

Critical Incident Policy

1. Introduction

Djerriwarrh Community College (the College) is an independent specialist senior secondary school based in Melton. We deliver the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) at Foundation, Intermediate and Senior levels for students aged 15-19 years. We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. The College is committed to supporting students to reach their individual personal, social and educational potential.

Djerriwarrh Community College (the College) is committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for all staff, students, volunteers, visitor and participants of programs and services. The College recognises that despite careful planning, organisational policies and procedures in place, it is possible that a critical incident may take place requiring critical incident or emergency management procedures to be implemented.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to communicate how the College will manage critical incidents.

3. Scope

This policy applies to College staff, students, parents/guardians, volunteers, contractors and visitors to the College.

4. Definitions

Critical incident	A critical incident may be described as any event that causes normally stable and healthy people to experience strong emotional or psychological distress, or threatens the safety of students and staff.
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5. Responsibilities

The Principal has the responsibility to appoint an Emergency Management Team to manage critical incidents.

6. Communication

This Health and Safety Policy is available in the College staff drive and Compass.

7. Policy

A critical incident may be described as any event that causes normally stable and healthy people to experience strong emotional or psychological distress, or threatens the safety of students and staff. It is an event which may be regarded as outside the normal range of experience of the people affected and has the potential to interfere with their ability to cope during the incident or at a later time.

A critical incident is often sudden, unexpected and may take many forms, including but not limited to:

- any fatality, near fatality or incident likely to seriously affect the student or staff member
- injury, illness or death of a student, staff or other school community member
- serious traffic accidents
- murder or suicide involving students/staff and their family member
- disappearance
- bomb threat
- serious threat or act of violence
- sexual assault
- hold-up or attempted robbery
- damage to property; natural disaster
- fire or hazardous material incident (gas, chemical, fuel)
- threat of infectious disease such as the development of a Pandemic
- major theft
- student/staff arrest
- any event with major impact on Djerriwarrh and its staff, volunteers or programs and services participants

It is very common and normal for people to experience a range of reactions to critical incidents which may be cognitive, physical, behavioural or emotional in nature. They need reassurance that these reactions are a normal part of dealing with shock, loss and grief.

7.1 Objective

The aim and purpose of this policy and accompanying procedure is to:

- recognise and understand the potential for such incidents
- provide key information as well as a practical guide for all staff in the event of a critical incident
- to ensure timely and effective responses are taken to address immediate staff, students, volunteers and participant safety and well-being
- to ensure due diligence and responsibilities to staff, students, volunteers and participants
- ensure compulsory reporting of incident occurs
- support high quality service provision at Djerriwarrh
- support organisational consistency.

When responding to a critical incident religious, political and cultural issues may require specific cross-cultural communication and sensitivity.

There are a number of vital phases in dealing with critical incidents – preparation and planning, response, management, recovery, review and evaluation.

7.2 Emergency Response Team

The Emergency Response Team is formed to effectively manage critical incidents. This team should communicate simply, take control and give clear and practical directions. The team should connect all stakeholders, reduce anxiety, restore calm and offer assistance.

Emergency Response Team membership will include the Principal, Lead Teacher and the Health and Safety (HS) Representative (College Administration Officer). However, the composition of the team activated following any critical incident will vary according to the nature and location of the incident as referred to in the Critical Incident Procedure.

The Principal will be responsible for appointing the Emergency Response Team. To avoid phone congestion, clear lines of communication are essential. Each member of the team will be issued with a list of the team members and their mobile contact numbers.

8. Associated documents and legislation

Associated policies and procedures	Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy Duty of Care Policy Child Safety Policy
Other associated documents Internal	Health and Safety Procedure Incident/Accident Report Form Safety Inspection Checklist Hazard Report Form Storing and Handling Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances
Relevant legislation	<i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i> <i>Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i> <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)</i> <i>Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)</i>
Other associated documents External	VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration

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