



Critical Incidents

Rationale

Templeton Primary School recognises that critical incidents can occur at school anytime. These may include but not limited to the sudden death of a student or staff member, suicide of a student or staff member, witnessing the murder, death or severe injury or disaster at school, significant vandalism of school property, terminal illness of a member of the school community, natural disaster or 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 ability to cope and function during or after the incident has occurred. The Critical Incident Plan Policy addresses six phases in which key management and leadership follow to ensure the incident is adequately addressed and that the physical, social and emotional state of groups and individuals are acknowledged.

Implementation

Phase 1 - Identification

Identification of potential and actual critical incidents will help individuals and groups cope with the incident and begin the process of readjustment and acceptance.

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

- o Principal
- o Assistant Principals
- o Leadership Team Members
- o School Council President

- o Other nominated teacher (at the discretion of the Principal)

It is the responsibility of this management team to assess individual critical incidents on their merits and act accordingly to put in place procedures to support all key stakeholders.

Phase 2 – Critical Incident Management

Using an appropriate timeline as deemed by the Critical Incident Management Team, the following checklist is to be followed and depending on the nature of the incident, select appropriate steps and measures.

- o Obtain factual information
- o Leadership Team meet and activate Critical Incident Management Team
- o Full staff briefing to inform all staff
- o Office staff provided with a written statement
- o Identify at risk students, staff and parents and refer to the Principal, Assistant Principals and if necessary counselling support.
- o Make contact with families of those at risk
- o Students be informed in class groups, ideally at the same time. Teachers to be given clear, factual written information to ensure consistency. Check for absentees and the Principal to notify these students when next at school.
- o Parents will be informed XUNO of the facts, school's response and facilities for parents for support.
- o The Department of Education (DET) will be informed through the emergency and Security management Unit (03) 9589 6266
- o 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.

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 Critical Incident Team to put in place counselling and appropriate intervention. School 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 regained. These can be presented through reinforcing school rules and norms, school bells return to normal, homework, logical consequences for inappropriate behaviour, newsletter carrying positive aspects of school life and parents encouraged to visit the school.

Phase 5 – Debriefing

Bringing closure to the critical incident involves a formal debrief with parents and staff. This may take in the form of:

- o Formal meeting with professional input
- o Question time to address any unanswered questions
- o Staff and parent session to seek additional information
- o Organisation of a ritual of closure – morning tea or assembly

Phase 6 – Critical Incident Review

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

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the school's three-year review cycle.

Last ratified by School Council in May 2022