

# National Code Standard 6

## *Critical Incident Policy and Procedure*

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### **IMPORTANT**

- In the event of a critical incident occurring in your personal life which requires emergency assistance, call 000. Once the operator answers, you will be asked which emergency services are needed: Police, Fire or Ambulance and to provide the location you are calling from. Speak clearly and calmly and give the operator all your details.
- To advise the College of a critical incident, call **0423 428 467**. This call will be answered by a member of the Critical Incident Team who will assist you.
- Staff will ensure that a record of the events surrounding the incident is documented in the Critical Incidents Register.

### **Overview**

1. The College is committed to providing the highest level of student support services, acknowledging the fact that international students living and studying in Australia in many circumstances face enormous challenges that may affect their psychological and/or physical well-being.
2. The College also acknowledges that unforeseen personal circumstances, such as serious illness and/or injury, death of a family member, etc., may also seriously affect a student's ability to study and/or attend classes and impact on their studies, their student visa conditions as well as their personal well-being.
3. To demonstrate the College's commitment to assisting our students to face and/or to overcome these critical life incidents, the College has developed a Critical Incident Policy and Procedure that covers actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident.
4. Our response to critical incidents will always be professional, sincere and provided immediately upon the need arising. In this way, we will be able to be responsive to our students as well as protecting the integrity and goodwill which students feel towards the College.
5. The College's "Critical Incident" policy takes into consideration the College's duty of care in relation to its students in terms of the legislative requirements of, inter-alia, the ESOS Act, the Work Health and Safety Act and the Anti-Discrimination Act.

### **Definitions**

6. A "critical incident" is defined in the National Code 2018 as "a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia) which causes extreme stress, fear and/or injury".
7. Examples of critical incidents include the following: serious illness, injury or death of a student; injury or loss of students or staff on field trips; attempted suicide; incidences of physical or verbal aggression; physical assault;

students or staff witnessing physical or verbal acts of aggression or criminal activities; natural disasters; fire, bomb-threats, explosions, gas or chemical hazards; sexual assault or drug abuse.

### **Critical incident team**

8. The College has a Critical Incident Team which is designed to assist the Chief Executive Officer in implementing the critical incident plan if a critical incident arises. The members of the Critical Incident Team are the Chief Executive Officer (chair of the Team), National Manager (Lisa White) and designated member of the College's Student Support staff.
9. In addition, each and every member of staff is authorised, where the need arises, to contact emergency services immediately upon becoming aware of a critical incident and then contacting a member of the Critical Incident Team.
10. A member of the Critical Incident Team will be available by contacting **0423 428 467** (mobile number) at any time a student requires urgent assistance.
11. The above-mentioned contact officers will have available information regarding local emergency contact numbers and/or providers of community and/or welfare support services, such as free and/or paid counselling services, Ethnic Associations, government departments, etc. Such information is also provided to students in the College's Student Handbook.

### **Responsibilities of the Critical Incident Team**

12. The Critical Incident Team will convene immediately upon being notified by a staff or student of a critical incident. At that point, the Critical Incident Team is responsible for developing a critical incident plan to respond to the particular incident and ensuring that the critical incident procedure described below is followed.
13. As well as responding to critical incidents as they occur, the Critical Incident Team is responsible for:
  - 13.1. reviewing and updating the critical incident policy;
  - 13.2. analysing and reviewing the response of the College to critical incidents and recommending and implementing any improvements to the critical incident procedures of the College. Input from staff and students should be sought in such reviews;
  - 13.3. implementing any strategies to assist the College in better responding to critical incidents;
  - 13.4. notifying staff and students about the critical incident policy; and
  - 13.5. attending to other aspects of the critical incident policy as and when they arise.

### **Critical Incident Plan**

14. The Critical Incident Team will convene immediately upon being notified by a staff or student of a critical incident (see further procedure below). At that point, the Critical Incident Team is responsible for developing a critical incident plan to respond to the particular incident.

### **Critical Incident Records**

15. An authorised member of the Critical Incident Team is to document any information relating to critical incidents in a Critical Incidents Register.
16. The "Critical Incidents" Register must include details such as:
  - 16.1. the nature of the incident,
  - 16.2. time reported,
  - 16.3. location,
  - 16.4. advice provided to student,
  - 16.5. assistance provided to student (e.g. organising interpreters)
  - 16.6. referrals given to student (e.g. police, ethnic associations, doctors, counsellors, solicitors, etc.)
  - 16.7. time and manner reported to senior management
  - 16.8. action taken
  - 16.9. follow-up contact details

17. Student Support staff will also monitor the situation and document the outcomes, so that on-going assistance may be provided if, as and when required.
18. Any student who considers that they need personal assistance should feel free to contact the College's Support Service staff for help. All discussions will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and a student's privacy will be respected at all times.

### **Critical Incident Procedure**

19. If a critical incident occurs which requires emergency assistance (such as the death or injury of a student), a member of staff or Critical Incident Team (whoever is first notified of the incident) should contact 000 for emergency relief (Police, Fire or Ambulance).
20. In all other instances, contact should be made with a member of the Critical Incident Team on **0423 428 467** (mobile telephone number available 24 hours a day).
21. The person/s in the Critical Incident Team who first became aware of the critical incident must notify immediately the National Manager.
22. The Critical Incident Team will promptly develop a critical incident plan which will involve:
  - 22.1. accessing student record to verify student details, including contact information. The Chief Executive Officer and National Manager (both members of the Critical Incident Team) have access to student records for verifying details to assist emergency services. Personal information (such as address details) should only be released where the individual is incapacitated and unable to provide these details themselves – see further information on privacy and personal information disclosure below;
  - 22.2. gather background details of the incident from the informing source if possible and appropriate;
  - 22.3. contact the Police Department, the Department of Home Affairs or its successor (for international students), the student's family.
  - 22.4. confirm that the Police or Emergency Service has been in contact with next of kin/family. An interpreter may be required to contact next of kin/family;
  - 22.5. assess the situation and organise any additional support required. This may involve liaison with offer staff members or external support organisations such as the Salvation Army - Phone 13 72 58 or Mission Australia 02-9219 2000. Counseling for staff and students may also need to be provided and will be arranged by the Critical Incident Team. Regard should at all times be had to the restrictions on the disclosure of personal information when dealing with third parties – see further below.
23. The critical incident plan, and its implementation, must be recorded in writing. Such records must be kept in the Critical Incidents Register and appropriate notations made in the students file. See further 'Critical Incident Records' section above.
24. An authorised delegate of the Critical Incident Team will, where necessary and appropriate, provide advice on the incident to relevant staff members and students. Any such notification will be made with due regard to the sensitivities of the critical incident and the need to protect the needs and personal details of the persons involved and the wishes of their family.
25. If the critical incident involves an overseas student, the Critical Incident Team may also need to advise the relevant Consulate/Embassy.
26. All comment to the media may be made by the Chief Executive Officer only.
27. Any direct contact with the family/next of kin in an official capacity is to be through the Chief Executive Officer or National Manager.

### **Ongoing Case Management**

28. The Critical Incident Team will arrange for an authorised member of the team to be responsible for managing the case on an ongoing basis including, where necessary, liaison with emergency services personnel, medical professionals, and family. Contact with family may be required to assist with travel and accommodation plans.
29. In the event of a student death, the National Manager (or some other appropriate person authorised by the critical Incident Team) will arrange for a letter of condolence and flowers to be provided to the student's next of kin on behalf of the College.
30. If the critical incident results in the inability of the student to conclude their studies and the student wishes to cancel their enrolment or the incident results in the student's death, the Critical Incident Team is responsible for ensuring

that all administrative arrangements are made in this regard (that is, any fees are refunded as entitled and email is cancelled). Personal property of the students left on College premise should be returned to the student's next of kin.

### **Release of Personal Information**

31. The College is bound by the Privacy Act to protect the integrity and confidentiality of personal information which it collects about staff and students. In the event of a critical incident, the College is permitted to release personal information where:

- 31.1. The College is required by law or legislation (for example, in response to a warrant); or
- 31.2. Where there is a serious or imminent threat to the life or health of an individual.

### **Related Forms**

- Critical incident register

### **Related Policies**

- Student Support Policy

### **Privacy Policy**

### **Related Standards**

- Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 – Standard 1 – Clause 1.7
- National Code 2018, Standard 6

### **Related Legislation**

- ESOS Act 2000
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Anti-Discrimination Act