



College council will review this policy every three years or as directed by DET

**Date approved:** November 2017

**Date of next review:** 2020

## RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Doncaster Secondary College recognises that critical incidents can occur at school anytime. These include but may not be limited to:

- the sudden death of a student or staff member
- the suicide of a student or staff member
- witnessing murder, death or severe injury or disaster at the school
- significant vandalism of school property
- terminal illness of a member of the school community
- natural disaster
- unusual or unfavourable media attention

The school recognises that these incidents can evoke strong emotions, stress and have the potential to overwhelm members of the school community and their ability to cope and function during or after the incident has occurred. The Critical Incident Policy addresses six phases in which management and leadership should ensure the incident is adequately addressed and that the physical, social and emotional state of groups and individuals are acknowledged.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The school will have a critical incident management team that comprises of:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Leadership Team Members
- School Council President
- Other nominated staff (at the discretion of the Principal)

### Phase 1 – Identification:

- Identification of potential and actual critical incidents will help individuals and groups begin the process of readjustment and acceptance;
- The management team will assess individual critical incidents on their merits and put in place procedures to support all key stakeholders.

### Phase 2 – Critical Incident Management:

- Using a timeline as determined by the Critical Incident Management Team, the following steps need to be completed as appropriate:
  - Obtain factual information;
  - Activate Critical Incident Management Team;
  - Full staff briefing to inform all staff;
  - Office staff provided with a written statement;

- Make contact with families of those at risk;
- Identify at risk students, staff and parents and refer to the Principal, Assistant Principal, Well-being staff and if necessary organise external counselling support;
- Students informed in class groups, ideally at the same time. Teachers to be given clear, factual written information to ensure consistency. Students will be offered support. Check for absentees and the Principal or delegate to notify these students when next at school;
- Parents will be informed via a newsfeed of the facts, school's response and the facilities for parents for support;
- The Department of Education and Training (DET) will be informed through the Emergency and Security Management Unit (03) 9589 6266;
- Any statements and contact with media MUST be directed through the Principal or Assistant Principals. No staff member is to speak to the media.
- Debrief with staff daily and keep them informed. A member of the Principal Team will contact the DET Media Unit for advice.

### **Phase 3 – Counselling Team:**

- Students, staff and parents will have varying degrees of responses to a critical incident that may require ongoing and regular support at school and at home.
- It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team and the Critical Incident Team to put in place counselling and appropriate intervention. Student Welfare Leader, Chaplain, School Psychologist and any additional guidance and social workers may be provided for short term or ongoing support.

### **Phase 4 – Re-Establishment of Staff and Students:**

- A sense of normality needs to be established at the school. Although there has been a significant critical incident, regular patterns of management and school life need to be resumed. These can be presented through reinforcing school rules and norms, logical consequences for inappropriate behaviour, newsletter carrying positive aspects of school life and parents encouraged to contact the school.

### **Phase 5 – Debriefing:**

- Bringing closure to the critical incident involves a formal debrief with parents as appropriate and staff. This may take the form of:
  - Formal meeting with professional input
  - Question time to address any unanswered questions
  - Staff and parent session to seek additional information
  - Organisation of a ritual of closure

### **Phase 6 – Critical Incident Review:**

- The Leadership Team, Critical Incident Management Team and any other relevant personnel will review the management and processes that have taken place and make adjustments where necessary for future actions.