



SOPHIA
MUNDI

The Inner City Steiner School P-12

Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy

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1. Overview

1.1 Policy

In line with the aims of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Sophia Mundi aims to provide a safe and secure environment for children, staff and volunteers who work or participate in schools.

The objective of this policy is to minimise, during an emergency or critical incident, trauma and distress to students and staff and damage to property and to ensure the teaching and learning program is maintained or resumed as soon as possible.

The principles underpinning this policy are:

- Leadership - the Principal retains responsibility for emergency and critical incident management
- Safety – the safety and well-being of individuals is paramount
- Graduated Response - the level of response can be at the school, local, regional or system level depending upon the level of support required
- Support – may be from within or external to the school provided it is co-ordinated, timely and appropriate
- Communication – to be based upon verified information and given in a timely manner

The policy addresses the phases of emergency management, which are:

- Prevention of;
- Preparedness for;
- Response to;
- Recovery from; and
- Review of emergencies and critical incidents.

All school employees should be mindful of their responsibility for confidentiality of information related to emergencies and critical incidents.

Emergencies and critical incidents can vary significantly in duration. Some will be discrete and short in duration others may be protracted and last for days or weeks.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all Sophia Mundi Steiner School employees.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 *Comprehensive/All Hazards Approach*

The development of emergency arrangements related to prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (PPRR). The PRRR are not necessarily sequential phases.

1.3.2 *Command and Control*

The overall direction of emergency management activities, including the coordination of human and physical resources.

1.3.3 Critical Incident

An incident in which there is a high likelihood of traumatic effects. A critical incident evokes unusual or unexpectedly strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with the ability of the individual, group or system to function either at the time or later. For example, an on-site accident causing death or serious injury, student or staff suicide, major vandalism, sexual assault at school, students lost or injured on an excursion or intruders on a school site who cause harm to people or damage property.

1.3.4 Emergency

An event, actual or imminent, which:

- Occurs on or off site;
- Endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment; and
- Requires a significant and coordinated response.

For example, bushfires, other fire or bomb threats, hazardous materials spillage, prolonged loss of a utility (for example, water or power), cyclone and floods.

1.3.5 Emergency Control Post (ECP)

The specific, safe location at which the Incident Controller is positioned and from which the response to the emergency or critical incident will be coordinated.

The Emergency Control Post is usually the administration area. An alternative post should also be identified in case the original area is not suitable.

1.3.6 Evacuation

The movement of people from a threatened area to a place of safety.

1.3.7 Hazard Management Agency (HMA)

A public authority which, because of legislative responsibility or specialised knowledge, expertise and resources, is responsible for emergency management.

Such organisations are either designated by legislation or detailed in State-level emergency management plans, for example, Victoria Police, Metropolitan Fire Brigade and the Department of Human Services.

1.3.8 Incident Alerts

The Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) sends incident alerts on a regular basis to Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) who forwards these alerts to the school via email. Incident alerts relate to unwanted activities, critical incidents or emergency situations that have occurred in the vicinity of Victorian schools.

1.3.9 Incident Controller

The person responsible for the overall management of an emergency or critical incident. This is normally the Principal unless they are incapacitated, unavailable, or have delegated the role. For some incidents, the Incident Controller will be subordinate to another agency, which has legislative authority for management of that hazard.

1.3.10 Intruder

A person entering school premises without permission and who does not have good cause to be on the premises.

1.3.11 Lockdown

Isolating students, staff and visitors from a perceived threat of physical harm at the school site by confining people to classrooms or other school buildings.

1.3.12 Operational Debriefing

A review of the management of an emergency or critical incident in order to affirm and reinforce what worked well, and refine and improve future processes and practice.

1.3.13 Prevention

Measures to eliminate or reduce incidence or severity of emergencies and critical incidents.

1.3.14 Preparedness

Measures to ensure that, should an emergency or critical incident occur, resources and services are capable of coping with the effects. Measures can include planning, staff training, and acquisition of specific safety equipment, infrastructure and maintaining the safety of the school grounds.

1.3.15 Response

Actions taken immediately prior to, during and immediately after an emergency or critical incident to ensure that its effects are minimised.

1.3.16 Recovery

Measures which support emergency or critical incident - affected individuals and school communities in reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, economic, environmental and physical wellbeing.

1.3.17 School Site Plan

The plan of the school site showing the general layout of buildings. The site plan may include Emergency Exits/Evacuation Escape Routes, location of any fire fighting equipment and the direction/location of the Evacuation Assembly Area. It may also identify the location of Fire Hydrant/s, gas storage and control valves, and the electrical system Main Isolating Switch.

1.4 Relevant Legislation or Authority

- *Australian Standard 1851: Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems and Equipment 1985*
- *Australian Standard 3745: Emergency Control Organisation and Procedures for Buildings, Structures and Workplaces 2002*
- *Australian Standard 4360: Risk Management 2008*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Education Training and Reform Act 2006*
- *Education Training and Reform Regulations 2007*
- *Emergency Management Act 1986*
- *Emergency Management Regulations 2006*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Safety & Health Regulations 2007*

2. Procedures

2.1 Prevention

To eliminate or reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of emergencies or critical incidents, the Principal will ensure risks associated with both on-site and off-site activities are addressed.

Risks will be addressed by:

- Identification of on-site and off-site situations that have the potential to become emergencies or critical incidents;
- Assessing the level of risk associated with each situation; and
- Implementation of appropriate risk mitigation strategies.

Emergencies or critical incidents can include natural disasters (for example, floods) or human disasters (for example, arson). Where necessary, the Principal shall consult with internal and external expertise (for example, local government or Victoria Police) as part of the risk assessment process.

2.2 Preparedness

2.2.1 *Emergency Management Plan*

The School will develop and maintain an *Emergency Management Plan*.

2.2.2 *Communication, Training, Testing and Review*

The Principal shall ensure the *Emergency Management Plan* of the school site is:

- communicated to all staff;
- readily accessible in the event of an emergency or critical incident;
- supported by staff who are trained for their roles in managing emergency situations;
- tested and reviewed at least annually;
- developed in consideration of the size of, and resources available to the school and services provided by other agencies such as Victoria Police, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade or the Department of Human Services.

2.3 Response

The Incident Controller will respond to a particular emergency or critical incident in accordance with the actions outlined in the *Emergency Management Plan*.

As well as tailoring the nature and level of response to the emergency or critical incident, the Incident Controller must also modify the responses as the situation changes and must recognise the varying needs of students and staff.

All notifiable incidents, defined as events, actual or imminent, occurring on or off site and involving anti-social or criminal behaviour, accident, notifiable disease, death or natural disaster, which endanger, or threaten to endanger, life, health and wellbeing, property or the school environment, shall be immediately reported to:

- The Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD);
- The School Board;

The Incident Controller shall liaise with the Principal in the preparation of media and parental communications.

2.3.1 Evacuation

The Incident Controller shall liaise with Hazard Management Agencies who may recommend or mandate an evacuation from the school site or a stay on the school site. Any evacuation must be immediately reported to the Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD);

2.3.2 Closure

Hazard Management Agencies, based on weather forecasts, may recommend the school not open for the day. The Principal should consult with the School Board prior to taking any such action.

The School shall notify Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) immediately after any order is made to temporarily close all or a particular part of the school's premises.

2.3.3 Lockdown

The Incident controller may initiate lockdown based on an assessment of risks to students through advice from other agencies (for example, Victoria Police or the Metropolitan Fire Brigade), or from other information available. In the event of lockdown, the school shall:

- Immediately report any lockdown to the Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD);
- Liaise with the School Board for media related matters and when preparing communications for parents following a lockdown; and

2.4 Recovery

Following an emergency or critical incident, the Principal shall:

- Take appropriate actions to return the site infrastructure to normal;
- Develop and implement medium to long-term strategies to identify and manage the ongoing social and psychological needs, and (in the case of students) the educational needs, of those affected;
- Liaise with the School Board for media related matters and when preparing communications for parents.

2.5 Review of Processes

The Principal shall:

- Organise an operational debriefing, as appropriate, to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the *Emergency Management Plan*; and
- Maintain documentation associated with management of the emergency or critical incident.

Appendix A The Comprehensive/All Hazards Approach to Emergency Management

