

## CRITICAL/NON-CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING PROCEDURE

This procedure must be read in conjunction and interpreted in line with the *Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting* policy.

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## 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1. The *Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting Procedures* provides schools with additional procedures to implement the *Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting policy* ( 2015).
- 1.2. The *Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting Procedures* must be considered in conjunction with the *Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting policy* ( 2015).

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. Critical and/or emergency incident – an event that causes severe impact, such as significant disruption to the school routine, an emergency management situation, or threat to the safety of students and staff.

It may be sudden or protracted, extremely dangerous, involve police or emergency services personnel, and generally be outside the normal range of experience or expectation of the people affected.

It may involve:

- a siege/hostage situation
- terrorist activity
- natural disaster – bushfire, flood, earthquake, severe storm
- a bomb threat
- a lock down, evacuation or temporary closure
- disappearance or suspicious removal of a student
- death on campus or a at a school activity

- 2.1.1. **All critical incidents must be reported immediately to the Directorate.**

- 2.2. Non-critical Incident - An event which is unanticipated or outside the accepted social norm, but which, in the experience of the general community, would not be considered an

extraordinary occurrence or situation, and which the school has strategies and procedures in place to manage with little or no external assistance. It may involve:

- accident or injury
- harassment
- bullying
- misconduct
- sexual harassment
- racism
- conflict
- theft
- brief interruption to the supply of a utility
- intruders
- first aid
- minor flooding
- minor property damage
- absenteeism.

2.2.1. **Any non-critical incident that deteriorates, resulting in serious injury or harm, puts the safety of students, staff or visitors at significant risk, or poses a real threat to property or the school environment, should be treated as a Critical Incident and reported immediately to the Directorate.**

### 3. PROCEDURES

#### 3.1. Determining the level of criticality

3.1.1. The definitions in the *Critical/Non-Critical Incident Management and Reporting* policy provide a clear description of a critical incident and a non-critical incident. If there remains any doubt in the mind of the principal or their delegate about the level of criticality, they should err on the side of caution and treat the incident as critical.

3.1.2. In situations where an incident of bullying, sexual harassment, racism or harassment escalates to the point where it poses a significant immediate threat to the safety of staff and/or students, or the situation becomes violent, it should be treated as a critical incident.

#### 3.2. Reporting

The fact sheet ***Determining Incident Criticality*** (Appendix 1), and flow chart ***Critical Incident Reporting Process*** (available internally through *Index*), enable principals to determine which incidents must be reported immediately to the Directorate and the mandated reporting process to be followed.

3.2.1. Any incident involving international students outside of activities organised or directly related to educational outcomes **must be reported immediately** to the Deputy Director General Education Strategy.

3.2.2. In the case of a critical incident principals must phone their School Network Leader (SNL) and/or Executive Officer, Office for Schools, then complete: ***Notification of a Critical Incident form*** (available internally through *Index*). The completed notification form must be forwarded by email to the School Network Leader (SNL) and/or Executive Officer as soon as possible on the day the incident occurred.

- 3.2.3. If any incident is also a *Notifiable Incident* ([Notifiable Incident Report Factsheet.pdf](#)) under the **Work Health and Safety Act 2011**, Worksafe ACT must be contacted, in the first instance, by telephone on (02) 6207 3000. If the incident involves a staff member, the SNL and People and Performance must be contacted as soon as possible. If the incident involves a student, the SNL as well as Governance and Assurance must be contacted as soon as possible. People and Performance (ph. (02) 6207 0614) must also be contacted as soon as possible.
- 3.2.4. In the case of incidents that fall outside the definition of a *Notifiable Incident*, (such as a minor to less serious accident, major theft of school property, ongoing harassment of staff by a community member that cannot be resolved), the established reporting processes should be followed, and a report form completed as soon after the incident, preferably the same day and forwarded to the appropriate areas of the Directorate within 48 hours of the incident.
- 3.2.5. If any student or staff member is injured as a result of a critical or non-critical incident and requires medical treatment, or if there is the potential for any individual student or staff member to suffer –
- the death of a person
  - a ‘serious injury or illness’ of a person, or
  - a ‘dangerous incident’
- this should be reported in line with the reporting procedures outlined in sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4.
- 3.2.6. In the case of a student accident, the reporting procedures set out in the [Student Accidents/Incidents](#) policy and procedures should be followed.
- 3.2.7. All incidents of alleged non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse of children and young people must be reported in accordance with the *Children and Young People Act 2008* following the [Mandatory Reporting](#) procedures. The appropriate SNL must also be advised without delay.
- 3.2.8. The principal or delegate has an obligation under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* to report Notifiable Incidents to Worksafe ACT immediately. These are defined as:
- the death of a person
  - a ‘serious injury or illness’ of a person, or
  - a ‘dangerous incident’
- arising out of work carried out by a business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. Such notifiable dangerous incidents include damage to or failure of major types of plant and equipment, uncontrolled fire, explosion, escape of gas, dangerous goods or steam and electric shock. Dangerous occurrences also include the imminent risk of these events or the death or serious injury to any person.
- 3.2.9. Notification of any incident involving injury must be made as soon as practicable and no later than seven days after the event and concurrently reported to the Directorate’s Risk Management and Audit Section (ph: (02) 6207 1974 or fax: (02) 6205 9453). If the incident involves a staff member, the SNL and People and Performance must be contacted as soon as possible. If the incident involves a student, the SNL as well as Governance and Assurance must be contacted as soon as possible.
- 3.2.10. The principal and staff must ensure that the scene of an incident remains complete and undisturbed, once immediate risks have been controlled. The **Work Health and Safety Act 2011** states the site or anything associated with the incident must not be disturbed prior to

Worksafe ACT and/or police examining the scene. For further advice refer to the [Student Accidents/Incidents policy](#).

### 3.2.11. *Privacy considerations*

3.2.11.1. When completing an incident report, information about students/persons who were directly involved or significantly caught up in the incident may need to be provided. In these circumstances all Directorate staff have certain obligations and responsibilities under the *Information Privacy Act 2014* and the *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997*. These Acts protect an individual's rights in relation to the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information held by government agencies.

3.2.11.2. Obligations imposed by Information Privacy Principle (IPP) 2 of the *Information Privacy Act 2014* require the collector of personal information to ensure that, before the information is collected or, if that is not practicable, as soon as practicable after the information is collected, the individual concerned is generally made aware of the purpose for which the information is being collected, that the collection is authorised or required by law if that is so, and to whom the information will be provided.

3.2.11.3. If an incident report contains personal information about a student under the age of 18 years, the student's parents/carers should be informed of the Directorate's policy in relation to privacy and the preparation of the incident report ([Student Accident Incident policy](#)).

3.2.12. Following all reportable incidents, schools should obtain witness statements from any person, including a student, who has direct knowledge of the incident. Where there are large numbers of witnesses to an event, witness statements may be obtained from a representative sample of witnesses with the names and contact details of remaining witnesses recorded.

3.2.13. Requests for copies of incident reports by parents or third parties should be directed to the manager of the Legal Liaison Section (ph: (02) 6205 9151).

3.2.14. Schools are required to keep a statistical record of any incidents of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and violence. Frequent analysis of this data allows schools to identify patterns or recurring incidents and put strategies in place to counter the offending behaviours. Principals are required to report annually on each of the key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework.

### 3.3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### 3.3.1. *Principal*

3.3.1.1. The ultimate responsibility for managing any incident on the school site or involving enrolled students, rests with the principal. In some cases the principal may appoint an incident manager. This will be a staff member with particular expertise and training who has agreed to lead the response to an emergency or critical incident. In such cases however, the duty of care responsibility of the principal for all staff and students is not relinquished.

3.3.1.2. **The principal or their delegate must notify the SNL or executive officer as soon as possible by phone of any critical incident that is occurring or has occurred on the same day that the incident has occurred.**

- 3.3.1.3. In the event of a critical incident such as a dangerous fire, severe chemical hazard, or criminal/terrorist activity for example, the principal or their delegate must defer to the legislative authority responsible for the control of such incidents.
- 3.3.1.4. The principal or their delegate is also responsible for implementing the correct reporting procedures determined by the nature of the incident (as indicated in the flowchart: **Critical Incident Reporting Process** (available internally through *Index*)). This includes debriefing individuals involved in an incident, managing the recovery and follow up processes, and collecting and filing any relevant material – reports, statements, etc – pertaining to a critical incident. The principal should also ensure parents/carers are informed if their son or daughter is negatively impacted by a critical or reportable incident, in line with Directorate guidelines and protocols ([Student Accident Incident policy](#)).
- 3.3.1.5. If the incident occurred as a result of a hazard within the school buildings or grounds, or due to the misuse of school resources, the school’s health and safety officer and the principal or their delegate should investigate the scene and ensure any hazard is controlled and procedures for the use of those resources revised and communicated, to prevent any further injuries or incidents.

#### 3.4. *School Network Leader*

- 3.4.1. The SNL should notify the Director, Governance and Assurance and the Deputy Director General, as soon as he/she becomes aware of a critical incident.
- 3.4.2. The SNL and Deputy Director-General should determine if the severity or scale of a critical incident warrants appointing a lead director. This need is communicated to the Director-General if and when required.
- 3.4.3. The SNL has a duty of care responsibility to provide as much support and assistance to the principal and general school community as required. This includes ensuring all persons involved in a critical incident have been thoroughly debriefed. The ACT Public Sector [Managing Injury and Illness in the Workplace](#) states that line managers have a responsibility for to provide ‘...a rapid and appropriate response once there is knowledge of any problem or circumstance that may impact upon a worker’s physical or psychological wellbeing.
- 3.4.4. The SNL should also ensure all follow-up documentation is completed. Given the potential for media and political attention and future litigation, the SNL is also responsible for ensuring all legislative and written reporting requirements are met.

#### 3.5. **Appendices**

- 3.5.1 Appendix 1 - *Determining Incident Criticality* (a decision-making chart for schools)  
**Appendix 2 – Critical and Reportable Incidents – Principal Checklist**
- 3.5.2 Internal documents available through *Index*.
- *Directorate Critical Incident Reporting Process* (a flow chart for schools)
  - *Notification of a Critical Incident* (an electronic reporting template for principals)
  - *Incident Briefing* (an electronic template for drafting a Ministerial briefing)

### 3.6. **Complaints**

3.6.1 Any concerns about the application of this procedure or the procedure itself, should be raised with:

- the school principal in the first instance;
- the Directorate's Liaison Unit on (02) 6205 5429;
- online at [http://www.det.act.gov.au/contact\\_us](http://www.det.act.gov.au/contact_us);
- see also the *Complaints Policy* on the Directorate's website.

## 4. **PROCEDURE OWNER**

4.1. Director, Governance and Assurance.

For support in relation to this procedure please contact Governance and Assurance on (02) 6205 9328.

**CRITICAL - REPORT IMMEDIATELY phone your SNL**

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It may be sudden or protracted, extremely dangerous, involve police or emergency services personnel, and generally be outside the normal range of experience or expectation of the people affected.

It may involve:

- a siege/hostage situation
- terrorist activity
- natural disaster – bushfire, flood, earthquake, severe storm
- a bomb threat
- a lock down, evacuation or temporary closure
- disappearance or suspicious removal of a student
- death on campus or a at a school activity

**If a dangerous fire, severe chemical hazard, criminal activity**, for example, also report immediately to the responsible ACT authority.

**If a sexual assault** of a child or young person, follow Mandatory Reporting procedures.

**If a Notifiable Incident**, e.g. death, serious bodily injury or dangerous incident, **also inform Worksafe ACT immediately** on telephone **6207 3000**. If the incident involves a staff member, the SNL and People and Performance must be contacted as soon as possible. If the incident involves a student, the SNL as well as Governance and Assurance must be contacted as soon as possible.

**Follow the reporting procedures specified in the Critical Incident Reporting Process flow chart.**

**NON-CRITICAL - FOLLOW REPORTING PROCEDURES**

An event which is unanticipated or outside the accepted social norm, but which, in the experience of the general community, would not be considered an extraordinary occurrence or situation, and which the school has strategies and procedures in place to manage with little or no external assistance. It may involve:

- accident or injury
- harassment
- bullying
- misconduct
- sexual harassment
- racism
- conflict
- theft
- brief interruption to the supply of a utility
- intruders
- first aid
- minor flooding
- minor property damage

- absenteeism

If the incident involves a staff member, the SNL and People and Performance must be contacted as soon as possible. If the incident involves a student, the SNL as well as Governance and Assurance must be contacted as soon as possible.

Risk Management & Audit must also be advised within 5 days – refer to the Student Accident/Incident Report form.

If an incident deteriorates to the point where the safety of students or staff are put at serious risk of injury, harm or placed under real threat – treat as a Critical Incident and report as specified in the Critical Incident Reporting Process.

If serious theft or damage to school property is involved - report to SNL and Infrastructure and Capital Works.

Keep a statistical record of incidents of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and violence for annual reporting purposes.