

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Approving authority	School Council
Purpose	This policy has been developed to meet the requirements of the Minimum Standards for school registration and the ESOS National Code 2018 Standards 5 and 6.
Responsible Officer	Principal and Academic Director
Associated documents	Emergency Management plan COVID Safe plan Accident and Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure Anaphylaxis Policy, Procedure and Plan Child Safety Policy and Procedure College Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedure First Aid and Medical Condition Policy and Procedure Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure Refusal, Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Student Enrolment Policy and Procedure Responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse Policy and Procedure Student Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure Student Support and Services Policy and Procedure Younger Students and Homestay Policy and Procedure Record Management Policy and Procedure

1. RATIONALE

Under the Minimum standards for school registration and the ESOS National Code 2018, Ozford College (the College) must have and implement a documented policy and process for managing critical incidents that could affect the overseas student's ability to undertake or complete a course, such as but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm. Ozford College will maintain a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken for at least two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

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

This Critical Incident Policy and Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Emergency management plan.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedures apply to critical incidents relating to the College's students.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 The Principal supported by the Senior Management Team has responsibility for the actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident and any follow up required. Only the Principal may speak to the media on behalf of the College.
- 3.2 A critical incident is defined by the 2018 National Code as 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (*within or outside Australia*), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'.
- 3.3 Critical incidents could include:

- missing students
 - severe verbal, written or psychological aggression
 - child abuse
 - medical emergencies including anaphylaxis, a severe, rapidly progressive allergic reaction that is potentially life threatening
 - death, serious injury or any threat of these
 - pandemic such as the COVID19 pandemic
 - natural disaster such as a extreme weather events such as storms, floods and bush fires.
 - domestic violence, physical, sexual or other abuse
 - data or privacy breach
 - an event in the student's home country that could be traumatic for the student
 - severe anxiety, physical or psychological harm;
 - requires police notification or involves matters of serious conduct;
 - is a WorkSafe notifiable incident; or
 - other events that affect the wellbeing of students or the school community
- 3.4 All staff and students at the College have the right to feel safe and to be safe. Staff members have a legal and moral responsibility to report and respond to critical incidents involving the students with whom they have contact with.
- 3.5 The College will provide information to students and staff about how to seek assistance for and report an incident that significantly impacts on students' wellbeing, including critical incidents.
- 3.6 Staff will be made aware of the Critical Incident Policy and Procedure and be given appropriate induction, to understand the relevant procedures to use in managing a critical incident.
- 3.7 The College recognises that appropriate infrastructure must be in place to ensure that all necessary support services are provided and follow up actions implemented in the event of a critical incident.
- 3.8 The College is committed to providing a prompt and appropriate response to critical incidents.
- 3.9 The College keeps written records of critical incidents and remedial actions taken. The records are maintained electronically in the Compass Student Management system. The records are maintained for a minimum of two years after the international student enrolment ceases.
- 3.10 As a follow-up action, the **Senior Management Team** develops a Critical Incident Action Evaluation Plan to review the management and response of the critical incident to address the underlying causes and various aspects arising from the incident including:
- evaluating and reviewing the plan;
 - creating and disseminating a revised plan and its procedures for future incidents;
 - updating and publishing relevant policy and procedures; and
 - organising appropriate staff development and training.
- 3.11 All critical incidents will be reported to the School Council, if there is a significant incident a report will be prepared.**

4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The College will provide students with or refer them to (including electronically) general information on safety and awareness relevant to life in Australia during orientation. Students are provided with information on what to do and who to contact in an emergency. The Emergency Contact details are made available on the Student Handbook.
- 4.2 What to do in the event of critical incidents is part of each Orientation process that students must attend. Students are advised where they can access the Critical Incident Policy and Procedure.
- 4.3 If the incident is determined as an emergency incident, the first action will be to contact the emergency services - fire, ambulance or police – as would be the case with other occupational health and safety matters.
- 4.4 Staff and students are informed that any critical incident must be reported to the Principal, High School Coordinator or International Student Coordinator in the first instance.
- 4.5 The Principal, High School Coordinator or International Student Coordinator will complete an initial critical Incident report that includes: the time, location and a description and nature of incident, the names of students/staff involved, together with any relevant information that may be of assistance.
- 4.6 After receiving the incident report, the Principal or International Student Coordinator will call a meeting of the **Senior Management Team**.

Planning the response

- 4.7 The **Senior Management Team** will meet to discuss the incident, plan and determine a prompt and appropriate response and action plan by:
 - Developing a clear understanding of the known facts.
 - Assessing risks and response actions
 - Planning an immediate response of the incident
 - Appointing a delegate to deal with public enquiries if the Principal is not available. If required, a media management procedure may be included in the management plan to ensure the most positive and supportive response to the media.
- 4.8 If the incident involves child abuse, the College Child Safety Policies and Procedures will be applied.

If the incident involves a younger student under CAAW responsibility

- 4.9 If the incident involves a student going missing, the College will:
 - make all reasonable efforts to locate the student.
 - if the student cannot be located, immediately:
 - notify Victoria Police.
 - the student's parents or legal guardians.
 - if the student is an overseas student, the Principal will notify the VRQA by phone/email and the Commonwealth via PRISMS as soon as practicable.
 - if the incident results in the student not being able to continue to reside at their current homestay, immediately support the student to transfer to an alternative homestay host (or emergency homestay if necessary) so as to not allow any

gap in the student's welfare arrangements. The College will notify the student's parents/legal guardians of the change.

- if the College is no longer able to approve the welfare arrangements of a student, as the student will not reside at approved homestay accommodation, make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the student's parents or legal guardians are notified immediately.
- advise Immigration via PRISMs:
 - as soon as practicable if the student will be cared for by a parent or nominated relative approved by Immigration and a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) is no longer required
 - within 24 hours if the College is no longer able to approve the student's welfare arrangements

Determining action plan and providing information to those affected by the incident

4.10 The **Senior Management Team** will determine the action plan and allocating individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks by devising a tasks schedule such as:

- Liaison with emergency and other services
- Liaison with students' next of kin/family members and other contacts such as agents
- Liaison with other external bodies, such as accommodation providers or foreign embassies,
- Assessing the psychological/emotional needs of those affected - Identify students and staff most closely involved and most at risk and, assess their needs, determine the nature and degree of support needed.
- Confirm access to emergency funds if necessary.
- Provide appropriate support to the student and family, for eg: arrangement for visits to hospital, arrangement for visit from/to family, hiring interpreters for overseas family, assist family to make contact with relevant departments for insurance/legal arrangements
- In the event that the incident involves a death of a student, additional support to the family will include:
 - assisting with overseas family to obtain a visa to come to Australia
 - making arrangements for funeral/memorial service/repatriation
 - obtaining a death certificate
 - assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues
- Provide appropriate support to other students. At a minimum, opportunities are provided for those involved to express and share with others the reactions that they had to the incident. Those in charge and those providing support also need extra consideration during this time.
- Formal stress management interventions required for students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, rescheduled assessment or exams)
- Counselling and managing students and staff not directly involved in the incident. Arrange a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with Counsellor/s. In this session, an opportunity is given to share the impact of the event, discuss various interpretations of the event in cultural/ethnic terms, the resulting sense of vulnerability, the experience of painful emotions and the normalisation of reactions
- Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required

4.11 **Ongoing Support** - Determining and plan for ongoing feedback and regular meetings so that the **Senior Management Team** is continually in touch and working together

- 4.12 The **Senior Management Team** will organise for reporting and recording of incident and actions taken. If the incident affects student's enrolment, the **Refusal, Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment Policy and Procedure** will be applied.
- 4.13 In the case of a student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance, the incident will be reported via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS). Key details reported will include the time, location and nature of the incident (e.g. threat, accident, death or injury), names and roles of persons involved (e.g. staff, students or other persons).
- 4.14 The **Senior Management Team** will provide information and facilitate appropriate venues for its dissemination. A written bulletin will be provided if the matter is complex. Students and academic staff have a need to accept the reality of the event, and the inevitable discussions that follow are better based on fact rather than on rumour or supposition. It is important that rumours are discounted.
- 4.15 **Resuming normal routines as soon as possible** - Once the event has been formally acknowledged - perhaps through meetings, a memorial service, or whatever is appropriate - the next step may well be to resume, as far as practicable, normal routines, so that any ongoing recovery strategies can take place against a background of predictability.
- 4.16 **Follow-up and evaluation** – as a follow-up action, the **Senior Management Team** will set in motion a Critical Incident Action Evaluation Plan to review the management and response of the critical incident to address the underlying causes and various aspects arising from the incident by:
- evaluating and reviewing the plan;
 - creating and disseminating a revised plan and its procedures for future incidents;
 - updating and publishing relevant policy and procedures; and
 - organising appropriate staff development and training.
- 4.17 **A report on significant incidents will be prepared for the School Council.**
- 4.18 Changes to the **Emergency Management Plan** and the Critical Incident Policy and Procedure, including updated resources, will be made as soon as practicable following the review and evaluation.
- 4.19 At the conclusion of the incident management, all aspects of the incident and its management will be recorded on the student files and Critical Incident File in the form of a file note.

5. FEEDBACK

Feedback and comments on this policy and procedure is welcomed by the listed responsible officer.

Appendix 1: Checklist for Staff Managing Critical Incidents

- ☐ The Principal will seek information about the incident and will request that the information is not immediately made public.
- ☐ The Principal or delegate will urgently deal with an emergency matter then call a meeting with the Critical Incident Team
- ☐ As soon as possible, the Principal will liaise with relevant staff to prepare a communication plan.
- ☐ Response and ongoing strategies including individual roles and responsibilities developed
- ☐ Where relevant, check that homestay arrangements are still suitable
- ☐ Liaison with the parents/guardians, police, doctors, hospital staff and other relevant professionals carried out
- ☐ The VRQA notified by phone, email and via PRISMs
- ☐ The Departments of Education and Immigration notified via PRISMs
- ☐ Legal assistance arranged if required
- ☐ Follow-up letters to family sent
- ☐ Incident report for Ozford records prepared and placed on student file and critical incident file
- ☐ Next of kin (parents/guardian) contacted and support provided to family and friends
- ☐ Arrangements made for visits from family and friends, e.g. accommodation, travel, crisis support and referral to appropriate services

Appendix 2: Checklist for Review and Evaluation of Critical Incident Management

How well were the following actions undertaken by the Critical Incident Management Team?

1 = poorly; 5 = very well, most appropriately. Please add comments to clarify your choice.

Question	Rating	Comments
Decision making process clear	Choose an item.	
Follow up required clear	Choose an item.	
Availability of mobile phones	Choose an item.	
Notification of and liaison with sponsor/agent if applicable	Choose an item.	
Arrangements for visits to/from family	Choose an item.	
Liaison with police, doctors, hospital staff	Choose an item.	
Hiring interpreters	Choose an item.	
Death notices	Choose an item.	
Funeral/memorial service arrangements	Choose an item.	
Refund of student's fees to pay repatriation or associated expenses	Choose an item.	
Copy of death certificate	Choose an item.	
Consideration of personal items and affairs (household and academic)	Choose an item.	
Insurance matters, OHSC coverage, ambulance fees	Choose an item.	
Formal stress management interventions required for students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, rescheduled assessment or exams)	Choose an item.	
Liaison with academic staff	Choose an item.	
Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required	Choose an item.	
Liaison with Department of Immigration and Border Protection if studies will be interrupted	Choose an item.	
Fees issue to be resolved for student unable to continue with their studies	Choose an item.	
Legal issues: helping students get access to legal assistance if required.	Choose an item.	
Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required	Choose an item.	
Follow up condolence or other letters to family	Choose an item.	
Financial assistance for families of affected person(s) if residing in Australia	Choose an item.	
Organising students/staff for hospital visits	Choose an item.	

Appendix 3: Critical Incident Recovery Timeline

In order to successfully manage a critical incident, the College will always take appropriate action and provide support during and after a critical incident. The recovery timeline following a critical incident will vary depending on the circumstances

Immediately (and within 24 hours)

- Gather the facts
- Ensure safety and welfare of staff and students and arrange for first-aid if necessary
- **Notify the Police if required**
- **Contact the parents/guardians**
- Confirm that homestay arrangement is still suitable
- Where possible notify the time and place of the debriefing to all relevant persons
- Manage the media
- Set up a recovery room
- Keep staff, students and parents informed.

Within 48-72 hours

- Arrange counselling as needed
- Provide opportunities for staff and students to talk about the incident
- Provide support to staff and helpers
- Debrief all relevant people
- Restore normal functioning as soon as possible
- Keep parents informed.

Within the first month

- Arrange a memorial service, if appropriate
- Encourage parents to participate in meeting to discuss students' welfare
- Identify behavioural changes and the possibility of post traumatic stress disorder and refer to Appendix 4 for mental health services
- Monitor progress of hospitalised staff or students
- Monitor mental and physical health of all helpers.

In the Longer Term

- Monitor staff and students for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post traumatic stress --disorder - refer for specialised treatment
- Provide support if needed.

In the Long Term

- Plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings
- Access specialist support if needed.

Appendix 4 – Crisis and Assistance Services

<p>Alcohol & Drug Information: <i>Directline</i> 1800 888 236 <i>Family Drug Help</i> 1300 660 068</p> <p>Australian Funeral Directors Association Advice Line: (03) 9859 9966</p> <p>Australian Search And Rescue Phone: (02) 6279 5000 Aviation Search and Rescue: 1800 815 257 Maritime Search and Rescue: 1800 641 792</p> <p>Coast Guard Search & Rescue Emergency Phone: (03) 9598 7003 (24 Hours)</p> <p>Centre Against Sexual Assault Sexual Assault Crisis Line: 1800 806 292</p> <p>Community Legal Centres <i>Coburg/Brunswick Community Legal & Financial Counselling Centre</i> 78 Bell Street, Coburg (03) 9350 4555 <i>Footscray Community Legal Centre</i> Level 1, 72 Buckley Street, Footscray (03) 9689 8444 <i>Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre</i> 22 Bellair Street, Kensington (03) 9376 4355 <i>Broadmeadows Community Legal Service</i> Suites 214/215 (Rooftop), Gladstone Park Shopping Centre (03) 9310 4376 <i>Fitzroy Legal Service</i> Fitzroy Town Hall, level 4, Access via the laneway and courtyard at 126 Moor Street, Fitzroy (behind the Fitzroy Library) (03) 9419 3744 <i>Darebin Community Legal Centre</i> 732 High Street, Thornbury VIC 3071 (03) 9484 7753 <i>Monash Oakleigh Legal Service</i> 60 Beddoe Avenue, Clayton North (03) 9905 4336 <i>YouthLaw - At Frontyard</i> 19 King Street, Melbourne (03) 9611 2412 <i>Tenants Union of Victoria</i> 55 Johnston Street, Fitzroy (03) 9416 2577 Coroner's Office 1300 309 519 Court Network (information, support & referral services for people attending court) T: 1800 681 614 T: (03) 8306 6966</p>	<p>Eating Disorders Foundation of Victoria Ph: (03) 9885 0318 / 1300 550 236</p> <p>Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Victoria (counselling, information and referral) Ph: (03) 9663 2939 / 1800 184 527</p> <p>Maternal And Child Health Line 132 229</p> <p>Mensline Australia 1300 78 99 78</p> <p>Mens' Referral Service (for men concerned about anger or violence) (03) 94874500 / 1300 766 491</p> <p>Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria (helpline) 8486 4222</p> <p>National Association of People Living with Aids Australia 1800 259 666</p> <p>Nurse-On-Call (24 hour health advice and information from a registered nurse) 1300 606 024</p> <p>Poisons Information Centre 131 126</p> <p>Quit Line (stopping smoking) 137 848</p> <p>Road Trauma Support Team (Confidential service for people affected by road trauma) 1300 367 797</p> <p>Safe Steps 24/7 Family Violence Response Line 1800 015 188</p> <p>SANE Mental Illness Helpline 1800 187 263</p> <p>Suicide Helpline Victoria (24/7 crisis intervention, support & information) 1300 651 251</p> <p>Teen Challenge Careline (Youth suicide prevention) 03 5852 3777</p> <p>Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450</p> <p>Womens' Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria 1800 015 188</p>
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Appendix 5: Sample Letters

Letter to Parents (Sample letter in the event of a death or injury of injury)

Dear Parents,

The school has experienced *(the sudden death, accidental injury)* of one of our students. We are deeply saddened by the death/events.

(Brief details of the incident, and in the event of a death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. *(Elaborate)* It is possible that your child may have some feelings that he/she may like to discuss with you.

You can help your child by taking time to listen and encouraging them to express their feelings.

If you would like advice or assistance you may contact the following people at the school:

Principal – *(name and contact details)*

International Student Coordinator - *(name and contact details)*

High School Coordinator - *(name and contact details)*

Yours sincerely,

Rong Liu
Principal

Letter to Parents of Under-18 student (Sample letter requesting consent for involvement of outside professional/s)

Dear Parents,

Following the recent *(critical incident)* we have arranged professional support for students in school who need particular help. *(Name)* is available to help us with this work. This support will usually consist of talking to children, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your son/daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with the psychologist. If you would like your child to receive this support please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by *(date)*.

If you would like further information on the above or to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip or telephone Ozford.

Yours sincerely,

Rong Liu
Principal

Ozford College Pty. Ltd is trading as Ozford College (CRICOS No. 02427A, Registered School No. 2016, ABN 41 102 265 225)

Last update and implemented: June 2023 To be reviewed: June 2023

Permission slip for Meeting with Psychologist

I/We consent to having our daughter/son meet with a psychologist.

I/We understand that my daughter/son may meet the psychologist(s) in an individual or group session depending on the arrangements which are thought to be most appropriate.

Name of

student: _____

Date of

Birth: _____

I would like my daughter/son to have the support being offered by the psychologist.

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian) _____ (date)

Appendix 6: Police Involvement and Coronial Investigations

While critical incidents are not only cases of sudden unexpected death, the police are required to investigate all cases of sudden unexpected death. Police actions include:

- Reporting such a death to the Coroner
- Notifying next of kin
- Obtaining official identification of the deceased (this must be done by someone who has known the deceased for some time)
- Conducting investigations on behalf of the Coroner - for example, interviewing witnesses and others who may have been involved, collecting clothing and other items for use in evidence, delivering specimens for analysis.

Coronial Investigations

Every death reported to the Coroner must be investigated. The body of the deceased will be taken to the morgue where it may be viewed by the relatives but not touched. Once the coronial inquiries are complete (and this may take some time), the body will be released to funeral directors to await instruction from the next of kin. At this stage the body may be touched.

Post Mortems (autopsies)

Most reported deaths require a post mortem examination to determine the medical cause of death. This usually involves an internal and external examination of the body, and of tissue, organ and blood specimens taken from the body. Cultural and religious objections to a post mortem may be discussed with the coroner or a court social worker. However, these objections very rarely influence the coroner's decision to conduct an autopsy.

Inquests

An inquest is a public hearing before a coroner (and occasionally a jury) to decide the circumstances of death. Once initial investigations are completed, the Coroner may (as in 90% of cases) dispense with an inquest. However, the Coroner may order an inquest or, in certain circumstances (such as murder), an inquest may be legally required.

Appendix 7: Preparing for Funerals

This information is taken from materials published by the Australian Funeral Directors Association. A variety of reading material is available. Inquiries may be directed to:

Australian Funeral Directors Association
PO Box 291
Kew East VIC 3102
(03) 9859 9966

When someone dies

When death occurs, the first practical consideration in most cases will be the need for a doctor's attendance. The deceased's doctor or the hospital authorities will explain what steps, if any, are required to establish the cause of death and complete the necessary death certificate. Meanwhile, the family may begin making their desired funeral arrangements, which can be completed when the death certificate has been signed.

Arranging a funeral

Initial interviews with the funeral director can be at a location nominated by you. While some people may have a fairly clear knowledge of the arrangements they want to make, others may want to consider a range of alternatives before making any decisions. The funeral director is there to guide and advise on the many matters which need to be considered.

Decisions to make will include:

- Time and location of the funeral
- Type of service
- Burial/cremation (reflection of the religious or ethnic attitudes and family traditions)
- Type of coffin
- Viewing arrangements
- Choice of participants
- Floral arrangements, motor vehicles and other relevant matters

The funeral director

The funeral director will take responsibility for arranging, with the family concerned, the time and place for an appropriate funeral service by coordinating and liaising with clergy members, doctors, hospitals and cemetery or crematorium officials.

The funeral director will lodge notices in the press, arrange floral tributes, provide a hearse and other vehicles, a funeral chapel and any other facilities and personnel required to carry out the wishes of the family being served. All official forms must be completed and taken to the appropriate people at the right time. The funeral director, for example, registers the death with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

The funeral ceremony

All reputable funeral directors are able to provide a broad range of services to suit the precise requirements of the bereaved family. Funerals can be as different as the people they are for, with their main purpose being to help the bereaved in the first stages of grief. The order, style and content of service can all be varied to suit the family's needs. A personal tribute from a family member or close friend, or perhaps including appropriate cultural traditions, may make the service more meaningful.

Special circumstances

Deaths from suicide and AIDS may sometimes present special problems because of old religious discrimination and/or social stigma. Nevertheless, the need for people to mourn and the rituals of the funeral are still essential for friends and family.

When there is no body (e.g. drowning accidents, abduction) it is still important to acknowledge the life of the deceased and help the family and friends to accept that death has occurred. A special memorial service to allow everyone to say goodbye and be able to get on with their grieving is essential. The use of photos, significant objects associated with the deceased's life, and perhaps candles are a great help to use in place of the body.

Grieving

Grief is not a single response, but a complicated series of feelings, emotions and even physical manifestations of a person's reaction to the bereavement. Grieving is an intensely personal process. Each death is unique and everyone affected will respond differently. Most survivors however, will pass through similar stages of grief from initial shock, numbness, and often denial and anger to realisation, acceptance and finally re-adjustment.

The intensity of grief experienced will be affected by a number of factors, including the degree of attachment to the deceased and the duration and quality of relationship with them. The greater the attachment, the longer it is likely to take to resolve grief. However it is not the passage of time itself which brings resolution, but the working through of stages of grief.

Appendix 8: General Guidelines for Teachers

Practical ideas to use with all age groups

1. Let the students tell you what happened.
2. Discuss what actually happened: give facts and sort rumour from fact.
3. Allow discussion time:
 - Where were you when it happened?
 - How did you find out?
 - What did you feel?
 - How might others feel?
 - The notion of blame is difficult. Instead try to incorporate what can be done now, into the discussion.
4. Some students like to write or draw - to recall events, people, and emotions - or to vent them.
5. Talk to the class about how they will respond and support survivors/victims during their absence (letters, visits etc.) and when they return to Ozford.

Practical ideas for use with adolescents

1. Group discussions are important and useful. They allow time to express and normalise their reactions and it is helpful if 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.
2. 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 right now - contribute to a memorial service, practical support for victims and families?
 - What can we do in longer term? Discuss possible improvements to the way the situation was managed – what could we do better?
3. Plan a follow-up time. Offer referral for individual counselling. Let students know what sort of help is available and that it is okay to seek help. Peer support can be valuable if peers are emotionally able to handle it.
4. If moved to tears, don't be afraid to let students/adults see - it can be very supportive and empathic.

For Staff: Coping with your own reactions to a critical incident/event.

It is important that teachers pay attention to their own mental and physical well-being and take time to ensure that they look after themselves, as well as their students, when a critical incident occurs.

Individuals have a wide range of responses to critical incidents and may be surprised by their own reactions or those of others. An individual's memories or experiences, and/or the accumulation of critical incidents, may increase the likelihood of a particular incident triggering a personal crisis.

Effects of critical events may include:

- Physical effects, such as changes in appetite and/or libido, sleep disturbances, increased susceptibility to illness, breathlessness, dry mouth, tremor and fatigue and increased sensitivity to noise, light and smell.
- A range of emotional responses, which may include anger, irritation, sadness, hostility, aggression, feeling inadequate, and denial.
- Altered thought patterns such as confusion, disorientation, forgetfulness, difficulty with tasks and normal routines, flashbacks, nightmares, poor judgment, and inability to assess others and oneself realistically.

The longer-term effects may include burnout or exhaustion, lack of interest in work or life in general, withdrawal from family and friends, escapism and over work. These responses impact upon family, social and work relationships and activities.

Appendix 9:

Victorian Department of Education resources: Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning
[Policy | education.vic.gov.au](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/policy)

Student Critical Incident Report

Name of student:

Teacher: _____ Course:

Time, date and place of incident:

Description of incident:

Action taken by teacher/staff:

Follow up Action:

