



Policy Category: WHS and Wellbeing	
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Signature: 	
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Related Legislation and Documents: <i>Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act</i>	
Additional Information:	

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1.1	2021	
1.2	18/2/22	Scheduled review according to Policy Development and Review Policy, no changes made.

Critical Incident

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DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

MSSA: Milkwood Steiner School Association

Critical incident means an event that creates significant danger, risk or likelihood of traumatic effects, and creates a situation where students, staff and the school community experience trauma, feel unsafe, vulnerable and/or under stress. Critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:

- the death/injury of a student, staff member and/or member of the school community
- the serious assault of a student, staff member and/or member of the school community
- the suicide of a student, staff member and/or member of the school community
- natural events such as cyclones, fires or floods

NT WorkSafe is a division under the Department of Attorney-General and Justice responsible for assisting businesses and workers understand their obligations under work health and safety, dangerous goods, electrical safety, and rehabilitation and workers compensation in the Northern Territory.

School community means the teaching staff, parents, students and other persons who have a direct involvement or interest in the school.

School staff includes any person responsible for the operations or education services at a school. This can include contractors, visitors or volunteers.

PURPOSE

These guidelines exist to support MSSA’s immediate and long-term response to a Critical Incident. Despite preventative measures, Critical Incidents occur in schools. MSSA’s Critical Incident response guidelines are Trauma-informed, and consider the widespread, long-term impact of Trauma on an entire community. By defining roles and responsibilities and creating a timeline for responses, this Policy and Procedure seeks to minimise the impact of Trauma in the context of a caring community.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Principal is responsible for:

- ensuring the safety of students and school staff in the immediate management of a critical incident

- coordinating the response to a critical incident situation
- immediately or when first practicable, informing the MSSA Board Chair of the occurrence of a critical incident
- immediately or when first practicable, informing NT WorkSafe of a critical incident involving a serious injury or the death of students or school staff. An Incident Report form must be completed within 24 hours of an incident occurring
- working with the Board and relevant Staff to manage communications with the school and wider community during a critical incident
- allocating appropriate external services such as counsellors to support the school during a critical incident
- working with the Board to ensure support is available to students and school staff during a critical incident
- conducting a debrief with school staff
- monitoring student and school staff wellbeing following a critical incident and providing ongoing wellbeing support, as required
- working with appropriate Staff to manage communications with the school and wider community during a critical incident
- preparing a media statement if required
- providing accurate and timely advice to the Minister for Education, as necessary, regarding critical incidents.

The Board is responsible for ensuring immediate and ongoing support for the Principal as required

The Finance Manager and Enrolment and Administration Officer are responsible for:

- prioritizing tasks as delegated by the Principal
- liaising with outside agencies such as Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services or Territory Families regarding communications, as required

Staff are responsible for:

- Duty of care to children
- remaining alert to signs of distress or trauma in colleagues who have been involved in critical incidents and seeking assistance, as required.
- Enacting tasks delegated by the Principal

GUIDELINES / PROCEDURES

WHEN A CRITICAL INCIDENT OCCURS

- Where a critical incident occurs in a school, the Principal will ensure the immediate safety of students and school staff.
- When practicable, the Principal informs the Board Chair of the critical incident.

- The Principal will delegate and allocate appropriate staff, for example, school counsellors, to a school to provide support required for a specific critical incident.

DURING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

External agencies such as Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services or Territory Families may need to be involved.

A Critical Incident Statement must be produced within four hours of a critical incident stabilizing. The Critical Incident Statement is adapted and distributed to all parties affected, including parents/carers, staff, community, Board.

The Principal must monitor support provided to students and school staff during a critical incident. The Principal will request additional support from the Board, if required.

AFTER A CRITICAL INCIDENT

The Principal coordinates a debriefing session with Staff after a critical incident, accessing support from external services as required. This debriefing should ideally occur within 24-72 hours after an incident.

The option for wellbeing support for students, community and staff must be communicated widely following a critical incident. This may involve daily letters/emails to parents, and information prepared by counsellors or other support services.

The Principal monitors students and staff in the weeks following a critical incident for signs of distress or trauma, recognizing that not all reactions to trauma will be the same, so tailored support should be offered according to the person affected.

The Board will support the Principal in areas of Critical Incident Response and Principal's wellbeing, following a critical incident and a school's debriefing session. This may be an ongoing commitment.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

EASE Counselling specialising in critical incident responses: <https://www.easa.org.au>

Catholic Care: 8944 2000

Anglicare: 8946 4800

Trauma factsheet

Myths and Facts about Grief factsheet

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement www.grief.org.au

Bereavement Care Centre: Understanding Children's Grief: www.bereavementcare.com.au

Children and Grief: <https://www.grief.org.au/uploads/uploads/The-Rosemary-Branch-Spring-2012.pdf>