Melbourne Campus
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Website www.sea-english.edu.au
CRICOS Code 02353C | ABN 68 095 476 029

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose

In accordance with Standard 6 (Student Support Services) of the National Code 2018, registered providers must:

- Support students to adjust to study and life in Australia and allow access to appropriate assistance for the Student as needed.

- Support students to achieve their learning goals and to achieve satisfactory academic progress.

- Have a documented Critical Incident Policy and Procedures that details the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, required follow-up after the incident, and records of the incident and action taken.

This document outlines Sydney English Academy policy, support mechanisms and procedures for managing a critical incident.

This policy will ensure that Sydney English Academy has:

- An effective approach in responding to critical incidents as they occur;
- Appropriate support and counselling services available to those affected;
- Appropriate training and information resources provided to staff.

In the event of a critical incident, Sydney English Academy recognizes that appropriate infrastructure must be in place to ensure the provision of all necessary support services.

Sydney English Academy recognizes the duty of care owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential.

Definition

The National Code 2018 defines a critical incident as "a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury."
Critical incidences include but are not limited to:

- Missing students
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Death, serious injury or any threat of these
- Natural disaster; and
- Issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse
- Non-life threatening events could still qualify as critical incidents.

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Responsibility The PEO will have overall responsibility for the efficient implementation and management of this Policy. Institute staff will be made aware of the critical incident policy and procedures and be given appropriate training to ensure a total commitment to the duty of care for International Students.

A review and evaluation of the response to the critical incident will be conducted and the procedures reviewed by the Critical Incident Management Team and/or other stakeholders.

Changes to the policy and procedures, including updating resources, will be made as soon as practicable following the review and evaluation.

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of Institute staff for ensuring the effective management of critical incidents.

Role	Responsibilities
PEO	• Head of the Critical Incident Management Team * • Liaise with emergency services • Liaise with Diplomatic Post/Embassy/Consulate • Liaise with Minister and memorial services • Liaise with DHA re Student visa • Liaise with media • Liaise with agents *Responsibilities of the Critical Incident Team are outlined in Section 1 of the Procedures.*
Director of Studies	• Liaise with staff • Ensure appropriate handling of student data by administrative staff • Communicate with students and community • Prepare letters of condolence to family/next of kin • Organise pastoral care • Make arrangements for visits to/from family/next of kin, including airport reception and hotel reservations • Hire certified translators/interpreters • Liaise with doctors/hospital staff/coroner/funeral director Obtain authorisation from next of kin for disposal of personal effects and affairs • Organise formal counselling

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Levels of Risk

Level	Responsibility	Examples
SEVERE	PEO	• Death, suicide or life-threatening injury • Deprivation of liberty, threats of violence, assault, rape/sexual assault, aggravated burglary, use of firearms, biological or chemical weapons Fire, bomb, explosion, gas/chemical hazards, discharge of firearms • Threat of widespread infection or contamination
SIGNIFICANT	Director of Studies	• Severe Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) risk • Serious injury incurred by staff/student • Activity where evacuation is required
MODERATE	Director of Studies	• Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) risk • Suspicious package left unattended • IT system crashes • Student suffers epileptic fit
MINOR	Director of Studies	• Minor injury • Plumbing blockages • Phone/electrical failure • Computer breakdown

PROCEDURE   CRITICAL INCIDENT

Action/ Method

1. Critical Incident Management Team

When a critical incident occurs, the PEO will form a Critical Incident Management Team *(refer Schedule 1 – Critical Incident Reporting and Procedure Flow Chart)*

1.1 The Critical Incident Management Team will consist of, but will not be limited to, the following staff members:

Principal Executive Officer (PEO)
Student Support Officer
External Counsellor (If required)
Additional Staff member, such as International Student Contact Officer

1.2   The Critical Incident Management Team's responsibilities include:

1.2.1   assessing risk and response actions;
1.2.2   liaising with emergency and other services;
1.2.3   contacting with student's relative/s and other appropriate contacts;
1.2.4   liaising with other external bodies, such as home stays, agents or foreign embassies; and
1.2.5   counselling and managing students and staff not directly involved in the incident.

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Action/Method (cont)	**1. Critical Incident Management Team** (cont)

1.3 The Critical Incident Management Team will set in motion a Critical Incident Action Plan to manage various aspects arising from the incident, including communication strategies. This will include:

 1.3.1 creating and disseminating the plan and its procedures;

 1.3.2 a review of the plan; and

 1.3.3 staff development and training.

2. Critical Incident Procedures

2.1 Critical Incident Management Team responsibilities:

 2.1.1 reporting and recording;

 2.1.2 flowchart and detailed action plan sample;

 2.1.3 evaluation and review checklist;

 2.1.4 media management;

 2.1.5 staff training;

 2.1.6 resources and local links.

2.2 A media management process will be included in the Critical Incident Management Plan in regard to dealing with the media, as may be appropriate in the circumstances.

3. Reporting and Recording of Incident and Action Taken

3.1 The *Educational Services for Overseas Students Act* 2000 (**ESOS Act**) requires Sydney English Academy to notify the DESE and the DHA as soon as practical after the incident and in the case of a Student's death or other absence affecting the Student's attendance, Sydney English Academy is required to report the incident via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (**PRISMS**). All aspects of the incident and its management will be recorded on the Student's file.

3.2 Any action taken in regard to a critical incident will be recorded to include outcomes or evidence if the incident is referred to another person or agency.

3.3 When an international Student dies or other critical events involving the students occur, Sydney English Academy will assume many of the tasks which would normally be dealt with by the family of the victim, if the incident had occurred in the Student's home country. Sydney English Academy has developed efficient, sensitive and supportive strategies for dealing with a critical incident and provides support to members of staff, Students and others in the community who are involved.

3.4 The ESOS Act requires Sydney English Academy to notify DESE and DHA as soon as practicable after the incident and in the case of a Student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance, the incident will need to be reported via the Provider Registration International Student Management System (PRISMS).

3.5 **Key Details to be Reported:**

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3.5.1 Key details to report include the time, location and nature of the incident (eg. threat, accident, death or injury), names and roles of persons involved (e.g. staff, international student, other).

Action/
Method
(cont)

4. Notifying Family and Services

4.1 When an international Student dies or sustains serious injury, Sydney English Academy may be required to assist the student's family. This may include:

4.1.1 hiring interpreters;
4.1.2 making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation;
4.1.3 obtaining a death certificate;
4.1.4 assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues;
4.1.5 assisting with visa issues.

4.2 Notification to services may be required such as:

4.2.1 home stay or accommodation provider;
4.2.2 library;
4.2.3 communication services provider.

5. On Campus Incidents

5.1 If the incident is on campus, the first action will be to contact the emergency services – FIRE, AMBULANCE OR POLICE – as would be the case with other OH&S matters. The PEO must also be contacted immediately when the incident involves a death, serious injury or a threat to life or property.

6. Off Campus Incidents

6.1 If the critical incident involves a student or staff member and is off campus, the staff member receiving the information must immediately contact the Principal Executive Officer, as Head of the Critical Incident Management Team, who will communicate with other staff as appropriate.

6.2 The Principal Executive Officer will urgently deal with an emergency situation and call a meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team to formulate an action plan to:

6.2.1 create a clear understanding of the facts
6.2.2 plan an immediate response
6.2.3 plan ongoing strategies;
6.2.4 allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks

7. Immediate Response

7.1 Issues to be considered:

7.1.1 Contact with next of kin/significant others – what is the most appropriate manner of contact?
7.1.2 Arrangements for informing staff and students.
7.1.3 Guidelines to staff about what information to give students.
7.1.4 A written bulletin to staff if the matter is complex.

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**Action/
Method**
(cont)

7. Immediate Response (cont)

7.2 **Issues to be considered** (cont):

7.2.1 Briefing staff and delegating a staff member to deal with telephone/counter inquiries.
7.2.2 Managing media/publicity.
7.2.3 Identification of those Students and staff members most closely involved and therefore most at risk.

7.3 Those directly involved:

7.3.1 personal friends /family
7.3.2 others who have experienced a similar past trauma;
7.3.3 other Students, staff, supervisors etc.

8. Critical Incident Management Team Action Plan

8.1 Arrange a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with Counsellors.
8.2 In this session, an opportunity is given to share the impact of the event, discuss various interpretations of the event in cultural/ethnic terms, the resulting sense of vulnerability, the experience of painful emotions and the normalization of reactions.
8.3 Organise a tasks timetable for the next hour/s, day/s etc.
8.4 Plan ongoing feedback and regular meetings so that the coordinating team is continually in touch and working together.
8.5 Confirm access to emergency funds if necessary.
8.6 **One member of the team should be present for all meetings to keep records of content and decisions.**

9. Critical Incident Response

9.1 Whilst every critical incident is unique, it will be dealt with according to the circumstances and the cohort of people affected. In the first instance, and if appropriate to the circumstances, the response to any critical incident will be the notification of Emergency Services followed by the PEO. Notification should include the type of incident, the exact location and details of any person or persons who might be injured, in distress, or at risk.

9.2 The staff member receiving the news should immediately contact the PEO. The Incident Report Form should be completed as soon as possible after the event (Bomb Threat Checklist, Accident Injury Report Form and Criminal Incident Form). If Sydney English Academy PEO is not available, then another member of Sydney English Academy Critical Incident Management Team should be contacted immediately.

9.3 The PEO will determine whether the incident is a critical incident as per criteria outlined in this Policy. Where a critical incident is determined by the PEO, the Critical Incident Management Team will convene under the directions of the PEO.

9.4 The Critical Incident Management Team will be responsible for the formulation, implementation and management of the critical incident response and resource allocation. The Critical Incident Management Team will maintain relationships and liaise with other appropriate external organisations.

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9.5 The immediate response to any critical incident will be the assessment, planning and the rapid implementation of intervention needs.

Action/Method (cont)

9. Critical Incident Response (cont)

9.6 Assessment of the incident will involve gathering background details as close as possible to the informing source and will consider:

9.6.1 Type of incident (scale and nature),
9.6.2 People involved and the resources needed;
9.6.3 Levels of risk and probable severity;
9.6.4 Levels of urgency; and
9.6.5 Implications of the incident.

9.7 Assessment will be ongoing until the incident is resolved.

9.8 Implementation of a response will include:

9.8.1 Stabilising the immediate environment and ensuring the safety of affected staff, students and visitors until the arrival of emergency services personnel;
9.8.2 A response strategy by the Critical Incident Management Team
9.8.3 A description of the roles and responsibilities of the Critical Incident Management Team, organisations and other nominated staff members;
9.8.4 Briefing staff and establishing a central information point to provide up-to-the-minute, accurate information to staff, students, and families;
9.8.5 Guidelines to staff about what information to give to students;
9.8.6 Notification of counselling (within first few hours).
9.8.7 Establishment of a quiet area for the use of victims and/or their families. This area will be protected from intrusion by anyone not immediately involved in the incident.
9.8.8 Steps to supervise property, both personal property and any buildings or structures which might be unsafe and in need of immediate repairs;
9.8.9 A written statement to staff, students and families regarding the incident.
9.8.10 A 24-hour on-call telephone roster to handle the reporting of critical incidents and the coordination of responses to the incident.

9.9 The PEO will be responsible for coordinating media requests, releases and press conferences.

9.10 Staff and students are strongly discouraged from making statements to representatives of the media. In all instances, the media should be referred to the PEO.

9.11 The campus is equipped with alarms which will be used to warn people in an emergency. Upon hearing the evacuation alarm, staff and students are asked to be aware that there is a real or potential emergency in the building. Upon hearing the alarm or upon being instructed to evacuate, staff and students should obey any directions given by fire wardens and assemble at the nominated emergency evacuation point(s). Lifts are not to be used at any time during an evacuation unless directed by Fire Brigade personnel.

9.12 At all times, staff and students are required to follow instructions from emergency services personnel (police, fire brigade, ambulance).

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Action/Method
(cont)

10. Critical Incident Management Team Ongoing and Follow-up Response

10.1   These issues may need to be discussed at subsequent meetings:

10.1.1   who is the decision-maker?
10.1.2   who will follow-up?
10.1.3   availability of mobile phones;
10.1.4   notification of and liaison with Sponsor/Agent if applicable;
10.1.5   arrangements for visits to/from family;
10.1.6   liaison with police, doctors and hospital staff;
10.1.7   hiring independent interpreters;
10.1.8   death notices;
10.1.9   funeral/memorial service arrangements;
10.1.10   refund of Students fees to pay repatriation or associated expenses;
10.1.11   copy of death certificate;
10.1.12   consideration of personal items and affairs (household and academic);
10.1.13   insurance matters, OSHC coverage, ambulance cover;
10.1.14   formal stress management interventions required for Students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, re-schedule assessment or exams);
10.1.15   liaison with teaching staff;
10.1.16   arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required;
10.1.17   liaison with DIPB if studies will be interrupted;
10.1.18   fees issue to be resolved if the Student cannot continue with their studies;
10.1.19   legal issues: helping Students to get access to legal assistance if required;
10.1.20   arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required;
10.1.21   follow-up condolence or other letters to family;
10.1.22   financial assistance for families of affected person(s) if residing in Australia;
10.1.23   organising student/staff for hospital visits.

11. Post Incident Management

11.1   The Critical Incident Management Team will convene within 24 to 48 hours following a critical incident to determine what follow-up procedures must be implemented in the areas of counselling, information dissemination, debriefing and the continued allocation of personnel.

11.2   Post incident management responses may include:

11.2.1   Dissemination of information to all staff, students and their families and, if appropriate, the media;
11.2.2   Monitoring the need for counselling and maintaining contact with staff and students who are likely to need ongoing support;

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Action/Method
(cont)

11. Post Incident Management (cont)

11.2 Post Incident Responses may include (cont):

11.2.3   Psychological debriefing of students and staff 24 to 72 days after the incident (except if legal processes contra-indicate);

11.2.4   Notifying embassies and consulates;

11.2.5   Training workshops in stress management and coping strategies;

11.2.6   Liaising with the families of affected students. If necessary, interpreters will be appointed;

11.2.7   Arrangements for visits from family, accommodation, travel and expenses.

11.2.8   Liaising with police, hospital and other medical staff;

11.2.9   Funeral, memorial or repatriation service arrangements;

11.2.10 Death notices;

11.2.11 Administrative/enrolment matters including fee refunds;

11.2.12 Liaising with (DHA);

11.2.13 Assisting students with access to legal services;

11.2.14 Personal items and affairs (household and academic) of students;

11.2.15 Monitoring reactions within the campus, including significant dates and anniversaries

11.2.16 Encouraging teaching and administrative staff to continue to be alert in recognising post traumatic reactions;

11.2.17 Allowing opportunity for the campus community to continue to talk about the incident and their reactions by organising weekly discussion sessions;

11.2.18 Encouraging support networks amongst staff and students;

11.2.19 Disseminating regular and up to date information via email to the campus community;

11.2.20 Monitoring media coverage as this may continue to cause distress to staff and students.

12. Review

12.1 Once a critical incident is resolved, the Critical Incident Management Team will evaluate the critical incident response which will form the basis of subsequent and improved responses.

12.2 Staff and students will be encouraged to provide their thoughts and experiences in order to assist in the review process.

13. Privacy

13.1 Under the *Privacy Act and National Privacy Principles*, individuals are entitled to the protection of their personal and private information. Sydney English Academy will exercise its discretion and may disclose information in the following circumstances:

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Action/Method (cont)	**13. Privacy** (cont)

13.2 If Sydney English Academy reasonably believes that the use or disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent threat to public safety or an individual's life, health or safety.

13.3 If Sydney English Academy has reason to suspect that unlawful activity has been, is being or may be engaged in, and uses or discloses personal information as a necessary part of its investigation of the matter or in reporting its concerns to relevant persons or authorities; or the use or disclosure is required or authorized by or under the law.

14. Critical Incident Staff Training

14.1 Resource checks are conducted regularly to locate all relevant community resources in immediate local area: Funeral Directors, Police and Medical Authorities, Religious Leaders, Ethnic Group Leaders, Media Representatives, Insurance Representatives, Local Embassy or Consular Representatives.

15. Stress Management

15.1 Debriefing as soon as possible after the event on an individual or group basis.
15.2 Further debriefing – one or more days after the incident (group basis).
15.3 Follow-up 2 – 6 weeks later – (individual or group basis).
15.4 Ongoing counselling as required.
15.5 Recovery time for staff involved and the Critical Incident Management Team members

16.   Skills and Knowledge

16.1   cross-cultural skills;
16.2   training skills and cross-cultural communication;
16.3   awareness of one's own values and biases and how they may affect the Students;
16.4   knowledge of resources at on-site and off-site premises;
16.5   uninterrupted access to those resources;
16.6   communication skills;
16.7   organisational skills;
16.8   liaison skills;
16.9   networking skills;
16.10 stress management skills;
16.11 delegation skills;
16.12 maintenance of clear and direct communication channels with decision-makers;
16.13 panic difSydney English Academy skills;
16.14 skills to eliminate time delays;
16.15 sensitivity to the issue of confidentiality;
16.16 sensitivity towards different cultural expressions of grief and other emotions;
16.17 protocol knowledge (e.g. for repatriation to home country);
16.18 diplomacy skills;
16.19 debriefing skills;
16.20 monitoring skills for those affected by incident;
16.21 recognition skills regarding warning signs of risks to students affected by the incident;
16.22 follow-up skills;
16.23 advocacy skills (for students);
16.24 referral skills to legal, medical, religious assistance;

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16.25 recognition of one's own limitations;

16.26 self-care skills

Action/Method (cont)	**17.** **Critical Incident Recovery Timeline**

17.1 In order to successfully manage a critical incident, Sydney English Academy will always take appropriate action and provide support during and after a critical incident.

17.2 The recovery timeline following a critical incident will vary depending on the circumstances.

17.3 **Immediately (and within 24 hours)**

17.3.1 gather the facts;

17.3.2 ensure safety and welfare of staff and Students and arrange for first aid if necessary;

17.3.3 where possible notify the time and place of the debriefing to all relevant persons;

17.3.4 manage the media;

17.3.5 set up a recovery room;

17.3.6 keep staff, students and parents informed.

17.4 **Within 48 – 72 hours**

17.4.1 arrange counselling as needed;

17.4.2 provide opportunities for staff and Students to talk about the incident;

17.4.3 provide support to staff and helpers;

17.4.4 debrief all relevant persons;

17.4.5 restore normal functioning as soon as possible;

17.4.6 keep parents/immediate family informed.

17.5 **Within the first month**

17.5.1 arrange a memorial service, if appropriate;

17.5.2 encourage parents to participate in meeting to discuss Student's welfare;

17.5.3 identify behavioural changes and the possibility of post-traumatic stress disorder and refer to Health Contacts for Mental Health Services;

17.5.4 monitor progress of hospitalised staff or students;

17.5.5 monitor mental and physical health of all helpers.

17.6 **After the first month**

17.6.1 monitor staff and Students for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder and refer for specialised treatment;

17.6.2 provide support if needed.

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17.6.3   plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings;

17.6.4   access specialist report if needed.

17. Emergency and Support Services

Action / Method (cont)

	Category	Contact	Telephone	Internet
	Sydney English Academy	**24 Hour Emergency**	**0430092777**	www.sea-english.com
	Emergency	**Police**	**000**	www.police.vic.gov.au
		Ambulance	**000**	www.ambulance.vic.gov.au
		Fire	**000**	www.mfb.org.au
		Missing Persons: Australian Federal Police	**000 (ask for Police)**	www.afp.gov.au/national/missing
		National Security Hotline	**1800 123 400**	www.nationalsecurity.gov.au
	Essential Services	**State Emergency Services**	**132 500**	www.ses.vic.gov.au
		Telstra Call Tracing Service	**1800 007 097**	www.telstra.com.au
		Poisons Information	**13 11 26**	www.rch.org.au/poisons
		Gas Emergency	**132 771**	www.esv.vic.gov.au
		Electricity Emergencies	**13 12 80**	www.citipower.com.au
		Water and Sewer Emergencies	**132 812**	www.southeastwater.com.au/
	Medical Services	**Alfred Hospital** (Commercial Road corner St Kilda Road)	**9276 2000**	www.alfred.org.au
		Nurse-On-Call Telephone health line, providing immediate, expert health information and advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week	**1300 60 60 24**	www.health.vic.gov.au/nurseoncall
		Royal Melbourne Hospital Grattan Street, Parkville	**9342 7000**	www.rmh.mh.org.au

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	Royal Women's Hospital 132 Grattan Street, Parkville	**8345 2000**	www.rwh.org.au

17. Emergency and Support Services

Category	Contact	Telephone	Internet
Medical Services (cont)	**St Vincent's Hospital** 41 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy	9288 2211 (public) 9411 7111 (private)	www.svhm.org.au/
	Western General Hospital Gordon Street, Footscray	8345 6666	www.wh.org.au
Community Bodies	**Australian Red Cross**	9345 1800	www.redcross.org.au
	Salvation Army	9653 3299	www.salvos.org.au
	Lifeline **Griefline (12 noon – 3am)**	13 11 14 9596 7799	www.lifeline.org.au
	Mensline Australia	1300 78 99 78	www.menslineaus.org.au/cms/index.html
	Association for Loss & Grief (Vic)	9650 3000	www.nalagvic.org.au www.nalagvic.org.au/fhcrisisaftermresponse.htm
Counselling Services	**National Suicide Helpline Victoria**	1300 651 251	www.suicidehelpline.org.au
	Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line	1800 806 292	www.rwh.org.au/casa
	Crime Victims Support Association	9758 4512	www.cvsa.asn.au
	Funeral Advice Line: **Australian Funeral Directors Association**	1300 306 543	www.funeralassist.com.au/
	Road Trauma Support Team	1300 367 797	www.rtstv.org.au
	Victorian Work Cover Authority	9641 1555	www.workcover.vic.gov.au

Action / Method (cont)

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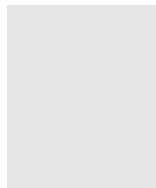
Headway Victoria	9642 2411	www.headwayvictoria.org.au	
Paraquad Victoria	9415 1200	www.paraquad.asn.au	

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APPENDIX 1 - CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE - FLOW CHART

CRITICAL INCIDENT

REPORTING AND PROCEDURE FLOW CHART

Notification of Critical Incident

Convene Critical Incident Management Team – Principal Executive Officer

Student Counsellor

Director of Studies

Additional Staff Member as required Eg. Student Support Service Officer

Formulate and Execute Critical Incident Plan

Organise debriefing, counselling and follow-up

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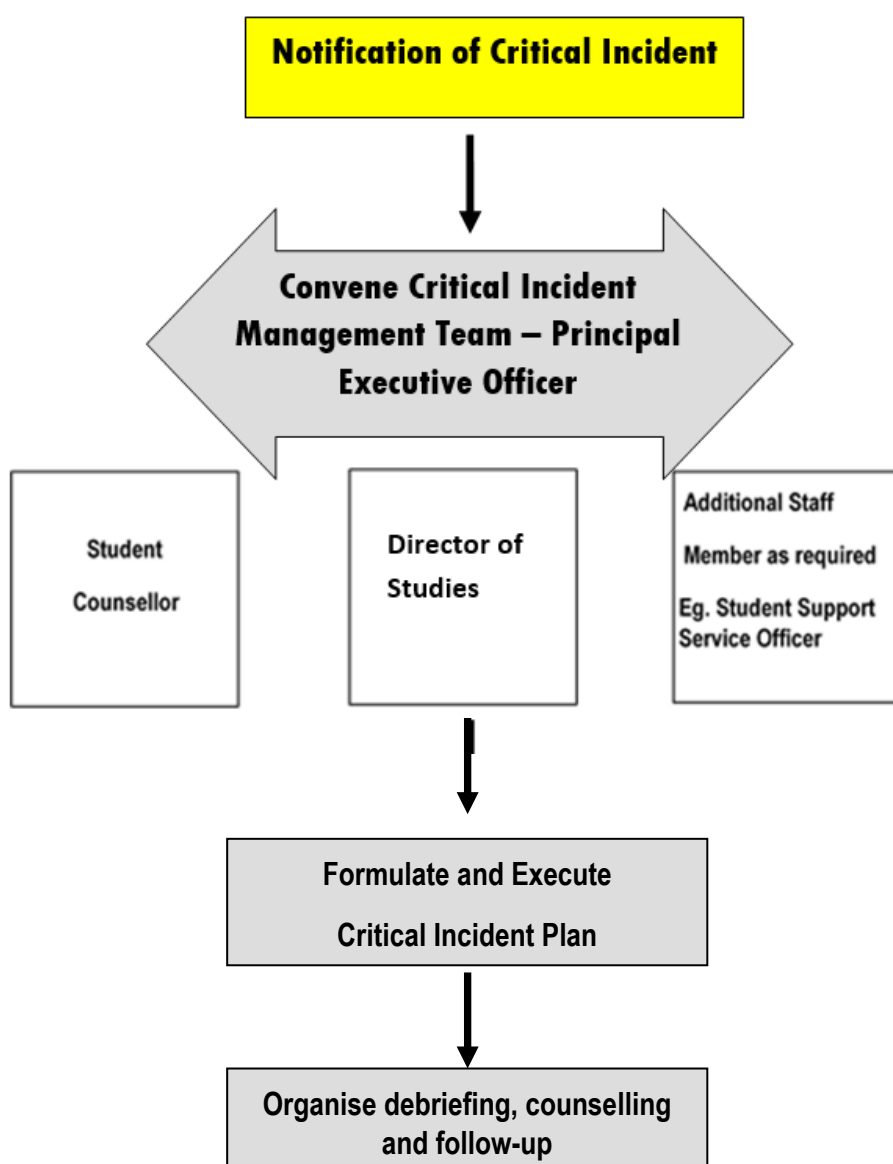Email: admissions@sea-english.edu.au | Website: www.sea-english.edu.au
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APPENDIX 2 – CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT FORM

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Date of Incident :	Time of Incident:
Place of Incident:	Affected person/s
Witnesses: (1) Name:	Contact:
(2) Name:	Contact:
(3) Name:	Contact:

SECTION 2: TYPE OF INCIDENT

☐ Death/suicide	☐ Serious accident
☐ Drugs	☐ Serious medical conditions/injury/health emergency/psychiatric
☐ Sexual assault/rape	☐ Intruders/stalkers
☐ Police involvement	☐ Weapons
☐ Physical violence	☐ Domestic violence
☐ Threats	☐ Civil unrest
☐ Damage to facilities	

SECTION 3: DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT

Please describe the incident factually

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SECTION 4: IMPACT ON THE ORGANIZATION

Will the incident disrupt the operations of Sydney English Academy?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does the incident/information have the potential to negatively affect the reputation of Sydney English Academy in the media/ wider community	☐ Yes	☐ No

SECTION 5: ACTION TAKEN

Action	Person/s Responsible	Timeline

SECTION 6: FOLLOW-UP

COMPLETED BY:

Staff Name: _____   *Position:* _____

Signature :   _____   *Date:*   _____

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APPENDIX 3- CRITICAL INCIDENT STAFF GUIDELINES

In the event of any critical incident, the first thing to do is calm the affected party/parties down and offer hope.

Communicate simply and give clear and practical directions in order to reduce the anxiety and connect the logic of the affected party/parties.

1. You are not super human

Managing a critical incident can be a very lonely time, especially if you are regarded as the focal link with International students at the Institute. While you are busy providing care or support to shoe directly affected by the incident, your own health and emotional wellbeing may be at risk. Health care should NOT be forgotten in your management strategy.

2. Take 'time out' each day to telephone or email other colleagues

This will give you not only a chance to debrief, but also to compare notes with sympathetic colleagues who have had similar experiences and a real understanding of what you are feeling. You are helping others while you help yourself.

3. Update resources as necessary

Insert as many local telephone numbers and contacts and as much information as you can so that you can refer to the resources, thereby allowing you to take effective and immediate action when necessary.

4. Preparing Yourself

How does one prepare for dealing with a critical incident in a cross cultural environment?

The attitude you assume is of the utmost significance:

- **Expect the unexpected.** Not everything occurs between 9.00 and 5.00 pm.
- **Do not be easily upset or disturbed** by even the most extreme situations
- **Convey empathy and respect** for the emotions of those involved
- **Worry and fear** should not be conveyed to the person/persons
- **Provide a sense of stability and strength**
- **Be able to alleviate tension and anxiety**
- **LISTEN –** to what <u>IS</u> said
- **LISTEN –** what <u>IS NOT</u> said
- **Create a personal equilibrium between your own values and those of a different value system,** but keep the values of the affected party/parties foremost in your mind

- **There will be times when you are unavailable.** Don't be consumed by guilt. As long as policy and procedures are in place, there will be someone else who can step in and fulfil the required role
- **Network and ethnic groups in the local community.** Keep a list of useful contacts that may be able to assist in matters not directly related to the Institute: religious customs, family support, interpreters, Embassy or Consular contacts.

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- **It is not always important to remain within the specific religious affiliation** to receive help in an emergency situation. Helping, coping, counselling skills are not religiously orientated - sensitivity is common to all members of the clergy. Keep this in mind when seeking assistance.

- **Learn as much as you can from foreign nationals** about how they would deal with specific scenarios – Ask Questions:

  How should the body of a Muslim car accident victim be handled when the Coroner demands an autopsy and religious custom prohibits?

  How does one act at a Chinese/Buddhist funeral Service? What is the proper way to express condolences?

  How is mental illness regarded in your country?

  What is the attitude towards rape in your country?

  The idea is to gain knowledge in advance, whenever possible.

- **Keep in contact with support networks like ISANA**. Whether by telephone or email, there will always be someone available to use as a 'sounding board'

5. Preparing Others

- **What do you do when staff respond that they are not qualified to handle International Students in crisis**? You eradicate this '*us and them'* attitude by engendering teamwork among staff with regard to assisting International Students. Let them know that they can be of invaluable assistance in a crisis by offering short-term training and workshops.

- **Establish and maintain your own network of contacts.** Try to include as wide a variety of types and levels of staff as possible.

- **Keep in regular contact**, whether formally or informally, as these contacts will be your most reliable allies at a moment's notice.

- **Conduct training regarding the Critical Incidents Policy for International Students**. It is important for staff to be aware of the existing of such a Policy.

- **Coordinate and conduct a critical incident simulation exercise**. Have the exercise observed and assessed by an outside party. Follow up with a debriefing and feedback session, inviting counsellors to educate participants about Stress Management, Post Traumatic Stress and in all counselling principles when dealing with International Students.

- **Conduct general Cross Cultural Awareness Training** at regular intervals.

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APPENDIX 4 - CRITICAL INCIDENT – MEDIA PROTOCOLS

CRITICAL INCIDENT - MEDIA PROTOCOLS

In many cases, the Institute would prefer not to issue a Press Release upon the death of an International student. However, in anticipation of some requests for comments from the media, it is advisable to have a Press Release drafted by media staff in the event it is required.

Listed below are some helpful hints which can be used and applied:

1. **'No comment'** is usually not a good idea.

2. A good Press Release should answer the following questions:

    - WHAT?
    - HOW?
    - WHEN?
    - WHERE?
    - WHY?

3. Add a joint statement from the PEO (on behalf of the Critical Incident Management Team) and a student representative, which will signify unity and dissuade the media from looking for an 'alternative angle' on the story. The statement should include an expression of shock and sadness concerning the tragedy, as well as compassion for the family and friends of the victim.

4. Comments should be included explaining the Institute's policy on responding to this type of situation. In addition, if the situation warrants, it would be appropriate to comment on what measures will be put in place to avoid a recurrence of events of this nature.

    5. Include telephone contact/s for further information at the bottom of the Press Release. The PEO is responsible for media enquiries, and all staff should be aware of the procedure to direct media enquiries to this person.

Managing the Media

Each critical incident is unique and the dynamics of each situation will need to be assessed when it occurs. It is important that a structured approach to media management is developed and is included in the Management Plan to ensure the most positive and supportive response from the media.

Taking Calls from Media

The Principal Executive Officer should handle the initial media calls. Calls should be returned as soon as possible.

It is important to note that the Institute has an input in media coverage so that the story is balanced. Therefore, **avoid answering questions with "no comment".** Respond to questions accurately, however it may be necessary to explain to the media that you are unable to answer the questions at this time because:
- of the sensitive nature of the issue; or
- You do not have the information available

It may be necessary to check with the Police, Ambulance or Fire Brigade etc. before making a statement.

Response Time is Important

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Officers likely to be contacted by the media need to be alerted immediately and kept informed as more details come to light.

Inform Reception as soon as possible that the incident has occurred, even if the details are unclear.

The PEO will need to be informed of the incident. They will be able to assist by handling the media enquiries. The PEOP will liaise with the Critical Incident Management Team regarding the situation.

Channel <u>All</u> Media Enquiries through One Person

The PEO will liaise directly with the media as more details are known.

Relate to Journalist/s in a Positive and Friendly Manner

Enlist the support of the media to report accurate information and avoid being defensive. Journals are professionals and have been assigned the job of reporting the story. They feel the public have a right to know and they will report the story with or without the Institute's cooperation. In a major disaster, the media is an <u>essential</u> means of communicating information, e.g. providing hot line phone numbers etc.

Working with the media representatives as professionals and providing them with accurate information regarding the incident means 'staying in control'. Cooperation can make the difference between inaccurate reporting, resulting in a story that reflects negatively on the Institute, and one which shows our caring role and our ability to respond effectively in a crisis. Emphasis should be placed in media comment on the SUPPORT available to students and staff.

Determine What the Official Response will be

The PEO may be able to provide advice to staff about other developments or broader issues that may need to be considered when framing the response. They may also be able to offer advice about the most effective methods of responding to newspaper, radio and television interviews.

Express concern. Restrict answers to facts. Accentuate the positives.

It is appropriate to **state the facts about what has occurred and what is being done. For example, when and where it occurred, how many people were involved or hurt, how much damage has been done etc.**

Describe the assistance being provided for students and staff who may have been traumatised. Explain that the Institute has been deeply shocked, that all available resources and support services have been gathered and what steps are being taken to rectify the situation and return to normal as soon as possible.

We have support structures in place to help you to cope with this tragedy.

IT IS IMPERATIVE TO AVOID MAKING COMMENTS WHICH IMPLY **BLAME** OR **FAULT** FOR ANY PART OF THE INCIDENT, AS THERE COULD BE SIGNIFICANT LEGAL IMPLICATIONS*.*

Official Enquiries

Official enquiries, e.g. by Police, are likely to follow serious incidents. Media comments on the public record may have an impact on proceedings at such enquiries.

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APPENDIX 5 - CRITICAL INCIDENTS – POLICE INVOLVEMENT

1. Sydney English Academy's Legal Obligations

While critical incidents are not only cases of sudden unexpected death, the Police and others must be contacted.

The Police are required to investigate all cases of sudden unexpected death. Police actions include:

- Reporting such death to the Coroner

- Notifying next of kin

- Obtaining official identification of the deceased (*this must be done by someone who has known the deceased for some time)*

- Conducting investig*ations on behalf of the Coroner. For example, interviewing witnesses and other*s who may have been *involved, collecting clothing and other items for use in evidence, delivering* specimens for ana*lysis.*

2. Coronial Investigations

*Every death reported to the Coroner mu*st be investigated. The body of the deceased will be taken to the morgue, where it will be viewed by the relatives but not touched. Once the coronial enquiries are complete, which could take some time, the body will be released to funeral directors to await instructions from the next of kin. At this stage the body may be touched.

3. Post Mortems (Autopsies)

Most reported deaths require post mortem examination to determine the medical cause of death. This usually involves an internal and external examination of the body and of tissue, organ and blood specimens taken from the body. Cultural and religious objections to a post mortem may be discussed with the Coroner or a Court Social Worker. However, these objections very rarely influence the Coroner's decision to conduct an autopsy.

4. Inquests

An inquest is a public hearing before a Coroner *(and occasionally a Jury)* to decide the circumstances of death. Once initial investigations are completed, the Coroner may *(as in most cases)* dispense with an inquest. However, the Coroner may order an inquest or, in certain circumstances *(such as murder),* an inquest may be legally required.

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APPENDIX 6 - CRITICAL INCIDENT – PREPARING FOR FUNERALS

This information is taken from materials published by the Australian Funeral Directors Association. A variety of reading material is available. Enquiries may be directed to:

Australian Funeral Directors Association
PO Box 291
KEW EAST, Vic 3102

Arranging a Funeral

When faced with having to make funeral arrangements, most people have no prior experience in organising such an event and little idea of what to do.

Initial interviews with the Funeral Director can be at a location nominated by you. While some people may have a fairly clear knowledge of arrangements they want to make, others may want to consider numerous alternatives before making any decisions. The Funeral Director is there to guide and advise on all matters which need to be considered.

Decisions to make will include:

- Time and location of the funeral
- Type of service
- Burial/cremation (reflect on what is appropriate)
- Kindness, helpfulness, understanding and the empathetic handling of funeral arrangements are the vital psychological components of the Funeral Director's role.

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APPENDIX 7 - CRITICAL INCIDENT – MANAGEMENT PLAN

A critical incident is defined as anything that is both extraordinary and beyond our normal ability to cope. Examples of critical incidents would include the death of a Student, an accident on campus, illness/death of a staff member and similar events that impact on groups within the Institute. Naturally, the specific situation will determine the actions the Institute will take. These actions will vary according to the degree of publicity of the incident, the age of those affected by it and the extent of their involvement.

General Guidelines

1. Plan the Response

The Principal Executive Officer should take responsibility for organising and co-ordinating the Institute's response in consultation with the Critical Incident Management Team. This may include contacting emergency services and/or families of those affected.

2. Provide information to those affected by the incident

The psychological starting point in assuming some control over an extent is understanding what happened. It is the PEO's task to provide information and appropriate venues for its dissemination. Students and staff have a need to accept the reality of the event and the inevitable discussions that follow are better based on fact rather than on rumour or supposition. It is import that rumours are discounted.

3. Resume normal routines as soon as possible

There is reassurance that safety in the predictability of normal routines. Once the event has been formally acknowledged – perhaps through meetings, a memorial service, or whatever is appropriate – the next step may well be to resume, as far as practicable, normal timetables, so that any ongoing recovery strategies can take place against a background of predictability.

4. Assess the psychological/emotional needs of those affected

After a traumatic event, the people involved will need support. The nature of this support will vary amongst individuals, but generally those closest to the incident will need more assistance than others. On advice from staff, the Counsellor should determine the nature and degree of support needed. At a minimum level, this should mean providing opportunities for those involved to express and share with others the reactions they had to the incident. Those in charge and those providing support also need extra consideration during this time. Finally, some action of 'closure' may need to be planned.

When something distressing has happened at the Institute there is usually at least one class that is particularly affected and in need of support.

Practical ideas to use with students

- Let the students tell you what happened
- Discuss what actually happened: give facts and separate rumour from facts
- Allow discussion time:
    - where were you when it happened?
    - How did you find out?
    - What did you feel?
    - How might others feel?

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The notion of blame is difficult. Instead, try to incorporate into the discussion what can be done now.

- Some students like to write or draw – to recall events, people and emotions – or to vent them.
  - Talk to the class about how they will respond and support survivors/victims during their absence (letters, visits etc.) and when they return to the Institute.

For Staff: Coping with your own reactions to a Critical Incident/Event

One of the difficulties from a staff member's perspective may be one's own reactions to a shared critical incident. The way a person reacts may make it harder for him/her to respond to the reactions of Students. Equally, sometimes a staff member's reaction may a better understanding of a Student's behaviour.

Individuals have a wider range of responses to critical incidents and may be surprised by their own reactions or those of others. An individual's memories or experience and/or the accumulation of critical incidents may increase the likelihood of a particular incident triggering a personal crisis. The affects of critical events may include:

- Physical effects, such as changes in appetite and/or libido, sleep disturbances, fatigue and increase in sensitivity to noise, increased susceptibility to illness, breathlessness, dry mouth, tremor
- A range of emotional responses which may include anger, irritation, sadness, hostility, aggression, feeling inadequate and denial
- Altered thought patterns, such as confusion, disorientation, forgetfulness, difficulty with tasks and normal routines, flashbacks, nightmares, poor judgment and inability to assess others and oneself realistically.

The longer term effects may include burn-out or exhaustion, lack of interest in work or life in general, withdrawal from family and friends, escapism and overwork. These responses impact upon family, social and work relations and activities.

It is important that staff pay attention to their own mental and physical wellbeing and take time to ensure that they look after themselves, as well as their Students, when a critical incident occurs.

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