



Developed 2002  
Reviewed 2005:2009:2016  
Due for Review in 2020

## ST PIUS X CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY

### Policy

This policy statement provides an indication to the school community of the scope and commitment of St Pius X School to the area of Crisis Management.

### Rationale

St Pius X School is concerned 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.

While experiencing or witnessing highly traumatic events is still uncommon, it is clear that the frequency of such events is growing. Consequently, the risks faced by students, staff and the broader school community are also growing. Such events can impact considerably on the physical, spiritual and psychological well-being of students, teachers and families having an adverse influence in areas such as learning, occupational performance and family interactions.

### Crisis Management Team

<b>Principal</b>	<b>Daine Burnett</b> <a href="mailto:burnett.daine@cathednet.wa.edu.au">burnett.daine@cathednet.wa.edu.au</a>
<b>Assistant Principal</b>	<b>Brett Wilkie</b> <a href="mailto:wilkie.brett@cathednet.wa.edu.au">wilkie.brett@cathednet.wa.edu.au</a>
<b>Assistant Principal</b>	<b>Stephanie Johnson</b> <a href="mailto:johnson.stephanie@cathednet.wa.edu.au">johnson.stephanie@cathednet.wa.edu.au</a>
<b>School Office</b>	<b>Margaret Tatasciore</b> <a href="mailto:tatasciore.margaret@cathednet.wa.edu.au">tatasciore.margaret@cathednet.wa.edu.au</a> <b>Marni Nichol</b> <a href="mailto:nichol.marni@cathednet.wa.edu.au">nichol.marni@cathednet.wa.edu.au</a>
<b>CEWA Representative</b>	<b>Eileen Climo</b> <a href="mailto:climo.eileen@cathednet.wa.edu.au">climo.eileen@cathednet.wa.edu.au</a>

## Critical Incident

**In the case of a Critical Incident all staff must follow the guidelines on page two. A member of the Leadership team must be notified immediately.**

The Critical Incident Standard determined by the Minister for Education in accordance with s.159(1)(i) of the *School Education Act 1999* requires the principal to notify the chair of the governing body and the Director General, Department of Education Services, about any critical and emergency incidents as soon as practicable and, in any event, within 48 hours of the incident.

In order to be deemed a Critical Incident one of the following points must be identified. In the case of any of these incidences, the Principal or Assistant Principal must be notified as a matter of urgency. The Crisis Management Plan will be called into place and take full action as per the requirements.

- Death, or life-threatening injury, of a student or staff member at school, or following an incident that occurred at the school or through a related school-based activity or circumstance;
- Circumstances that pose a critical risk to the health, safety or well-being of one or more students or staff;
- A circumstance posing a *critical risk* is one which would, if action had not been taken or the risk otherwise averted, have resulted in death, life-threatening illness or life-threatening injury to one or more students and/or staff.
- Receipt of an allegation of child abuse, including but not limited to sexual abuse, against a student by a staff member or student or other person, whether the abuse is alleged to have occurred recently or in the past;
- Issuing a formal warning to a staff member or ceasing the employment of a staff member for a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct suspected to be grooming behaviour;
- Incidents requiring school closure, lockdown, or reduction of number of students or staff attending.
- Refer to Appendix 1 regarding documentation

## **PREVENTION AND PREPARATION**

It is the responsibility of all staff at St Pius X to be aware of their duty of care in assessing risk factors in all school activities that children participate in. Staff must minimise risks and also be aware of the school's plan of action in the event of a crisis.

St Pius X School has a Lockdown Procedure in place.

### **Steps Involved In Preparation and Prevention;**

- Regular maintenance checks of all areas and equipment are to be carried out by the School Leadership Team. All staff are responsible for reporting maintenance problems and environmental hazards to the principal or secretary.
- Teachers should have a clear understanding of their school duties and responsibilities. New staff should be made fully aware of school policies through the school induction process.
- Teachers are to meet with the principal to discuss all excursions at least three weeks before the event. Teachers need to inform the principal of arrangements for transport, communication and adult student ratio. Teachers need to discuss with the principal the possibility of risks associated with the excursion. Before going on excursions teachers need to have read the reference file, "School Camps And Excursions, Guidelines For Catholic Schools."
- Staff and students need to be drilled in procedures related to safety at school. For example the evacuation plan needs to be in place and practised.
- Staff are to be encouraged to attend courses related to school safety. For example First Aid or Bronze Medallion.
- First Aid materials and equipment need to be kept up to date and readily accessible by the Assistant Principals.
- Keep in contact with sister school so that they are aware of the assistance they may be called upon to offer in the case of an emergency. Sister School is St Benedict's, Applecross. (9364 5836)

### **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

Alcohol and Drug Service ( 24 Hours)	1800 198 024
Doctor's Surgery – Reynolds Road Medical	9364 6444
Fire Brigade	000
Ambulance	000
Parish Priest	9450 4171
Poisons Information Service	131126
Police Station – Kensington	9474 7555

## **RESPONSE**

This involves the prompt implementation of effective actions and the mobilisation of effective resources. The responsibilities for the members of the Crisis Management Team in the first 24 hours are as follows.

### **Principal**

- Gather information and decide on the level of response required.
- If necessary call together the Crisis Management Team and enact the school Crisis Management Plan.
- Contact Catholic Education WA.
- Find out the facts from the police and when information can be released.
- Contact families of people involved in the crisis. Arrange a visit where necessary.
- Inform staff.
- From samples letters held by the secretary, adapt information to be released to various groups.
  1. Front desk statement.
  2. Letter to Parents.
  3. Media Statement.
  4. Statement for Staff to read to Students.
- Start to keep a written record.
- Arrange for team meeting at the end of the day.

### **Secretary**

- Ensure a phone line is kept free.
- Collate paper work for statements to be released.
- Arrange relief teaching. St Benedict's may be able to assist here.
- Regional Catholic schools for extra support.

### **Assistant Principal Administration**

- Contact non-government school psychology services.
- Give staff guidelines on the role they can play with students.
- Set up a room that can be used as a support facility.
- Attend to victim's personal belongings.
- Provide support for siblings.
- Secure entrance and exit points to media.

### **Assistant Principal Religious Education**

- Contact Parish Priest.
- Support distressed staff.
- Make arrangements for parents who may call at school.
- Look at prayer or memorial services.

### **Teachers on Excursion – In the Event of injury/death**

- Contact Principal/Leadership Team
- Take care of students / parents until Principal and Crisis Management Team are contacted and strategies are put in place.

## **After Day One The Crisis Management Team Is To Continue To Meet And Look At The Recovery Process.**

### **CMT Responsibilities**

- Return the school, to as far as possible, a regular routine.
- Preparation for service or funeral. Who will attend?
- Continue to monitor reactions within the school community and offer support.
- Consider debriefing for those most critically affected.
- Update staff and students with new information.
- Keep parents informed.
- Keep note of expressions of sympathy, condolences and offers of help.
- Maintain contact and support to families of victims.
- Be prepared for legal proceedings.
- Discuss the need for a memorial.
- Continue to meet as a team on a regular basis and review the plan.
- Continue to liaise with outside agencies.
- Monitor those in care giver roles.
- Keep record of anniversaries.
- Arrange for a memorial erection in consultation with parents.
- Bring people closer to victim to allow opportunity for discussion / debriefing.
- Parents of school community / P & F to coordinate home assistance through class representatives.

## Media guidelines

The St Pius X Crisis Management Team should specifically address the following:

- ❖ Principal – as team coordinator, is also the media spokesperson.
- ❖ Prepare press release, with updates if necessary.
- ❖ Deal directly with the media (if possible).
- ❖ Set “ground rules” for interaction with media (entering school grounds, who they interview...)
- ❖ Seek advice from the Police.

Be cooperative, while setting boundaries – helps stifle rumour and speculation.  
Anticipate what the media may want.

<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advise school personnel of the media procedure.</li><li>• Advise students of the media procedure and where they stand if approached for interview. Parents should also be told of the advice given to students.</li><li>• Protect confidential information (check identity if the nature of the question seems inappropriate).</li><li>• Consult with bereaved families to assure them that confidential information is being protected.</li><li>• Ensure a consistency of information, keep to the facts. Seek police advice.</li><li>• Cooperate with the media and seek their cooperation.</li><li>• Secure entrance/exits to school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give out personal information.</li><li>• Supply photographs of the victims.</li><li>• Speculate or give credence to unfounded theory.</li><li>• Create heroes or glorify the deceased.</li><li>• Forget that media interest will extend beyond the event. Funerals, memorial services and coronial enquiry will all receive attention.</li></ul>

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

### **Reaction of Children in Pre-School and Early Primary**

#### **Emotional/Behavioural/Cognitive**

- regressive behaviours such as crying, thumb sucking, bed-wetting, infantile language
- fears
- clinging, adult dependent
- irritable
- disobedient / oppositional
- aggressive behaviour, violent themes to play
- disturbed pattern of activity
- repeated talking about event
- upset at change to routines
- poor concentration, shortened attention span

#### **Physical**

- sleep disturbance in both pattern and duration
- change to eating patterns
- toileting problems – change to bowel/bladder patterns

### **Helping Younger Children at School after a Trauma**

Children need security and stability. Fears underlie much of the behaviour change seen after a trauma. Familiar behaviours may substitute for feelings/behaviours which are unfamiliar or uncomfortable e.g. laughing when feeling sad or worried. Children can be helped in managing these intense feelings. Parents and teachers may also be struggling with their own emotional reaction.

- listen when the child wants to talk and answer only the question asked
- show the child you care so as to maintain their trust
- give frequent reassurance. Be aware that children may be anxious on separating from parents
- allow children to be active and noisy as a way of expressing feelings
- look out for changed behaviour that may be aggressive or destructive
- use plain language when talking about death – consult on consistent explanations via special letters, notes
- if out of character behaviour persists for more than a month or so, or the child appears to be blaming themselves for the incident, then specialised intervention may be required and it is advised to discuss this with the parents

## Helping Children in Middle and Upper Primary School after a Trauma

Children need security and stability. Fears underlie much of the behaviour change seen after a trauma. Familiar behaviours may substitute for feelings/behaviours which are unfamiliar or uncomfortable e.g. laughing when feeling sad or worried. Children can be helped in managing these intense feelings. Parents and teachers may also be struggling with their own emotional reaction.

Between the ages of 7 and 10 most children come to an understanding of the finality of death. The concept of death remains immature and it should be recognised that children will retain some unusual notions on what it means to be dead. At the age, death is generally seen as something that happens to other people, to older people.

- Provide a stable environment to assist adaptation to trauma. Re-establish routines
- Discuss what happened in the trauma to allow expression of feelings. Look for positive aspects. Don't feel that you have to hide your personal feelings or emotions. Children will feel less isolated if they see others sharing their emotions. If individual children have misconceptions/misinformation about the incident (particularly in relation to death) consult with the parents before correcting this.
- Use creative activities to look at the event. Younger children will use play. Older children can benefit from using art, music or drama to express their feelings. This should be done cautiously and it may be wise to seek professional advice on these interventions.
- Group activities can be especially useful in allowing children to regain a sense of control and security.
- Allow opportunity for creative play and encourage re-enactment of the incident. Expressing feelings through play make it less likely that the children will relive the trauma internally (case by case scenario).



# CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLANNING

## GATHERING INFORMATION ON AN INCIDENT

This is intended to give some direction on the information that will facilitate effective crisis management. It may be photocopied or used as the basis for a checklist.

• Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_

- What happened
- Who was involved
- Where
- When
- Who is reporting
- Who witnessed the event
- Who knows about the incident
- Have emergency services been contacted
- Are there police officers on the scene? Name of attending officer
- What is known on extent of injuries or deaths
- Have any other actions been taken
- Have parents been contacted
- Telephone contact numbers

Name \_\_\_\_\_ number \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ number \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ number \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ number \_\_\_\_\_

- Crisis response team called together

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

- Crisis management plan enacted

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX 1



## CRITICAL AND EMERGENCY INCIDENT REPORT FORM

The Critical Incident Standard determined by the Minister for Education in accordance with s.159(1)(j) of the *School Education Act 1999* requires the principal to notify the chair of the governing body and the Director General, Department of Education Services, about any critical and emergency incidents as soon as practicable and, in any event, within 48 hours of the incident.

**This form should be completed as soon as practicable and, in any event, within 48 hours of the incident, saved for your records and sent to:**

Assistant Director, Non-Government Schools  
Telephone: (08) 9441 1900 Facsimile: (08) 9441 1901

Email: [criticalincidents@des.wa.gov.au](mailto:criticalincidents@des.wa.gov.au)  
Postal address: PO Box 1766, OSBORNE PARK DC WA 6017

### INCIDENT TYPE

Please indicate the type of critical or emergency incident by **ticking one or more** of the boxes below.

- Death, or life-threatening injury, of a student or staff member at school, or following an incident that occurred at the school or through a related school-based activity or circumstances;
- Circumstances that pose a critical risk to the health, safety or well-being of one or more students or staff;  
A circumstance posing a critical risk is one which would, if action had not been taken or the risk otherwise averted, have resulted in death, life-threatening illness or life-threatening injury to one or more students and/or staff.
- Receipt of an allegation of child abuse, including but not limited to sexual abuse, against a student by a staff member or student or other person, whether the abuse is alleged to have occurred recently or in the past;
- Issuing a formal warning to a staff member or ceasing the employment of a staff member for a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct suspected to be grooming behaviour;
- Incidents requiring school closure, lockdown, or reduction of number of students or staff attending.

If you cannot tick one of these boxes, the incident may not need to be reported to DES as a critical incident. If in doubt, please contact the Assistant Director, Non-Government Schools, for clarification.

### SCHOOL DETAILS

School:	Campus:
Chair of Governing Body:	Principal:
Telephone (business):	Telephone (mobile):
Email:	

### INCIDENT

Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:
Location of Incident:	
Date Principal first notified of incident and by whom:	
Date Chair of Governing Body notified:	
Date Parents/Caregivers notified (if applicable):	

### PERSON(S) INVOLVED (tick all applicable)

Whole School     Student(s) – Year level(s): \_\_\_\_\_     Teaching Staff     Support Staff

Volunteer     Former student     Student from another school     Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENT (detail what happened, who was affected and whose actions caused the incident)

**AGENCIES NOTIFIED OF INCIDENT** (by governing body, principal or staff members – when applicable and known to the Critical Incident Reporter)

<input type="checkbox"/> WA Police notified	Date:	Report No:
<input type="checkbox"/> DCPFS notified (Mandatory report)	Date:	Receipt No:
<input type="checkbox"/> DCPFS notified (child protection concern)	Date:	
<input type="checkbox"/> DEFS notified	Date:	
<input type="checkbox"/> TRBWA notified	Date:	
<input type="checkbox"/> WorkSafe notified	Date:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Date:	

**ACTION(S) TAKEN TO RESOLVE THE INCIDENT** (by governing body, principal or staff members)

<input type="checkbox"/> Suspension/exclusion of student(s)	Period of time:
<input type="checkbox"/> Expulsion of student(s)	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> School closure	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> School lockdown	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction in students or staff attending	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Counselling sought/provided	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Health and safety services advice sought	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Code of Conduct breach warning issued	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff disciplinary action taken (please specify):	Details:
<input type="checkbox"/> School policies/procedures followed (including School Critical and Emergency Incident Policy)	Details:
<input type="checkbox"/> Other action(s) taken (please specify):	Details:

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTION TAKEN TO RESOLVE THE INCIDENT**

**HOW ARE ANY ONGOING RISKS TO STUDENTS AND/OR STAFF BEING MANAGED?**

Who is responsible for management of these risks? \_\_\_\_\_

**LODGED BY AUTHORISED CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTER**

Name:	Date:
	Position:

**Thank you for completing the Critical Incident Report.**  
The Department may contact you at a later date to obtain further information.

**DES INTERNAL USE ONLY**

Incident Number:	Related RM8 References:
DES Staff Name:	Position:
Date Received:	Time Received: