



SOPHIA
MUNDI

Steiner Education and IB World School

Emergency & Critical Incident Plan

Management Procedures

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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 the school.

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

2. Purpose and Background

The purpose of this Emergency Management Plan (EMP) is to provide details of how SMSS will prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

The policy addresses the phases of Emergency and Critical Incident Management, which are:

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

3. Scope

This EMP applies to all staff, students (including incoming and outgoing Exchange Students), visitors, contractors and volunteers at SMSS. All school employees should be mindful of their responsibility for confidentiality of information related to emergencies and critical incidents.

4. Definitions

4.1 Comprehensive/All Hazards Approach

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

4.2 Command and Control

The overall direction of Emergency and Critical Incident Management activities, including the coordination of human and physical resources.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 Evacuation

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

4.7 Hazard Management Agency (HMA)

A public authority which, because of legislative responsibility or specialised knowledge, expertise and resources, is responsible for Emergency and Critical Incident Management.

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

4.8 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.

4.9 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.

4.10 Intruder

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

4.11 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.

4.12 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.

4.13 Prevention

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

4.14 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.

4.15 Response

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

4.16 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.

4.17 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.

5. Types of Critical Incidents that may affect a school community i:

- a death in the school community - following illness, by accident, by suicide, or as a result of criminal behaviour;
- serious injury to a member of the school community;
- students or staff lost or injured on an excursion;
- violent assault of a member of the school community;
- violent events in the community;
- witnessing a serious accident or an act of violence;
- student facing arrest or criminal charges
- natural disasters;
- terrorism, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard;
- use of violent weapons in the school;
- outsiders coming into school and being aggressive towards students and/or staff;
- disappearance of a student or staff member;
- social abuse of students or teachers;
- media coverage of issues in a way which is distressing to the school community
- the breakdown of host family arrangements (for incoming and outgoing exchange students)

6. Critical Incident Management Plan

6.1 Information Gathering

The Principal's Office should be notified immediately after a Critical Incident has occurred. The Principal (or his designated representative) will then confirm the incident and collect information about the incident from reliable sources as a matter of urgency.

Refer to Attachment C: Initial Critical Incident Record

6.2 Formation of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)

- The Principal (or the Principal's delegate) will convene a meeting of the Critical Incident Response Team to plan an appropriate response to the incident. The CIRT members are:
- Principal (Co-ordinator)
- Head/s of School

- Welfare Team
- Administration Manager Human
- Business Manager
- Class and Specialist teachers
- Student Exchange Co-ordinator

6.3 Tasks of the Critical Incident Response Team

Issues to be addressed in the initial meeting:

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact the family or police to ascertain what information may be released within the school NOTE: In the case of Exchange Students, and interpreter may be required – maintain open lines of contact with the Host Family and the International Family (Appendix A)	Principal & Exchange Co-ordinator
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a factual written statement, without graphic detail, for use as a reference by teachers when discussing the incident with students	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Determine whether to tell students about the incident at a whole school assembly, by year level or individual classes depending upon the nature of the incident	Principal & Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with teachers who feel uncomfortable raising the event with students and arrange for support from another teacher or a member of the recovery team	CIRT
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify staff who may be too distraught to take classes and arrange replacements from within the school, from neighbouring schools or casual teachers	CIRT
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform students soon after briefing staff	Welfare/Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask teachers to mark a roll to identify who has been informed and who has not.	CIRT

Having verified information:

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide teachers and ancillary staff with a brief outline of the incident	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a brief factual outline to others within the school community on a need-to-know basis	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform staff as soon as possible about a serious emergency involving death or injury which occurs after hours, on the weekend or during school holidays	Principal & Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform staff as soon as possible about a serious emergency involving death or injury which occurs after hours, on the weekend or during school holidays	Principal/Welfare

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> If relevant, inform staff that the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team will be managing the emotional response to the trauma and will be providing defusing, debriefing or one-to-one support to affected students and staff.	Principal/Welfare

6.4 Informing the School Community

Staff

Refer to Attachment D - 'Phone Tree' Staff addresses and telephone contact numbers are available in Edumate Staff will probably require a special meeting to review information handouts, ask questions of concern, and collaborate on any proposed alterations to class work/curriculum. The emergency staff meeting presents an opportunity to provide known facts, dispel rumours and to establish a common reference base. It also provides an opportunity to outline the preliminary recovery management arrangements

Before the start of the school day:

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Verify and restate factual information about the incident, so that staff can understand what has happened and the information will sink in	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Talk with staff about the reactions they may experience	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Outline recovery management arrangements	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform staff about procedures for dealing with the media	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform staff about procedures for dealing with the media	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss procedures to be followed by staff during the day	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss guidelines for informing their students and ways of answering questions from students	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide teachers with a written summary or use as a reference when discussing the incident with students	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss guidelines for informing their students and ways of answering questions from students	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss guidelines for informing their students and ways of answering questions from students	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide teachers with a written summary or use as a reference when discussing the incident with students	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that staff have time to have their questions answered and to talk about the incident amongst themselves.	Welfare

At the end of the school day:

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> If relevant, engage CISM Team to run defusing or debriefing sessions which will allow staff to share the trauma of the day	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> If relevant, engage CISM Team to run defusing or debriefing sessions which will allow staff to share the trauma of the day	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify students at risk who will require further follow-up by CISM Team	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide opportunity for Critical Incident Response Team to debrief and review the day	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide opportunity for Critical Incident Response Team to debrief and review the day	Welfare
<input type="checkbox"/> Allow CIRT to debrief and gain relevant support	Principal

allow CIRT to debrief and gain relevant support

Close friends and their families

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Notify close friends and their families, including girlfriends or boyfriends, prior to making an announcement to other students. NOTE: In the case of Exchange Students, and interpreter may be required – maintain open lines of contact with the Host Family and the International Family (Appendix A)	Welfare & Exchange Co-ordinator
<input type="checkbox"/> Take students aside when they arrive at school and inform them privately	Welfare & Exchange Co-ordinator
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider contacting the students or their families at home prior to the start of the school day	Welfare & Exchange Co-ordinator
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that individual attention is given to intimate friends who are likely to have special needs beyond those of other students	Welfare & Exchange Co-ordinator

Students who need to know

To ensure clarity and consistency of information, assemble students and outline the facts of the incident at the earliest opportunity. Whether the assembly is for the whole school, a whole year level, or class groupings, will depend on the nature and scope of the incident.

The classroom setting enables teachers to monitor individual reactions within a supportive environment. Death, injury or other significant emergencies are usually more effectively managed in a classroom setting rather than at a general assembly or over the public address system. Teachers should establish a climate of open communication to help students work through issues such as unresolved conflicts which traumatic events may cause to resurface.

In the classroom staff aim to:

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a factual account of the incident at the beginning of the first class, in a way that ensures that everyone hears the same information	Teachers
<input type="checkbox"/> Limit speculation and rumour by providing factual and relevant information about the incident	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform students about the location of counselling services and recovery rooms inform students about arrangements for memorial services, funerals and appropriate ways to express condolences	Principal/Welfare/Exchange Co-ordinator

Outline arrangements for the day.

Parents and the school community

Parents, School Board members, other members of the school community and neighbouring schools will want to know what has happened and to assist if possible. It is important that they are given factual information and that the information has been approved for public release.

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the release of information with those directly affected and to the police	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Send a letter to parents about the incident (refer to Appendix G: Sample Letters)	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Advise parents about the recovery arrangements which have been put in place	Welfare

- advise parents about the recovery arrangements which have been put in place
- provide copies of the Common Reactions to Trauma (refer to Attachment A: Common reactions to traumatic events)
- explain to parents that adolescents are likely to seek comfort from their peer group rather than their parents and adults
- provide a recovery room for parents and run parent briefings as required.

6.5 Managing telephone calls

Ensure that personnel responsible for taking incoming telephone calls are thoroughly briefed on:

information to be given,

to whom enquiries should be directed. Notes should be kept of every incoming call: time, caller, recipient, details (if applicable). In particular, special note should be taken of calls from parents, and from the media

6.6 Security

There may be the need to arrange for Security officers to monitor/restrict access to school grounds. In the interim, staff may be required to supervise the gates and ensure adequate security. This role may be undertaken by the

relevant authority, e.g. police or fire brigade, if they are involved. A map of the school is to be available, to enable speedy allocation of response areas.

6.7 Setting up a recovery room

- Assembly Points/Recovery Rooms need to be set up and staffed:
- to allow communication of relevant information, and provide space for upset students to take time out and/or to receive appropriate assistance.
- designate a room where people know they can quickly locate support staff
- ask for a staff volunteer, preferably with first aid knowledge, to supervise the recovery room and to support those who are very distressed
- monitor students for shock reactions and have someone available to provide first aid if required
- set up a student recovery room well away from classrooms, or several rooms during a large incident, close to toilets and with comfortable chairs and tissues
- provide a separate recovery room for staff
- allow distressed staff members and students reasonable access to the room
- ensure that several adults are available to monitor and assist students during a large or complex incident where a large number of students may be affected
- set aside a room for parents with tea and coffee making facilities, which is separate from students to avoid having them congregate around the school
- encourage students to gather in smaller friendship groups rather than larger groups
- keep a list of students who are attending the recovery room
- give students a task to undertake such as making a card or writing a letter to the injured person as soon as practicable
- contact parents of students who remain in the recovery room and alert them about possible concerns.

6.8 Liaising With the Media

From time to time the impact of some mass media reporting following a major critical incident or disaster has overwhelmed individuals and communities, generating enormous amounts of resentment and stress. In particular, the following have caused distress: the reporting of inaccurate information about the event; seemingly insensitive reporting of events, including distressing film footage, interviews or photographs; the harassment of individuals and families; an ongoing recurrence of reports and images from the disaster on news reports over a number of years; and the over-exposure of views of individuals which do not reflect those of the community concerned. The conflicting time scales of the media, emergency services, and school communities can also create tensions for those waiting for news.

Media coverage, however, can provide accurate and helpful information about a critical incident and about sources of help. It can also evoke a necessary sense of value and significance to the event.

It can describe the process of grieving and give examples of how the community can help. It may also facilitate the grieving of the public at large through publicising and broadcasting memorial services. It may help raise funds. It can help some wrongs to be righted. Managing media interest at critical incidents has emerged as a major issue. Thought needs to be given in planning for critical incidents to optimise the media's advantages and to restrain its excesses.

Ensure that adequate information, including facts and relevant responses are supplied to the Media. Release only facts - do not release unconfirmed information. Parental permission may need to be sought to release some information.

The Media should be informed by the Principal in consultation with Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Media contact with staff and students should be minimised - the Principal should provide the Media with clear guidelines for making any contact with staff or students. Where media interest is high, the school may choose to take the lead in media management by:

- calling a media conference - at a time and place suited to the school,
- arranging for relevant individuals to be available to the media for interview, eg students, staff, parents
- The Principal should prepare the Media Release. It may be advisable for this to be reviewed by a legal representative.

Refer to Attachment I: Preparing a media release

A suitable room should be designated to hold Press Conferences.

All staff, especially the Receptionist, need to be briefed as how to handle questions from the media and how to deal with phone calls.

Experience relates that the Press/Media go to great lengths to obtain a story out of a newsworthy event. Authorities recommend that:

- (a) regarding the media as an ally, and
- (b) providing accurate, up-to-date statements, increase the likelihood that accurate reporting of the event will occur.

6.9 Restore Normal Routine

Medium-term recovery management requires school personnel charged with the responsibility of managing emergencies to restore school routine. At the same time, provision should be made for the ongoing support of members of the school community.

It is at this time that funerals and associated rituals take place and when people are often most emotionally vulnerable, yet wanting to return to normal.

Refer to Attachment XX: Funerals

Parents are likely to discuss reactions their children are experiencing such as physical and emotional tiredness and degrees of sleep disturbance. Parents may need an opportunity to discuss their own tiredness and the need to protect their children after a life-threatening event. Children may indicate a desire for the return of routine and normality. Most children grieve intermittently rather than continuously. There may be times when children seem to have forgotten the death or the emergency. Flashbacks can be triggered for months and years.

Tasks during the first two weeks:

- provide information and encourage support networks among parents
- restore regular school routine
- allow opportunities to talk about the incident and reactions
- monitor and support reactions within the school community
- reiterate information about reactions as required
- use specialist support staff to assist staff, students and parents
- provide information updates about the condition of anyone in hospital
- prepare public expressions of farewell such as obituaries and wreaths when a death has occurred
- be aware of cultural and religious differences in response to death and what the funeral may entail
- keep parents informed, parents may wish to meet together
- monitor those in care giving roles
- consider referring students with persistent behaviour changes to a counsellor or specialist agency
- liaise with community support agencies such as churches, funeral directors, community health centres, police in schools units
- liaise with neighbouring schools
- keep a scrapbook of eulogies and sympathy cards in a central location for members of the school community to read
- monitor media coverage of the event to identify areas which may be causing difficulty or distress for students and staff

- refer staff who are concerned with issues of legal liability to professional associations
- suggest that staff make detailed notes for their personal reference about the event and their part in it.
- suggest that staff obtain copies of any official statements they make
- use replacement class room teachers to enable staff to attend the funeral.

6.10 Conduct an Operational Debrief

After routine is restored the CIRT members should be reconvened by the Principal in order to review the School's response to the incident. This process is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the team's response and to highlight areas for further development.

6.11 Ongoing Support and Monitoring

Support and monitoring is an ongoing process that begins after the incident occurs and can continue for months or years.

Early tasks:

- provide information and encourage support networks among parents
- restore regular school routine
- allow opportunities to talk about the incident and reactions
- monitor and support reactions within the school community
- reiterate information about reactions as required
- use specialist support staff to assist staff, students and parents
- provide information updates about the condition of anyone in hospital
- prepare public expressions of farewell such as obituaries and wreaths when a death has occurred
- be aware of cultural and religious differences in response to death and what the funeral may entail
- keep parents informed, parents may wish to meet together
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- consider referring students with persistent behaviour changes to a counsellor or specialist agency
- liaise with community support agencies such as churches, funeral directors, community health centres, police in schools units
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- keep a scrapbook of eulogies and sympathy cards in a central location for members of the school community to read
- monitor media coverage of the event to identify areas which may be causing difficulty or distress for students and staff
- refer staff who are concerned with issues of legal liability to professional associations
- suggest that staff make detailed notes for their personal reference about the event and their part in it.
- suggest that staff obtain copies of any official statements they make
- use replacement class room teachers to enable staff to attend the funeral

Long-term recovery management requires a continuing awareness of individual needs and reactions and a process for managing those responses.

Recovery can take up to three years or even longer. Significant dates or events such as anniversaries, or the taking of annual school photos may bring about re-emergence of symptoms. Six months after the initial incident is a critical time.

The affected group may feel forgotten as time passes by and relationship problems may emerge. Those who were drawn together by a shared experience are likely to start pulling away from each other and establishing new networks. Family cohesion may be altered as different members grieve and respond differently.

Grief, longing and pain may be particularly strong or may return on anniversary dates such as birthdays, the date that the incident occurred, or other significant dates such as Christmas. Marking these days may be helpful in giving concrete expression to such feelings.

Individuals may continue responding to triggers that remind them of the event for a long time. Hot, windy days often unsettle people who have experienced bushfires for many years after the experience.

Media may continue to use footage of an event for years, especially when a similar event occurs. This may be distressing and unsettling for some people. Reactions may appear weeks or months later and could be triggered by another loss.

Children will grieve more intermittently and over a longer period of time than an adult. The intensity of the emotions cannot be sustained for very long, so children will let the grief go, allowing it to return in small spurts.

Ongoing monitoring tasks

- consider the significance of anniversaries and plan commemorative activities if appropriate
- monitor students for signs of change including relationship problems, drug dependency, hyper arousal, increased susceptibility to illness and accidents
- prepare people for coronial inquests and legal proceedings providing them with knowledge about what to expect
- review the curriculum and include or enhance life skills programs and bereavement education where appropriate
- acknowledge the work of school-based and specialist care givers and continue to monitor their well-being, particularly when things start to quieten down and they may start to reveal their own views about the experience
- inform any new teacher about the child's or the class's experience and possible triggers which may cause a re-emergence of symptoms
- alert regular specialist support staff about any concerns regarding students or other members of the school community.

The Welfare personnel will organise and facilitate formal group interventions (such as stress debriefings and defusing) and will engage in one-to-one follow up, counselling, referral and monitoring of individuals affected by an incident. The Welfare personnel will take a key role in organising the CISM response.

Critical Incident Stress Management Interventions

CISM interventions are the programs and strategies aimed at assisting people affected by critical incidents. CISM includes a variety of traumatic stress interventions including:

- pre-incident education
- disaster preparedness
- defusings
- demobilisations
- debriefings
- on-scene support services
- follow-up services
- community outreach programs
- individual counselling
- peer counselling
- crisis intervention training

7. Procedure - Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In an Emergency	
Call Police, Ambulance, Fire Services	000
For Advice call your Organisational Contact	SMSS Principal 0401828602
Convene Incident Management Team	
Department of Education Emergency & Security Management (24 hours Communication centre – 95896266)	

7.1 Response – The incident controller

The Incident Controller will respond to a particular emergency or critical incident in accordance with the actions outlined in the *Emergency and Critical Incident 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:

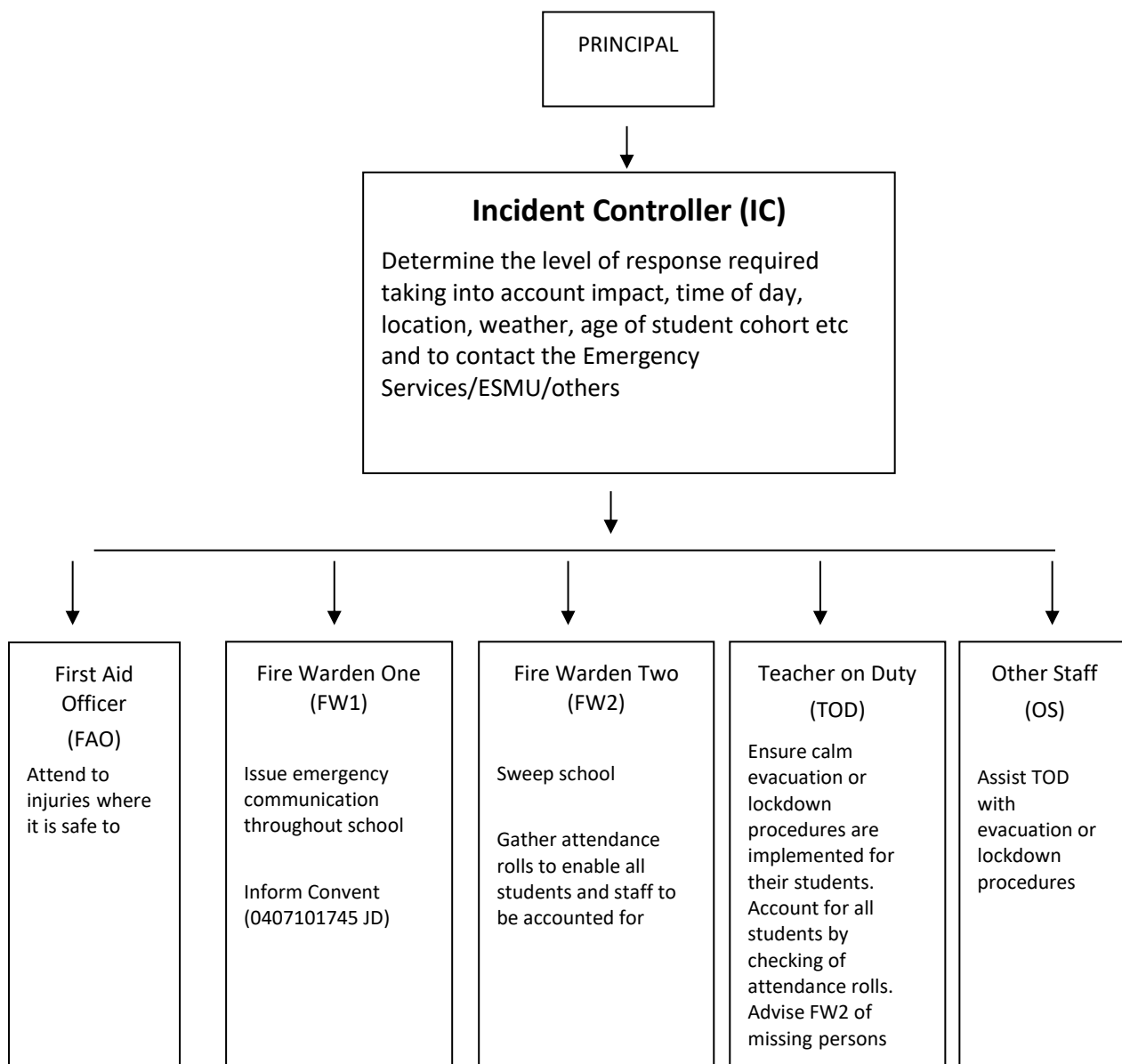
The Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD);

The VRQA (for Exchange Students)

The School Board;

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

7.2 Incident Control Structure and Roles



- Role of ESMU – work with the IC and Emergency Services to maintain staff and student safety until the emergency is resolved. ESMU will notify Regions about injuries and other incidents that may involve support including specialist psychological services to students and teachers in trauma response and recovery
- Role of DEECD Regional offices – provide first level co-ordination and support when the emergency is beyond the resources of the school. The Regional Emergency and Critical Incident Management Coordinator determines when regional co-ordination is required. An officer nominated by them may be directed to control response and recovery activity at the site of the emergency.
- Role of the VRQA – to provide specific support and advice to Exchange Students and their families.
- In the event of an off-site emergency, the TOD/Outdoor Ed co-ordinator assumes the role of IC and FAO. The off-site IC must inform the Principal immediately for off-site support and assistance.

7.3 Response Step 1 - Assess the Situation

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Alert the Principal and Administration Office as to nature of Emergency	TOD/OS
<input type="checkbox"/> Administration office to appoint an Incident Controller (usually Principal)	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Verify information.	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Take appropriate safety precautions (e.g. Contact Convent, turn off gas, water and/or electricity).	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Administer First Aid where appropriate.	FAO
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact emergency services as appropriate: Ambulance, Victoria Police, Fire Brigade, gas provider, water provider, electricity provider. Phone numbers for each of these are listed see: <i>Emergency Contacts</i> Meet emergency service at gate 2, Open bollards and accompany emergency services to St Mary's Anaphylaxis emergencies – transport second auto-injector to incident location	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the incident site remains secure and undisturbed where Victoria Police Force is likely to be involved.	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Remove people from the scene to an appropriate assembly area or classroom.	TOD/IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Account for everyone in the vicinity.	TOD

7.4 Response Step 2 - Enact Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan (Evacuate or Lockdown)

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider the need to evacuate either on-site or off the school site.	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with school staff and other agencies in considering lockdown.	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate the evacuation or lockdown – School (text staff) and Convent (call)	FW1
<input type="checkbox"/> Evacuation: Take the evacuation kit to the designated assembly area/administration area.	FAO
FW2 Sweep school	FW2
<input type="checkbox"/> Take Attendance Rolls to evacuation location and ensure TOD confirms all present and accounted for	FW2
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a list of missing persons. Recheck if safe to do so	FW1/FW2
<input type="checkbox"/> Lockdown: Take Attendance Rolls Staff to text Principal on 0401828602 with: CI X, # of students, Missing student names	TOD
<input type="checkbox"/> TOD confirms all present and accounted for	TOD and FW2

7.5 Response Step 3 - Inform School Board and ESMU

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact School Board.	Principal

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Report incident to the Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD)	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Report incident to Regional Education Office	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with School Board for all communications about the incident.	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Consult with professional counselling/support services as required.	TOD
<input type="checkbox"/> Media enquiries	Principal

7.6 Response Step 4 - Organise to Support those Affected

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Offer immediate comfort and support to those most affected.	TOD/OS
<input type="checkbox"/> Make direct contact with affected staff or families. (In the case of a death, Victoria Police contacts the family.)	TOD
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a statement for informing students and determine method of delivery.	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Brief all staff of known facts (without graphic detail).	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform students using a prepared statement and offer comfort and support. Consider siblings and close friends.	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Set up a recovery room.	IC/FAO
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a written statement related to incoming enquiries and for students to take home to their parents. Liaise with School Board and other agencies before releasing information.	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider staff and students absent or off-site today and relief staff that need to be informed.	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and notify others who need early advice (e.g. Parents & Friends, key community agencies, other schools affected).	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider external counselling services for staff in need.	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for relevant authorities to clear School and return to environment	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Tree	Principal

7.7 Response Step 5 - Commence Immediate Recovery Operations

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Debrief all staff as necessary. Review with the Emergency and Critical Incident Management team and plan for the next day.	Principal /IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Organise necessary relief/additional staff to meet teaching, support, administration and front office needs.	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure support for the leaders of the school response and those who have been supporting others. This may involve support from external counselling services for those in need.	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with local agencies for possible after hours/weekend support.	Principal

8. Recovery

ACTIONS	COORDINATED BY
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify and offer more specialised personal support to vulnerable and/or most affected staff and students.	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide recovery support and advice for students/staff/parents about the normal cycle of recovery and indicators that extra support may be required.	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Follow up contact with family/families involved to express sympathy, arrange retrieval of personal items of student/staff member as appropriate and discuss school role in ongoing support.	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Update information to staff, parents, and students, as appropriate. Rumour control.	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Special considerations for suicide, including contagion effect.	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural considerations	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Death notice	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Memorial service	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Funeral attendance, with attention to the wishes of the family	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing support for students and staff	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Notifying staff who are not at school	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining documentation	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Process for meeting visitors (e.g. community people most affected)	/ Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Interagency liaison	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Instruct receptionist as to what information is to be told to parents and others	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Review responses and continuing needs	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge people who have supported the school	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Review school records/mailling lists and amend as appropriate	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Operational debrief (see Appendix)	IC
<input type="checkbox"/> Inquest/court date(s) (arrange support for staff involved)	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Review & modify <i>Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan</i>	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Anniversary dates	Principal
<input type="checkbox"/> Update Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) if appropriate.	Principal

9. Emergency Contacts

9.1 Emergency Services and Other Contact Numbers

Group	Phone Number
Victoria Police	Life-threatening or time critical emergency
	000
	Non-life threatening incident requiring police response
	000
	Collingwood Police Station (for advice only, if police response required, call 000)
	(03) 9419 4911
Metropolitan Ambulance Service	000

Metropolitan Fire Brigade	000
State Emergency Service (Victoria)	132 500
Royal Children's Hospital	(03) 9345 5522
Poisons Information Centre (24 hour service)	13 11 26
Nurse On Call (24 hour service)	1300 6060 24
Gas – Energy Safe Victoria	132 771
Electricity	Convent Site Coordinator 0438380833 (03) 9415 3600 Reception (4)
Water	Convent Site Coordinator 0438380833 (03) 9415 3600 (4)
Emergency & Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) (24 hour service)	(03) 9589 6266
Northern Metropolitan Regional Education Office Director	(03) 9488 9403
City of Yarra	(03) 9205 5555
EPA Pollution Watch Line (24 hour service)	(03) 9695 2777
Work Safe	132360
Victorian Bushfire Information Line (24 hour service)	1800 240 667

Useful Contacts

Contact	Phone Numbers		
	Daytime	Mobile	Out of Hours
Abbotsford Convent Foundation	(03) 9415 3600		0438380833
Independent Schools Victoria (ISV)	(03) 9825 7200	Tom Nyland (media)	0417562924
City of Yarra	(03) 9205 5555		(03) 9205 5555
Collingwood Children's Farm	(03) 9417 5806		
VRQA (for Exchange Students)	(03) 96372806		

10. Evacuation and Lockdown

10.1 School Evacuation Kit

The school evacuation kit comprises:

- ☐ Attendance rolls
- ☐ Mobile telephone
- ☐ Student health care plans and medication (e.g. Epipen)
- ☐ First aid kit

10.2 Off-site Evacuation Procedures

Occurs when it is deemed too dangerous to remain on site after evacuation.

The Incident controller (IC) will seek advice from Victoria Police or the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in determining whether to undertake an off-site evacuation. Victoria Police or the Metropolitan Fire Brigade may mandate an evacuation in collaboration with the IC.

The roles of school personnel in an off-site evacuation will be similar to those in an on-site evacuation.

After an off-site evacuation, the school site will need to be inspected or cleared by relevant authorities before people return to the site.

TOD will guide the students off-site on foot using the nearest safe exit route. The nearest safe exit route will be advised by the IC on advice from the emergency services.

10.3 Lockdown Procedures

Lockdown is the act of 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. It is used when an external and immediate danger is identified and it is determined that the children should be secured inside the building for their own safety.

The Principal will initiate lockdown based on an assessment of risks to students and staff. The decision to initiate lockdown will be informed by advice from other agencies or other information available at the site. The Principal will appoint an Incident Controller (IC). The IC will advise Victoria Police and other appropriate emergency service agencies including the Emergency and Security Management Unit (ESMU) of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

On initiation of lockdown, FW1 and FW2 will attend their designated areas and conduct lockdown communications. Lockdown communications consist of 2 short bursts of the hand crank siren followed by the shout of "Lockdown". They will ensure all external gates are locked.

On hearing the lockdown communication, all Teachers on Duty (TOD) are required to return their students to their classroom and remain there until the "End of Lockdown" communication is issued.

During lockdown, the TOD is required to lock all windows and doors and have students sit below window level. Other Staff (OS) are to report to the Administration Office where they may be given specific duties such as posted at locked doors to allow pupils/staff to enter if locked out or wait at the main entry to the school to guide emergency services personnel, if safe to do so. TOD should do all they can to account for their pupils.

The IC will issue end of Lockdown communications to FW1 and FW2 on advice by the Emergency Services. The End of Lockdown communication will involve one long siren followed by the shout of "All Clear".

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY TEACHERS ON DUTY DURING LOCKDOWN
If in class, stay in the classroom
If out of class, return to the classroom or closest safe area
Direct students who are out of class into their regular or the closest classroom
Do not leave classroom to get students
Close the classroom door (lock it if possible)
Close windows, blinds and shutters
Turn lights off
Keep all people close to the ground (e.g. on the floor) and away from windows and doors
Tell students that mobile phones are not to be used and are to be turned off
Record the names of all people in the classroom
Stay calm and encourage others to be calm and quiet
Provide information to the Principal as required
Do not allow any unauthorised people into the room
Remain in the room until the de-activation signal is given
If emergency medication is required then contact the administration office for advice
If a young child needs to use a toilet consider use of a plastic lined bin
Wait any specific instructions from either the IC or FW1

10.4 Bushfire

The school is not on the register of schools deemed to be at risk from a bushfire.

The likelihood of a bushfire threatening inner city Melbourne is remote. Should any such catastrophic event occur, there would be ample warning. The Principal would:

Make contact with emergency services to establish status of fire and degree of risk.

Enact off-site evacuation or lockdown procedure in accordance with advice from the emergency services

Liaise with the ESMU.

10.5 Examinations Emergency Procedure

In an immediate Emergency DIAL 000 and specify the service required.

On-Campus Venues:

Chief Invigilator/Chief Supervisor to contact the Principal/IB coordinator or delegate immediately to inform of situation – relevant contact numbers are stored in allocated mobile phone and in SMSS IB Invigilator handbook.

External Venues - Convent:

Prior to examination session, Chief Invigilator/Chief Supervisor needs to obtain name and contact details of designated Fire Officer/Emergency Personnel in external venue.

Chief Invigilator/Chief Supervisor to consult with designated Fire Officer/Emergency Personnel on procedure to be followed in the event of an evacuation.

Examination Evacuation Procedures

Prior to commencement of examinations (i.e. during announcements), the emergency exit(s) will be pointed out to candidates in the examination venue.

Unless otherwise advised, all alarms should be treated as an emergency.

If instructed or you hear notification:

Evacuate the building immediately by the nearest exit route and proceed to assembly point.

St Mary's campus – the assembly points are: courts, outside the administration block and the Mercator lawn (examination use only)

Intermittent ringing of the alarm:

Investigate the source of the alarm, do not take risks and prepare to evacuate.

If the alarm is sounded, the Chief Invigilator/Supervisor is responsible for the evacuation of the examination venue, in accordance with the instructions given by the appropriate authority, and should follow the normal procedures and instruct candidates to leave the building immediately and assemble at the designated assembly point.

Chief Invigilator/Supervisor to stop the examination.

Chief Invigilator/Supervisor to instruct the invigilators/supervisors to act as 'Marshalls' i.e. will be responsible for leading their designated rows or classes/sections of students to the assembly point.

Instruct the students to leave all examination materials on their desks and turn papers over.

Escort the students from the examination venue using the emergency exit(s).

Close the door to the venue you are vacating.

Assist anyone who may be disabled or otherwise need assistance.

The Chief Invigilators/Supervisor/Principal/IB coordinator should contact the Exams Office/VCAA immediately to report the situation – contact numbers will be stored in allocated mobile phones.

The Exams Office will contact the relevant department who decide if they want to abandon the examination, or proceed once the situation has been resolved.

Students are to follow the Invigilator to the assembly point, where a register will be taken to confirm attendance.

Invigilators/Supervisors are to ensure that the students are supervised as closely as possible whilst they are out of the examination room. Students are still required to observe examination conditions i.e. no talking, texting, telephoning,

communicating with anyone. Failure to do so will be treated as a breach of examination regulations.

Note the time and duration of the interruption.

If you are permitted to return to the examination room, check the signature roll again once all candidates are seated and re-start the examination.

A full written report of the emergency should be filed by the Chief Invigilator/Supervisor with the Examinations Office within 2 working days, so that the information can be relayed to the relevant departments.

10.6 Casualties

In the event of an accident - administer first aid in accordance with the circumstances of the occurrence of the accident.

REMAIN CALM / DO NOT PANIC

If necessary, seek assistance from someone who is qualified in first aid.

DO NOT LEAVE THE INJURED PERSON ALONE. Send someone else for help.

If no-one is available to go for help, do whatever you can to assist the person until help arrives.

DO NOT become a casualty. Protect yourself, the casualty and any other person from the danger.

If the injured person is still in danger, either:

remove him or her from the hazard (for example, in the case of smoke inhalation, move the person to an area where there is fresh air); or

remove the hazard from the person (for example, in the case of electrocution, switch the power off).

If the situation looks life threatening, try to get urgent medical attention from paramedics or medical practitioner.

When medical help arrives, assist in the management of the casualty if asked

10.7 Communication, Training, Testing and Review

The Principal shall ensure the *Emergency and Critical Incident 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.

10.8 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);

10.9 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.

10.10 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

10.11 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.

10.12 Review of Processes

The Principal shall:

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

11.Preparedness

Involves developing plans, policies and procedures in the event an emergency or critical incident occurs either on or off-site. Preparedness activities include:

- Drafting and updating the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan
- Communicating the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan
- Conducting annual evacuation and/or lockdown drills
- Conducting anaphylaxis briefing twice yearly
- Maintaining a log of all off-site activities including locations, dates, times, student numbers and emergency contact information

Emergency plans should involve the emergency services where possible.

Any school camp, off-site activity or excursion can only occur after approval by Faculty and Principal. In approving the activity, all must consider:

- Contribution of the activity to the school curriculum
- Adequacy of the planning and organization
 - Experience and competence of staff
 - Appropriateness of the venue
 - Seasonal and locality factors (e.g. Bushfire season)
- Provisions made for safety and welfare of students and staff including medication needs
- Adequacy of supervision

A copy of the Excursion Procedure Form for each off-site activity must be lodged with the Head of faculty and filed in the Administration Office prior to departure.

It is the responsibility of the Teacher on Duty/Outdoor Ed staff to familiarise students with procedures for dealing with emergencies at that particular location as soon as practical after arrival. Evacuation protocols need to be communicated and trialled as appropriate.

11.1 Outgoing Exchange Students

All Outgoing Exchange Students must register their travel with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade via Smart Traveller: <https://smartraveller.gov.au/Pages/registering-your-trip.aspx>

12. Overview of School Context and Risks

This document supports Sophia Mundi Steiner School's *Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy*.

12.1 Student Demographics

Sophia Mundi is a P-12 school of approximately 200 students.

- We have students with English as a second language.
- We have Students with Anaphylaxis and Asthma attending the school. Each has a Management Plan in place.

12.2 Geographic

a. Roads into and away from School

Sophia Mundi's school site is on leased space within the Abbotsford Convent Site. The convent site is easily accessed by St Helier's Street. The site comprises heritage buildings and grounds accessed via narrow, single lane roads. Locked, removable bollards prevent public vehicle access within the site. Sophia Mundi has a key to the bollards for emergency use.

b. Access to public transport

Both sites are well serviced by rail and bus connections (both within 10 minutes walking distance) and the nearest tram connection within 20 minutes. The school is well serviced by bicycle tracks.

c. Distance from school to home

Our student body comes mainly from inner eastern suburbs of Kew, Balwyn etc. Due to the overall lack of Steiner schools in Melbourne, some come from further afield either by car (pooling) or public transport.

d. Distance from school to Community Facilities

The school operates a canteen one day a week. The nearest food outlets are within the convent site.

12.3 Specific Risks

Natural Emergency Risks

There is little risk of flood from the adjacent river due to the elevated school site. The adjacent Collingwood Children's farm acts as a firebreak between the school and bushland along the banks of the river and the nearby Yarra Bend Park.

Other Risks

The site is fenced to prevent unauthorised access by intruders.

Off-site Risks

The school has a comprehensive Outdoor Ed programme. The camps, by nature, involve exposure to risk. All camps are led by qualified Outdoor Ed staff who all have current Wilderness First Aid and Anaphylaxis and Asthma training.

13.Critical Incident Reporting

A) Reporting to the Emergency Services on 000 must occur if:

- The safety of staff or students is at risk
- There is criminal activity
- There is a threat to property or the environment

B) Followed immediately by contacting the Emergency Services Management Unit (ESMU). (03 9589 6266)

The following must be reported to the ESMU:

- Fatality including illness, suicide and suicide attempts
- Serious injuries (GP, ambulance or hospitalisation)
- Transport accidents
- Assault, threat of assault or offensive behaviour
- Firearms, weapons or bomb threats
- Siege, hostage, disappearance or removal of a student
- Outbreak or incidence of disease
- Fire, flood, major disaster or natural event
- Chemical, biological or radiological spillage or contamination
- Criminal Acts (violence, theft, arson, vandalism)
- Sexual assault or allegations thereof.

Guide to Reporting to the ESMU

Call	000	
Contact	ESMU	Tel 03 9589 6266
Advise	Who	Number and names of persons involved Name of person reporting the emergency/critical incident
	What	Nature of the emergency/critical incident
	When	Time of the emergency/critical incident

Where	Location of the emergency/critical incident
Report	Verify details of incident with an incident report

14.Prevention

Involves conducting an assessment to identify potential hazards and develop policies and procedures designed to mitigate or prevent damage.

Prevention activities include:

- Identifying and eliminating hazards and risks
- Reviewing and improving work practices
- Reviewing and improving physical security such as fences, sign in procedures for visitors

Risk assessments must be performed for each activity, on-site or off-site, where there is a reasonable risk of the activity resulting in an emergency or critical incident.

Risks should be classified as High, Medium or Low according to the following definitions:

High Risk

Where there is a reasonable likelihood of occurrence and the consequence of the occurrence is severe.

Medium Risk

Where there is a low likelihood of occurrence but the consequence of the occurrence is severe.

Low Risk

Where the consequence of the occurrence is minor.

Mitigation strategies should be developed for all High and Medium risks with a view to reducing the risk to Low. In the event that mitigation strategies cannot reduce the overall risk to low, these risks must be outlined in the permission slips and signed off by parents in order for the student to participate.

14.1 Important Locations

AREAS	LOCATION
Evacuation Assembly Areas	Southern End of Tennis Courts
Evacuation Kit	Administration Office
First Aid kit	Administration Office
Power board - main	Ground Floor Foyer of St Mary's
Power board – sub board	Classroom to the east of main power board
Water mains – shutoff	Cage located at Gate 2
Gas main – shutoff	Cage located at Gate 2
List of people on site	FW2
Fire Hydrant 1	Outside door to the admin office
Fire Hydrant 2	NE corner of Tennis Courts

15. Relevant Legislation or Authority

- *Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Vic.),*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) and*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 (Vic.)*
- *Education and Training Regulations 2017*
- *Australian Education Amendment Act 2017*

16. Appendix A: Critical Incident Plan - Exchange Students

Definition of a Critical Incident

The definition of a critical incident for an Exchange student is broader than that for a local student. Following are examples of critical or traumatic incidents which would impact on an Exchange student in a more complex way than a local student:

- being arrested or detained by the police or other authorities,
- having criminal charges laid against the student,
- engaging in criminal behaviour,
- becoming seriously ill or pregnant,
- death of a member of the immediate family,
- threatening harm to him or herself,
- being threatened with violence

The above scenarios result from the school environment being extended to include the outbound students while on exchange overseas as well as the inbound students outside of school hours while on exchange in Victoria and under the welfare responsibility of the School.

Host Family

Although the School's Critical Incident policy will still apply, special consideration must be taken to ensure the student's family overseas and the host family are kept well informed of the actions being taken. Together with the expertise of the Exchange Co-ordinator, this may require the use of an interpreter.

Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)

As mentioned in the Emergency and Critical Incident Policy, incidents vary in complexity and the guidelines provide a framework for action.

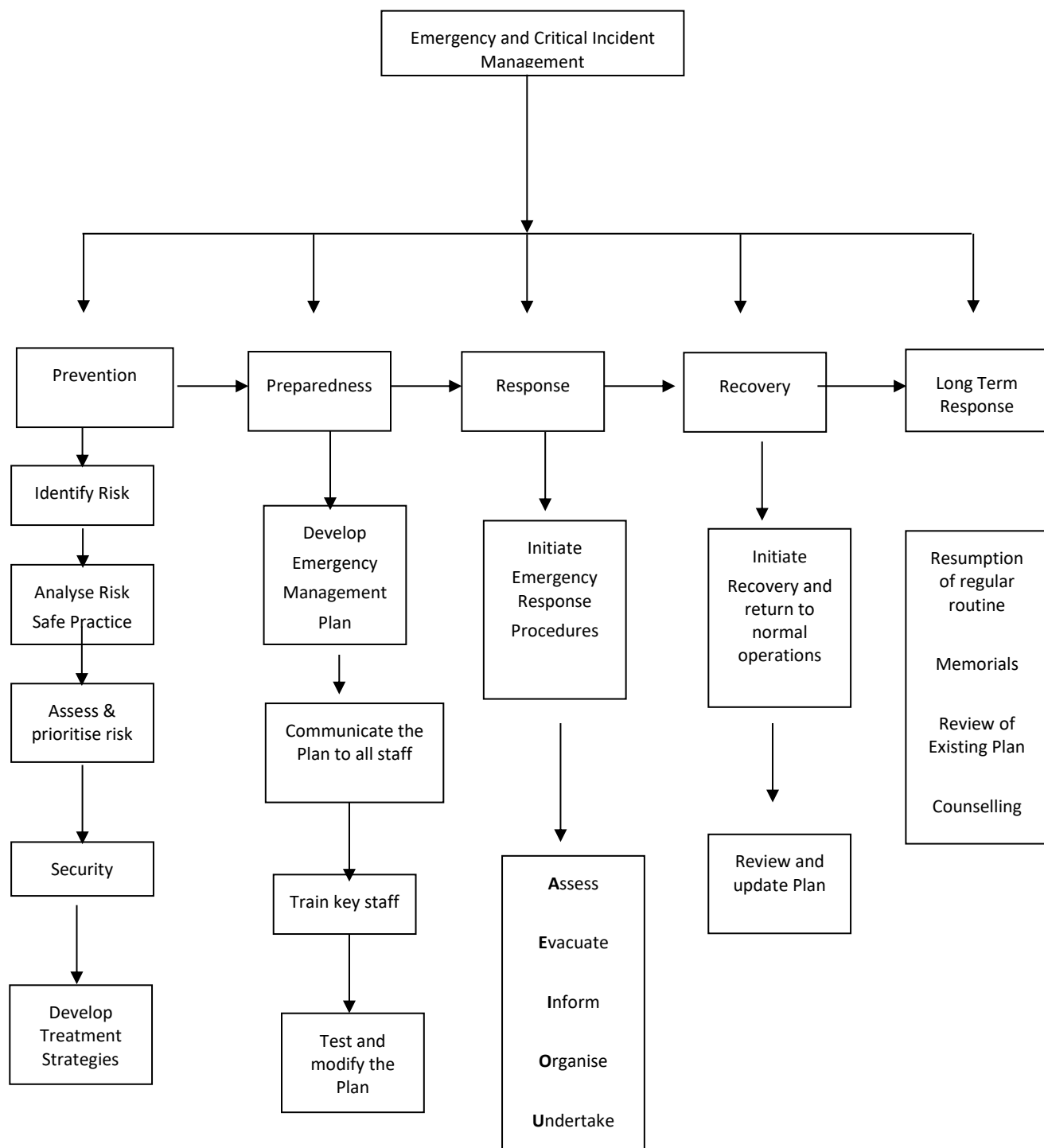
The actions would be determined by the CIRT which would include:

- Principal
- Head/s of School
- Welfare Team
- Administration Manager
- Business Manager
- Class and Specialist teachers
- Student Exchange Co-ordinator

The CIRT would proceed to implement the Recovery plan as appropriate for the incident and the VRQA would be notified.

If required, an interpreter would be available to the student/s throughout the process to ensure that he or she understands what is happening and can clearly express their concerns or fears and ask any questions.

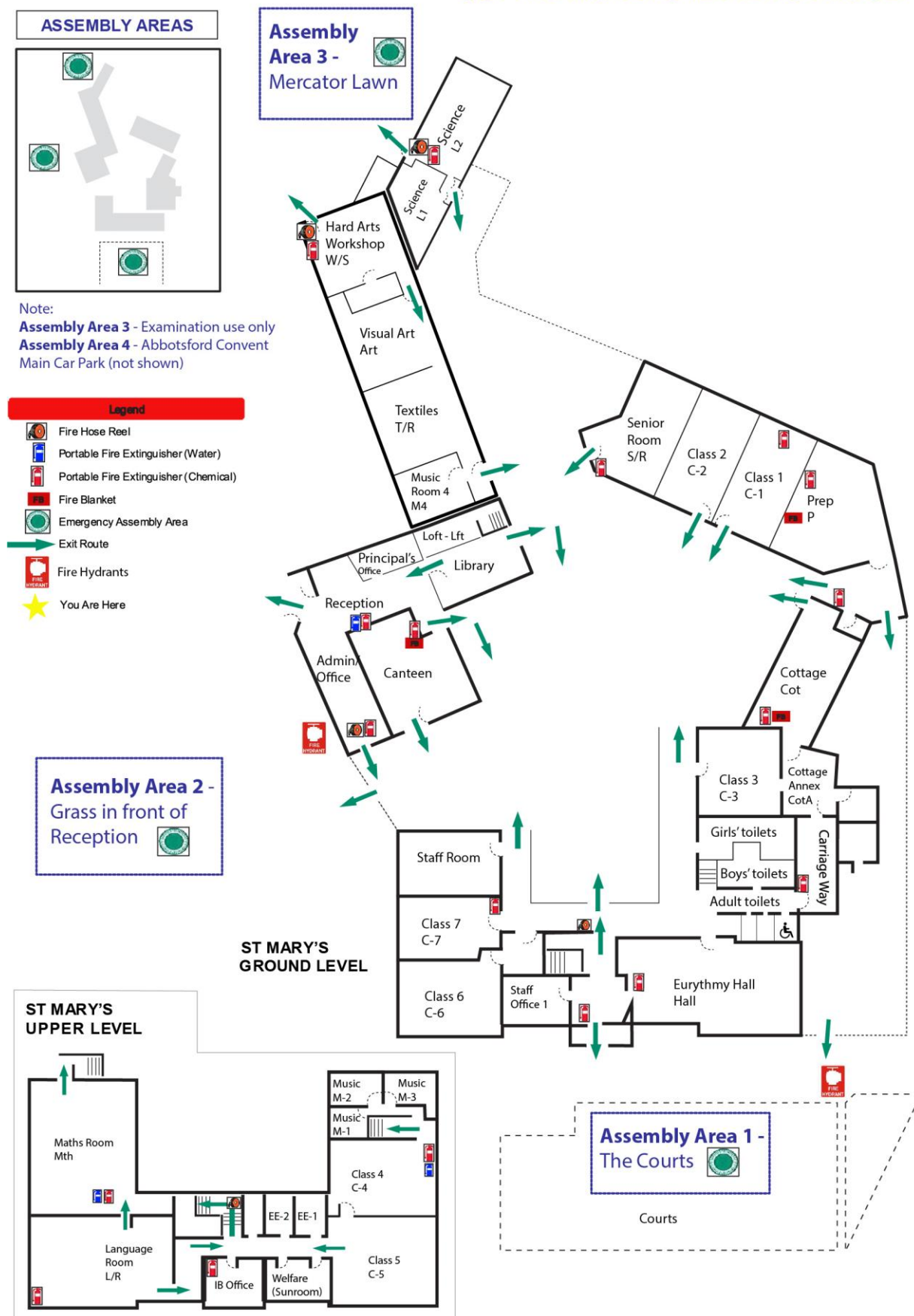
17. Appendix B: The Comprehensive/All Hazards Approach to Emergency and Critical Incident Management



18.Appendix C: Site plan

EMERGENCY EXITS AND ASSEMBLY AREAS

SOPHIA MUNDI STEINER SCHOOL



19. Appendix D: Initial Critical Incident

Initial Critical Incident Record

Date.....

Time of notification

Name of person taking the call

Position

Name of person reporting the incident

Tel:

Details

What happened?

Time:

Location:

Who witnessed it - staff/student/other?

Actions taken - at scene/elsewhere?

Anyone hospitalised?

Types of injury?

Where is everyone now?

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS REQUIRED

Principal notified YES NO Time.....

Other school staff YES NO Time.....

Emergency services notified YES NO Time.....



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ABN: 44 006 411 016

Discussing a Critical Incident with Classes

When something distressing has happened at a school or within a school community there is usually at least one class group that is particularly affected, and in need of support.

Practical ideas for use with all groups

- Let the students tell their understandings of what happened.
- Discuss what actually happened: give facts, and sort out rumours from facts.
- Allow discussion time: e.g. where were you when it happened? How did you find out? What did you feel? How might significant others feel? What rumours have you heard about the (fire/accident/whatever)? etc.
- The attribution of blame can be quite difficult to handle. Instead, try to incorporate discussion of what can constructively be done now.
- Some students like to write or draw - to recall events, people, emotions. Clay is also a useful medium.
- Help the class and teachers plan how they will reintroduce and support survivors/victims when they return to school or during their absence (e.g. letters, drawings, company etc.)
- Offer personal counselling and tell the class where you'll be in the school for the next few hours and/or how appointments may be made.

Practical ideas for use with Adolescents and Adults

For adolescents and teachers, group discussions can be important and useful. They allow time to express and rationalise reactions - and it is helpful if the teachers and adolescents share their reactions. "Crazy" thoughts, extreme emotions such as helplessness, frustration, anger, and survivor guilt, may need to be recognised and vented.

It is important and useful to end discussions on a positive and practical note, as follows:

- What heroic acts were observed? • What can we do immediately - e.g. prepare memorial service, practical support for victims and families,
- What can we do in the longer term? e.g. plan for disaster prevention.

Action Plan:

Who is going to do what, and when?

Plan a follow up time. Offer individual counselling, or referral. State what help is available, and that it is O.K. to seek help. Peer support can be valuable if peers are emotionally able to handle it.

If moved to tears, don't be afraid to let other students/teachers see - the expression of emotion can validate the responses of others and the expression of these responses, and thus be very supportive.

20. Appendix E: Short Term Tasks with Students

There will be wide range of reactions to the news of an incident, injury or death. Some students may be visibly affected while others may show no sign of distress. Dealing with, and responding to, news of an emergency is a very individual experience. Individual characteristics, such as how a person interprets the event, previous experiences and the relationship to the injured or deceased are all factors that influence how people will respond. Young children and adolescents can be traumatised by what they hear from others about an incident. Use protective interrupting strategies if a story or details become too graphic for some students. Protective interrupting requires the teacher to stop an anecdote being told in a public forum. It may be possible to change the direction of a discussion by distracting or diverting the student. The student should be given an opportunity to tell the story in a more appropriate setting alone with the teacher.

It is useful to:

- allow opportunities to talk about the incident and reactions, taking the opportunity to explain that different people respond in different ways
- explain that a range of reactions may be experienced, that the reactions are normal, that people react in a range of ways and with time and support the reactions will ease
- repeat the facts as often as requested
- allow students to opt out of discussion
- encourage older children to talk and to piece together a clear picture of what happened
- use the natural tendency of children to repeatedly question what happened as a useful means of dispelling rumors and myths.
- Short term tasks - supporting students When providing support to students try to:
 - provide support and comfort
 - sit quietly with the child, say little, accept silence
 - accept initial emotional reactions
 - use minimal prompts such as 'you've had a frightening experience'
 - tell children that you are sorry such an event occurred and you want to understand and assist them
 - provide information about what has happened and what is being done to help use active listening and empathy skills
 - be alert for anyone who appears to be in shock who may need medical attention acknowledge the experience and normalise the reactions 'you've had a frightening experience, no wonder your hands are shaking'
 - bring a calm presence to the situation
 - provide ongoing support to individuals when they receive additional information such as notification of deaths, or when collecting personal effects
 - ensure that support is available at home before the student leaves the scene
 - be guided by the child and listen to what the individual wants
 - start from the children's point of understanding
 - ask children to tell you what happened in their own words
 - allow opportunity for play, some children seek to get a better understanding of what happened through play
 - allow children to talk over concerns with someone they have chosen, including another teacher
 - respect the need for adolescents to seek support from their peer group and to be with their friends rather than with adults.

Try to avoid statements in which students are told:

- it will be all right because it may not be
- they are lucky it wasn't worse as such statements rarely console anyone who is traumatised
- about death using abstract explanations or euphemisms, gone to sleep, passed away
- how they are feeling.

21. Appendix F: Practical Ideas for the Classroom

Children and adolescents need to give concrete expression to their trauma and grief. The following activities may be useful in helping children come to terms with the event.

- Answer children's questions simply and directly. If the questions are too hard or seem inappropriate or it is distressing to answer them, ask the child to suggest an answer. This can help both teacher and child start to discuss the feeling behind the question being asked.
- Talk with students about what made that person special.
- Make cards or drawings expressing how sad they feel and maybe include a special memory of that person.
- Create a memory box where students can write a memory of that person and store them in the box.
- Write goodbye letters.
- Make an audio tape using a starter such as What I'd like to say to.....was special because
- Compile a collection of edited student drawings about their classmate and present it to the child's parents.
- Collect photographs of the child at the school and present them to the child's parents, e.g. class, excursion, concert, sporting photos.
- Provide a special place within the school where students and staff can place memorials and tributes
- activity such as planting a special plant or laying a plaque.
- Prepare the rest of the class for the return of students affected by the emergency.
- Use journal writings as a way of monitoring a student's responses.
- Collect and donate money to specific charities or illness foundations when a student has died from a terminal illness
- Discuss the cause of the event as a lead into prevention and preparedness issues.
- Mobilise support from friends, let them discuss how they can support their friend.
- Engage in accident prevention activities.
- Use student's desk as a focal point for memorials, tributes and good byes.
- Use photos for memorial activities, particularly with intellectual impaired students.
- Consider grief and loss education programs provided by grief associations or funeral homes.
- Use strength cards to compile a list of the special things about the student.

22. Appendix G: Coping with Suicide

Helping students cope after a suicide

Suicide, like other forms of sudden death and trauma affects the whole school community. Managing recovery after a suicide is especially difficult as it is often surrounded by taboos, myths and secrecy. The secrecy that often surrounds suicide develops a climate in which it is difficult for students to gain assistance with their own reactions and depression. Schools that manage the event successfully are likely to be less at risk of copycat suicides or related risk taking behaviours. It is important for teachers to monitor students who may be at high risk following a suicide, particularly those who show extreme reactions, are particularly close to the deceased or who have had previous traumas in their lives. Students may express feelings of guilt or responsibility for the death. It is valuable to emphasise that suicide was the choice of the person.

Short term tasks

- Where possible, check with parents to determine what information can be released
- Inform staff about the death and discuss ways of dealing with students.
- Inform students about the death in an honest and sensitive manner.
- Be aware of affected brothers and sisters, close friends, girlfriends or boyfriends.
- Provide unambiguous information to staff and students which will dispel rumours.
- Avoid providing excessive detail about the method used to bring about the death, the motivation, family reaction.
- Do not glorify or romanticise the death or encourage others to do so.
- Try to dispel any myths that students may express about the death he must have been brave to kill himself.
- Encourage discussion which emphasises that the person chose to commit suicide.
- Discourage students from apportioning or accepting blame.
- Use active listening skills to support students who want to talk about the death.
- Wait for students to raise issues rather than forcing discussion when they may not be ready to do so.
- Provide students with information about grief reactions and the grieving process.
- Emphasise that grief reactions are normal and that they will disappear over time.
- Reassure students that there is no right way to feel or react in these circumstances.
- Encourage students to talk to their parents about the suicide. •

Provide information to students and parents about support services which are available through the school and the community.

- Identify a recovery room where students can go if they need a quiet area.
- Monitor students to identify those who may need support - particularly those who show extreme reactions, are close to the dead person or are known to have had traumatic experiences of their own.
- Monitor anyone who seems particularly withdrawn and be aware of the potential for copycat behaviour.

Medium term tasks

- Continue to monitor those students who are most affected or at highest risk.
- Encourage students to use networks of friends.
- Discuss with students how they might support one another.
- Provide staff with information about warning signs and risk factors.
- Ensure that provision is made for staff to deal with their own grief.
- Prepare staff and students for the funeral.

Long term tasks

- Continue to monitor the school community over the long term.
- Be aware of the significance and sensitivity which surrounds anniversaries, sporting events, school photos.
- Review the school's response to death and suicide and accommodate changes to the curriculum and personal development policies where appropriate

23. Appendix H: Sample Letters

Sample letters to parents from the principal

Prompt communication with all parents in the school following an emergency will help them to understand what has happened and will also help to dispel rumors which can be extremely destructive. If possible, an information letter should be sent to all parents within twenty-four hours of the emergency. Further information could be communicated to parents as an information item in the school's regular newsletter or as a special newsletter about the emergency.

Information to be included in the letter should be verified for accuracy and confirmed as available for public release with police and legal representatives. In some cases, police or others may not want certain information to be published, even though it may be widely circulating informally within the school community.

Each of the sample letters has five functions. It tells parents

1. The facts
2. What the school has done
3. The school's plans
4. How their children may react
5. How to get help

Sample letter – Death

(can be modified to suit accident, death or suicide)

Date

Dear Parents,

Early on Sunday morning three current students and a former student of our School were involved in a traffic accident on the Eastern Freeway. Two students were tragically killed and one critically injured. We have spoken with the parents of all concerned and offered them the heartfelt sympathy of our whole school community as well as any support or help we are able to give. We have been reassured by the care and concern demonstrated by students, teachers and parents in the support offered at this difficult time. Also, we have in place at school a support system which involves the School Welfare personnel, Christina Community Priest, and other members of our Critical Incident Management Team who are available to provide assistance to our School community.

Your children may be affected by this tragic event in many ways. Reactions may include crying, not wanting to talk, wanting to talk, anger, wanting to be alone, lack of concentration, sleeping or eating problems. We encourage you to be sensitive with your child and to call me or our school counsellor (telephone no.) if we can help. There is no doubt that we have all been saddened by this event, but it would be best for school procedures to continue as normally as possible when students return to school and for students to attend each day. We have planned a parent meeting on Wednesday, 12 March at 7.00 pm in the MGH, where we can talk about the forthcoming memorial service and any other related issues that concern you.

Yours sincerely.....

Principal

Sample letter – Disaster

(can be modified to suit building destruction or disaster)

Date

Dear Parents,

I want to inform you about the damage caused to the School by the weekend windstorms, and to assure you that we are doing everything possible to minimise the effects on our community.

The worst affected area has been the Primary Classrooms, which had extensive roof damage when an uprooted tree fell on it, and was then further damaged by rain which soaked the classrooms of the Years 3 and 5. A temporary covering has been placed on the roof to prevent further damage, the tree has been removed and we are currently awaiting the results of safety inspections, before we can know when the rest of the School can be attended. Other areas of the School suffered only superficial damage, and are already fully functional.

In the meantime, students of the Primary School are to attend School as normal, where their class teachers will explain where they are to go till the building has been repaired. We have arranged temporary classrooms in the Convent to accommodate all children affected. We also have in place, a Crisis Incident Management Team who will be coordinating all responses to this disastrous event.

We urge you to reassure your children in the present circumstances, and to let them know that they will be returning to their usual rooms as soon as it is safe. If they have been upset by these events, please encourage them to talk and to express themselves in other ways, such as drawing or writing about their feelings. If you feel you need assistance, please call the School. We have staff with specialist training to help you further.

Yours sincerely.....

Sample letter – Incident

(can be modified to suit sexual offences or violence)

Date

Dear Parents,

A recent event has occurred which has affected the entire school community, and the details are included in this letter, so that you may know the facts as opposed to any rumours you may have heard. I would also like to assure you that everything is being done to minimise the negative effects this may have on the students, and to suggest ways in which individual students may be helped.

Yesterday, a child in Class 6 made charges of inappropriate sexual behaviour against one of the teachers. The charge involved fondling and kissing, and the police are investigating. In the meantime, the teacher concerned has been indefinitely suspended, pending the outcome of the investigation, and a replacement teacher commences tomorrow. The child is receiving professional support and counselling.

Obviously, this incident has shocked us all. Regardless of the outcome of the charges, we have all been troubled by the accusation. We have made available counsellors, teachers, and other resources so that students and staff can get help when they need it. I have also spoken to the student body and encouraged them to report to me any behaviour by others that makes them feel unsafe. At this stage, it appears unlikely that any other children have been involved.

You can help your children in two important ways. Firstly, reassure them that they are safe and will continue to be safe in this School. Listen to their fears, no matter how groundless you feel them to be. Secondly, be a model of fairness. The teacher concerned is innocent, and will remain so until (or if) proved guilty. It is reasonable to feel angry; it is not reasonable to blame someone who may not have done anything wrong. Parents or students who feel they need further assistance, can contact the School where they will be put in touch with a member of the Critical Incident Response Team, who will arrange for appropriate help.

We have planned a parent meeting on Wednesday, 2 April at 7.00 pm in the Eurythmy room. At that meeting, we can talk more about this situation, and I will update you on any new developments. Yours sincerely.....

24. Appendix I: Preparing a Media Release

Prepare a media release containing about three paragraphs, ideally limited to one page in length, that has been verified for accuracy and checked with police and family.

Paragraph 1 briefly outline the verified facts

Paragraph 2 outline what the school has done to assist those

Paragraph 3 affected outline support and recovery arrangements

include a name and contact number for the school media coordinator

25. Appendix J: Phone Tree

The purpose of a phone tree is to communicate with people affected by a crisis (students, families, staff). The advantages of a phone tree are that a message can be given quickly, personally, and specifically, and that in certain cases, staff can be better prepared emotionally before they arrive on campus. A phone tree can be designed for each section of the School, thereby achieving efficient and effective communication.

