

# Critical Incident Response Policy

## PURPOSE:

1. In accordance with the National Code, must have strategies in place to manage Critical Incidents as well as documented Support Mechanisms. This policy is designed to ensure that :
  - a) Meets its Duty of Care as an Employer and Education Provider,
  - b) can respond to a Critical or Significant Incident or Event, and
  - c) Meets the requirements of the RTO Standards 2015 and National Code 2018
2. This policy shall be disseminated to all Staff and Students to ensure that they are aware of these requirements in the event of a Critical Incident and shall form part of the induction process.

## SCOPE:

3. Critical Incident Response is a comprehensive, integrated and systematic and approach to Crisis Intervention consisting of Core processes which can be applied considering the appropriateness of the specific intervention in relation to the event.
4. A Critical Incident is defined as:

“A traumatic event, or threat of such (within or outside Australia) which has the potential to harm life or well-being, and causes extreme stress, fear or injury to the person experiencing or witnessing the event.”
5. Critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:
  - Serious injury, illness, or death of a student or staff
  - A missing student
  - Severe verbal or psychological aggression
  - Physical or Sexual assault
  - Occupation Health & Safety Risk
  - Student or Staff witnessing a serious accident or violent act
  - Natural disaster
  - Fire, bomb-threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
  - Drug or Alcohol abuse
  - Damaging Media attention

## PROCEDURE:

Procedures in Critical Incident Response should consider the actual management of a Critical Incident and should include the following items:

- a) At the time of occurrence
- b) Immediately after

- c) Following
- d) Post

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE**

### **Designated Officer**

- 6. The Designated Officer:
  - a) Is any Staff Member who is either a direct witness or the first to be informed of the incident or potential incident
  - b) Is to assume temporary control over the Critical Incident and to assign duties and responsibilities to Staff and Students as required,
  - c) Is to alert the General Manager or most Senior Staff Member at the first available opportunity,
  - d) Is to provide a brief to and form part of the Critical Incident Response Team,
  - e) Is to complete the Critical Incident Report Form

### **Critical Incident Response Team**

- 7. When an incident occurs, the General Manager or most Senior Staff Member will form a Critical Incident Response Team – CIRT.
  - a) The General Manager or most Senior Staff Member shall be the designated Critical Incident Team leader,
  - b) The CIRT is to take over control of the Critical Incident from the Designated Officer, after a handover brief, and
  - c) The Designated Officer will form part of the CIRT
- 8. The CIRT is responsible for:
  - Implementation of this procedure,
  - Identifying the cause to the Critical Incident circumstance, assessing and controlling any further risk,
  - Implementing, monitoring and maintaining risk control measures,
  - Regularly monitoring the effectiveness of the Critical Incident risk control measures and rectify any deficiencies in the procedures,
  - Consulting with Staff and Students on Critical Incident practices,
  - Liaison with Emergency Response Authorities,
  - Liaison with Department of Education (DoE) and the Department of Employment and Work relations (DEWR), Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and other relevant agencies,
  - Ensuring the well-being of Staff and Students following the Critical Incident,
  - Arranging Counselling or Trauma Services following the Critical Incident.

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TIMELINE**

- 9. At the time of occurrence and within 24 hours

- a) Identify the cause of the Critical Incident
- b) If practical, remove or minimise the cause for a potential further Critical Incident
- c) Ensure the Safety and Well-being of Staff and Students
- d) Ensure injured and/or traumatised Staff and Students are provided with appropriate Emergency Care
- e) Arrange Counselling, Trauma or Religious Services
- f) Ensure support for Staff and Students in the event an incident is continuing
- g) Keep Staff, Students, Parents, Agents and where necessary DoE, DEWR, DHA informed
- h) Manage Media Reports
- i) Designated Officer is to Complete the Critical Incident Report Form
- j) Commence an investigation to record real-time or factual data on the Critical Incident

#### 10. Immediately After

- a) Arrange Counselling, Trauma or Religious Services
- b) Allow Staff and Students to contact relatives and friends
- c) Ensure Staff and Students who have been exposed to the Critical Incident with Support and Practical assistance
- d) Debrief all relevant personnel involved in the Critical Incident
- e) Where applicable, ensure the site of the incident is not disturbed in relation to a Police matter or when an investigation is required by WorkSafe
- f) Keep Staff, Students, Parents, Agents and where necessary the DoE and DHA informed
- g) Restore Normal daily operations, where practical and as soon as possible
- h) Manage Media Reports

#### 11. Following

- a) Ensure Staff and Students are provided ongoing access to Counselling, Trauma or Religious Services
- b) Monitor Staff and Students attitudes and behaviour for any signs of PTSD
- c) Monitor Health and Well-being of any Staff and Students hospitalised
- d) Keep Staff, Students, Parents, Agents and where necessary the DoE, DEWR and DHA informed
- e) Assist in the arrange of memorial proceedings if appropriate
- f) Conduct a CIRT debrief and provide the report to Staff and Students where necessary
- g) Manage Media Reports

#### 12. Post

- a) Ensure Staff and Students are provided ongoing access to Counselling, Trauma or Religious Services
- b) Analyse the findings of the CIRT Incident debrief and where necessary implement RISK Control Measures to minimise the likelihood of reoccurrence

### **REPORTING OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT**

- 13.** In accordance with the ESOS Act, is required to notify the DoE, DEWR and DHA as soon as practical after the incident and in the event of a student's death or other circumstance affecting the student's attendance. In this instance, notification will be made initially by Phone followed by reporting via PRISMS.