

The Riverina Anglican College

Updated 31st August 2018. Due for review 31st August 2019.

Critical Incident Management

Overview

A critical incident is one in which the safety and security of the College community is threatened and in which the emotional consequences will be unsettling or harmful.

Critical incidents are commonly of the following type:

- a serious injury or accident involving students and/or staff;
- the death of a student, parent or staff member;
- misadventure at a College event (students lost or at risk);
- an external threat (natural disaster, manmade attack).

They usually occur without warning and require rapid and effective response to prevent further harm to the College community and to minimize long term consequences.

Efficient communication between and amongst the College members is essential and should involve all elements - Executive, Wellbeing, teaching staff, students and parents.

The Principal has ultimate control of decisions made in any particular circumstances. The Deputy Principal – Wellbeing and Pastoral Care will act as co-ordinator and liaison between staff, students and parents, assisted by the Deputy Principal - Academic.

Any critical incident is to be reported to the relevant co-ordinator as quickly as possible.

The co-ordinator then ensures the immediate safety of students & staff, if necessary activating the Fire and Emergency Procedures for the College. **See Policy 29 Work Health and Safety Policy** for guidelines and procedures to be followed at the time of an emergency evacuation or lockdown.

Any emergency services are contacted (ambulance, rescue services, police, etc) as needed. Arrangements should be made for directing services to place of incident (either by staff or two students). Staff attending an incident should carry mobile phones to assist with communication.

The Principal and Executive are contacted.

Reception are notified, all main line calls are to be transferred to the Principal's Assistant. First Aid officers attend.

Members of the Wellbeing team (Chaplain, Counsellor, Heads of Year) are informed.

As needed, parents of students are contacted (the Wellbeing team may assist with this task).

If students are in the immediate vicinity of an incident, they should be moved to a quieter area under the supervision of staff. In the case of an accident, students may have to provide information to Police, WorkCover, etc. Writing down an account may be useful as well providing a means of debriefing.

Students and staff witnessing an incident such as an accident must be given reassurance and support (Wellbeing team to assist).

When the immediate impact of the incident is over, students and staff should be debriefed by the Wellbeing team and given the opportunity to express any sense of grief, fear or shock. Further debriefing should take place over the following weeks and months. Parents should be kept informed of this process.

In the event of a death in the College community, staff and students should be given the opportunity to express grief and receive support. A room (or rooms) set aside for this specific purpose in the first few days after the incident is suggested. Extra counselling assistance may be engaged.

Staff must be kept informed of outcomes so that they may form part of the whole College support system.

Depending on the circumstances, a year or whole College assembly may be held to outline issues so that there is no misinformation, which could lead to further discomfort.

Participation by students and staff in part and whole College activities, such as funeral services in the short term and the establishment of memorials (gardens, plaques, etc) in the long term, may assist with assuaging grief.

Media - only the Principal or the Principal's delegate will issue any statements.

Overseas or Interstate Excursion

The procedures would follow the above guidelines in the main. Staff in charge of the activity would contact the Principal and College Executive via telephone. There will be a delegated staff member with copies of all of the information pertaining to the trip/excursion who would be able to assist in communicating with staff and parents concerned. All overseas trips should be registered with DFAT in case of emergencies.

Administration Staff should be aware of the repercussions of any critical incident so that they may deal with enquiries from parents/guardians.

Review - all actions relating to critical incidents must be analysed and reviewed as soon as possible so that practices may be checked and improved.

Exchange Students

The guidelines applied in the ministry of overseas exchange students involved at a Critical Incident at The Riverina Anglican College or off-site on a school-endorsed activity, tour or excursion are as indicated above for local students with the following additions:

As stated above, the Principal has ultimate control of decisions made in any particular circumstances. The Deputy Principal – Wellbeing and Pastoral Care will act as co ordinator and liaison between staff, students and Host parents, assisted by the Deputy Principal - Academic.

In addition, the student(s) Head of Year, and the Business Manager will, with those members of staff listed above, form the Critical Incident Team for the exchange student.

Responsibilities of the Principal:

- Liaise with Emergency Services
- Communicate with student's family or students' families, letters of condolence
- Communicate with host family and Exchange Organisation
- Obtain direction from the student's family or students' families with regard to personal effects and belongings, their return or disposal
- Communicate with students/College community
- Liaise with Diplomatic Embassy
- Liaise with media
- Prepare a written report of the incident and initiate resulting recommendations/actions in the ensuing weeks/months.

Responsibilities of the Critical Incident Team (under the direct supervision of and in consultation with the Principal):

- Organise pastoral assistance for student's family overseas
- Organise pastoral assistance for host family
- Organise formal counselling and stress management
- Communications with host family/families
- Make arrangements for visit from family/next of kin
- Engage a translator for the family
- Liaise with medical staff/hospitals/funeral directors etc
- Provide Principal with daily briefing updating him on the status of the incident
- Record and report all communications/meetings with student's family, next of kin, Emergency Services, media, staff, students and wider College Community throughout the period of the incident. Copy all notes and records of communications and meetings to the Principal on the day of their occurrence.

Responsibilities of the Business Manager:

- Manage insurance matters in association with the Exchange Organisation
- Review legal issues including advising family of process/access to assistance if needed.

Incidents involving Exchange Students which occur outside normal school hours

In the event that a critical incident occurs outside school hours and whilst the student is under the care of the host family, the procedures outlined in Part B for the management of the Critical Incident are to be followed.

Responsibility of the host family:

- Contact emergency services
- Report incident to the Exchange Organisation
- Provide a written report of the incident, including date, time, circumstances and witnesses, to the Principal.

Responsibilities of the Principal

- Refer to Part B
- In addition to the procedures in place for an incident which takes place during school hours, on school excursions or on school property, the Principal is to provide and oversee counsel, support and communications of the host family

Medication relating to Critical Incidents

First Aid officers administer student medication, provided that a signed consent letter from the student's parent/guardian is submitted with the medication and the medication is in the original packaging with a pharmaceutical label on the box.

Administering prescribed medication

When a medical practitioner has prescribed medication that must be administered during the school day, parents are responsible for:

- bringing this need to the attention of the College
- ensuring that the information is updated if it changes
- supplying the medication and any 'consumables' necessary for its administration in a timely way
- providing the College with a written request and, where applicable, a Management Plan signed by their family Doctor.
- ensuring students attending excursions or camps etc have the requisite amount of medication and that the organising teacher is fully informed

The Principal, or designated staff, are responsible for informing relevant staff of the management needs of students requiring the administration of prescribed medication.

The administration of prescribed medication in schools is carried out by the College Front Office Staff, or on camps or excursions, the designated staff member.

Prescribed medication is kept in Sick Bay, locked in the cabinet, clearly marked with the student's name.

All medical information pertaining to students will be kept on their individual files and the relevant information entered into the College's computer system.

Emergency care management

Schools do not generally supply or administer medications in an emergency unless they have been provided by parents as part of the negotiated individual health care plan for a specific student. Parents are requested to provide management plans for students with asthma or for any other severe forms of allergy, particularly those that may lead to anaphylactic shock.

Where parents have provided the information, it is stored in the Synergetic system and Front Office Staff keep emergency notes.

In an unanticipated emergency, the College will provide a general emergency response, e.g. call an ambulance. Where an emergency response requires the immediate administration of medication to prevent serious illness or injury, staff should administer the medication e.g. Ventolin for a first asthma attack.

In the case of an emergency, for example anaphylaxis, staff may use medication (if available) which is not specifically prescribed for a student in order to secure the safety of that student.

Non-prescribed medications

In general, schools do not administer medication which has not been specifically requested by a medical practitioner for an individual student for a specific condition. In some cases the medical practitioner may not write 'a prescription' for such medication because it may be available 'over the counter'. NSW Health advises that this does not mean that the medication is not potentially harmful and that schools should follow the same procedures for such medications as for 'prescribed medications'.

In particular, the administering of paracetamol is not permitted without a signed consent form from parent/guardian.