



CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN

INFORMATION GATHERING

Inform Administration Leader or delegate

Confirm incident / collect reliable information
Contact Emergency Services (see attached list)

PLAN

Administration Leader convenes a meeting with the College of Teachers and relevant staff to:

Appoint

Appoint the Management Plan Coordinator (if the Administration Leader is unable to take this role)
Outline proposed Action Plan – as below
Assign tasks (as below) to appropriate personnel
Appoint Press/Media Liaison Person
Appoint Coordinator of Counselling/Support
Appoint contact person for parents (where necessary)

Inform / Consult

Staff: Briefing and Management Plan
Students who need to know – assembly or specified group meetings
Parents who need to know: Phone, Email or Letter
Legal Representation
Relevant outside agencies e.g. ISV, SEA

Allocate resources

Control use of phones – allocate specific phones for incoming and outgoing calls

Arrange security

Designate assembly point of parents

Media Room

Recovery room for staff and / or students

INTERVENE

Liaise with outside agencies (re defusing, debriefing, counselling)

Defuse affected staff/students (within 8 hours)

Identify students / staff needing further support

Provide initial support/defusing for parents (within 3 hours)

Arrange debriefing where necessary (after 5-7 days)

Communication of sympathy/concern etc to affected parents

PROVIDE

Information / letter to affected parents

Information to Press / Media

Supportive Information Handouts for staff

Re: personal response

Re: understanding student responses

Review of class work / curriculum for affected year levels

ON-GOING RECOVERY

Support for Administration Leader and College of Teachers

Support for affected staff, including office staff

Support for Intervention Team (Daily debriefing)

Long Term Initiatives

Community & Curriculum

Long Term Monitoring / counselling of those affected.

REVIEW

Meeting to evaluate Wild Cherry School's response (after approximately 1 week) and recovery (after 3 months in case of serious critical incidents)

NOTES TO ACCOMPANY ACTION CHECK-LIST

INFORMATION GATHERING

Find out the facts:

The Administration Leader should be notified immediately after the Critical Incident has occurred. The Administration Leader will then confirm the incident and collect information about the incident from reliable sources as soon as possible.

If the incident occurs during the school holidays, then the Administration Leader (or designated representative) will be the initial contact, and will confirm the details.)

Confirmation may be obtained by contacting:

the people involved

the Police

Hospital

Details required may include

WHO?

Student

Family Member(s)

Staff

Visitor

WHERE?

On Campus

Off Campus

WHEN?

During School

After Hours

On Holidays

PLAN

The Administration Leader will convene an urgent meeting with the College of Teachers and relevant support Staff.

If the incident occurs during the school holidays, the Administration Leader (or designated representative) will contact the relevant personnel to convene said meeting in order to plan the immediate response, and what should be done on the first day of return to school.

APPOINT

From this meeting, a person will be appointed to co-ordinate the Action/Management Plan devised. In addition, co-ordinators of Counselling/Support, Media Liaison and Parent Contact will need to be appointed (as required).

When appointing co-ordinators, care should be taken to ensure that these persons are not traumatised by the event to the extent that their capacity to facilitate response/recovery will be impaired.

INFORM/CONSULT

Staff briefing

The Administration Leader will call a Full Staff Briefing and provide the correct, up-to-date facts of the incident, and outline the proposed Management Plan.

(If the incident is during the School Holidays, the Administration Leader will co-ordinate a response which provides the opportunity for a Full Staff Briefing, especially in relation to the Action Management Plan.)

These meetings will also suggest sources for personal support for staff, especially if the incident is on campus.

Inform students

To ensure clarity and consistency of information, assemble students and outline the facts of the incident at the earliest opportunity. Whether the assembly is for the whole school or a year level will depend on the situation and the scope of the incident.

Inform parents

Immediate contact will be made with parents/relatives of those directly involved. In addition, the Administration Leader shall provide by letter the facts of the incident.

CONSULTATION/INFORMING PERSONNEL AND ORGANISATIONS

May include:

Providing the facts of the incident

Outlining any proposals about the management plan

Checking any other suggestions or possible assistance

Ensuring that adequate information, including facts and relevant responses are supplied to the Media

ALLOCATE RESOURCES

Ensure that personnel responsible for taking incoming telephone calls are thoroughly briefed as to information to be given and to whom enquiries should be directed. Note especially, calls from parents, media.

SECURITY

There may be the need to arrange a Security Guard to restrict access to the school grounds. In the interim, school staff (key holders) may be required to supervise the yards and ensure adequate security.

This role, in the case of police or fire service involvement, may be undertaken by the relevant authority.

RECOVERY ROOM

Set up a Recovery Room in the School – to isolate upset students to allow them to receive appropriate assistance.

A designated staff member of the Committee of Management shall set up a room with hot and cold drinks and comfortable chairs.

It may be an advantage to have an outside counsellor in attendance as well as a school staff member.

Allow distressed students and staff access to this room for several days after the incident.

INTERVENE

Set up a support group for the school

If the magnitude of the incident is too great for school personnel alone to manage, outside agencies will be contacted to negotiate access to services of counsellors, psychologists and social workers to provide additional support. (It is essential that the Administration Leader (or their representative) be involved in decision making with outside personnel.)

Liaise with outside agencies

Schools experiencing Critical Incidents commonly report an influx of professionals and well-intentioned people offering counselling and other support. Care should be taken to ensure that only those people whose suitability has been affirmed will take any role in the response and recovery plan. Prior knowledge is a distinct advantage here.

Defusing of affected staff and students should be done within 8 hours of the incident. Defusing provides a meeting where, as a group, those affected can retell their experience, clarify the facts, discuss their feelings, learn about normal reactions to trauma and discover some important strategies for coping

Every attempt should be made to ensure that all affected persons attend defusing meetings. Those people who facilitate the defusing process should be alert to those who may require further support.

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (commonly referred to as C.I.S.D.) provides a more structured meeting of those involved in the incident, including those who are part of the response team.

In addition, a school may gain considerable advantage from offering a CISD to the Management Team.

CISD is best-completed 5-7 days after the event (Provided defusing has already been completed). In very serious cases CISD may need to be completed within 24 hours of the event.

PROVIDE

Information to affected parents

Press / Media Liaison

The Media is to be informed by the **Administration Leader ONLY**. The Administration Leader may choose to appoint a staff member or P.R. expert as Media Liaison Person.

Media contact with staff and students is to be minimized, and the Administration Leader will provide the Media with clear guidelines for making any contact with staff or students.

The Administration Leader will write the Media Release, in consultation with the Education Leader if possible, and information will be disseminated in a standard form.

A suitable room will be designated to hold Media Conferences if necessary. If the incident is controversial, then the media may be dealt with by Public Relations experts.

All office staff need to be briefed as how to handle questions from the media and how to deal with phone calls.

Staff may require a special meeting to review information handouts, ask questions of concern, and collaborate on any proposed alterations to class work / curriculum.

ON-GOING RECOVERY

On going recovery strategies are crucial to the overall well being of staff and students and therefore to the optimum functioning of School. Close attention should be given to the development of an on-going recovery plan.

ON-GOING RECOVERY CHECK-LIST

WITHIN 48 TO 72 HOURS AFTER THE INCIDENT:

Restore the school to regular routine as soon as possible

Provide structure to help students and staff return to normal functioning

Encourage teachers to allow students (especially those more directly involved) in opportunities to talk about the incident and about their reactions. This is an important part of the recovery process but should be not forced on students

Keep parents informed

Inform parents about:

School Management Plan

Possible reactions of students

Source of help for families

Support school staff

Encourage two-way communication between parents and school

Allow time for staff members to deal with their own emotional responses

Provide support for staff including debriefing by appropriately qualified counsellors when needed

Inform staff of the possible effects on students

Provide advice on how to manage student reactions

Monitor the situation

Warn of the need for caregivers to monitor their own mental and physical health

Provide or organize additional personnel if required

DURING THE FIRST MONTH

Arrange a memorial service at school within a week of the incident if students or teachers have been killed in the incident, or remain seriously injured

Encourage close friends and others directly involved in the incident to participate and be involved in the planning

Encourage students to attend funerals

Convene a meeting of parents of students involved, after three or four weeks, where a number of students were directly involved.

Enlist the aid of counselling professionals to encourage parents to express and share their feelings about their children's welfare and to help them understand their children's reactions

Encourage staff to be alert for signs of significant persistent changes in behaviour of those affected by the incident

Some students may not experience or exhibit reactions until days or weeks after the event

Students with behaviour changes persisting for more than a month may need specialist professional help

Monitor progress of hospitalised students

Ensure hospitalised students have access to counselling support

Liaise closely with hospital support staff about hospital support programs

Ensure continued access to counselling support for students on discharge

Ensure there is a support program for hospitalised students on return to school

Monitor the mental and physical health of those in caregiver roles and other helpers

Burnout Syndrome may occur, especially when the emergency is perceived to have eased. Adjust workloads where necessary.

Arrange meetings with caregivers (include administrators) to monitor how well they are managing their increased workloads and emotional and physical stress levels

Remember that students may have caregiver roles. Ensure personal support is readily available

IN THE LONGER TERM

Monitor the staff for signs of undue stress

Encourage stressed staff to seek professional help

Try to provide a supportive environment

Provide for increased demand on teacher relief time

Continue to monitor mental health of caregivers

Students in caring roles may develop delayed stress

Establish procedures for ensuring continuity of monitoring long term effects despite staff changes in the school

Be alert for and sensitive to the disturbing influences of anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings

Special support for those affected may be needed again at these times

Make extra staff and services available if necessary