



St Francis de Sales
COLLEGE

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

APPROVAL OF CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Principal:
Gavin McGlaughlin

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gavin McGlaughlin', written over a horizontal line.

College Board Chair:
David Kyriacou

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Kyriacou', written over a horizontal line.

Date: 27 October 2020

Review Date: January 2024

INDEX

VISION STATEMENT	4
OUR MISSION	4
POLICY STATEMENT	4
DEFINITION.....	4
RESPONSIBILITIES.....	5
OVERALL STRATEGIES	5
PROCEDURES.....	6
During school hours on school grounds	6
During school hours away from school grounds, e.g. day excursions, sport	6
Before or after school hours or during school holidays	6
Overnight camp/trip	6
LIAISON AND COMMUNICATION.....	7
FOLLOW UP	7
MONITOR AND REVIEW	7
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	7
APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT.....	8

VISION STATEMENT

St Francis de Sales College aspires to be a leader in education serving the Adelaide Hills community. Grounded in our Catholic values and in partnership with families, all community members are known and loved as an individual made in the image of God.

Providing a contemporary and inclusive education, relationship and engagement empowers students to be self-motivated, creative and courageous learners.

Our students' growth mindset inspires them to achieve their personal best in all aspects of their school life and develops confident graduates eager to impact their local and global community.

OUR MISSION

St Francis de Sales College is a community in which faith is nurtured in a Catholic Christian tradition. It does this by recognising each individual's skills and talents while appreciating and accepting their uniqueness.

The College is committed to promoting community and personal fulfilment through life enhancing relationships.

St Francis de Sales, as patron, symbolises the high hopes that are held for every St Francis de Sales student, so that, inspired and guided by his example, each child may:

- Promote a culture of life through courage un responding to the challenges that life brings
- Foster the engagement of faith and reason
- Develop a love of learning and independent thinking
- Be an ethical leader by valuing and respecting each individual, irrespective of position, wealth, racial or ethnic origin and religious beliefs
- Become socially responsible contributor in their community and to society
- Acquire virtue and wisdom and respond generously to others, throughout their life

POLICY STATEMENT

We are committed to ensuring that employees are provided with a safe and healthy work environment. This will be achieved, in part, by minimising the impact of critical incidents.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff are aware of what to do when a critical incident arises directly involving St Francis de Sales College staff and/or students.

These procedures are in addition to the usual support and pastoral care offered to employees, students and families.

DEFINITION

Critical incidents occur when a person experiences, witnesses or is affected by a sudden traumatic event which has the potential to harm life or wellbeing. Such events can challenge our ability to cope and impact on our sense of security.

Examples:

- major injury
- serious traffic crash/accident
- death – accidental or following an illness
- suicide or self-harm
- dangerous intruder on College grounds resulting in Lockdown
- bomb threat
- sexual assault
- fire at school or bushfire
- hazardous substance spill or explosion
- natural disaster.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are made available to implement this policy. The Principal is also responsible for the implementation of this policy by ensuring that all staff understand the policy and appropriate procedures.

Critical Incident Response Team

- Principal
- Deputy Principals
- Business Manager
- Year Level Leaders
- APRIM
- Marketing and Communications Coordinator
- College Counsellor
- Student Services
- CEO School Performance Leader

OVERALL STRATEGIES

These strategies are to be implemented to provide the basis for managing and providing support to staff, students and families following a critical incident:

- to provide timely and accurate information to key stakeholders
- to consult with staff, students and parent/carer groups
- to document and distribute procedures to all staff for dealing with critical events
- to address the need for relevant professional development
- to provide training for key staff in the areas of first aid, fire and evacuations
- to provide all staff with knowledge of evacuation procedures
- to provide assistance or professional counselling to staff or students after a critical incident has occurred.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures should be adhered to following a critical incident or major injury, and should be followed in conjunction with the 'Guidelines for responding to a critical incident' in Appendix A.

During school hours on school grounds

- administer first aid
- contact emergency services
- staff member to stay with student until family member takes over responsibility
- reassure and comfort students and staff involved
- inform Principal or the Deputy Principal
- Deputy Principal to inform parents/family and contact CESA School Performance Leader
- if there is an injured student or staff member, a staff member is to accompany the injured person to hospital
- students provided with information and offered support/counselling
- convene College Leadership Team meeting
- Principal communicates facts to staff
- staff advised of information to be communicated to students
- staff offered support – Counsellor / Access Services
- information communicated to parent community

During school hours away from school grounds, e.g. day excursions, sport

- administer first aid
- contact emergency services
- students provided with information and offered support/counselling
- reassure and comfort students and staff involved
- inform the Principal or Deputy Principal
- Deputy Principal to inform parents/family and contact CESA School Performance Leader
- staff member to stay with student until family member takes over responsibility
- convene College Leadership Team meeting
- Principal communicates facts to staff
- staff advised of information to be communicated to students
- staff offered support – Counsellor / Access Services
- information communicated to parent community

Before or after school hours or during school holidays

- staff member who learns of a major injury/death of a student or staff member is to contact Principal or Deputy Principal
- Principal or Deputy Principal to convene the College Leadership Team as soon as possible
- Principal communicates facts to staff and contact CESA School Performance Leader
- visit the family and offer support
- inform College community (if appropriate)
- counselling offered at College

Overnight camp/trip

- administer first aid
- contact emergency services
- staff advised of information to be communicated to students
- reassure and comfort students and staff involved
- inform the Principal or Deputy Principal
- where appropriate, Police must be informed as soon as possible
- Deputy Principal to inform parents/family and contact CESA School Performance Leader
- staff member to stay with student until family member takes over responsibility
- convene College Leadership Team meeting
- Principal communicates facts to staff
- staff offered support – Counsellor / Access Services
- information communicated to parent community
- students provided with information and offered support/counselling

LIAISON AND COMMUNICATION

Media

The Principal (or nominee) is the official spokesperson for the College. The Principal may obtain assistance from the CEO School Performance Leader to liaise and work with the media.

Enquiries from parents

The EA to Principal and office staff will refer telephone and other enquiries to the Principal, or in the absence of the Principal, a member of the College Leadership Team.

FOLLOW UP

- Follow up with College Leadership Team, as appropriate
- Convene a follow up staff meeting
- One month later - request staff feedback and review of procedures

MONITOR AND REVIEW

This document will be reviewed within three years of the date of issue. Changes in legislation or Catholic Church Policy may necessitate earlier review and subsequent amendment or re-issue.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Bushfire Response Plan

Duty of Care Policy

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/suicide-response>

APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT



The following are elements to consider, where appropriate:

FIRST 24 HOURS

Find out the facts	Collect information about the incident from reliable sources as soon as possible. Identify staff/students or parents at risk.
Establish a management plan	Contact Catholic Education Office and relevant personnel i.e. one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEO School Performance Leader• Director or Assistant Directors• ACCESS Convene a meeting immediately with available members of the College Leadership Team. College Counsellor is notified for assistance. Determine if additional support from outside support agencies is needed.
Inform all staff	Representative/s of the College Leadership Team provide staff with the facts of the incident. Outline the proposed management plan. Suggest sources of personal support for staff.
Inform all students	Outline the facts of the incident at the earliest opportunity, as appropriate. Use of internal PA system where appropriate.
Set up a recovery room in the school	Provide, where possible, tea/coffee, comfortable chairs and an appropriate support person. Allow distressed students and staff access to this room for several days after the incident. This could be coordinated by a member of the College Leadership Team and a College Counsellor representative.
Liaise with the media	Nominate a spokesperson (Principal or nominee). Minimise media contact with staff and students. Provide the media with clear guidelines for making any contact with staff or students.
Inform and update parents and students	Provide parents and students with relevant facts and possible links to support mechanisms.

48 – 72 HOURS AFTER THE INCIDENT

Restore school to regular routine	Provide structure to help students and staff return to normal functioning.
Allow time for debrief	Encourage staff to allow students (especially those more directly involved) to talk about the incident and about their reactions. This is an important part of the recovery process but should not be forced upon students.
Maintain communication	Encourage two-way communication between parents and College and ensure that parents are kept informed of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the College’s management plan • possible reactions of students • sources of help for families.

DURING THE FIRST MONTH

Arrange a memorial service at school within a week of the incident if students/staff have died in the incident	Encourage close friends and others directly involved in the incident to participate and be involved in the planning.
Co-ordinate a meeting of key staff in the school who have been affected by the accident	Involve College Leadership Team, College Counsellor and Support Services i.e. ACCESS. Encourage staff to express and share their feelings and concerns.
Convene a meeting of parents of students involved in the incident after three or four weeks (where a number of students were directly involved)	Involve counselling professionals to encourage parents to express and share their feelings and concerns about their children’s welfare and to help them understand their reactions.

IN THE LONGER TERM

Monitor staff for signs of stress	Encourage stressed staff to seek professional help. Endeavour to provide a supportive environment. Allow and provide for increased demand on teacher relief time.
Monitor other members of the school community for signs of stress	Everyone in the school community will be affected by the crisis situation at some level. Past losses may be triggered by the incident and current life issues will be felt strongly. Encourage those affected to seek support and/or professional help.
Be alert for and sensitive to the disturbing influences or anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings	Specific support for those affected may be needed again at these times. Provide extra staff and services if necessary.
Review	Review strategy and outcomes after each incident.

Adapted from: “Traumatic Incidents Affecting Schools”, K. Bidwell and T. McManus, Queensland 1990