



# Critical Incident Policy

## PURPOSE

To ensure that Bendigo Senior Secondary College (BSSC) provides an appropriate response and level of support to all students following a critical incident.

## OBJECTIVE

To explain to BSSC students, their parents, carers and staff the processes and procedures in place to support students following a critical incident.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, their parents and carers, and all BSSC staff.

## POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the ***Bendigo Senior Secondary College Student Death and Student Significant Self Harm Postvention Plan.***

### Critical Incident

The incident may occur in the college environment or outside. It may involve staff, students or those close to them. The network of those involved in a traumatic event can be wide, especially if it directly involves the college. Feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time. A critical incident is an occurrence where a student's health or wellbeing is, or has been, placed at significant risk. This may include but is not limited to:

- serious injury, illness or death of a student or staff member
- students or staff lost or injured on an excursion
- a missing student
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- physical assault
- student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence
- natural disaster affecting the student's family e.g. earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm or extremes of temperature
- fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
- social issues e.g. drug use, sexual assault.

Dated: June 2018

Person Responsible: Student Wellbeing Manager

Endorsed by College Council: Not required

Review: Every 2 years

Bendigo Senior Secondary College: Department of Education & Training CRICOS Provider Code: 00861K

## Critical Incident Response Team

Bendigo Senior Secondary College has a Critical Incident Response Team to assist the principal in the prevention and management of critical incidents at the college, or incidents involving BSSC students.

The Principal is the Critical Incident Response Team Leader.

The Critical Incident Response Team also includes

- Assistant Principal – Student Engagement, Wellbeing and International Programs
- Student Wellbeing Manager
- Student Wellbeing Coordinator/Advisor
- Other, as appropriate.

## The responsibilities of the team include:

- risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action
- analysis of requirements to address these hazards
- establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, hospital, Poisons Information Centre, community health services
- 24-hour access to contact details for all students and their families
- IRIS alert
- 24-hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident e.g. Wellbeing Team, legal services, School Security Unit
- development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified
- dissemination of planned procedures
- organisation of practice drills
- regular review of the critical incident plan
- assisting with implementation of the critical incident plan
- arranging appropriate staff development
- budget allocation for emergencies

## Critical Incident Procedure

All critical incident plans assign responsibilities among relevant staff members, cover all the actions to be taken and timelines for doing so.

### Immediate Action (within 24 hours)

- Identify the nature of the critical incident. *In the case of a student death or significant self harm, staff must refer to the **BSSC Student Death and Student Significant Self Harm Postvention Plan**.*
- Form the Critical Incident Response Team
- IRIS alert notification
- Notification of the Critical Incident Committee/team leader
- Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy
- Assignment of duties and resources to college staff
- Seek advice and help from any necessary emergency services/hospital/medical services
- Dissemination of information to parents and family members, as appropriate

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- Completion of a critical incident report
- Media response if required (see below)
- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

#### Additional Action (48 – 72 hours):

- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing)
- Provide staff and students with factual information, as appropriate
- Restore normal functioning of college operations
- Identify any other people who may be affected by critical incident and access of support services for affected community members
- Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties
- Evaluate critical incident management
- Be aware of any possible longer term disturbances, e.g. inquests, legal proceedings, anniversaries.

#### Resources

The nature of critical incidents is such that resources cannot always be provided in anticipation of events. The Critical Incident Team will use its discretion to provide adequate resources – both physical and personnel – to meet the needs of specific situations. Staff will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

#### Managing the Media

- Consider the impact of social media on the current situation and consider intervening if the use of social media escalates distress
- Use social media/online communication (website/Compass alert/BSSC Facebook page/BSSC Twitter) for consistent messaging around available support and information sharing, where appropriate
- Consult with Critical Response Team/School Support Services Emergency Management/headspace for ongoing management of social media, if appropriate
- Determine what the official college response will be.
- Only the Principal or delegate should speak to the media, to ensure that only factual information is disseminated
- If accurate information is unavailable or the issue is of a sensitive nature, the Principal or delegate will explain that questions cannot be answered at this time.

#### Evaluation and Review of Management Plan

After every critical incident, a meeting of the Critical Incident Response Team will be held to evaluate the critical incident report, the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required. This process will incorporate feedback from all relevant staff, students and local community representatives.

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