



BLACKFRIARS
PRIORY SCHOOL

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Date Approved: 2020

Review Date: August 2022

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CONTEXT

As the only school founded by the Dominican Friars in Australia, Blackfriars Priory School remains faithful to the search for Truth (Veritas) as lived and taught over the last 800 years by the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), and exemplified by Saint Dominic, our Founder, and Saint Albert the Great, our Patron.

Saint Dominic's commitment to study continued throughout his life. The pursuit of knowledge was not for its own sake but to better understand God's creation and its use in the works of the Order has continued through the centuries. Today, Dominicans can be found throughout the world.

An early member of the Dominicans was Saint Albert the Great. He became a lecturer, scientist, philosopher and Bishop. After his death he was recognised as a Doctor of the Church. The Doctor Universalis – The Universal Doctor, in recognition of his extraordinary genius and extensive knowledge, for he studied every branch of learning known at his time. His quest for knowledge saw him study everything he could find as it was through learning about creation, that he was able to know more about the creator, God, and then hand on that information to all he taught.

The lifelong commitment of Saint Dominic and Saint Albert to discovering and applying Truth to hand on to others remains at the core of the Blackfriars teaching pedagogy and its community. Blackfriars is built upon the Four Pillars of Dominican Life: Prayer, Study, Community Life and Service.

PURPOSE

Blackfriars Priory School is committed to ensuring staff and all other members of the school community are provided with a safe and healthy work environment. Minimisation, in part, will be achieved by proactively responding to and managing the impact of critical incidents on and off the school campus.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Staff are aware of what to do when a critical incident arises directly involving the School staff and/or students.

In the event of a critical incident, this policy and procedure will guide the School in:

- Providing a caring and supportive response to staff, students and the wider community.
- Returning to normal routine as soon as possible.
- Maintaining an optimal learning environment.
- Minimising short and long term adverse effects on the school and its community.

These procedures are in addition to the usual support and pastoral care offered to staff, students and families.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Blackfriars Priory School community.

POLICY

Definition of critical incident

Within the context of the School, a critical incident can be defined as an alleged or actual event or situation which may create a risk of substantial or serious harm, either mentally or physically, and/or affect the safety and wellbeing of an individual(s) and/or the School Community.

Examples of a critical incident may include:

- Major injury/medical emergency
- Serious traffic crash/accident
- Death – sudden/accidental or following an illness (staff or student)
- Suicide
- Abduction
- Intruder on School grounds
- Bomb threat
- Sexual assault
- Fire at School
- Hazardous substance spill or explosion
- Natural disaster (e.g. bushfire, earthquake, flood)
- Terrorism

Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for ensuring adequate resources are made available to implement this policy and for ensuring this policy is communicated and understood by all Staff.

Critical Incident Response Team Members:

- Principal and as delegated:
 - Executive Team
 - Counsellor and Psychologist
 - Assistant Deputy Principal, Wellbeing
 - Chaplain

In the event of a critical incident, the Critical Incident Response Team will follow the Critical Incident Plan 2019.

[\(Appendix 1\)](#)

To support this policy the following procedures have been established:

- Documentation, distribution and communication of these procedures to all Staff for dealing with critical incidents
- Providing ongoing training for key Staff in the areas of first aid, fire and evacuation
- Establishment and communication of evacuation procedures for all Staff
- Provision of pastoral support to Staff following a critical incident.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

1. Critical Incident Plan 2019 ([Appendix 1](#))
2. CESA Critical Incident – things to consider at the local level
3. CESA Principal Consultant – Critical Incidents: Category 1 Communication Protocol
4. CESA Critical Incident – Communication Flowchart
5. CESA Critical Incident – Category 1 Communique

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for implementation, monitoring and review of the policy is vested at the level of the following roles:

Principal

POLICY REVIEW

Frequency: Every 2 years

Next review date: August 2022

APPROVAL AUTHORITY / POLICY OWNER

Blackfriars Priory School

Critical Incident Response Plan

This plan outlines the essential tasks for the first 24 hours and should be used by the Emergency Response Team (ERT) to guide their roles and responsibilities. Members of the ERT are usually: Executive Team, Assistant Deputy Principal Wellbeing, School Psychologist, School Counsellor
The plan should always be used in conjunction with the Critical Incident Toolkit/Guidelines and Fact Sheets. Headspace School Support can be accessed on **1800 688 248**.

This Critical Incident Response Plan has been developed by the Blackfriars Priory School Executive Team: **December 2019**

Appendix 1

Inform

Staff	Who
Inform staff ASAP and keep them well informed about all available information regarding the critical incident and the immediate critical incident plan (inclusive of staff on leave)	Principal
Inform staff of the option of not being involved if their own wellbeing is at risk.	Principal
Inform staff of support they can access (Employee Assistance Program)	Principal
Inform staff that the students will be notified in small groups via script.	Principal
Parents	Who
Inform the parents of close friends and vulnerable students to ensure support at home	Wellbeing Team
Inform parents via letter/email to give them immediate and accurate information about the School's response to the incident	Principal EA to Principal DD&CR
Provide parents with contact information for support for them and their children	Deputy Principal or Head of Primary to distribute template letter approved by Principal
Resources need: Headspace School Support Toolkit p35 for script	
Students	Who
Inform close friends and vulnerable students personally and provide sources of immediate and ongoing support	Wellbeing Team – depending on the circumstances
Inform students using the agreed script in small groups, with consideration of: ∴ Friends closest to the student ∴ Students in the same Year level ∴ Students in the same class as sibling ∴ Home Groups of Year level groups preferable Delivery in whole school assemblies is not recommended Resources needed: headspace School Support Toolkit p33-34 for script	House Heads Homegroup teachers Class group teachers
Community	Who
Inform all auxiliary adults who will have contact with students in the following 24 hours	Executive Team & Wellbeing Team
Inform Principals of schools within the area, specifically those attended by the student's siblings or known close friends	Principal Deputy Principal & Connected schools/clubs.
Inform Catholic Education South Australia	Principal

Support

Staff	Who
Identify and plan support for staff at risk	Wellbeing Team to set up Parlour as support room
Encourage staff to contact Employee Assistance Program if they require addition support	Wellbeing Team
Inform staff of identified liaison person	Identify 1 staff that is central contact for staff questions.
Provide staff with the details of the information being provided to parents and students	EA Principal
Check in with staff at the start and end of the day for wellbeing and consistent messaging	Executive Team Wellbeing Team,
Parents	Who
Establish a line of support with the family of the student or staff member effected by the incident	Depends on circumstances
Gather and protect student's belongings (Standby Response Service can assist 0408 133 884)	Deputy Principal Head of Primary Head of House
Encourage parents in the School community to access mental health services and referral pathways if needed.	Wellbeing Team
Determine time, location and personnel for parent information and support session	Executive Team & Wellbeing Team
Students	Who
Immediately follow up all unexplained student absences	House Heads
Set up a student support room / refecton space that is staffed with appropriate experienced personnel	Experienced staff with good rapport with students to set up and be present
Work collaboratively with external services (e.g Headspace) to identify and plan support for students at risk	Wellbeing Team
Monitor students and, in collaboration with mental health agency, begin assessments of students identified as at risk	Wellbeing Team
Other Considerations	Who
Consider who needs information on: ∴ Identifying relevant risk factors for the incident ∴ Understanding grief responses ∴ Referral pathways to support services	Executive Team Wellbeing Team

Manage

Media	Who
Consider the need for an appropriate media response	Principal Director of Development
Contact School's Governing Body Media Unit or headspace School Support for advice	Principal Director of Development
Consider what extra support and Information may be appropriate	Executive Team Principal
Social	Who
Consider the impact of social media	Wellbeing Team, House Heads
If the use of social media escalates distress, consider intervening	House Heads, Homegroup teachers Class group teachers
Use social media for consistent messaging around help seeking and information sharing	Director of Development
Consult with Diocesan Media for ongoing management of social medial	Director of Development.
Emergency Response Team	Who
Undertake self-care: ∴ Debrief everyday ∴ Identify a self-care activity for each member ∴ Discuss coping mechanisms ∴ Watch for signs of vicarious trauma ∴ Ensure that staff can take a break from the response if required	Executive Team Assistant Deputy Principal Wellbeing Clinical Psychologist School Counsellor
Next Steps	Who
Document the incident and all action undertaken	Principal & DP EA Principal
Organise a meeting with key players to develop a plan for foreseeable future	Principal Executive Team Wellbeing Team,
Resources needed: headspace School Support Toolkit p16-21	

Resources:

CESA Critical Incident Management
Headspace School Support Toolkit: [Link](#)