

***CRITICAL INCIDENT
MANAGEMENT***

PROVINCE POLICY 4



**St Francis Xavier Province of the
Christian Brothers
(Queensland and Northern Territory)**

MAY 2003

INTRODUCTION

Xavier Province Centre Ministries and Edmund Rice Schools have a responsibility to be sensitive to and manage the reactions of students, teachers and others during and after a critical incident by initiating support programs within the school or in co-operation with external agencies. Whether the incident is of a disastrous proportion or of a relatively small magnitude, a quick and effective response is required.

1. RATIONALE/PURPOSE

These guidelines will enable those with authority and appropriate expertise in Edmund Rice Schools and Ministries to implement a consistent response to critical incidents across Edmund Rice Schools and Ministries while exercising appropriate discretion in specific incidents.

The purpose of this policy is to:-

- provide planning and response guidelines for Province Ministries and Edmund Rice Schools;
- assist in the development of skills for response to a wide variety of critical incidents;
- raise awareness of issues which may confront counsellors and others in their support of schools following critical incidents;
- assist staff to identify when support programs may be appropriate; and
- provide some overview of normal human reactions to the abnormal circumstances of a critical incident.

Predetermined contingency plans/guidelines can do much to:

- lessen the impact of critical incident events;
- lessen the time lost in recovery; and
- restore people to "good health"

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Under the stewardship entrusted to those involved in schools and ministries, Xavier Province personnel are committed to being strategically prepared to deal with incidents in order to protect the safety and welfare of every person.

In line with gospel values and the tradition of Edmund Rice, Critical Incidents are handled pastorally and appropriately, ensuring that the dignity and the privacy of each person are respected.

3. POLICY

All Edmund Rice Schools and Ministries will have a comprehensive Critical Incident Management Plan developed to respond to a wide variety of critical incidents which may affect a Province, school or ministry.

All Edmund Rice Schools and Ministries will nominate a Critical Incident Management Team drawn from senior management, counsellors and others with student welfare responsibilities, legal and media consultants, to assist and advise schools and ministries in the implementation of the Critical Incident Management Plan.

4. DEFINITIONS

A critical incident can be described as any event or circumstance that

- causes normally stable and healthy people to experience unusually strong emotional or psychological distress which has the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the time of the event or later,
- endangers the health and well being of staff or students at Edmund Rice Schools, Ministries or initiatives, or
- endangers property within the St Francis Xavier Province or at any Edmund Rice School or Ministry.

Critical incidents often have similar characteristics including:

- rapid time sequences;
- overwhelming of usual coping responses of individuals or communities;
- severe disruption, at least temporarily, to the functioning of individuals or communities; and
- perceptions of threat and helplessness and a turning to others for help.

Critical incidents happen on several levels, which are described in the Critical Incident Management Plan.

The 1800 Number is a special designated free call phone number which can be activated during a critical incident, to deal with multi calls from the public.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1.1 The Province Leadership Team, acting as the Trustees of the Christian Brothers (Queensland) has overall responsibility for ensuring that this framework is implemented. Specifically, the Province Leadership Team has responsibility to:

- ratify and review the policies,
- approve additional resources in the event of a critical incident, and
- approve activation of the 1800 number.

5.1.2 Edmund Rice Education Directorate will;

- develop, implement and monitor policy and procedures within all schools,
- assist schools with training opportunities for staff, and
- ensure each school has developed a Critical Incident Management Plan.

5.1.3 Board/PLT Representative will;

- ensure compliance systems are in place.

5.1.4 Ministry Leaders will;

- develop, implement and monitor policy and procedures within the ministry/ministries,
- assist the ministry/ministries with training opportunities for staff within this policy, and
- ensure each ministry has developed a Critical Incident Management Plan.

5.1.5 The Principal will;

- develop and implement the Critical Incident Management Plan, reflecting the local conditions in the school,
- appoint and monitor a Critical Incident Management Team,
- promote knowledge of the existence and content of the Critical Incident Management Plan in the school,

- communicate decisions regarding an incident, in line with the Critical Incident Management Plan,
- be guided by the Critical Incident Management Plan when making decisions concerning communication with the media. The Principal can act as spokesperson for the school, in line with the Critical Incident Management Plan and Media Policy.

5.1.6 Staff will;

- make themselves aware of the relevant policy and procedures relating to critical incidents,
- follow mandatory reporting requirements as required,
- follow procedures in the event of a critical incident.

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION

5.2.1 FORMING A CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will consist of an identified group of people who will be responsible for directing and managing school or ministry personnel, students, parents, the media, and other community members, during and following a critical incident.

The Critical Incident Management Team will be formed at the commencement of each year and will be prepared to manage critical incidents from an organizational perspective.

Membership will be updated as required by vacancies and circumstances.

The decision to activate the CIMT will be made by the Principal, Ministry Leader or Director, Edmund Rice Schools.

As a guide, the CIMT will include as leader, the Principal or Ministry Leader, and others, such as;

- identified members of the College Leadership Team or Ministry Team,
- school counsellors,
- persons with student/participants welfare responsibility, and
- workplace health and safety officer.

The Critical Incident Management Team will;

- meet at least once a semester for the purpose of training and planning for an incident,
- ensure that the Critical Incident Management Plan is current and relevant to local area and ministry,
- fulfil allocated tasks, and
- provide information to the Principal/Ministry Leader to improve and update the Plan.

5.2.2 CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of this Plan is to;

- provide guidelines for critical incident planning and responses for schools and ministries,
- raise awareness of issues that may occur following critical incidents,
- ensure that the communication channels between relevant groups are clear and direct, to maximise accuracy, efficiency and ultimately minimise anxiety and speculation,
- ensure that the process of identifying and gathering information, about a critical incident or issue, is managed effectively, and
- assist staff to identify what support programs may be appropriate.

The Plan should be used to guide the management of critical incidents and must include:

- an outline of key roles and responsibilities of staff,
- clear lines of communication and support,
- identification of potential incidents, or issues, to enable early identification and appropriate response,
- templates and standard forms to be used for recording, reporting and monitoring communication activity during a critical incident,
- contact numbers for emergency services,
- a Critical Incident Management flow chart,
- steps to be taken in response to a Critical Incident,
- immediate communication systems response,
- details for media contact.

5.2.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROVINCE POLICIES

Media and Privacy Policy must be read in connection with this Policy, as there is a strong inter-relationship.

5.2.4 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

It is important whenever a critical incident occurs that has the potential to generate media interest, that Province media consultants must be contacted. The consultant can ensure effective control of the media at the scene.

The Principal/Ministry Leader is the spokesperson for the school/ministry in accordance with the Media Policy.

Province Media Consultant contact details are in the Critical Incident Management Plan.

If the media enters school/ministry property without permission, they may be requested to leave, but this could result in them employing other methods to get the story or pictures. If the media arrives unannounced, they should be referred to the media consultant. If the media consultant is not yet on scene, the media should be directed to a safe area where they do not disturb the crisis recovery process. They should be informed their requests would be dealt with as soon as possible.

5.2.5 SUMMARY PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING

Procedures for responding to Critical Incident Response Procedures, (see Annexure 1) must be displayed in prominent locations around the school and workplace. This procedure sheet must be included in the staff handbook.

5.3 COMPLIANCE

The internal audit schedule is completed each year.

An external audit is carried out at least every 3 years, or as required.

Evidence needed to comply with the Policy is appropriately recorded and stored.

5.4 POLICY BREACH

Any deliberate breach of this Policy, may lead to disciplinary action as defined by the Disciplinary Policy (Staff).

ANNEXURE 1

St Francis Xavier Province Congregation of Christian Brothers – Critical Incident Response Procedures

A. Survive	B. Immediately	ASAP	C. Once safety assured	D. Within 24 hours	E. Beyond 24 hours
<p>Preserve Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danger • Response • Airways • Breathing • Circulation <p>Ensure Safety</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Account for everyone 2) Tend to injured 3) Render the situation safe 4) Establish the facts 5) Contact Emergency Services <p>Police 000</p> <p>Ambulance 000</p> <p>Fire Brigade 000</p> <p>Doctor:</p> <p>Priest: (if required)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Inform Principal Ministry Leader 2) They in turn inform PLT and/or Director ER schools in line with CIP 3) Activate Critical Incident team 4) Develop Action Plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Notify relatives 2) Inform staff, students and school community 3) Consult media and legal advisers in line with CIP for media communication 4) Identify holding or briefing area 5) Document facts 6) Prepare phone contact person to deal with community media calls 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Set up incident room and other rooms as needed 2) Prepare for counselling 3) Update and document facts 4) Prepare report for PLT/ERED 5) Plan for return to normal duties ASAP 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ongoing debriefing 2) Encourage all to access support 3) Prepare for dealing with Post Traumatic Stress 4) Monitor and support survivors and families 5) Monitor admin and care givers 6) Update facts 7) Support absent staff/students 8) Plan for return of injured staff/students 9) Plan for formal proceedings: inquests, court, funerals, liturgies 10) Liaise with Media and Legal advisers 11) Access specialist providers 12) Recognise different cultures