



Critical Incident Management Policy

INTRODUCTION

The PMSA recognises the impact that a serious or critical incident can have on its staff, students and wider school communities and is committed to acting with concern and compassion to minimise the impact of critical incidents on all involved. The PMSA also understands the importance of planning and taking action to prevent, prepare for, respond to or recover from critical incidents which may occur in its schools.

This policy is designed to ensure that the PMSA and its schools:

- Meet all duty of care obligations in providing the highest possible standard of health and safety for staff, students, contractors, sub-contractors and their employees, visitors and other persons working at or visiting the PMSA or one of its schools or business entities;
- Are able to respond swiftly and effectively in the event of a critical incident;
- Implement an integrated approach to management of risks associated with critical incidents; and
- Are compliant with relevant legislation so that: (i) exposure of persons to health and safety risks arising from critical incidents is avoided or minimised; and (ii) physical and psychological trauma are reduced.

POLICY INTENT

This policy provides a framework to support school planning by providing a consistent approach in identifying and minimising risks of exposure to potential critical incidents and by providing a plan for appropriate action and support, should a critical incident occur at a PMSA school or an off-campus event such as a camp or excursion.

DEFINITIONS

A Critical Incident can be broadly defined as an incident which involves the possibility of immediate or imminent threat, physical and/or emotional distress to staff, students and other members of the school community; and which may be regarded as outside the normal range of experience of the people affected.

Examples of critical incidents that could affect school communities include, but are not limited to:

- Death of a member/s of the school community
- Serious injury or illness of a member/s of the school community
- Serious incident involving a member of the school community during an off-site activity including interstate and overseas
- Threat or act of violence towards a member/s of the school community
- Substantial criminal activity e.g. vandalism.
- Development of a Pandemic in the school community



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CRITICAL INCIDENT PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

This Policy requires that all PMSA schools take action to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from, critical emergencies and incidents. This includes:

- identifying all on-site and off-site situations that have the potential to become critical incidents that would affect staff, students and/or the wider school community;
- using risk management practices to assess the potential risks and develop mitigation strategies;
- developing a *Critical Incident Management Plan* that considers the management of foreseeable risks, including evaluating and reviewing the plan annually;
- communicating the plan to all staff;
- training key staff; and
- testing and modifying the Critical Incident Plan annually.



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CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The establishment of an effective *Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)* is an essential element of the PMSA Pastoral Care Program across all PMSA schools and ensures that schools respond to crisis situations responsibly, compassionately, immediately and comprehensively. Under this Policy all PMSA schools are required to develop and maintain a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP).

The aim of the Critical Incident Management Plan is to:

- Document strategies to identify and best manage the response to critical incidents that may occur within the school and its community,
- Define roles and responsibilities of various personnel within the school during a critical incident,
- Provide for the safety and welfare of students, staff and the wider school community in a crisis situation,
- Minimise the personal and financial costs associated with critical incidents,
- Minimise the impact of the incident and ensure that students, staff, parents and other members of the school community receive the support required during and after a critical incident.
- Assist staff, students and their families and members of the wider school community to return to normal functioning as quickly as possible following a critical incident.

The **Critical Incident Management Plan** must, as a minimum, include:

- The range of critical incidents covered by the Plan
- A general description of the school and its environment
- Identification and assessment of the potential risks to which students, staff and members of the wider school community may be exposed, including off-site activities such as camps and excursions
- Description of all actions to be taken in the event of specific critical incidents including consideration of immediate, medium and long term actions and follow-up and timelines for action.
- Identification of roles and responsibilities of staff, students and other persons during critical incidents.
- Procedures for reporting critical incidents
- Emergency Services and key personnel contact numbers
- Measures to prevent or reduce the impact of critical incidents if they do occur
- Arrangements for establishing recovery programs following a critical incident
- Media Management - Protocols
- Process for the evaluation and review of the plan

The school Critical Incident Management Plan must provide the basis for the school to formulate detailed strategies for responding to critical incidents in a manner that will:



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- deal effectively with the immediate and longer term health, welfare and safety of persons involved in, or affected by, a critical incident
- provide for the effective management and running of the schools' daily business in the immediate, short and longer term
- promote effective and appropriate communication to all persons affected
- promote collaborative working relationships within the school and with the wider school community
- complement existing policies and procedures

OFF-SITE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

All PMSA schools have a responsibility to plan for the safety of staff and students involved in all school activities regardless of where they are to be conducted.

OVERSEAS STUDENTS

For the policy on managing overseas students, for whom the school has undertaken care responsibilities, please refer to the PMSA Homestay Risk Management Policy.

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS TRAINING

All schools should ensure that staff, students and the wider school community know what the Critical Incident Management Plan contains, and through the provision of appropriate training, what they are required to do in the event of a critical incident.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Plan should be reviewed annually and/or following a critical incident and an element of the procedures contained in the Plan tested twice yearly. Personal contact information for people nominated with responsibilities in an emergency should be reviewed when there is a change of personnel or quarterly. Emergency contact details for staff should be updated each term. The review process must incorporate feedback from a cross section of staff, students and representatives from the wider school community.

CRITICAL INCIDENT COORDINATION TEAM (CICT)

This Policy requires that all PMSA schools develop and implement systems and processes for appropriate, effective and expeditious responses to, and management of, critical incidents including a ***Critical Incident Coordination Team*** which consists of a team of school personnel that will be formed in the event of a critical incident to coordinate the management of the incident. Members of the CICT



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should include those with expertise, such as the school Chaplain, first aid officer, and a member of the school executive, as well as others who have personal qualities appropriate to crisis management. Members of the team can also be drawn from the wider school community.

The role of the Critical Incident Coordination Team

1. To assist in reducing psychological suffering and assist the school community through the incident
2. To oversee the implementation of the Critical Incident Management Plan
3. To provide support systems and a safe place for individuals during this period of time
4. To provide accurate information and to maintain communication links within the school and to outside sources
5. To establish liaison with all relevant emergency services (e.g. Police, fire brigade, ambulance, hospital, poisons information centre, health services)
6. To provide 24 hour access to contact details for all students and their families (this also includes agents, homestay families, carers, consular staff, embassies and interpreting services if necessary)
7. To provide 24 hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident (e.g. School Chaplain, School Sergeant)
8. To assist in making appropriate referrals and follow up resources available to students, staff and members of the wider school community
9. To help restore and maintain a supportive, positive, working and learning environment, as soon as possible after the incident

CRITICAL INCIDENT DIRECTOR (CID)

The composition of a school's Critical Incident Management Team can be decided by the Principal; however, the school Principal must act as the Critical Incident Director and will have overall responsibility for coordinating the school's response to the critical incident.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT CENTRE (CIMC)

All schools must identify a pre-designated location where the Critical Incident Coordination Team will meet as soon as practicable once an incident has been deemed to be a critical incident as defined in this policy. The CIMC must be equipped with those resources needed to manage the incident. A secondary location should also be identified for use in the event of the primary location being within the affected area.

CRITICAL INCIDENT COMMITTEE

The PMSA requires that each of its schools has in place a Critical Incident Committee to assist the Principal in the prevention and management of critical incidents at the school, or off campus in the case of a critical incident occurring on a camp or excursion.



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The responsibilities of the committee include:

- assessments of risks which have the potential to be critical incidents
- analysis of requirements to address these risks
- assisting in the development, implementation, dissemination and review of the school's Critical Incident Management Plan
- arranging appropriate staff development and training
- allocating budgets to support requirements of school's Critical Incident Plan

MANAGING THE MEDIA

The Principal will determine the official school response and should co-ordinate all media enquiries.

- All enquiries from the media should be directed to the Principal or in the case of the PMSA Corporate Office, the PMSA Executive Manager.
- No comments should be made by staff to the media.
- No interviews with students should be permitted.
- Camera crews should be kept at a distance.
- No student should be photographed without parental permission.
- The Principal should confirm all facts before speaking to the media. If accurate information is not available or is sensitive, the Principal should explain that questions cannot be answered at this time
- Avoid implying blame or fault for any part of the incident
- The Principal may delegate media liaison to another member of staff

RECORD KEEPING

Details of the incident and the action taken are to be retained by the school and on relevant student files, where applicable. Careful records should be kept throughout the response period and placed in a local file created specifically for the purpose.

The records on the staff and/or student files should include:

- detailed documentation about each step taken in the response process
- copies of emails and letters
- records of significant interactions that occur
- correct details for significant people in the process

COMMUNICATING THE POLICY

This Policy must be made available on the school's intranet and in printed form with all Heads of Schools and Departments. Sections of the policy must also be made available to parents and students via the school's website and the Student Handbook (Student Diary).



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CRITICAL INCIDENT NOTIFICATION

As soon as is reasonably possible the Principal must report the critical incident to the Chairman of their School Council and the PMSA Chairman, using the processes as outlined at Appendix A of this Policy. The PMSA Chairman will report critical issues to the two Church Moderators and their Church offices.

GOVERNANCE

Each PMSA School Council will conduct an annual assurance review of each school's critical incident management capability and report the findings to the PMSA Council.

POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be initially evaluated after 12 months of its implementation, and thereafter every two years or as the need arises. Schools should adopt a similar time-frame in the evaluation of their policies.

AMENDMENT REGISTER

Issue No	Date of Issue	Page No	Details of and reason for amendment
01	15/02/12	All	Proposed for adoption by PMSA Council
02	19/03/12	All	Critical Incident Management Policy approved by PMSA Council.
03	26/10/15	All	Inclusion of Appendix A to guide PMSA Council reporting of critical incidents to the Moderators of the Uniting and Presbyterian Churches in Queensland.