



International Student Critical Incident

Rationale:

- To promote a healthy, supportive and secure environment for international students; and
- To provide guidance to school staff on handling a reported critical incident.

Policy:

- A critical incident is an occurrence where an international student's health or wellbeing is, or has been, placed at risk. All critical incidents are to be reported and managed in accordance with the guidelines for local students, with additional overlaying responsibilities, processes and protocols for international students.
- Schools have a duty of care in prevention, intervention and reporting of such incidents.
- International students remain at risk and are especially vulnerable to potential harm. They are often exposed to a range of additional risks that must be addressed. These include their temporary status, the conditions of their visa, the implications of cultural differences and norms, their level of English language skill, access to immediate family, and social support relationships.

A Critical Incident- how to respond and who is involved

1. Emergency Response Team

Emergency Response Team Leader: Principal.

Deputy 1: Assistant Principal overseeing International Programs

Deputy 2: Another Assistant Principal

If the Principal is not on site, the head of student wellbeing (on site) and Assistant Principal (ISP) will jointly undertake the Team Leader role. They will oversee the direct management of the school's response including informing DET, IED, Security Management Services, SEIL, chairing staff meetings and ensuring the critical incident review occurs. 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

Liaison with police and family during a reported critical incident is a matter which needs to be handled with the utmost sensitivity. The Principal, ISP Co-ordinator Assistant Principal and Wellbeing Co-ordinator are likely to be involved in this process. Following a critical incident, especially one which is welfare based, the family may be exposed to social media communications and may need support from the school in managing this.

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 / Assistant Principal of International Student Program (ISP) will liaise verbally and prepare written information for students, staff, parents and/or community. They will also be the primary contact point for parents and community members who have questions or concerns following the critical incident.

Facilitating actions in response to all critical incidents

Stage 1 – Identify

- When a critical incident occurs, immediate and effective steps must be taken to ensure the student's safety and that appropriate professional and specialist support services are put in place.
- If appropriate, the student may be referred to approved professionals and/or support agencies. Privacy of the student must be considered.
- Inform DETs Program Development Officer (PDO) of the incident immediately. Information provided by the school must be succinct and accurate.
- The PDO will advise the Manager of Program Planning and School Support Unit (PPSSU) within the International Education Department (IED) of the Department of Education and Training (DET) who will in turn notify the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).
- Effort must be made to effectively and appropriately inform parents of the critical incident, in consultation with the appointed welfare officer and the student.
 - Decision-making and consultation regarding this should take into consideration the age of the student (i.e. if the student is over 18 years of age).
- Schools should take the required steps to inform the DET Regional Office and the SEIL.

Stage 2 – Critical incident report

- Schools complete a Critical Incident Report for the Regional Director and the Deputy Secretary, Office of Government School Education (OGSE), including any actions taken and their outcomes.
- Schools forward a copy of the critical incident report required by the Regional Office to the PPSSU for records.
- Depending on the seriousness of the incident the PDO may also be required to write an incident report in consultation with the school.
- The completed Critical Incident Report, along with any relevant information is forwarded to the ISC or Principal for additional comments and signature.
- The Critical Incident Report is then forwarded to the Manager, PPSSU and the General Manager, IED, and DHA for risk assessment and authorisation.

Stage 3 – Program Planning and School Support Unit (PPSSU) Action

- The Manager and/or the General Manager of the PPSSU will determine the best course of action based on the student welfare policy, the Department guidelines and a risk management assessment.
- The Manager of the PPSSU may be required to write a Ministerial Brief if the critical incident is judged to have a potential negative impact on the International Student Program (ISP).
- Accurate records must be kept on the school's student file regarding the incident and actions/decisions made, to ensure appropriate support and future incident review and investigation.
- Schools and the PPSSU will work in co-operation to ensure the compliance of the program and preserve the quality reputation of the Victorian Government School system.

Stage 4 – Follow up

- The school provides regular updates to the PPSSU on the student's progress post-incident, if the student remains at a Victorian Government School.
- Ensure that appropriate departmental policy and school welfare and support structures are in place to protect the student and any other students from potential and real harm/risk in the future.

Stage 5 – Notify Department of Home Affairs (DHA)

- The PPSSU must notify DHA if a critical incident results in the deferral of a student's course, or any non-compliance by the student.

Responses to specific Critical Incidents

Self-Harm (actual or threatened) / Suicidal ideation

Response:

- Staff member who becomes aware of student self-harm must immediately notify the head of student wellbeing on site and the Principal.
- If the head of student wellbeing / Principal is unavailable, the Assistant Principal overseeing International Student Programs must immediately be notified.
- The Principal and Assistant Principal will liaise with the SEIL / Regional wellbeing team / School Support Officer at IED / Student Management Services (indicating that the individual is an international student), as required in the specific incident.
- 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, Assistant Principal, as required.
- Any staff involved in a self-harm incident can seek counselling via the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Staff can call directly or organize a free counselling session appointment.
- Staff can also contact Headspace on **1800 650 890** or **eheadspace.org.au** Headspace is a confidential, free and secure service where staff can speak to a qualified mental health professional.

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 relevant members of the welfare team should take all reasonable steps to ascertain the whereabouts of the student.
- 000 must be called immediately, not the local police station.
- Principal / AP of ISP/ head of wellbeing to be immediately notified.
- The Principal / Assistant Principal will liaise with the SEIL / Regional wellbeing team / School Support Officer at IED / Student Management Services (indicating that the individual is an international student).
- The parent(s) will be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable by either the Principal, Assistant Principal or the Wellbeing team member, depending upon the consultation between them.

Immediate response to report of student attempted suicide off site:

- The school Principal and/or Assistant Principal and relevant members of the welfare team should take all reasonable steps to ascertain the whereabouts of the student (such as contacting the home stay family, seeking information from person who notified of incident).
- 000 must be called immediately, not the local police station.
- Principal / AP of ISP/ head of wellbeing to be immediately notified.
- The Principal / Assistant Principal will liaise with the SEIL / Regional wellbeing team / School Support Officer at IED / Student Management Services (indicating that the individual is an international student).

- 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 if staff members are to attend. Any attending staff member must not attend alone and should be accompanied by another staff member as specified in this paragraph.
- The parent(s) will be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable by either the Principal, Assistant Principal or the Wellbeing team member, depending upon the consultation between them.

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

- 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**

Prior to the student's return to school:

- A school support team will be identified for the student. It will comprise of the Principal / Assistant Principal of ISP, parent (if able) or the Home Stay parents, and Wellbeing team member/s.
- 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.
- With the agreement of the student and his/her family, a safety plan will be formulated and put in place prior to the return to school of the student.

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/suicidguidelines.pdf>

Self-Harm (actual or threatened) / Suicidal ideation / Attempted Suicide (outside of school hours)

Response:

- When the school becomes aware that an international student has attempted suicide outside of school hours, it must promptly convene a meeting with an identified support group (Principal / Assistant Principal, parent, wellbeing team member, Home stay parent/s, 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).

Suicide

Response

In the event of a student suicide, the Principal will follow the DET Guidelines for managing the school's response.

Evaluation:

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

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Approved by Kambrya College School Council	June 2018
Responsible for Review	Paul Looker- Assistant Principal
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