

Overseas Student Critical Incident Policy and Procedure (Standard 6)

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Statement of Context and Purpose

Seymour College recognises the duty of care owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential.

Procedure

Critical Incident

A critical incident is a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia) which causes extreme stress, fear or injury. This may include but is not limited to:

- Serious injury, illness or death of a student or staff member
- Students or staff lost or injured on an excursion
- A missing student
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Physical assault
- Student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence
- Natural disaster e.g. earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm or extremes of temperature
- Fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
- Social issues e.g. drug use, sexual assault

Critical Incident Committee

Seymour College has an Incident Response Team to assist the Principal in the prevention and management of critical incidents at the school, or off campus in the case of an overseas student for whom the school has undertaken care responsibilities.

- The critical incident team leader is appointed from within the School's Senior Executive Team and is likely to be the Principal, Deputy Principal or Executive Director of Corporate Services.
- The Critical Incident Response Team and those responsible for other management responsibilities within the College which may vary accordingly to individual critical incidents includes:
 - Senior Leadership Team
- The responsibilities of the team include:
 - risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action analysis of requirements to address these hazards
 - 24 hour access to contact details for all students and their families and emergency contacts provided by student's family (for schools with overseas students this will also include agents, homestay families, carers, consular staff, embassies and interpreting services if necessary)
 - 24 hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident e.g. school counsellor, Heads of School, legal services, school security
 - development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified including arranging emergency or alternative accommodation arrangements if necessary
 - dissemination of planned procedures
 - organisation of practice drills
 - regular review of the critical incident plan
 - assisting with implementation of the critical incident plan
 - arranging appropriate staff development budget allocation for emergencies

Critical Incident Plans

All critical incident plans assign responsibilities among relevant staff members; cover all the actions to be taken and timelines for doing so.

Immediate Action (within 24 hours)

- Identify the nature of the critical incident
- Notification of the critical incident response team
- Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy including arranging emergency or alternative accommodation arrangements if necessary
- Assignment of duties and resources to school staff
- Seeking advice and help from any necessary emergency services/hospital/medical services
- Dissemination of information to parents and family members
- Completion of a critical incident report
- Media response if required (see below)
- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

Additional Action (48 - 72 hours)

- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing)
- Provide staff and students with factual information as appropriate
- Restore normal functioning and school delivery

Follow-up - monitoring, support, evaluation

- Identification of any other people who may be affected by critical incident and access support services for affected community members
- Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties
- Provision of accurate information to staff and students where appropriate
- Evaluation of critical incident management
- Be aware of any possible longer term disturbances e.g. inquests, legal proceedings

Resources

The nature of critical incidents is such that resources cannot always be provided in anticipation of events. The critical incident response team uses its discretion to provide adequate resources – both physical and personnel – to meet the needs of specific situations. Staff will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

Managing the Media

- Manage access of the media to the scene, and to staff, students and relatives
- The Principal liaises with the board of Directors
- Determine what the official school response will be
- All facts should be checked before speaking to the media
- If accurate information is unavailable or the issue is of a sensitive nature, explain that questions cannot be answered at this time
- Avoid implying blame or fault for any part of the incident as this can have significant legal implications
- The Principal may delegate media liaison to another member of staff

Evaluation and review of management plan

After every critical incident, a meeting of the critical incident response team will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required. If appropriate this process will incorporate feedback from all staff, students and local community representatives.

Example of a critical incident plan - injury to overseas student

Immediate Action (within 24 hours)

- Identify the nature of the critical incident
- The person, who is initially notified of the incident, be that the Principal, Director of Boarding or Director of International Programs, should get as much information as possible regarding the nature of the critical incident.
 - Where did the injury occur? On campus or off?
 - How severe is the nature of the injury?
 - Where is the student now?
 - Is the student in hospital?
 - Has an ambulance been called?
 - Is an interpreter required?

- The information should be documented for further reference.
- Notification of the School Principal if not already aware
- The person who is initially notified of the incident should notify the critical incident response team immediately.
- Assignment of duties to school staff
 - The critical incident team leader will identify the staff member responsible for any immediate action
 - The incident will then be referred to the identified staff member.
 - The responsible staff member should keep in close contact with the critical incident team leader and any other staff members as required.
- Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy
 - If the student is on campus
 - Ensure appropriate intervention to minimise additional injury
 - Provide first aid where necessary
 - Ascertain seriousness of injury
 - Call ambulance if required
 - If ambulance is required, accompany student to hospital
 - Ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff
 - If ambulance is not required accompany student to relevant medical service
e.g. doctor
 - If the student is off-campus
 - If situation appears serious, call an ambulance and either meet the ambulance at the student's location or at the hospital
 - Otherwise go to location of student
 - Provide first aid where necessary
 - Ascertain seriousness of injury
 - Call ambulance if required
 - If ambulance is required, accompany student to hospital
 - Ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff
 - If ambulance is not required accompany student to relevant medical service
e.g. doctor
 - If the student has already been taken to hospital
 - Go to hospital
 - Ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff
- Dissemination of information to parents and family members (may require an interpreter)

- When there are a number of people to contact such as when a student is in a homestay, the school should attempt to simultaneously contact all parties.
- Contact the parents/legal guardian of the student
- Contact the carer of the student e.g. they may be living with a relative
- Contact the emergency contacts provided by the student's family
- Contact Australian Homestay Network
- Completion of a critical incident report [see critical incident report]
- Media response if required, Principal to liaise with our Director of Marketing and Communications
- Inform critical incident response team leader of any relevant factual information to be conveyed to the media liaison.
- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved
- If the student is seriously injured or requires hospitalisation, the school should enlist aid of overseas consular staff to assist the family if they are travelling to Australia, with interpreting services to aid in communication with the relevant medical services and with counselling services if required.
- The school should assess whether other staff and students have been affected by the incident and provide support and counselling as required.
- The school should also contact Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) and inform them of the incident.

Additional Action (48 - 72 hours)

- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing)
- Provide staff and students with factual information as appropriate
 - Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be appropriate for the Principal to address the school and inform them of the facts of the incident and the condition of the student concerned.
- Restore normal functioning and school delivery
 - Where the incident occurred on school premises, there will be other procedures to follow in relation to any possible safety issues and the school's legal obligations. The critical incident response team should identify the appropriate staff member to follow up these issues

Follow-up - monitoring, support, evaluation

- Identification of any other people who may be affected by critical incident and access of support services for affected community members
 - The effects of traumatic incidents can be delayed in some people; the school needs to be aware of any emerging need for support and/or counselling.
- Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties
- If the student is in hospital for some time, the school needs to maintain contact with the student and their family.
 - Support and assistance for the student and family
 - Depending on the condition of the student, the school could provide school work for the student to enable them to remain in touch with school activities
 - Discuss with the family any required changes to the enrolment of the student
 - e.g. suspension or cancellation of enrolment and make any changes required on Synergetic
- Provision of accurate information to staff and students where appropriate
 - Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be appropriate for the Principal to address the school and inform them of the facts of the incident and the condition of the student concerned.
- Evaluation of critical incident management
 - The critical incident response team should evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required
- Be aware of any possible longer-term effects on the school and student well-being e.g. inquests.

Reference Points / Background Papers

Consequences of a Breach of this Policy

Seymour College emphasises the need for all employees to comply with the requirements of this policy. Any employees found to be in breach of the requirements of this policy may be subject to further training and/or disciplinary action.

Implications for Practice

At Principal Level

To properly implement this policy, the Principal must ensure:

- that this policy is endorsed every three years;
- that copies of this policy are made available to employees, for example on the Seymour College intranet;
- that this policy is incorporated into the Principal's record of current policies;
- that this policy is incorporated into Seymour College's induction program, to ensure that all employees are aware of the policy, have read and understood the policy, and acknowledge their commitment to comply with the policy;
- that periodic training and refresher sessions are administered to all employees in relation to this policy.

At Other Levels

To properly implement this policy, all Seymour College's employees must ensure:

- that they will abide by this policy and assist Seymour College in the implementation of this policy;
- that they notify Seymour College if an employee becomes aware of a breach of this policy.