifies DET critical incidents (Security Services Unit on 9589 6266).
- Principal class to notify SEIL.

Immediate response to report of student attempted suicide off site:

- The school Principal and/or Assistant Principal and/or relevant member/s of the well-being team should take all reasonable steps to ascertain the whereabouts of the student (such as contacting family, seeking information from person who notified of incident).
- 000 must be called immediately, not the local police station.
- Principal or representative to be immediately notified.
- If it is deemed appropriate by the police in consultation with the school Principal and/or Assistant-Principal and/or relevant member/s of the well-being team to attend an offsite location, this should only be undertaken by the school Principal and/or Assistant Principal and/or relevant member/s of the well-being team. No other staff members are to attend. A staff member must not attend alone and should be accompanied by another staff member as specified in this paragraph.
- Parents/guardians notified as soon as is practicable by a member of the wellbeing or Principal team.
- Principal team member to inform other members of Principal team and head of wellbeing on site.
- Head of wellbeing to liaise with Principal team member and seek direction as required.
- Principal class notifies DET critical incidents (Security Services Unit on 9589 6266).
- Principal class to notify SEIL.

Once the immediate threat of harm to the student has passed:

- Inform police as required of the incident and the school's involvement (Principal or nominee).
- Inform DET Critical incidents that the situation has been contained (Principal).
- Debrief with appropriate staff (Principal and head of wellbeing on site).
- Seek counselling through EAP if required on **1800 337 068**
- Contact Headspace on **1800 650 890** or **eheadspace.org.au**
- Liaise with parents as required (Principal and head of wellbeing on site).

Prior to the student's return to school:

- A school support team will be identified for the student. It will comprise of the parent/guardian, wellbeing team member, assistant principal, sub school leader.
- The support team will liaise with a representative from the supporting agency/medical facility involved with the student, subject to having received the student's or parent's consent to doing so.
- A safety plan will be formulated and put in place prior by the treating physician to the return to school of the student. Students are NOT able to attend school without a current safety plan.
- Student are unable to attend school excursions/camps without a current safety plan.
- Students exhibiting signs of psychological distress/stress/imbalance/anxiety/refusal to comply with instructions/dangerous behaviour to self or others will not be permitted to attend excursions/camps.
- In the event that a student is at an excursion/camp and exhibits any signs of the above, the parent will be required to collect the student from the excursion or camp and will incur any such cost associated with such.

For further information see the DET Guidelines to assist in responding to attempted suicide or suicide by a student:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/health/suicideguidelines.pdf>

Attempted Suicide (outside of school hours) Response:

- When the school becomes aware that a student has attempted suicide outside of school hours, it must promptly convene a meeting with an identified support group (Assistant Principal, parent, wellbeing team member, sub school leader, parent, student and agency representative as required) to develop a safety plan for that student.
- The student must not return to school until an appropriate safety plan has been developed and received by the school and the student and/or parents have been provided with a copy.
- The Principal reserves the right to refuse the return to school if it is deemed unsafe for the student to return (including consideration of any safety plan and any feedback from the student/ their parent's/ their treating doctor).
- Any staff involved in an attempted suicide can seek counselling via the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP service is provided by Converge International and staff can call directly on **1800 337 068** to make a counselling session appointment. Staff can also contact Headspace on **1800 650 890** or **eheadspace.org.au**

For further information see the DET *Guidelines to assist in responding to attempted suicide or suicide by a student*:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/health/suicideguidelines.pdf>

Suicide

In the event that a student suicides, the Principal will follow the College *Suicide – Self-Harm Policy*, DET Guidelines and Suicide Response Plan for managing a response. The Principal or their representative will also contact Security Services Unit on 9589 6266

Links and Appendices (including processes related to this policy)

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/mgtplanning.aspx>

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/pages/emergency.aspx>

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- *Appendix A*: Critical Incident Recovery Plan (CIRP)
- *Appendix B*: Critical or Traumatic Incident Plan – First 24-hour Short Term Tasks
- *Appendix C*: Emergency Contacts

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

Author	Keith Perry- College Principal
Approved by Kambrya College School Council	May 2018
Responsible for Review	Paul Looker- Assistant Principal
Next Review Date	May 2021

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.

IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 The Recovery Team will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the Plan

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 Training (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.

2. 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.

Appendix B

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

Responsibilities and Procedures

1. 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**.

2. 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.
- 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 designated Recovery area.
- Ensure that students understand the importance of not making hysterical calls out of school.
- Ensure the school continues as normally as possible.

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.

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

- Designate appropriate room/space.
- 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 another student.
- 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.
- Displan 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.
 - 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.

Reference

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



Managing School
Emergencies Booklet.

Appendix C: Emergency Contacts

DET Security Services Unit	9589 6266
WAYYS Emergency Housing	97915692
Narre Warren Police	9705 3111
ELHMS Triage (Students)	1300 369 012
Child First	9705 3939
DHS Child Protection Dandenong	8765 5444
Child Protection After Hours Emergency	131278
CASA	1800 806 292 or 9349 1766
Victorian Suicide Helpline	1300 651 251
Lifeline	13 11 14
Poisons Information Service	13 11 26
Disposal of needles and syringes	1300 365 482
Parent line	13 2289
Grief line	9596 7799
Kids Help Line	1800 551 800
DET Media	9637 2871
DET EAP	1800 337 068
CAT (Crisis Assessment Team)	9767 8222 9554 1800 or 9554 1000 (after hours)