

CHALCOT LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY: Critical Incident Recovery Plan

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RATIFIED
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1. RESPONDING TO A TRAUMATIC OR CRITICAL INCIDENT IN WHICH THE SCHOOL IS INVOLVED

Chalcot Lodge Primary School may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event.

The incident may involve loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance. The incident may occur in the school environment or outside. It may involve staff, students, parents or those close to them. The network of those involved in a traumatic event can be wide, especially if it directly involves the school. Feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time.

Counselling will be provided for all those who need it. This may include many who do not seem to be closely connected to the event or the individuals involved.

While school should operate as normally as possible, some degree of flexibility will exist.

It is essential that people be given clear, accurate information at all times. It is essential that a Critical Incident Recovery Team be formed to manage the short and long term effects.

2. ACTION TO BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF A TRAGIC/TRAUMATIC EVENT WHICH INVOLVES THE SCHOOL

2.1 Incidents vary in complexity. These guidelines provide a framework for action and would not necessarily be followed in all cases.

2.2 However, the following 4 principles must be followed:

1. provide clear, accurate information
2. describe the actions to be followed
3. provide help for all affected
4. maintain a normal school program as close as possible

2.3 Obtain accurate information. Deal only with substantiated facts.

2.4 As soon as possible inform staff, especially those most directly involved. Inform family individually. Allow questions and discussion as they arise. Dispel rumours.

2.5 Appoint a skilled Critical Incident Recovery Team to assist in the management of the incident. The team may include staff members, psychologists, counsellors, external Department of Education and Training (DET) personnel, support agencies etc. The size and composition of the team will be related to the nature of the incident. Distribute names of the Critical Incident Recovery Team members, and inform others of the role of the team.

- 2.6 As soon as possible provide information to the community as to what has happened, and what is being done.
- 2.7 Advice regarding media inquiries will be obtained by the Principal from the DET Emergency Communications Centre and the DET Media Unit.
- 2.8 Establish an open line of contact with the family or families directly involved.
- 2.9 Provide out of school hours contact if necessary.
- 2.10 Try to identify those most likely to need help, e.g. classmates, teacher, special friends. Some students not directly affected may become distressed.
- 2.11 Ensure that counselling help is available. Contact the Regional Office and/or DET if necessary. All emergency or criminal activity, in which the safety or well-being of staff or students is at risk, or where there is a threat to property, must be reported immediately to the Department's 24 hour Emergency and Security Management Branch on **(03) 9589 6266**.
- 2.12 Continue to keep staff, students and parents informed, especially about what has happened and what the school is doing about it.
- 2.13 As soon as possible call students together and provide information about what has happened and what the school is doing about it. A follow up letter home may be important.
- 2.14 Provide counselling services for all. Ensure that there are suitable places in which this can take place. Be prepared to modify the timetable and other arrangements so that people are free to make use of available help.
- 2.15 The class teacher may be the person to whom students first turn for help.
- 2.16 Children wishing to attend funerals should do so in the company of their parents. Provide meaningful participation for those not actually attending the service.
- 2.17 Continue normal routines at school but acknowledge the effect of tragedy on the school community. Be flexible with those in need of help. Be aware that many people may be deeply affected, e.g. an event may cause a person to recall some traumatic event involving them in the past. The anniversary may also be a difficult time.
- 2.18 Maintain links with the family. The school and family may wish to develop a memorial garden, erect a memorial plaque, or display a photo in a prominent position in the school.
- 2.19 Be sensitive to staff and student's needs over a period of time.

LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- [DET Emergency Management Planning](#)

- [Emergency and Critical Incident](#)

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: Critical Incident Recovery Plan (CIRP)
- Appendix B: Critical or Traumatic Incident Plan – First 24 hour Short Term Tasks
- Appendix C: Emergency Message Record Form – Template

3. EVALUATION

The Critical Incident Recovery Plan will be reviewed by the Principal and Student Wellbeing Coordinator in consultation with the Education Policy, every three years or following any critical incident at the school.

Appendix A

Critical Incident Recovery Plan (CIRP)

Responsibilities and Procedures

1. PLAN STATEMENT

This Plan is an integral part of the Emergency Management processes of the school.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 The Recovery Team will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the Plan (refer to 4.3 for the composition of the team).

It will need to consider:

- establishing the facts as soon as possible
- developing an action plan of short, medium and long term tasks
- contact with the Department of Education and Training (DET)
- liaising with external authorities as necessary
- communicating with the whole staff as soon as possible
- meeting with staff both as a whole and with individuals or groups for debriefing
- communicating with the student body if applicable
- meeting with students in groups or individually for debriefing
- contacting parents/guardians
- short term and long term counselling requirements for groups or individuals

The relevance of each of the above will depend on factors such as the nature and magnitude of the incident, the intensity of the impact on the School community and the number of people affected.

3. DEBRIEFING

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing has three components:

1. initial discussion about feelings and an assessment of the intensity of the stress responses
2. detailed discussion of signs and symptoms of stress responses
3. closing stage - provides overview and information with referral to an outside agency if required

3.1 The Recovery Team will assist the Principal to facilitate the recovery of staff and students and those of the School community affected by the critical incident.

3.2.1 The debriefing meeting of the Recovery Team should include a mental health professional.

3.2.2 The Recovery Team will decide the structure and composition of debriefing meetings; such meetings should be held within **eight hours** of the critical incident. These meetings will review the impressions and reactions of the persons involved during or following the incident.

3.3 Counselling support and referrals for students and their families will be provided initially by the Principal or their nominee and a Regional Guidance Officer.

4. REVIEW

4.1 The Recovery Team will meet to review the implementation of the Critical Incident Recovery Plan within **seventy two (72) hours** of the critical incident.

4.2 As part of the Critical Incident Recovery Plan, the Principal will set up a Recovery Team when deemed necessary.

4.3 Following a critical incident, the Principal will convene the Recovery Team as soon as possible.

The composition of the Recovery Team will be:

- the Principal
- the Assistant Principals
- a member of the teaching staff
- a member of the Educational Support staff (first aid trained)
- other support staff as appropriate
- as necessary, psychologists, counsellors and DET personnel.

EVALUATION

The Plan will be reviewed by the Principal and Student Wellbeing Coordinator in consultation with the Education Policy Committee, every three years or following any critical incident at the school.

Appendix B

Critical or Traumatic Incident Plan – First 24 hour Short Term Tasks

Responsibilities and Procedures

Emergency Record

Record Information

- nature of the incident
- location of the incident, number and names of persons involved
- name of the person reporting the incident

- time incident reported
- contact telephone number if away from school

Verify all Details

- confirm that the information given about the event is accurate

Record the Incident

- notify the Principal or Emergency Management Coordinator
- ensure emergency services have been called notify the Department's 24 hour Emergency Communications Centre on **(03) 9589 6266**

Ensure students and staff are safe from harm or injury

- emergency Coordinator to cordon off any 'crisis' area and keep students away from there
- manage the grounds while staff are briefed and ensure media do not intrude
- check all school areas such as toilets, multipurpose room, kitchen etc for stray students
–
- ensure the school continues as normally as possible

Establish Critical Incident Recovery Team

The composition of the Recovery Team will be:

- the Principal
- the Assistant Principals
- a member of the teaching staff
- a member of the Educational Support staff (first aid trained)
- other support staff as appropriate
- as necessary, psychologists, counsellors and DET personnel.

Allocate responsibilities

- emergency message register
- emergency contact list
- evacuation and assembly of staff and students
- cordon off area of 'crisis'
- establish a Support Team and Communications Centre to:
 - manage information and phone calls
 - provide information to parents arriving at school
 - coordinate routine school activities – maintain where practical
 - notify students, staff and ancillary about the emergency
 - notify parents first, and then siblings in the school
 - establish a recovery room and supervisor for affected students
 - establish a waiting room for parents
 - inform students
 - inform School Council
 - inform School Community

- monitor School Community's reactions
- liaise with outside agencies and emergency services
- brief key personnel and review responses

Set Up Recovery Room

- set up Library, and if necessary the Staffroom
- screen windows

Appoint Recovery Room Supervisors

- First Aid Trained staff

Recovery Room Supervisors' Responsibilities

- keep calm
- monitor students for shock reactions, provide first aid if necessary
- keep a list of students attending the recovery room
- give the students a task to undertake such reading a book, computer
- contact parents of students who remain in the recovery room and alert them to possible concerns

Informing Staff

- provide teachers and ancillary staff with a brief outline of the incident
- outline recovery management arrangements
- discuss procedures to be followed by staff during the day
- discuss the general procedures that Critical Incident Team will be following
- discuss guidelines for informing students and ways of answering questions from them
- give staff time to discuss this among themselves
- provide a brief factual outline to others in the community on a need to know basis
- inform staff as soon as possible about a serious emergency involving death or injury which occurs after hours, on the weekend or during the school holidays
- inform staff as soon as possible about arrangements for holding a brief meeting before informing students at the start of the next school day
- review with staff afterwards any issues and needs
- provide staff with contact numbers for counselling or support services for themselves

Informing Students

Principal or senior staff

- contact the bereaved family or police to ascertain what information may be released within the school
- determine whether to tell students about the incident at a whole school assembly, by year levels or individual classes, depending on the nature of the incident
- discuss with teachers who feel uncomfortable raising the event with students and arrange for support from another teacher or a member of the recovery team
- identify staff who may be too distraught to take classes and arrange replacements

- if applicable, inform students soon after briefing staff
- ask teachers to mark a roll to identify who has been informed and who has not

Teachers

- provide a factual account of the incident at the beginning of the first class in a way that ensures all students hears the same information
- limit speculation and rumours
- if applicable, inform students about arrangements of counselling and recovery rooms
- outline the arrangements for the day

Communication Centre

Organise the following to be on hand:

- telephone - dedicated line in case of jamming by incoming calls
- telephone message if necessary
- message records
- phone lists
- rolls
- excursion list
- timetable
- maps
- computer and printer
- photocopier
- displans

Media Coverage

- contact DET Media Unit on 9637 2871 or 9264 5821
- liaise with the family about any statements made to media
- keep a record of media enquiries
- check that information provided does not conflict with court requirements or police proceedings
- anticipate renewed interest arising from anniversaries, court proceedings

Long Term Actions

- monitor and support members of the school community, particularly on significant dates such as anniversaries
- consider longer term intervention activities such as counselling or specialist support
- consider establishing an area within the school as a place of remembrance
- reconvene key people at regular intervals to review the school response and effectiveness of planning arrangements
- review the school emergency management plan in light of experience gained
- with advice from the Legal unit prepare for legal proceedings if necessary
- remove students name from the roll if deceased

Reference

- DET's Managing School Emergencies - Minimising the impact of trauma on staff and students



Managing School
Emergencies Booklet.

Appendix C

Emergency Record Form – Template

Date: /___/

Time of notification: _____ : _____ am/pm

Name of person taking the call

Position:

Name of person reporting the
incident

Contact telephone
number

Details

Describe:

Where everyone is now

What action is being taken to help?

Who:

When:

Where:

How:

Nature and extent of injury:

Immediate Actions Required

Principal notified? Yes Time: ____ : ____ am/pm

Other school staff? Yes Time: __: __:
am/pm

Emergency Services notified? Yes Time: ____ : ____ am/pm

Emergency & Security Management notified? Yes Time: ____ : ____ am/pm

Emergency Contact Telephone Numbers

POLICE 000

AMBULANCE 000

FIRE BRIGADE 000

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES (SES) 132 500

EMERGENCY SECURITY MANAGEMENT (03) 9589 6266

Emergency Message Record Form

Time: _____ : am/pm

Message
from

Action required?

Yes

No

If 'YES', please detail:

Completed

Message taken
by

Time: _____ : am/pm

Message
from

Action required?

Yes

No

If 'YES', please detail:

Completed

Message taken by