



# St Joseph's School ~ Renmark

## Critical Incident Policy



### **Definition of a Critical Incident:**

Critical Incident may be defined as an event which causes disruption, creates significant danger or risk and which creates a situation where staff, students or parents feel unsafe, vulnerable or under stress.

Examples of such incidents include:

- The death of someone involved with the school community-by accident, suicide or murder.
- Serious injury to someone in the school community.
- Students lost or injured during an excursion.
- A hostage situation involving staff or students.
- Violence, assault, stalking.
- Witnessing of a serious incident or of violence by a member of the school community.
- Significant vandalism of school property.
- Fire, bomb or terrorist threat, explosion, natural disaster, extremes of weather conditions.

### **Management of a Critical Incident:**

The above are examples of incidents which may necessitate the implementation of a Critical Incident Plan. Priority should be given to others and self and then to anyone who may be injured.

### **The Preparation Phase:**

The school staff are responsible for coordinating all aspects of the Critical Incident Plan. Part of this responsibility involves ensuring that every staff member is conversant with procedures to be implemented during critical incidents.

As with all WHS issues, advanced preparation is essential in minimising the impact of undesirable incidents. It is impossible to predict the type of incident which might destabilise a school or when such a situation may arise. Natural forces and tragic circumstances are generally beyond our control.

### **The Response Phase:**

When a Critical Incident occurs within the school community, the staff should meet as soon as possible. As this may be impossible, administration will activate the plan.

Namely:

- The Principal (or the teacher in charge if the principal is away) and/or the office staff contact the Catholic Education Office 83016600 - Human Resources Unit.
- Where necessary, contact emergency services.
- Inform staff of details of the incident at a full staff meeting.
- Where necessary, initiate a 'Lock In' or 'Lock Out' situation.
- Where necessary, teachers must call roll to identify whereabouts of all students.
- Inform students in smallest possible groups.
- Inform parents by letter or in person.
- Identify staff, students and parents at risk.
- Provide extra support for staff and students.
- Have processes that allow discussion to take place.
- Provide individual and small group counseling.

Staff will be informed of a Critical Incident by using a predetermined signal. Depending on the circumstances, a Lock Out or a Lock In may be deemed necessary to ensure the safety of staff and students.

### **Lock Out Procedure:**

A Lock Out would mirror a fire evacuation. This would be indicated by a sustained sounding of the fire alarm, a long whirling sound.

Staff are required to:

- Remove students from the classroom as quickly as possible in an orderly manner and assemble on the designated assembly area. Accounting for students who are in the toilets or on messages etc.
- Doors and windows are to be locked if the urgency of the situation allows.
- A roll call of students to be made at the earliest opportunity.

### ***Procedure for emergency wardens:***

*Principal: Don DePalma*

- Check all classrooms, utility rooms and all toilets.
- Take mobile telephone.
- Mark an X on the doors once checked and locked.

*Secretary: Lyn Leuders*

- Check all of the Administration building.
- Mark an X on the doors once checked and locked.
- Take the first aid kit.
- Take roll call books to staff.

### ***On arrival to the designated area:***

- All teachers to conduct a roll call and report any missing persons.
- Secretary (Lyn) to inform teachers of any children arrive late, gone home etc.
- As name are called out students are to sit on the ground.
- Teachers report class tally to the principal or the emergency warden.
- All other staff must report their presence to the principal/ emergency warden, who will ensure all staff are accounted for.

No one may leave the designated area until specifically directed to do so by the Principal/ emergency warden.

### **One prolonged Blast of the Siren will signal the all clear**

#### ***Lock In Procedure:***

A Lock In is indicated by an continuous intermittent ring of lesson bells. If a Lock In is required during a scheduled play time, staff are to move students as quickly as possible to their classrooms.

Staff are required to:

- Ensure the safety of students by moving them to an area of the classroom which is least conspicuous from outside.
- Lock classroom doors and windows immediately.
- Close all window coverings.
- Ensure all children are accounted for.
- Ensure the room is safe and secure.
- Wait for further instructions.
- Model 'normal' behaviour.

### **One prolonged Blast of the Siren will signal the all clear**

#### ***Special Duties of Staff***

- Room 6                      Check girls toilet.
- Room 5                      Check boys toilet
- ESO Staff                    Check Library, Activity Room
- Office Staff                Check staffroom and all admin areas
- Secretary                    Bring class lists and attendance records.
- Bursar                        Telephone FIRE BRIGADE - 000. Open the front gate and direct the fire service.
- All parents and visitors to the school are expected to follow the evacuation/ emergency procedures.
- Each teacher is to advise their parent helpers of the above procedures.

#### ***The Recovery Phase:***

This phase is characterised by monitoring of ongoing grief and evaluation of the plan and individual roles. Individuals respond differently to situations and the effects on some may be long lasting as they work through their feelings.

A formal evaluation of the implementation of the Critical Incident Plan involves providing feedback on its strengths and weaknesses. The school community is encouraged to reflect upon the incident and identify the growth that may occur in the aftermath of the incident.

Signed:

Chairperson School Board: *Steve Atkinson* .....August 2024

Principal: *Don DePalma* .....August 2024

Policy Review Date: August 2024

Next Review Date: August 2027