



**EXCELSIA
COLLEGE**
Sydney - Australia

Document Name

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Introduction

In the event of a critical incident, Excelsia College recognises that appropriate planning and infrastructure must be in place to ensure the provision of all necessary support services. This document outlines Excelsia College procedures for managing a critical incident, ensuring that Excelsia College has:

- an effective approach in responding to critical incidents as they occur;
- appropriate support and counselling services available to those affected;
- appropriate training and information resources provided to staff.

Under Standard 6 of the *National Code 2007*, higher education providers must support students to:

- adjust to study and life in Australia;
- achieve their learning goals; and
- achieve satisfactory academic progress towards meeting the course learning outcomes.

Under Standard 6.4 the registered provider must have a documented critical incident policy together with procedures that covers the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, required follow-up to the incident, and records of the incident and action taken.

The Critical Incident Manual is designed to assist both those with primary responsibility for the management of critical incidents and other staff and students to respond appropriately in the event of a critical incident.

Policy Statement

Excelsia College recognises and accepts the duty of care owed to its students in respect of the planning and management of critical incidents.

Scope

The critical incident procedures apply to domestic and international students enrolled at Excelsia College. In the case of critical incidents occurring on-campus, the Work Health and Safety (WHS) policies and procedures cover all persons on site at the time of the incident – students, staff and visitors.

Definition

A critical incident is defined by the National Code as *'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'*.

Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- missing students;
- severe verbal or psychological aggression;
- accidents, fires, natural disasters;
- death, serious injury or any threat of these;
- issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse.
- terrorist activities.

Non-life threatening events could still qualify as critical incidents.

Staff Training

The College is committed to the professional development of staff in relation to responding to critical incidents. The Chief Executive will be responsible for initiating and coordinating the provision of staff training and engaging, where necessary, professional support. Excelsia College staff will be made aware of the critical incident policy and procedures and be given appropriate training to ensure the duty of care for domestic and international students is prominent in their thinking.

Review and Evaluation

A review and evaluation of the response to the critical incident will be conducted after each critical incident, and the procedures reviewed by the Critical Incident Management Team and/or other stakeholders. Changes to the policy and procedures, including updating resources, will be made as soon as practicable following the review and evaluation.

Procedures

1. Guiding Principles

These procedures are intended to serve both as an educational aid that encourages prior thought and preparation for potential crises and as an immediate response document that can be utilised quickly in the event of an emergency. This document is not intended to anticipate every scenario; however, it is meant to be thorough enough to provide a structured plan for responding to various situations that are deemed critical.

When a student dies or sustains serious injury, the College may be required to assist the student's family. This may include:

- hiring interpreters
- making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation
- obtaining a death certificate
- assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues
- assisting with visa issues.

The safety and security of students and staff are the top priorities of the College during any critical incident or crisis. The Critical Incident Management Team will prioritise attending to essential, initial steps to ensure protection of lives, and/or seek immediate care for injured or affected students. Reporting and recording will take second priority, and be completed as soon as possible.

2. Action Plan

The Critical Incident Management Team will set in motion a critical incident action plan to manage various aspects arising from the incident, including communication strategies. This will include:

- creating and disseminating a plan and its procedures;
- a review of the plan;
- staff development and training;
- media management.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The CIMT will consist of the following full-time staff:

- Chief Executive (Chair)
- Head of Counselling (Coordinator)
- Director of Finance and Administration
- Chaplain
- Registrar

- Director of People and Culture (Minutes, Records), and
- Other key stakeholders as determined by the Team.

Responsibilities

When a critical incident occurs, the Chief Executive will normally call a meeting of the CIMT. The CIMT is responsible through the Head of the School of Counselling for:

- assessing risks and response actions;
- liaison with emergency and other services;
- contact with students' relatives and other appropriate contacts;
- liaison with other external bodies, such as home stays, carers or foreign embassies;
- counselling and managing students and staff not directly involved in the incident;
- writing reports for the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE) and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC);
- maintaining appropriate student files and the critical incident file.

3. Reporting

The Head of Counselling will be responsible for completing required reports on every critical incident for domestic and international students. The *Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act) requires the College to notify DIISRTE and DIAC as soon as practical after the incident. In the case of the death of an international student or other absence affecting the student's attendance, the Registrar will report the incident via PRISMS. Reporting will take account of the information privacy principles at <http://www.privacy.gov.au/publications/index.html#G>

In addition, the following may need to be notified:

- student accommodation or Homestay provider;
- Library;
- Information Technology Services.

4. Recording

The Head of Counselling will be responsible for recording all information pertaining to a critical incident with the support of staff and and/or students involved, and for maintaining these records in the Critical Incident File. The Registrar will maintain appropriate records in the student file. In addition to the student database, Excelsia College maintains hard copies of student details on student files, including student's current address and telephone numbers, emergency contact details, next of kin details, agent or sponsor (if applicable), and medical information if applicable.

Key Details to be Recorded

Key details to record 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, domestic or international student). Any action taken in regard to a critical incident will be recorded on an Incident Report to include outcomes or evidence if the incident is referred to another person or agency.

5. Response

In the case of an on-campus incident, the staff member first on the scene will taken any necessary life saving or protection measures, such as administration of first aid or contacting the nearest First Aid Officer. A staff member receiving notification of a critical incident on or off campus contacts the Chief Executive or the Head of Counselling. The Chief Executive or Head of the School of Counselling urgently deals with any emergency situation, and then convenes a meeting of the CIMT and other staff involved to make decisions as to how to proceed. The CIMT will:

- create for themselves a clear understanding of the known facts;
- plan an immediate response;

- plan ongoing strategies;
- allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks; and
- appoint one member of the Team to keep records of meeting content and decisions.

Communication

As soon as possible the Chief Executive will liaise with relevant staff to prepare a communication plan and nominate a spokesperson. Communication may include:

- response and ongoing strategies including individual roles and responsibilities
- liaison with police, doctors, hospital staff and other relevant professionals
- legal assistance if required
- follow-up letters to family
- incident report for the College's records.

The Chief Executive is the only person who will address the media. No other staff member is to speak to the media about the incident.

Immediate Response

The following issues will be considered.

- Contact with next of kin/significant others – ascertain the most appropriate manner of contact (home phone, mobile, etc).
- Arrangements for informing staff and students.
- Guidelines to staff about what information to give students.
- A written bulletin to staff if the matter is complex.
- Briefing staff and delegating a staff member to deal with telephone and personal enquiries (Receptionist, PA, etc).
- Managing media/publicity.
- Identification of students and staff members most closely involved and thus most at risk:
 - those directly involved
 - personal friends and family of those involved
 - others who have experienced a similar past trauma, and
 - other students, staff, etc.
- Arranging a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with Counsellors. 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.
- Organising a tasks timetable for the next hour/s, day/s, etc.
- Planning ongoing feedback and regular meetings so that the coordinating team is continually in touch and working together.
- Confirming access to emergency funds if necessary.

Ongoing and Follow up Response

- These issues may need to be discussed at subsequent meetings of the CIMT:
 - WHO will FOLLOW UP?
 - Availability of mobile phones
 - Notification of and liaison with Sponsor/Agent if applicable
 - Arrangements for visits to/from Family
 - Liaison with Police, Doctors, Hospital Staff
 - Hiring Independent Interpreters
 - Death Notices

- Funeral/Memorial Service Arrangements
- Refund of student's fees to pay repatriation or associated expenses
- Copy of Death Certificate
- Consideration of personal items and affairs (household and academic)
- Insurance Matters, Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC), Ambulance Cover
- Formal Stress Management interventions required for students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, rescheduled assessment or exams)
- Liaison with Academic Staff
- Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required
- Liaison with DIAC if studies will be interrupted
- Fees issue to be resolved if student cannot continue with their studies
- Legal Issues: helping students get access to legal assistance if required
- Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required
- Follow up condolence or other letters to Family
- Financial Assistance for families of affected person(s) if residing in Australia
- Organising students/staff for hospital visits.

Recovery Timeline

The successful management of critical incidents depends on the College taking appropriate action and providing support during and after a critical incident. The recovery timeline following a critical incident varies, depending on the circumstances. Here is a general guideline.

- **Immediately (and within 24 hours)**

- Gather the facts;
- Ensure safety and welfare of staff and students and arrange for first-aid if necessary;
- 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;
- 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 Health Contacts for Mental Health Services;
- Monitor progress of hospitalised staff or students;

- Monitor mental and physical health of all helpers;
- Debrief all relevant persons.
- **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.

Contact Information and Emergency Numbers

Emergency Services:

POLICE 000
 AMBULANCE 000
 FIRE 000

Role/Agency	Location/hours	Numbers
Chief Executive		9819 8807
Head of the School of Counselling		9819 8834
First Aid Officers		See noticeboard
Counselling Centre		9819 8835
<i>healthdirect</i> Australia	24 hours health advice line www.healthdirect.org.au	1800 022222
Local Doctors	Shop 45, Level 2, Macquarie Shopping Centre, 197 Herring Road, Macquarie Park	9878 6666
Local Pharmacy/Chemist	Priceline Pharmacy Corner Herring and Waterloo Road, Macquarie Shopping Centre	9887 1115
Hospitals	Ryde Hospital Denistone Road, Eastwood	9858 7888
	Concord Repatriation General Hospital Hospital Road Concord	9767 5000
	Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Missenden Road Camperdown	9515 6111
State Emergency Services		132500
National Security Hotline		1800 123400
Mental Health Information		9816 5688
Poisons Information Centre		131126
Rape Crisis Centre		9819 6565
Domestic Violence Centre	24 hours	1800 656463
Crisis Care		1800 650840
Interpreting Services		131450

CRITICAL INCIDENT FLOWCHART

1. IMMEDIATE ACTION

Staff member(s) (witness to incident or first contacted)...**Gather factual information and**
1. Contact Emergency Services - Dial 000



<p>Note: <i>Assess situation: focus on immediate safety of other students and staff</i></p>	<p>Staff member(s) (witness to incident or first contacted)...</p> <p>2. Ensure safety & welfare of staff and students</p> <p>3. Contact First Aid Officer</p> <p>4. Administer first-aid until ambulance arrives</p>
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NB: Once police or fire brigade arrive at the College they will determine if other resources such as State Emergency Services (SES) are required to assist.

Critical Incident Management Team member to liaise with emergency services



<p>Note: <i>Contact Chief Executive within the hour</i> <i>Debrief & counselling information as soon as practicable</i></p>	<p>5. Staff: Contact Critical Incident Coordinator (Head of School of Counselling)</p> <p>6. Staff: Give facts of the situation</p> <p>7. Staff: Receive advice from Head of School of Counselling on debriefing and counselling</p> <p>7a. Chief Executive: Manage incoming inquiries (and outgoing information via web, phone...)</p>
<p>Note: <i>Within 24 hours</i></p>	<p>8. Critical Incident Management Team: Prepare a written statement</p>



<p>Note: <i>Within 48 hours receive briefing from critical incident team</i></p>	<p>2. Chief Executive or Delegate: Inform colleagues</p>
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<p>Note: <i>Within 48 hours</i></p>	<p>3. Head of School of Counselling: Contact parents or families/friends of affected person</p>
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<p>Note: <i>Within 48 hours</i></p>	<p>11. Head of School of Counselling /Staff: Complete "Incident Report" form</p>
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2. ADDITIONAL ACTION (when appropriate)

Chief Executive: Convene brief meeting of the Critical Incident Management Committee with Management Committee to	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss intervention plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtain executive support



Contact Local Support Personnel		
Support Personnel	Name	Telephone
Counsellors	Counseling Centre	9719 1924
Nursing and emergency staff	Hospital	Ryde: 9858 7888 Macquarie: 9888 1222 Concord: 9767 5000 Sydney: 9382 7111 Rozelle: 9556 9100



Chief Executive: Convene full staff meeting of teaching and administrative staff to	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss action plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow staff response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decide on how students will be informed or given additional information



Resource Officers/Student Services/Support: Set up a first aid room		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide fluids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comfortable chairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support personnel



Head of School of Counselling: Inform students of	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facts of the incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • counselling services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow student discussion or response



Head of School of Counselling and/or Counsellors convene with First Aid Officers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify "at risk" students and staff • Be aware of others who have experienced trauma • List of students involved



Chief Executive: Contact parents or families of "at risk" students and staff



Head of School of Counselling: Arrange debriefing for "at risk" students and staff
Organise for referrals to professional counsellors if required



Student Services/Counsellor: **Inform all parents via College website**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The facts of the critical incident | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the College's response plans |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• possible reaction of students | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sources of help for families |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• encourage two-way communication between parents and the school | |



Critical Incident Management Team: **Restore regular routine as soon as practicable**

- All staff can help here



Critical Incident Management Team: **Obtain updated factual information**

- continue to inform staff, students and parents



Critical Incident Management Team: **Continue to monitor well-being of students and staff**

- All staff to report new information to Critical Incident Management Team
- Staff may use rapport with students to counsel or refer on to professional body... Critical Incident Management Team to be informed of all referrals
- Recovery time for staff involved

CHECKLIST FOR FOLLOW-UP, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

A review and evaluation of the response to the critical incident will be conducted after each critical incident, using the following checklist, which may itself be reviewed (GEN-F16).

How well were the following actions undertaken by the Critical Incident Coordinating Group?
1 = poorly; 5 = very well, most appropriately. Please add comments to clarify your choice.

Question	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Decision maker clear						
Follow up clear						
Availability of mobile phones						
Notification of and liaison with Sponsor/Agent if applicable						
Arrangements for visits to/from Family						
Liaison with Police, Doctors, Hospital Staff						
Hiring Independent Interpreters						
Death Notices						
Funeral/Memorial Service Arrangements						
Refund of student's fees to pay repatriation or associated expenses						
Copy of Death Certificate						
Consideration of personal items and affairs (household and academic)						
Insurance Matters, OHSC Coverage, Ambulance Cover						
Formal stress management interventions required for students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, rescheduled assessment or exams)						
Liaison with Academic Staff						
Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals						
Liaison with DIAC if studies will be interrupted						
Fees issue to be resolved for student unable to continue with their studies						
Legal Issues: helping students get access to legal assistance if required						
Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals						
Follow up condolence or other letters to Family						
Financial Assistance for families of affected person(s) if living in Australia						
Organising hospital visits						

References and Related Documents

Critical Incident Manual
ASC Crisis Management Plan
Work Health & Safety Policy
ACPET National Code 2007 Easy User Reference Guide
ISANA Critical Incidents Kit
ISCA Support Handbook National Code 2007
Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000