

## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Critical Incident Management Policy applies to all primary and secondary Catholic schools managed and operated by the Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (**DOSCEL**) in the Diocese of Sale in the State of Victoria (**Schools**).

Schools have a responsibility to provide a safe and supportive environment for staff, students and members of the community. The wellbeing of students, staff and community members can be adversely affected by crisis events. Appropriate planning and intervention can reduce the likelihood of such events and mitigate the impact should a crisis occur.

A critical incident may be an event which causes disruption to an organisation or significant danger or risk, resulting in a situation where staff, students and parents, guardians and/or carers may feel unsafe, vulnerable and distressed, either emotionally or psychologically.

### 2.0 PURPOSE

This Policy outlines the procedures for the management of critical incidents.

A planned process of prevention, response and recovery activity that is well coordinated can reduce the impact of an incident.

### 3.0 PRINCIPLES

- 3.1** DOSCEL recognises that due to the range of possible traumatic events and the diversity of potential impacts on members of the school community, it is not possible to establish a single response strategy for all situations.
- 3.2** A school community that has a planned response to a critical incident or trauma will facilitate:
  - A strategic response at a time of potential instability
  - Recovery through having established effective plans, preparations and responses and by providing levels of support as described throughout this Policy
  - A quicker return to normal routines
  - A sense of cohesiveness within the school community
  - A sense of responsibility and control over situations which may arise
  - A demonstration of caring and support at a time of great need
  - A minimisation of short-term and long-term disruption to personal and professional functioning
  - The care of the physical and emotional well-being of staff and students.

## 4.0 DEFINITION

**Critical Incident:** A critical incident may be defined as an event which causes disruption to an organisation or significant danger or risk, resulting in a situation where staff, students and parents, guardians and/or carers may feel unsafe, vulnerable and distressed either emotionally or psychologically. Some critical incidents may result from emergencies occurring outside the school environment, such as serious injury to a student whilst holidaying with family. This may affect teachers and students in ways which the school needs to address. A critical incident may not necessarily require an initial emergency response.

Critical incidents that may affect the school community include:

- the death/serious injury of a student, staff member or school community member
- the destruction of the whole, or part, of the school
- the murder of a student, staff member or school community member
- death or misadventure on a school excursion or camp
- students witnessing serious injury or death
- staff member, student, sibling or parent, guardian and/or carer suicide
- flooding or other natural disasters
- terminal illness of a member of the school community
- use of violent weapons in the school
- outsiders (intruders) coming into school and being aggressive to students and staff
- disappearance of a student or staff member or school community member
- major vandalism
- media coverage of issues in a way which creates concerns in the school community.

Each school community is unique, so what may be considered a critical incident in one community may not be considered a critical incident in another community.

## 5.0 PROCEDURES

**5.1** The DOSCEL Secretariat and all Schools will utilise the DOSCEL Critical Incident Management and Response Resource to inform in-school critical incident procedures.

**5.2** The DOSCEL Secretariat will provide support and training by relevantly qualified staff in the use of the DOSCEL Critical Incident Management and Response Resource.

### **5.3 Critical Incident Plan**

- The DOSCEL Secretariat and all Schools will review their critical incident plans and assess for any critical incident risks at least once per year.
- The Critical Incident Management Plan will be clearly communicated to staff members and members of the school community.

#### 5.4 Critical Incident Response Team

- The DOSCEL Secretariat requires that all Schools establish a Critical Incident Response Team (**CIRT**) with the responsibility to implement the procedures outlined in the DOSCEL Critical Incident Management and Response Resource.

#### 5.5 Reporting Critical Incidents

- Schools will follow the Process for Critical Incident Response outlined in the DOSCEL Critical Incident Management and Response Resource.
- The Chief Executive Officer, DOSCEL must be informed by the Principal or other senior member of staff by contacting the school's School Leadership Consultant once a safe environment has been established.

#### 5.6 Student Wellbeing and Safety

- When responding to and managing any critical incidents, Schools will ensure that they comply with their obligations under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (**CISS**), Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (**FVISS**) and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (**MARAM**).
- If, in the event of a critical incident, concerns arise regarding the wellbeing and safety of a student or group of students or a potential risk of family violence, Schools should consider whether a request for information should be made or whether any information should be voluntarily provided to another prescribed Information Sharing Entity (**ISE**) under CISS or FVISS. Other ISEs include Victoria Police and family violence specialist services.
- Decisions associated with critical incident management must be made in accordance with MARAM.
- For further information, see: [Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Contextualised Guidance](#), [Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines](#), [Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines](#), and [Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework](#).

## 6.0 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 6.1 Each school in the Diocese of Sale will have a Critical Incident Plan enabling a swift, coordinated response to a critical incident.
- 6.2 The negative impacts of critical incidents will be minimised through effective management.
- 6.3 Every school has an established CIRT.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

- Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (2017). *Critical Incident Management and Response Resource*.
- Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited (2017). *Critical Incident and Emergency Management Flowchart*
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety \(Information Sharing\) Regulations 2018](#)
- [Family Violence Protection Act 2008 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Family Violence Protection \(Information Sharing\) Regulations 2018](#)
- [Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines](#)
- [Family Violence Information Sharing Guidelines](#)
- [Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework](#)
- [Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Contextualised Guidance](#)

## 8.0 REVIEW

**Implementation Date:** May 2020

**Updated:** April 2021

**Review Date:** May 2022