

POLICY TITLE: Critical Incident

Purpose

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) recognises that critical incidents can arise that may impact staff, students and the College community. This policy is designed to assist in planning, preparing, managing and responding to emergencies, disasters and other critical incidents and has also been developed to reflect Photography Studies College (Melbourne)'s practices that comply with "Standard 6 – Student Support Services" of the "National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students". The procedure provides a framework for the implementation of an effective response.

Policy

Photography Studies College (Melbourne) applies this policy to all staff, students, contractors working on campus and visitors who have had exposure to a critical incident; either at the College or in transit to or from the College. It also includes staff and students who may have been exposed to a critical incident whilst travelling on behalf of the College.

This policy together with the procedures covers the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, the required follow-up to the incident, the records made of the incident and the action taken.

Critical incidents are traumatic events or the threat of such that occur suddenly and unexpectedly which causes extreme stress, fear or injury. They may be an emergency or disaster, with effects on staff, students and the operations of the College or some other physical event; a series of events; or a personal or psychological trauma that has severe immediate impact and potentially long term effects.

Critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:

- Death/suicide;
- Serious accident or injury;
- Psychiatric emergency, especially psychosis and mania;
- Deprivation of liberty, threats of violence, assault, rape/sexual assault, aggravated burglary, biological or chemical weapons;
- Fire, bomb, explosion, gas/chemical hazards, discharge of firearms;
- Threat of widespread infection or contamination;
- Natural disaster
- Civil unrest;
- Severe Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) risk

Procedures

The procedure deals with both the immediate actions that need to be undertaken in the event of a critical incident, the required follow-up to the incident, the way in which the College community is informed and any follow-up measures that need to be

organised. This procedure articulates a plan for delivering a timely and coordinated response to critical incidents and ensures that the reported critical incidents are:

- Responded to, or resolved, in the best possible way for the student(s), their families, and for the College community
- Adequately documented
- Reported to relevant staff within the College and any relevant government agencies
- Communicated to the family in an appropriate way

In the case of a critical incident, the Leadership Group including the Managing Director, Director of Communications & Students and Academic Director will be immediately informed. A Critical Incident Team including the Communications & Students Officer will be formed and other Photography Studies College (Melbourne) staff as required. The Team will coordinate the College response to the incident and become the Critical Incident Team.

1. Responsibility

The responsibilities of the Critical Incident Team include, but may not be limited to:

- Assessment of the risk, which may require emergency action.
- Contact with all relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, community emergency services, hospital, poisons information centre, community health services.
- Contact with next of kin/nominated emergency contact.
- Detailing arrangements for informing staff and students.
- Devising guidelines for staff about what information to give students.
- Delegation of a staff member to deal with telephone/counter enquiries.
- Ensuring the site is secure for any potential police investigation.
- Dealing with external media
- Notifying appropriate Government agencies

2. Action undertaken

To ensure the required notification of any critical incident, Photography Studies College (Melbourne) will ensure that contact has been made with any student and international student (or their designated emergency contact person) if the student has been absent from all their classes for more than two consecutive sessions.

In the event of an incident involving an International Student, the Critical Incident Team will ensure the following is undertaken:

- Monitor the condition of and provide appropriate support to the international student/s through any period of treatment/convalescence.
- Ensure where appropriate that family members and other relevant people are kept informed of the condition of the international student.
- Liaise with the police and other emergency services personnel.
- Advise and assist any family members who decide to travel to Australia to support the international student/s with travel and accommodation requirements.

3. Additional assistance

In the event of the death of an International Student, the Critical Incident Team will ensure the following is undertaken:

- Contact the family and determine their wishes regarding repatriation of the body, personal effects, religious observances etc.
- Inform the relevant Consulate and discuss the allocation of roles and responsibilities
- Coordinate the repatriation of the body and personal effects in line with the family's wishes and in accordance with Australian regulations.
- Organise the sending of a letter of condolence to the family.

PSC may also further assist the student's family. This may include:

- Assisting with personal items and affairs;
- Assisting with accommodation in Melbourne;
- Obtaining a death certificate;
- Arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation;
- Being mindful of religious and cultural observances.
- Organising interpreters

4. Recording of incident and subsequent action taken

A critical incident report will be completed as soon as practical after a critical incident has occurred. This report may be forwarded to the relevant Commonwealth Government department if appropriate.

The content of the report will include:

- Describe the **context** of the incident.
- Describe the **actual incident** in detail.
- Explain why the incident was **critical**.
- Explain **the actions that were performed to meet the critical incident**.
- Detail what was learned from the incident
- Identify actions that could have been performed better in relation to the management of the critical incident.

5. Debriefing and Support

The Leadership Team will ensure that there is an opportunity for all staff who play a significant role in the response to participate in a debriefing session. This session will also provide an opportunity for staff to talk about their own reactions to the event.

6. Evaluation and Review of Management Plan

- After each critical incident, a meeting of the Critical Incident Team will be held to evaluate the critical incident report, the effectiveness of the management plan and to make any modifications as required.
- The evaluation process will incorporate feedback gathered from all students, staff and local community representatives.
- An evaluation report will be made available to all staff on the Critical Incident Team.

Definitions

Nil

Related Documentation

Policies

Monitoring, Notifying & Reporting International Students
Privacy and Personal Information Policy
Records Management

Procedures Forms & Documents

PRISMS Course Variation Form (restricted access)
Critical Incident Report
Enrolment Form
International Student Contact Records Management Procedure

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Julie Moss - Managing Director

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