



# IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE

*Through Mary to Jesus: "The Way, the Truth and the Life"*

*John 14:6*

## Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy

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Document #

HSW04

Version 2.1



## 1. Introduction

The Critical and Emergency Incident Policy describes the College, its environment and the potential hazards to which it is likely to be exposed. It identifies potential risks to the daily operations of the College and to the safety and welfare of staff and students. Risk management practices and risk mitigation strategies are outlined. The policy identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Emergency Management Team.

Procedures are additionally outlined in this document to describe the actions to be followed in case of specific types of emergencies.

### 1.1 Rationale

The College recognises:

- That witnessing highly traumatic events is uncommon however, such events can have a considerable impact on the psychological wellbeing of students, staff and families and may have an adverse effect on learning, teacher performance and family interactions.
- That an emergency may have effects on those involved lasting long after the initial crisis has been resolved.
- The need for a Critical and Emergency Incident Policy detailing a set of procedures designed to better enable College staff to respond to a sudden serious incident in a manner that preserves life and lessens the impact of the incident on others.
- The need to reinstate normality as soon as possible after a traumatic event, thus enabling a continuation of the College academic program for students in a highly supportive and caring environment.
- That in addition to implementing procedures to resolve the emergency quickly, it may require support to assist the overall school community to return to normal functioning.

## 2. Scope

This policy and associated procedures are to be implemented in the unlikely event of a critical incident or emergency that may affect the safety of students, staff, and/or the College community while on College grounds or during a related College-based activity or circumstance.

## 3. Definitions

**Person/s** - includes a student/s, College staff, contractor/s, volunteer/s, or members of the College community.



Critical and emergency incidents are defined as:

- Foreseeable incidents therefore, should be prepared for in policy and procedures.
- Death, or life-threatening injury to any person while on College grounds or during a related College-based activity or circumstance.
- Circumstances that pose a critical risk to the health or safety of one or more persons, (such as natural disasters).
- Any incident requiring school closure, lockdown, or a reduction in the number of students or staff attending.

**Critical risk** – if action had not been taken or the risk otherwise averted, in this circumstance, the scenario could have resulted in death, life-threatening illness or life-threatening injury to one or more persons.

**Crisis Management** – Employing quick and educated decisions, using a strategy, to alleviate potential harm, damage to life, property or reputation.

**Emergency Management Team (EMT)** – refers to the College staff who will meet when an emergency occurs, and during training sessions, in order to implement the College Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy and associated procedures.

**Incident Manager (usually the Principal)** - means the person responsible for the overall control of an emergency or critical incident. The College Principal will assume this role unless:

- the College Principal is incapacitated or unavailable
- the College Principal decides to appoint another person as Incident Manager because of the nature of the incident or the expertise of the individual
- for incidents involving more than one site there will be an Incident Manager appointed for each site
- for some incidents, whether on single or multiple sites, the Incident Manager will be subordinate to another agency which has legislative authority for management of that hazard e.g. Department of Fire and Emergency Services).

**Non-reportable Incidents** – but which preparations should be made, include the sudden death of a staff member or student, unconnected with the College premises or College related activity.



**Reportable incidents include:**

1. The death of a student or staff member on College grounds, or during a College related activity, or following an incident at the College or during a College related activity.
2. An incident involving injury, illness or trauma to a student or staff member at the College or during a College related activity requiring ambulance or hospital attendance.
3. An incident requiring a police or other emergency services response when a student appears to have been taken or removed, or goes missing and cannot be accounted for, from the College or from a College related activity, without proper authority.
4. An incident requiring the College to be locked down or to evacuate staff and students, or reduce the number of students or staff attending, or to close for any duration for health or safety reasons.
5. The receipt of a complaint or allegation of child abuse, including but not limited to sexual abuse, committed against a student –

(a) by a staff member or another student; or

(b) by another person on the school premises or during a school-related activity; whether the abuse is alleged to have occurred recently or in the past.

6. Issuing a formal warning to or ceasing the employment of a staff member for a breach of the Code of Conduct suspected to have involved grooming behaviour.

**Grooming** - For the purpose of the [definition of reportable incidents](#), grooming is the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject in order to establish trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or avoiding exposure.

**Trauma** - For the purpose of the [definition of reportable incidents](#), a trauma is a psychological wound or injury suffered at school or during a school-related activity [Australian Psychological Society].

## 4. Responsibilities

The **Principal** is responsible for compiling a suitable Emergency Management Team (EMT). Membership of the EMT may include (but not limited to):

- Principal
- Deputy Principal (s)



- Senior Leadership team members (SLT)
- Work Health and Safety Officer (WHS)
- First Aid Attendant

The **Principal** is responsible for reporting critical and emergency Incidents to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

The **Chair of the College Board** (or delegate) must inform the Director General as soon as practical, and in any event **within 48 hours of the incident**, using the form published by the Director General for this purpose.

#### *Emergency Management Team*

- a) Staff assigned to the EMT will vary according to the nature and severity of the emergency; however, the core team will comprise the College Principal, Deputy Principal and Senior Leadership.
- b) Nominated teaching and non-teaching staff may be assigned support roles and will assist the EMT as required.
- c) A general overview of the responsibilities of those in the EMT are outlined below. It should be remembered that these provide a general guide and the Incident Manager, most often the Principal, may assign duties as they see fit.
- d) Emergency management plans for specific emergencies are outlined in the Critical and Emergency Incidents Procedures.
- e) NB: During holiday break, in the event of a critical incident, the Principal should be notified by the staff member on duty. The Principal will then assign an EMT member as Incident Manager.

The College **Principal** shall:

- assume overall responsibility for the development, review and testing (e.g. evacuation drill) on an annual basis and after any emergency or critical incident
- convene the EMT to conduct an annual review of the policy and associated plans
- convene the EMT during any emergency and will retain overall responsibility for the implementation of the Emergency and Critical Incidents Policy and procedures
- authorise all communications to the media
- authorise the dissemination of information to teachers, students and parents



- notify the **Director of the College Board** of any critical and emergency incidents within 24 hours or as soon as practical.
- ensure all Critical and Emergency Incidents are recorded in a Critical and Emergency Incident Register.

It is the responsibility of the **Chair of the College Board** to ensure the Critical and Emergency Incident Report (<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/dl/z7exrr> ) is completed **within 48 hours** for the Director General of the Non-Government Schools Regulation arm of the Department of Education. The form is to be sent to: [NGSRegulation.Criticalincidents@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:NGSRegulation.Criticalincidents@education.wa.edu.au).

The College Registrar shall:

1. be a member of the EMT and facilitate provision of all associated duties
2. ensure there is a system in place for the immediate recovery of any items of College equipment that may be missing and able to be used as weapons to inflict harm to persons or property
3. enable the provision of First Aid training to identified key staff each year, e.g. Early Learning Years staff, First Aid responders, Health and Physical Education staff in HLTAID012, or otherwise approved by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and to maintain a data base of staff with First Aid qualifications

The **Deputy Principal** (or delegate) shall:

- assume the role of Incident Manager at the request of the Principal
- ensure that the Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy and plans are communicated to students
- coordinate all critical incident recovery interventions for students
- coordinate all critical incident recovery interventions for staff
- maintain a list of current emergency contact telephone numbers for use in the event of a critical or emergency incident (e.g. hazard management and support agencies like the WA Police Service, DFES, the Department for Community Development and Department of Health, and parents of students)
- liaise with external agencies such as DFES and where appropriate, request their input to identify additional risks around the school



- obtain the endorsement of the police, DFES, emergency medical services, health and mental health services and the Local Emergency Management Committee to the College's Emergency and Critical Incidents policy and procedures
- where appropriate implement strategies to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of occurrence of emergencies or critical incidents

The Work Health and Safety Officer shall:

- conduct regular risk assessment checks of the College grounds, equipment and the surrounding area to identify potential threats to the safety and wellbeing of staff and students

## 5. Policy Principles

### 1.2 General Principles Guiding Implementation

- a) The Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy is intended to be flexible. A detailed Plan with procedures (HSW05) have been developed which will assist the College to manage emergencies ranging in nature and intensity from small-scale and localised incidents to incidents of a larger scale and which are likely to require external assistance.
- b) The Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy will be communicated to College staff. Staff will be required to read the policy and familiarise themselves with aspects of the documentation, specifically the evacuation and lockdown procedures and medical procedures.
- c) The policy will also be available to staff on the College Administration drive. The key components of the policy will be discussed at College staff meetings. Relief teachers will be provided with information about the College evacuation and lock down procedures in an information pack supplied by the College.
- d) Critical and Emergency incidents will at all times be managed in the best interests of students.
- e) Critical and Emergency incident plans will include all the particular needs of the students and staff within the school e.g. disabled persons, young students, asthmatics etc.
- f) The Critical and Emergency Incidents procedures will be tested routinely. Key members of staff will be trained in their duties and all staff and students will be regularly drilled in the procedures to be adopted during an emergency. Students will participate in an evacuation drill bi-annually.
- g) The Policy will be reviewed at least annually, after each drill. Feedback will be requested from all participants in evacuation and lock down drills and possible improvements identified. Should an emergency or critical event occur, the relevant parts of the policy will be reviewed as soon as



possible after the event to determine whether procedures in the policy were followed and whether they were adequate in the circumstance.

- h) The EMT will monitor the College premises and local environment and be aware of events occurring in the local, national and international arena with potential to evolve into a situation that may necessitate a response from the College.
- i) The roles and responsibilities of other agencies and government departments will be respected. The policy will be reviewed with consideration of the services provided by other agencies such as the Police Service, State Emergency Service, Fire and Emergency Services Authority, AISWA, the Non-Government Schools Psychology Services and Department of Health, including Mental Health Services.
- j) Interventions will respect the confidentiality and rights of members of the College community and be culturally appropriate. Support to students and staff will enhance resilience and be informed by ongoing assessment of the needs of the College community. It will be both timely and equitable.
- k) All College employees must be mindful of their responsibility for confidentiality of information related to emergencies and critical incidents.
- l) All staff and visitors remain responsible for contributing to a safe school environment and complying with College policies and with Occupational Safety and Health Regulations.

### 1.3 Prevention

#### *Risk Identification - An overview of the College structure, location and population and programs*

Immaculate Heart College is located on Santa Gertrudis Drive, Lower Chittering. The College is located 43.9 km to Midland St John of God Emergency Department and 44.4 km to Joondalup Health Campus. Both health facilities are equipped with an emergency department and an afterhours medical practice. The local fire station is located on an adjacent property off Muchea East Road and the nearest police station is Gingin, 38.1 km from the College.

The College operates a Pre-Kindergarten to Year 12 program. While all students share access to College facilities such as the hall, canteen, and ovals generally, Primary students are located on the western side of the campus, while Secondary students attend classes on the eastern portion of the campus. Approximately 400 students are enrolled in the College. Approximately 60 staff and occasional volunteers are located on campus during a normal school day.

A risk assessment has been performed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which has assisted to identify the risks summarised below.





The Early Learning Centre (ELC) outdoor play area is protected by a fence, a lockable gate and video surveillance camera. A fence borders the College along Santa Gertrudis Drive but does not surround the College oval or Secondary field as this is pastoral. A pastoral fence is situated on the northern boundary of the College oval. As such, members of the public may enter the College grounds freely. Additionally, The College resides alongside the Divine Mercy Church. At present, consideration must be given to the risk of transient 'unintended' visitors. Threat from an individual/s with a gun or knife, while not considered a likely risk, must be considered. Visitors to the College are required to report to College Reception and to wear a visitor's badge for the duration of the visit.

Internal events may include the risk of fire or explosion. The College uses gas appliances and stores chemicals for science experiences. Electrical equipment is used extensively throughout the College.

Bushfire and extreme wind events are considered possible, as the College is flanked by pastoral properties and nearby bushland. In summer, surrounding grasses of neighboring properties and bushland can be long and/or unmanaged.

This pastoral and bushland have been known to house snakes. Snakes have been found close to classrooms and on the College oval in previous years.

The school participates in regular camps, excursions, and Outdoor Education programs to locations which are a considerable distance from the College and emergency services. Some of these camps include high-risk and water activities and may be conducted in fire risk areas during the fire danger period.

#### 1.4 Preparedness

Effective preparation for emergencies will include the following.

- a) The EMT will convene annually to review the College Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy and procedures and monitor the security systems.
- b) Emergency plans and forms will be prepared for a range of possible emergencies. These plans will be placed along with all reports, forms, checklists, templates and general information in the procedures. The Principal will retain updated copies of the emergency procedures and will be accessible to all staff via the IHC Administration drive.
- c) The Emergency procedures will contain a list of updated emergency contact numbers.
- d) The **Principal** and the **Work Health and Safety Officer** (WHS) will conduct regular risk assessment checks. They will identify and assess all potential risks including school buildings, grounds and



surrounding area. The **Principal** will consult with the external agencies including DFES, to assist in identifying preventable risks.

- e) During June to October on all school days, the **WHS Officer** will from time to time monitor the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website for extreme weather warnings. Extreme weather warnings for hail and high winds may present a risk to students and staff participating in outdoor lessons or sporting activities, travelling to and from venues or travelling home. The **SLT** will identify potential risks for students. The level of risk will determine the College response, which may extend from no action required to one of the following: school closure, evacuation, cancellation of programs etc.
- f) The WHS Officer is responsible for emergency response equipment which will be prepared and checked annually. The WHS Officer is responsible for ensuring that an up-to-date equipment list is available
- g) Prior to students leaving the College campus on any approved College excursion, an emergency response kit will be prepared by the teacher in charge of all camps
- h) A first aid kit will be taken on every excursion by the teacher in charge
- i) Critical and Emergency Incident Response forms to be used by the EMT will be carried by the teacher in charge
- j) Staff with responsibilities for the care of students in higher risk activities such as bushwalking and water-based activities are to arrange specialist training and qualifications that will better enable them to assess risk and respond to incidents should they occur.

#### *Site plans*

- a) Site plans will be prepared by the **College Registrar** and be available in every classroom and office in the College.
- b) Site plans will show the evacuation routes, exits, designated safe areas and fire control equipment.
- c) The site plans of the College should be readily available for inspection by staff and all external agencies responding to an emergency.

#### *First Aid training*

A list of staff with current First Aid qualifications will be maintained by the **College Registrar** and made available to staff on the Administration drive.



### *Emergency pick up information to parent/carers*

- a) During Term 1 of each year, parents/carers will be informed through the College newsletter and website of approved procedures for collecting their child/children during an emergency.
- b) During emergencies, the website will contain information regarding pick up procedures for parents/carers collecting their child/children.

### *Specialist staff*

- a) Students involved in water activities will be supervised by staff with specialist aquatic rescue qualifications and according to the Department of Education Outdoor Activities Guidelines 2009
- b) Staff and students will be trained for their roles in managing emergencies (e.g. participation in emergency and lock down drills). Students will be drilled in lock down and evacuation procedures at least once a year, as close to the commencement of the school year as practical. Students will be advised of specific evacuation plans at College assemblies, at the start of all excursions and camps, and via SEQTA Student Notices.
- c) Relevant parts of the Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy will be communicated to contractors and persons using the College facilities during and outside College hours.
- d) The development of a supportive school climate, strong parental support and resilience in students and staff will help offset the traumatic effects of any future emergency or critical incident on the College community.

### **1.5 Post Incident Recovery**

- a) Once an emergency or critical incident has been brought under control and the site declared safe, it is important that the normal running of the College recommence as soon as possible. The **Incident Manager** will determine when the critical or emergency incident has passed.
- b) A critical or emergency incident may last from a few minutes to a few months depending on the circumstances and nature of the situation. As soon as is practicable after the critical or emergency incident, the EMT will convene to:
  - plan and implement appropriate steps to return the school infrastructure to normal
  - where appropriate, inform members of the College community of the facts of the critical or emergency incident



- inform parents of any action that the school plans to take to help students recover from the critical or emergency incident
  - plan medium to long term strategies to identify and manage the ongoing educational, psychological and social needs of those affected
  - debrief on the effectiveness of the Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy in the situation.
  - an agenda for the EMT meeting and associated check lists are contained in the procedures manual
  - sample announcements to students are contained in the EMT Manual.
- c) Teachers will be given accurate and timely information about:
- the emergency or critical incident
  - short-term and long-term recovery strategies in place
  - related issues that may arise for themselves and for students e.g. questions about death, suicide, grief etc.
- d) Parents/carers will require prompt notification of issues involving their child/children resulting from any critical or emergency incident. Such notification will be appropriate to the nature and extent of the emergency. Parents/carers may be informed by a Secondary or Primary SLT member, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- e) The communication may occur in the form of a telephone call, from SMS, or written correspondence. Sample letters and statements to parents are contained in the procedures manual.
- f) Students affected by any critical or emergency incident will be assessed to ascertain their need for additional support by relevant SLT member or nominated staff who have been trained in student risk screening. AISWA consultants may also be used if the expertise is not available at the College.
- g) A counselling team will be established and coordinated by the Principal or his/her delegate.
- h) A record of the counselling schedule shall be kept by the Principal or his/her delegate.
- i) Information sheets for administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents/carers are located in the procedures manual.



## 1.6 Media Liaison

- a) Journalists may arrive on the scene as any emergency is in progress or soon after an emergency has ceased. The **Principal** should be the only person to release information to the media. The Principal may delegate this role.
- b) The College will provide the media with timely and accurate information and will nominate the media meeting location. Information is contained in the procedures manual.
- c) Under no circumstances are College staff permitted to divulge information or make comment to any media personnel.
- d) Should any College staff member be approached directly by a person from the media, the staff member should respond to any requests for information with "I am sorry, I cannot help you".
- e) The staff member must immediately report contact from, or the presence of, the media to a member of the College EMT.
- f) If any visitor is on (or adjacent to) the College grounds, has a camera and look like they are going to photograph or film, staff must tell them the College is private property and they cannot film without permission. Staff should refuse to answer any questions and respond with "I am sorry but I cannot help you".
- g) If a phone call is received from the media, staff are to respond with "I am sorry I can't help you". Take the name and details of the caller and immediately terminate the call. Do not offer to put the caller through to the Principal. Do not put the caller through to the Chair of the Board or anyone else.
- h) **College staff** are not to speak with the media under any circumstances.
- i) **Students and parents** are not authorised to speak with the media on behalf of the College.

## 6. Procedures

Procedures are provided as a part of the Incident Response Management and Emergency Procedures (HSW05).

## 7. Supporting Information

- Guide to the Registration Standards and other Requirements for Non-Government Schools.pdf
- Australian Standard 3745 - Emergency Control Organisation and Procedures for Buildings
- Industrial Relations Act, 1979



- Occupational Safety and Health Act, 1984
- Occupational Safety & Health Regulations, 1996
- School Education Act, 1999
- School Education Regulations, 2000
- Australian Standard 4360: Risk Management
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Working With Children Act 2004

## 8. Related Documents

The Emergency and Critical Incidents Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following College policies, or procedures, all of which can be found on the College Administration drive:

Type	Document	Doc #
Policy	Adherence to National Principles for Child Safety	HSW01
Policy	Workplace Learning Policy	HSW03
Policy	Child Protection and Safety Policy	HSW02
Procedure	Community Dispute and Complaint Resolution	SM01
Policy	Staff Induction Policy	HR05
Management Plan	Incident Response Management and Emergency Procedures	HSW05



## 9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually for validity.

Version	Year of Review	Authored by:	Reviewed by:	Reason for amendments or review
1.0	September 2021	K.Knight	S.Shaw	Developed 2015 and 2019 procedures for detail.
2.0	September 2023	T.Carpenter	S.Da Luz	First Aid training specification updated due to superseded qualification, amended title of Work Health and Safety Officer, edited for consistency and renaming of document file.
2.1	December 2023	K.Knight	K.Knight	Added in section 5, 'A detailed Plan with procedures (HSW05)'