

# Rowville Primary School

## Critical Incident Recovery Policy



DET International CRICOS Code - 00861K



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Rowville Primary School.

### Purpose

To provide guidelines on how to respond to a traumatic or critical incident in which the school is involved.

### Definitions

#### *Incident*

An incident is an actual or alleged event or situation that:

- causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to a student's health, safety or wellbeing either directly or indirectly while under the care or supervision of the school, including international students
- impacts a student and is brought to the attention of the school, regardless of when or where it occurred, provided it is impacting on the student or other students within the school environment
- causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to an employee's health, safety or wellbeing either directly or indirectly in the work setting
- affects or risks affecting the continuity of school operations, including matters of security (including cyber security), property damage and emergencies
- requires police notification or involves matters of serious conduct
- is a WorkSafe notifiable incident.

Critical incidents requiring planning include, but are not limited to:

- child abuse
- medical emergency
- mental stress
- data or privacy breach
- missing student/person

Critical incidents can also be defined as an incident that causes harm, or creates a risk of harm, to the safety, health, and well-being of any student or staff member, regardless of where it occurs. It includes security matters, including cybersecurity. It may require police notification or be a Worksafe notifiable incident.

### Guidelines

When a critical incident occurs, the following four principles will be followed:

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

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### Implementation

- Obtain accurate information. Deal only with substantiated facts.
- As soon as possible inform staff, especially those most directly involved. Inform family and close friends 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 via the Emergency Management Plan.
- 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.
- Establish an open line of contact with the family or families directly involved.
- Provide out of school hours contact if necessary.
- Continue contact with the family to identify their expectations of the school and contact interpreter services if necessary.
- Try to identify those most likely to need help.
- Ensure that counselling help is available.
- Contact the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126.
- Continue normal routines at school but acknowledge the effect of a critical incident within the school community.

### Evaluation

- Evaluation of the Plans will follow any critical incident at the school

### Links and Appendices (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- [DET Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning](#)

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: Critical Incident Recovery Plan (CIRP)
- Appendix B: Critical or Traumatic Incident Plan – First 24 hour Short Term Tasks
- Appendix C: Emergency Message Record Form – Template

### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2024
Approved by	Rowville Primary School Council
Next scheduled review date	May 2026

## Appendix A

### Critical Incident Recovery Plan (CIRP)

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#### Responsibilities and Procedures

##### 1. PLAN STATEMENT

This Plan is an integral part of the Emergency Management processes of the school.

##### 2. IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 The Recovery Team will be responsible for coordinating and implementing the Plan (refer to 4.2 for the composition of the team).

##### It will need to consider:

- establishing the facts as soon as possible
- developing an action plan of short, medium and long term tasks
- contact with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DET)
- liaising with external bodies, including the media
- communicating with the whole staff as soon as possible
- meeting with staff, both as a whole and with individuals or groups for debriefing
- communicating with the student body
- meeting with students in groups or individually for debriefing
- contacting parents/carers
- short term and long term counselling requirements for groups or individuals.

The relevance of each of the above will depend on factors such as the nature and magnitude of the incident, the intensity of the impact on the School community and the number of people affected.

##### 3. DEBRIEFING

##### Critical Incident Stress Debriefing has three components:

1. initial discussion about feelings and an assessment of the intensity of the stress responses
2. detailed discussion of signs and symptoms of stress responses
3. closing stage - provides overview and information with referral to an outside agency if required

3.1 The Recovery Team will assist the Principal to facilitate the recovery of staff and students and those of the School community affected by the critical incident.

3.2 The debriefing meeting of the Recovery Team should include a mental health professional and one peer who was not involved in the incident.

3.3 The Recovery Team will decide the structure and composition of debriefing meetings; such meetings should be held within **eight hours** of the critical incident. These meetings will review the impressions and reactions of the people involved during or following the incident.

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**3.4** Counselling support and referrals for students and their families will be provided initially by the Principal or their nominee and Student Support Services Team Leader North Eastern Victoria Region – Outer East (Kelly Gaunt 7505 3627 / 0429 552 618)

**3.5** Counselling support and referrals for staff is available through Employee Wellbeing Support Services Program (Phone 1300 291 071)

#### **4. REVIEW**

**4.1** The Recovery Team will meet to review the implementation of the Critical Incident Recovery Plan within **seventy two (72) hours** of the critical incident.

**4.2** Following a critical incident, the Principal will establish a Recovery Team as soon as possible.

#### **The composition of the Recovery Team may include:**

- 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, DET psychologists, counsellors and other DET personnel.

#### **5. EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the Plans will follow any critical incident at the school.

## **Appendix B**

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

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#### **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
- contact the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126.

##### **2. Ensure students and staff are safe from harm or injury**

- cordon off any 'crisis' area and keep students away
- manage the grounds while staff are briefed and ensure media do not intrude
- check corridors, toilets etc for students - try to prevent students from being on their own, particularly if they are distressed
- ensure the school continues as normally as possible

##### **3. Establish Critical Incident Recovery Team**

###### **The composition of the Recovery Team may include:**

- the Principal
- the Assistant Principal
- a member of the teaching staff
- a member of the Educational Support staff (first aid trained)
- other support staff as appropriate
- as necessary, DET psychologists, counsellors and other DET personnel.

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### 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:
  - manage information and phone calls
  - coordinate media requests for information
  - provide information to parents arriving at school
  - coordinate routine school activities – maintain where practical
  - notify staff about the emergency
  - notify students about the emergency
  - notify parents first and then siblings in the school
  - establish a recovery room and supervisor for affected students
  - establish a waiting room for parents
  - inform School Council
  - inform School Community by Compass
  - monitor School Community's reactions
  - liaise with outside agencies and emergency services
  - brief key personnel and review responses

#### 4.1 Recovery Room

- Establish a space to be used as a recovery room.

### 5. Informing Staff

- provide staff with a brief outline of the incident
- 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

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### 6. Informing Students

#### *Principal or senior staff*

- contact the bereaved family or Victoria Police to ascertain what information may be released within the school
- prepare a written factual statement
- 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.

#### *Teachers*

- provide a factual account of the incident
- inform students about arrangements of counselling and recovery rooms
- inform students about arrangements for services, and appropriate ways to express condolences

### 7. 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/beyond boundaries list
- timetable
- maps
- Emergency Management Evacuation Plan instructions.

### 8. Media Coverage

- nominate a media coordinator
- contact DET Media Unit on 9637 2871
- 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
- keep a record of media enquiries
- check that information provided does not conflict with court requirements or police proceedings
- anticipate renewed interest arising from anniversaries, court proceedings.

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### 9. Long Term Actions

- monitor and support members of the school community, particularly on significant dates such as anniversaries
- 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
- prepare for legal proceedings if necessary
- remove student's name from the roll if deceased.

### 10. Reference

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



Managing School  
Emergencies Booklet.



**Appendix C**

**Emergency Record Form – Template**

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Date: / \_\_\_ /

Time of notification: \_\_ : \_\_ am/pm

Name of person taking the call \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person reporting the incident \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

**Details**

**Describe:**

Where everyone is now

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What action is being taken to help?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who: \_\_\_\_\_

When: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature and extent of injury: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### Immediate Actions Required

Principal notified? Yes  \_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_ : am/pm

Other school staff notified? Yes  \_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_ : am/pm

State Emergency Services notified? 132 500 Yes  \_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_ : am/pm

Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) notified? 1800 126 126 \_\_ Yes  \_\_ Time: : am/pm

### Emergency Contact Telephone Numbers

**POLICE** 000

**AMBULANCE** 000

**FIRE BRIGADE** 000

**VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES (SES)** 132 500

**LOCAL HOSPITAL** Dandenong Hospital 9554-1000  
135 David Street  
Dandenong Vic 3175

The Angliss Hospital 1300 342 255  
39 Albert Street  
Upper Ferntree Gully Vic 3156

**INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE (ISOC)** 1800 126 126

**Emergency Message Record Form**

Time: \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : am/pm

Message from \_\_\_\_\_

Action required?                      Yes                       No

If 'YES', please detail:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Completed

Message taken by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Message Record**

Time: \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : am/pm

Message from \_\_\_\_\_

Action required?                      Yes                       No

If 'YES', please detail:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Completed

Message taken by \_\_\_\_\_