

TERANG COLLEGE

CRITICAL INCIDENT

POLICY (Operations)

1. RATIONALE

- 1.1. Occasionally schools will face a crisis situation that affects the College and community.
- 1.2. These are "Critical Incidents". At any time of the day a critical incident may occur at the College creating a situation where staff, students and parents feel strong emotions, unsafe, vulnerable and under stress, which have the potential to overwhelm their ability to cope, either then or later. Incidents may necessitate the implementation of a Critical Incident Management Plan.
- 1.3. The early identification of a potential/actual critical incident will help in creating a situation where the grieving process can begin, where students, staff and parents can talk about the situation in terms of readjustment and acceptance. If a critical incident is not addressed adequately, a significant amount of unresolved grief can develop within the individual regardless of his/her age. Unresolved grief can lead to severe emotional difficulties, physical illness and contribute to a crisis later in life.

2. AIMS

- 2.1. To minimise the impact of crises on members of the College community.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 Issues, actions and decisions relating to this policy will take into account Department of Education and Training policies, memos, guidelines and circulars and Government Ministerial Orders and Acts.
- 3.2 This policy is to be implemented in conjunction with the College Emergency Management Policy.
- 3.3 A critical incident may include:
 - 3.3.1 the sudden death of a student or a staff member,
 - 3.3.2 the suicide of a student or a staff member,
 - 3.3.3 the murder of a student or a staff member,
 - 3.3.4 groups of students and/or staff who witness sudden death, severe injury or disaster on College premises or whilst travelling to or from the College on an excursion,
 - 3.3.5 significant vandalism of College property,
 - 3.3.6 the terminal illness of a member of the College community.
 - 3.3.7 natural or community disaster.
 - 3.3.8 unusual and/or unfavourable media attention,
 - 3.3.9 an intruder entering the College and its grounds.
- 3.4 The Critical Incident Management Team consists of the following:
 - 3.4.1 Principal,
 - 3.4.2 Assistant Principals,
 - 3.4.3 Leadership Team Members,
 - 3.4.4 College Council President or nominee.
- 3.4 **Critical Incident Management:**
 - 3.4.1 Management deals with the initial impact through to the area of post-incident. It is essential these steps are discussed and amended so as to provide the maximum management. These actions will occur simultaneously, with the exact order depending on the nature of the incident. Within 24 hours following the incident, the following checklist is to be followed;
 - 3.4.1.1 obtain factual information – e.g. police/family/those involved,
 - 3.4.1.2 Leadership Team meet,
 - 3.4.1.3 the Department of Education and Training (DET) will be informed through the Emergency and Security Management Unit (03) 9589 6266,
 - 3.4.1.4 activate Critical Incident Management Team,
 - 3.4.1.5 full staff meeting to inform all staff,
 - 3.4.1.6 office staff to be provided with information to assist in the management of telephone calls,
 - 3.4.1.7 identify "at risk" students, staff and parents - refer them to the Principal and Assistant Principals.

- 3.4.1.8 make contact with the families of those at risk and inform them of support available,
- 3.4.1.9 students will be informed in class groups, at the same time - teachers will be given a written statement to ensure consistent information which will include:
 - 3.4.1.9.1 the facts
 - 3.4.1.9.2 the College's response – changes to normal timetable
 - 3.4.1.9.3 meeting venues
 - 3.4.1.9.4 counselling facilities available
 - 3.4.1.9.5 any other arrangements
- 3.4.1.10 rolls to be checked to ensure all children are accounted for.
- 3.4.1.11 all absent students and staff members will be informed of the incident asap by the Principal or Assistant Principals,
- 3.4.1.12 Parents will be informed through a formal letter sent home from the Principal,
- 3.4.1.13 The Department of Education and Training (DET) be updated through the Emergency and Security Management Unit (03) 9589 6266,
- 3.4.1.14 All statements and contact with the media MUST be provided by only the Principal or nominee and/or the DET Media Unit,
- 3.4.1.15 staff to meet and be debriefed regularly.

3.5 **Counselling Team:**

- 3.5.1 If an incident relevant to 3.2 occurs, a team will need to provide counselling for those members of the College community who are deemed to be at risk. The team will be arranged by the College Leadership Team.
- 3.5.2 The counselling team will assist as required. Long term intervention will require referral of the individual to an appropriate outside agency.
- 3.5.3 Privacy and integrity will be considered during all arrangements.
- 3.5.4 The counselling team will provide the School Leadership Team with continuous evaluation and student/staff status.
- 3.5.5 A final report from the team will be submitted to the School Leadership Team.

3.6 **Re-Establishment of Staff and Students:**

- 3.6.1 Once the regular patterns of management have been re-established, the College will monitor the impact on students, staff and parents to ensure they feel safe.

3.7 **Debriefing Student, Parents and Staff:**

- 3.8.1 After re-establishing boundaries for students and staff, parents and staff will be formally debriefed, bringing closure to the 'Critical Incident'.
- 3.8.2 Debriefing to take the following format:
 - 3.8.2.1 formal meeting with professional input given by an appropriately qualified presenter, e.g. Counsellor,
 - 3.8.2.2 question time to address any unanswered questions parents or staff may have,
 - 3.8.2.3 sessions to be held for students, staff and parents with it being determined if these should be separate or combined,
 - 3.8.2.4 each session to provide the opportunity for those in attendance to seek additional information, join a support group or express concerns.

3.9 **Critical Incident Review:**

The Critical Incident Management Team, in consultation with any other relevant personnel, will review the management of the critical incident and make any indicated adjustments to the plan.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years

Approved by College Council on 20/08/2018