



CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Relevant to:	All staff, all students
Developed by:	Management Team
Date of Introduction:	October 2016
Date of Most Recent Review:	2021
Date for Review:	2024
Approved:	2019
Related Documents:	OH & S Policy, Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Student Welfare and Discipline Policy, Emergency Management Plan (approved by TASFIRE)

PURPOSE

This policy outlines the principles adopted by Tamar Valley Steiner School for guiding the prevention, management and recovery processes associated with critical incidents occurring in the School community.

RATIONALE

Critical incidents can impact considerably on the psychological well-being of students, teachers and families causing adverse effects in areas such as learning, occupational performance and family interactions. Tamar Valley Steiner School supports the School community, to reduce the traumatic effects of crisis situations both in the short and longer terms and accordingly shall ensure that adequate and appropriate measures are in place to manage the response to traumatic events.

1. DEFINITION: WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

A critical incident affecting a school is any event that causes people to experience significant or traumatic reactions that are beyond their normal emotional range.

2. PREVENTION

Tamar Valley Steiner School is committed to preventing critical incidents, where possible, using the following strategies:

- 2.1 formation of a critical incident management team, which liaises with committees within the school, including OH&S, and with emergency and community agencies, assists towards rectifying risks, develops a management plan, familiarises staff with the plan
- 2.2 ensures staff are aware of Duty of Care and OH&S issues, have access to Child Protection policies and

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- can address bullying and other anti-social behaviors effectively
- 2.3 the school develops a culture of addressing emotional overload, at-risk behavior and safety issues
- 2.4 assessing vulnerabilities particular to this school, such as a bushfire or pedestrian accident
- 2.5 developing strategies to address vulnerabilities
- 2.6 keeping confidentiality
- 2.7 maintaining professional boundaries and an adult role in dealings with students
- 2.8 challenging dangerous behaviors
- 2.9 promoting resilience
- 2.10 establishing links with support agencies when necessary.

3. PLANNING

It is recognised that, in the event of a critical incident, thorough planning will allow for:

- 3.1 quick action when information is received
- 3.2 establishment of the facts
- 3.3 appropriate information shared quickly with appropriate groups of people
- 3.4 acknowledgement that events change as they unfold and careful management is required
- 3.5 demonstration of caring to all affected
- 3.6 recovery and return to normal routines
- 3.7 a sense of control – by doing everything possible to make things as calm as possible under the circumstances
- 3.8 appropriate appreciation shown to all who assist, to encourage cohesiveness in the School Community
- 3.9 debriefing and/or counselling for those involved as soon as possible after the event.

4. IDENTIFICATION

An incident is identified as critical if it meets with the definition above. The concepts behind critical incidents are tragedy, trauma, emergency and crisis. A critical incident is one that causes disruption to an organisation, group of people, or even one person, and creates significant danger or risk or traumatically affects individuals within an organisation. Examples of critical incidents are:

- 4.1 death of a staff member or student
- 4.2 destruction of the whole or part of a school
- 4.3 break-in accompanied by major vandalism
- 4.4 students or staff taken hostage or kidnapped
- 4.5 students or staff witnessing serious injury or death
- 4.6 violence between students or assault of a teacher or student
- 4.7 allegation of sexual assault involving a member of the school community made public
(Note: Allegations of child abuse or misconduct that may involve child abuse made against school employees are handled in accordance with the Tamar Valley Steiner School Child Protection Policy)
- 4.8 student or staff suicide
- 4.9 natural disaster – bushfire, flood/storm, earthquake, extremes of temperature
- 4.10 major disaster in the community – explosion/fire, gas or chemical hazard, industrial or transport accident
- 4.11 bomb threats
- 4.12 unfavorable media attention

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- 4.13 outbreak of a communicable disease
- 4.14 intruder on school grounds posing a risk.

5. MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Tamar Valley Steiner School Critical Incident Management Team consists of:

The College Chair, The Business Manager, The School Administrator.

The Critical Incident Team will be in charge of managing a critical incident and will take responsibility for the following:

- 5.1 establishing the facts from a reliable source;
- 5.2 ensuring the safety of students, staff and visitors if they are at risk, initiating evacuation and providing first aid, if required
- 5.3 meeting as a Team as soon as possible to implement the Critical Incident Response Plan, College Chair may make instant decisions if necessary
- 5.4 determining the level of support needed – which groups are most affected and how to help all other students/staff/parents. Implement Recovery Plan.
- 5.5 preparing Fact Sheets for Class Teachers, Administration, media statements, parents (only the College Chair or an nominated spokesperson should speak to the media)
- 5.6 ensure all relevant emergency numbers are easily accessible by staff
- 5.7 ensure all actions are documented fully.

6. MANAGEMENT OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS OCCURRING AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL

The person in charge of managing a critical incident away from the School should:

- 6.1 ensure the safety of students and staff
- 6.2 assert authority in a calm, reassuring manner
- 6.3 ensure students and staff stay together and complete a roll call as soon as possible
- 6.4 follow the instructions of the venue management in implementing their emergency plans, as long as these do not conflict with the duty of care of the students
- 6.5 advise emergency services immediately and inform them of School personnel and students unaccounted for
- 6.6 advise the College Chair and Chairperson of the Board as soon as possible
- 6.7 ensure parents are kept informed
- 6.8 remain with the group until relieved of responsibility
- 6.9 write full report of incident and any follow up actions which were implemented offsite for Critical Incident Management Team