

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

PURPOSE

Melbourne Montessori School ('MMS') is committed to exercising the utmost duty of care possible for all students and staff at the School. This policy is designed to help any of those affected by a traumatic incident. This policy will apply to the Crisis Response Team affected by a traumatic incident could be a small number of people or might include up to and including the whole school body.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Melbourne Montessori School Emergency Management Plan.

SCOPE

1. Crisis Response Team
2. Critical Incident Plan
3. Communication Protocols
4. Resources
5. Recording and Reporting
6. Managing the Media

DEFINITIONS

Critical incident: is a traumatic event, or the threat of such which causes extreme stress, fear or injury. This may include but is not limited to:

- serious injury, illness or death of a student or staff member
- students or staff lost or injured on an excursion
- a missing student
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- physical assault
- student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence
- natural disaster e.g. earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm or extremes of temperature
- fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
- extreme social issues e.g. social media problem, drug use, sexual assault.

PROCEDURES

1. Crisis Response Team

MMS has an Emergency Management Plan which incorporates a Crisis Response Team whose task is to deal specifically with the emergency itself and then to deal specifically with its aftermath. The Crisis Response Team is made up of the Principal, Business Manager and Deputy Principals. This team is responsible for the management of critical incidents at the School, or off campus in the case of camps etc.

The responsibilities of the team include:

- 1.1 risk assessment of all hazards and any aspect of the situation which may require emergency action;
- 1.2 establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services, e.g. police, fire brigade; ambulance, hospital, Poisons Information Centre, community health services etc;
- 1.3 24-hour access to contact details for all students and their families;
- 1.4 24-hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident, e.g. school counsellor, Student Services, legal services, school security, immediate development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified;
- 1.5 communication of planned procedures;
- 1.6 assisting with implementation of the critical incident plan;
- 1.7 arranging appropriate staff development to assist at critical incidents;

- 1.8 annual review of the critical incident plan;
- 1.9 budget allocation for possible emergencies.

2. Critical Incident Plans

All critical incident plans need to:

First 24 hours

- 2.1 Be made immediately and assign responsibilities among relevant staff members, they must cover actions to be taken and outline the timelines for the actions.
- 2.2 Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy.
- 2.3 Assign duties and resources to specific school staff.
- 2.4 Identify where help is needed from any emergency services/hospital/medical services.
- 2.5 Communicate information to staff, parents and family members.
- 2.6 Start to complete the Critical Incident Checklist and start recording information.
- 2.7 Prepare a media response, if required.
Contact Chris Newman of Civic Reputation Tel: 9620 9300.
- 2.8 Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved.

Within 48 – 72 hours

- 2.9 Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing).
- 2.10 Provide staff and students with factual information as appropriate.
- 2.11 Aim to get back to the 'normal routine', without a set time frame.

After 72 hours

- 2.12 Identify any other people who may be affected by the critical incident and access support services for affected community members.
- 2.13 Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties.
- 2.14 Provide accurate information to staff and students where appropriate.
- 2.15 Evaluate critical incident management.
- 2.16 Investigate and plan for any possible longer term disturbances, e.g. inquests, legal proceedings, anniversaries.

3. Communication Protocols

The Deputy Principals inform:

- all staff (including admin staff),
- the Chairman of the School Board,
- Consultants (eg. community counsellors) as necessary.

The Principal informs:

- the student/s and parents of those involved, being mindful of legal and privacy constraints,
- any siblings and close friends of the victims individually or contacts their parents to ask whether they would prefer to speak to their children,
- the rest of the school if appropriate.

ALL parents/students are informed of counselling and assistance available. (It is most important to inform ALL students of this assistance, as we can be certain of the social links that exist. For example, a tragic incident occurring to a Grade 6 student, may have a large impact on a Grade 3 student who is a family friend of the victim).

4. Resources

The nature of critical incidents is such that resources cannot always be provided in anticipation of events. The critical incident team uses its discretion to provide adequate resources – both physical and personnel – to meet the needs of specific situations.

NB: Teachers need to be conscious of not taking on roles which are not appropriate. Staff are generally not trained counsellors, there are organised referral systems and structures in place to protect the integrity of individual staff members and the students.

Alma Family Therapy Centre is available for staff and parents to access any counselling required.

5. Recording and Reporting

The accurate recording of critical incidents at or involving the School is essential to organisational learning surrounding critical incidents. Organisation learning provides direction for the future and may assist in preventing future critical incidents. Documentation of critical incidents is required at the identification of the critical incident, during the critical incident and when the matter has been finalised. Documentation is best done as soon as possible after an incident has occurred.

5.1 Recording

When identifying and managing a critical incident it is important to accurately record all relevant facts and actions taken. The Critical Incident Checklist must be completed.

Relevant facts may include:

- student details
- date and time of the incident
- other parties involved
- people notified (see checklists)
- stakeholders notified or involved
- decisions made
- follow up action
- members of Crisis Response Team
- chronological documentation of events

5.2 Reporting

When the critical incident has been finalised the school's Critical Incident Register must be updated. A formal report on all critical incidents must be made to the School Board.

6. Managing the Media

- 6.1 All facts should be checked before speaking to the media.
- 6.2 The Business Manager will manage access of the media to the scene, to staff, students and relatives and will have all media enquiries directed through them.
- 6.3 The Principal and Board will determine what the official School response will be and in the first instance, the Business Manager will be the appointed spokesperson in a crisis.
- 6.4 Later, depending on the nature of the crisis, the Principal may be required to speak to the media – possibly in conjunction with the Chair of the School Board.
- 6.5 If accurate information is unavailable, or the issue is of a sensitive nature, the Business Manager will explain that questions cannot be answered at this time.
- 6.6 Avoid implying blame or fault for any part of the incident as this can have significant legal implications later on.
- 6.7 Further details available in the School's Media Crisis Policy.

EVALUATION

After every critical incident, a meeting of the critical incident team will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required. If appropriate this process will incorporate feedback from all staff, students and local community representatives.

REVIEWED: 2017

ATTACHMENT**CRITICAL INCIDENT CHECKLIST****NOTIFY AUTHORITIES & KEY PERSONNEL**

Notify Emergency Services (Ambulance/Fire/Police) as necessary

Mobilise any emergency personnel eg Fire Wardens etc

Notify Management Group Members

Notify Class Teacher

Notify Parent or Guardian (as appropriate)

Notify Chairman of School Board

VERIFY INCIDENT & RESPOND

Identify all those involved/affected

Determine outline of incident

Prepare any necessary statements

Develop phone and email contact list specific to the incident

Commence record of the events

Inform Insurance company

COORDINATE PLANNING WITH FAMILY

Identify a family spokesperson

Inform family contacts

Liaise with family and insurance company over dealing with students medical costs

IN THE EVENT OF DEATH

Identify appropriate counselling/support personnel for students and teachers

Liaise as necessary with Police and family members

Consider the planning of a memorial service

INFORM/INVOLVE THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY (as appropriate in each incident)

Facts of the event

Safety issues

Availability of counselling

The families wishes

Planning of any memorial services

EMERGENCY CONTACTS - EXTERNAL**ORGANISATION CONTACT PHONE NO.****Emergency Services Fire/Police/Ambulance 000 (or 112 from mobiles)**

Police 9524 9500 / 000

Fire Brigade 000

Bush Fire Brigade 000

Ambulance Bookings 000

Local Hospital Monash Medical Hospital 9594 6666

Royal Children's Hospital 9345 5522

State Emergency Services 132 500

Poisons Information Centre 131 126

Bereavement Care Centre: Alma Family Therapy 9500 2411

Centacare Grief Support: Alma Family Therapy 9500 2411

Salvo Care Line 13 72 58

KEY PERSONNEL IN THE CASE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS**FIRE/ BOMB THREAT OR ANY OTHER EVACUATION OR CONTAINMENT**

Business Manager: Pravin Ramdany 0488 771 162

Chief Warden: Gay Wales 0424 466 536

Fire Wardens: