CRAIGIEBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PLAN

RATIONALE:
Occasionally schools will face crisis situations that affect the school and community. These are called 'Critical Incidents'. At any time of the day a critical incident may occur at the school creating a situation where staff, students and parents feel strong emotions, unsafe, vulnerable and under stress. This has the potential to overwhelm their ability to cope, either during the incident or later on in time.

AIMS:
To provide a plan to be followed if a critical incident occurs within the school grounds or directly affects the school and its community.

CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN:
Craigieburn Primary School may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event. The incident may involve loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance. The incident may occur in the school 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 school. Feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time.

Identification:
The early identification of a potential/actual critical incident will help in creating a situation where the grieving process can begin, where students, staff and parents can talk about the situation in terms of readjustment and acceptance. If a critical incident is not addressed adequately, a significant amount of unresolved grief can develop within the individual regardless of his/her age. Unresolved grief can lead to severe emotional difficulties, physical illness and contribute to a crisis later in life.

The following scenarios are examples of possible critical incidents that may impact the school:
- The sudden death of a student, staff member or community member
- The suicide of a student, staff member or community member
- The murder of a student, staff member or community member
- Groups of students and/or staff who witness sudden death, severe injury or disaster on school premises or whilst travelling to or from a school on an excursion
- Significant vandalism of school property
- The terminal illness of a student, staff member or school member
- Natural or community disaster
- Unusual and/or unfavourable media attention.

Responding to a traumatic or critical incident in which the school is involved:
Counselling should be provided for all those who need it. This may include many who do not seem to be closely connected to the event or the individuals involved. The school may be in a position to help grieving families at difficult times, e.g. through the school's participation in the funeral service.

While school should operate as normally as possible, some degree of flexibility should exist.

It is essential that people be given clear, accurate information at all times. It is essential that a Critical Incident Recovery Team be formed to manage the short and long term effects.
Action to be taken as a result of a tragic/traumatic event which involves the School

The following four principles must be followed in the event of a critical incident:

1. Provide clear, accurate information
2. Describe the actions to be followed
3. Provide help for all affected
4. Maintain a normal school program as close as possible.

CRITICAL INCIDENT RECOVERY POLICY AND PLAN

The following guidelines are to be followed in the event of a critical incident, if deemed necessary by the school:

- As soon as possible inform staff, especially those most directly involved. Inform close friends and family individually. Allow questions and discussion as they arise. Dispel rumours
- Appoint a skilled Critical Incident Recovery Team to assist in the management of the incident. The team may include staff members, psychologists, counsellors, external DET personnel, support agencies etc. The size and composition of the team will be related to the nature of the incident. Distribute names of the Critical Incident Recovery Team members, and inform others of the role of the team
- As soon as possible provide information to the community as to what has happened, and what is being done
- Appoint a skilled Critical Incident Recovery Team member to respond to media enquiries. A written press release may be useful. If necessary, protect others from contact with the media. Advice regarding this may be obtained from the DET Emergency Communications Centre and the DET Media Unit
- Establish an open line of contact with the family or families directly involved
- Provide out of school hours contact if necessary. This could be as simple as circulating the Principal’s telephone number. In more complex situations it may mean maintaining telephone contact at the school
- Continue contact with the family to identify their expectations of the school, e.g. student participation in funeral or memorial service
- Try to identify those most likely to need help, e.g. classmates, teacher, special friends. Some students not directly affected may become distressed
- Ensure that counselling help is available. Contact the Regional Office and/or DET if necessary. All emergency or criminal activity, in which the safety or well-being of staff or students is at risk, or where there is a threat to property, must be reported immediately to the Department’s 24 hour Emergency and Security Management Branch
- Continue to keep staff, students and parents informed, especially about what has happened and what the school is doing about it
- As soon as possible call students together and provide information about what has happened and what the school is doing about it. A follow up letter home may be important
- Provide counselling services for all. Ensure that there are suitable places in which this can take place. Be prepared to modify the timetable and other arrangements so that people are free to make use of available help
- The class teacher may be the person to whom students first turn for help
- Children wishing to attend funerals should do so in the company of their parents. Provide meaningful participation for those not actually attending the service
- Continue normal routines at school but acknowledge the effect of tragedy on the school community. Be flexible with those in need of help. Be aware that many people may be deeply affected, e.g. an event may cause a person to recall some traumatic event involving them in the past. The anniversary may also be a difficult time
- Maintain links with the family. The school and family may wish to develop a memorial garden, erect a memorial plaque, or display a photo in a prominent position in the school
- Be sensitive to staff and student’s needs over a period of time.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES:

Critical or Traumatic Incident Plan – First 24 hour Short Term Tasks

Responsibilities and Procedures

1. Emergency Record

   Record Information
   - nature of the incident
   - location of the incident, number and names of persons involved
   - name of the person reporting the incident
   - time incident reported
   - contact telephone number if away from school

   Verify all Details
   - confirm that the information given about the event is accurate

   Record the Incident
• notify principal workplace coordinator
• ensure emergency services have been called notify the Department’s 24 hour Emergency Communications Centre

2. Ensure students and staff are safe from harm or injury
• student Managers and Year Level Coordinators cordon off any ‘crisis’ area and keep students away from there
• manage the grounds while staff are briefed and ensure media do not intrude
• check corridors, toilets etc for stray students - try to prevent students leaving on their own particularly if distressed
• send all very stressed students to the Recovery area in the Library
• ensure that students do not make hysterical calls out of school
• ensure the school continues as normally as possible.

3. Establish Critical Incident Recovery Team
   The composition of the Recovery Team will be:
   - the Principal
   - the Assistant Principals
   - a member of the teaching staff
   - a member of the Educational Support staff (first aid trained)
   - other support staff as appropriate
   - as necessary, psychologists, counsellors and DET personnel.

4. Allocate responsibilities
• emergency message register
• emergency contact list
• evacuation and assembly of staff and students
• cordon off area of ‘crisis’
• establish a Support Team and Communications Centre to:
  o manage information and phone calls
  o coordinate media requests for information
  o provide information to parents arriving at school
  o coordinate routine school activities – maintain where practical
  o notify students, staff and ancillary about the emergency
  o notify parents first, and then siblings in the school
  o establish a recovery room and supervisor for affected students
  o establish a waiting room for parents
  o inform students
  o inform School Council
  o inform School Community by newsletter
  o monitor School Community’s reactions
  o liaise with outside agencies and emergency services
  o brief key personnel and review responses

5. Recovery Room(s)
   Set Up Recovery Room
   • set up Library, and if necessary the Staffroom
   • empty adjoining rooms if possible and relocate to other rooms
   • screen windows
   • have available pens, textas, paper, scissors, envelopes, tissues

   Appoint Recovery Room Supervisors
   • First Aid staff

   Recovery Room Supervisors’ Responsibilities
   • keep calm
   • monitor students for shock reactions, provide first aid if necessary
   • encourage students to gather in small friendship groups rather than bigger ones
   • keep a list of students attending the recovery room
   • give the students a task to undertake such as making a card or writing a letter
   • contact parents of students who remain in the recovery room and alert them to possible concerns.

6. Informing Staff
• provide teachers and ancillary staff with a brief outline of the incident
• Restate to ensure that staff understand and it sinks in
• outline recovery management arrangements
• discuss procedures to be followed by staff during the day
• discuss the general procedures that Critical Incident Team will be following
• discuss guidelines for informing students and ways of answering questions from them
• give staff time to discuss this among themselves
• provide a brief factual outline to others in the community on a need to know basis
inform staff as soon as possible about a serious emergency involving death or injury which occurs after hours, on the weekend or during the school holidays.
inform staff as soon as possible about arrangements for holding a brief meeting before informing students at the start of the next school day.
review with staff afterwards any issues and needs.
provide staff with contact numbers for counselling or support services for themselves.

7. Informing Students

Principal or senior staff
- contact the bereaved family or police to ascertain what information may be released within the school.
- prepare a written factual statement, without graphic detail, for use as a reference by teachers when discussing the incident with students.
- determine whether to tell students about the incident at a whole school assembly, by year levels or individual classes, depending on the nature of the incident.
- discuss with teachers who feel uncomfortable raising the event with students and arrange for support from another teacher or a member of the recovery team.
- identify staff who may be too distraught to take classes and arrange replacements.
- inform students soon after briefing staff.
- ask teachers to mark a roll to identify who has been informed and who has not.

Teachers
- provide a factual account of the incident at the beginning of the first class in a way that ensures all students hear the same information.
- limit speculation and rumours.
- inform students about arrangements of counselling and recovery rooms.
- inform students about arrangements for services, and appropriate ways to express condolences.
- outline the arrangements for the day.

Notifying close friends
- notify close friends especially girlfriends and boyfriends prior to making an announcement to other students.
- take these students aside when they arrive at school and inform them privately.
- consider contacting their parents prior to the start of the day.
- ensure individual attention is given to intimate friends who are likely to have special needs beyond those of other students.

8. Communication Centre

Organise the following to be on hand:
- telephone - dedicated line in case of jamming by incoming calls.
- telephone message if necessary.
- message records.
- phone lists.
- rolls.
- excursion list.
- timetable.
- maps.
- computer and printer.
- photocopier.
- display instructions.

9. Media Coverage

- nominate a media coordinator, prepare the School Council President and Principal to provide on camera interviews.
- contact DET Media Unit.
- prepare a three paragraph report:
  - briefly outline the facts.
  - outline what the school has done to assist those affected.
  - outline support and recovery arrangements.
  - include a name and contact number for the school media coordinator.
- liaise with the family about any statements made to media.
- exclude discussion of policy matters, limit comment to the emergency and the school response.
- set rules for persistent media.
- keep a record of media enquiries.
- offer scheduled interviews in return for media commitment not to seek uninvited access to staff, students, parents.
- negotiate accepted areas for filming e.g. school/church boundary and not within.
- check that information provided does not conflict with court requirements or police proceedings.
- anticipate renewed interest arising from anniversaries, court proceedings.
10. **Long Term Actions**
- monitor and support members of the school community, particularly on significant dates such as anniversaries
- consider longer term intervention activities such as counselling or specialist support
- consider establishing an area within the school as a place of remembrance
- reconvene key people at regular intervals to review the school response and effectiveness of planning arrangements
- review the school emergency management plan in light of experience gained
- consider a ritual of marking significant dates
- prepare for legal proceedings if necessary
- remove students' name from the roll if deceased
- consider article in school magazine

11. **Reference**
- DET's *Managing School Emergencies - Minimising the impact of trauma on staff and students*

**REVIEW:** This policy will be reviewed as a part of the school’s cyclic process or more often if necessary due to changes in legislation or regulations.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **Nov 2016** and will be reviewed 2019.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**
This policy is to be read in conjunction with:
- Emergency Management Plan

**APPENDICES:**
- **APPENDIX 1:** Incident Management Team
- **APPENDIX 2:** Incident Management Team Contact Roles/Details
- **APPENDIX 3:** CPS Communication Tree
- **APPENDIX 4:** Emergency Record Form
APPENDIX 1: Incident Management Team
Incident Management Team (IMT) – Action Process

IMT MEMBER FIRST CONTACTED

Inform other members if IMT

Has the incident occurred during school hours?

NO

Attempt to inform Principal or Assistant Principal.
David Naismith
Jim Beattie
Pam Gouramanis

YES

Were you successful in contacting all IMT members?

YES

Meet with IMT in Principal’s office

Principal contacts DET Emergency Management Branch 24 hours

Principal/AP contacts DET Emergency Management Branch 24 hours

NO

Were you successful in contacting Principal Class Member?

YES

Contact DET Emergency Management Branch 9589 6266 24 hours

Contact NWVR Provision and Planning Manager Doug Harnetty

Assistant Principal contacts NWVR Provision and Planning Manager Doug Harnetty

Principal/AP contacts NWVR Provision and Planning Manager Doug Harnetty

Is this incident a break in or major vandalism?

YES

Is attendance at school required?

NO

Travel to school.

NO

Assistant Principal contacts NWVR Provision and Planning Manager Doug Harnetty

Principal contacts DET Emergency Management Branch 24 hours

Principal/AP contacts DET Emergency Management Branch 24 hours

Response organized with reference to Critical Incident Guide
# APPENDIX 2 Incident Management Team Contact/Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMT Role/Activities</th>
<th>Primary Contact</th>
<th>Back up Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incident Controller (Chief Warden)</td>
<td>David Naismith (Principal)</td>
<td>Jim Beattie (Assistant Principal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning tasks will be performed by</td>
<td>Simon Rennick (OHS Rep)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations (Area Warden) tasks will be performed by:</td>
<td>Pam Gouramanis (Assistant Principal)</td>
<td>Elisabeth Bryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications task will be performed by:</td>
<td>Sheryl Zugaro (Business Manager)</td>
<td>Sonya Hickson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics (Warden) tasks will be performed by:</td>
<td>Jim Beattie (Assistant Principal)</td>
<td>Amanda Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid tasks will be performed by:</td>
<td>Carol Colbert</td>
<td>Dawn Hollaway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3 Craigieburn PS Communication Tree

Principal
David Naismith

000 Emergency Services

DET NWMR
Coburg 9488 9488
Bendigo 5440 3111

School Council
President

Assistant Principal
Jim Beattie

Assistant Principal
Pam Gouramanis

Business Manager
Sheryl Zugaro

Leading Teacher
Elisabeth Bryan

Assistant Principal
Jim Beattie

Leading Teacher
Grade 4

Education Support Staff Leader
Kim Hough

Education Support Staff (Aides)
per staff list

Specialist Teachers Team Leader
Linda Maxwell

Specialist teachers as per staff list

Welfare Officer
Simon Rennick

Counsellor

Chaplain
Rob Ernst

Team Leaders
Foundation
Kim Rotondi
Grade 1
Melissa Pongrac
Grade 2
Jamie Saddinton

Team Leaders to contact their teams.
Per staff list

Team Leaders
Grade 3
Anthony Sterich
Grade 5
Michelle Di Curzio
Grade 6
Kim Milne

Team Leaders to contact their teams.
Per staff list

Education Support Office Staff
Per staff list

Canteen
Michelle Kaman

Camp Australia School Care

Parents Refer to parent contact information details

Neighbourhood Schools Communication Tree
Mickleham PS
Mt Ridley P-12
Appendix 4
Emergency Record Form

Date: ______________
Time of notification: ___________ am/pm
Name of person taking the call: ________________________________
Position (e.g. Teacher): ________________________________________
Name of person reporting the incident: __________________________
Contact telephone number: _________________________________

Details
Describe:
Where everybody is now
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Where everybody is now
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
What action is being taken to help.
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Who:
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
When: __________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Where: _________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
How: __________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Nature and extent of injury:
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Immediate Actions Required
Principal notified       Yes ☐ Time _______ am/pm
Other school staff     Yes ☐ Time _______ am/pm
Emergency services notified Yes ☐ Time _______ am/pm
Emergency & Security Management Notified Yes ☐ Time _______ am/pm

Emergency Contact Telephone Numbers
Police                  000
Ambulance               000
Fire Brigade            000
DET Emergency & Security Management  9589 6266