



Blackall Range Independent School

Critical Incident Policy

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to outline procedures for action to take to manage critical incidents at Blackall Range Independent School (B.R.I.S.). These could include but not be limited to the incidence of fire, lockdown, or contamination.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff and students of the school, and provides information about areas of responsibility, reporting, communication

Responsibility

Principal

Point of Contact

Principal

POLICY

The B.R.I.S. critical incident management plan applies in the event of a disaster which may cause confusion and stress amongst the school community. Critical incidents may include, for example, natural disasters, such as flood, fire or earthquake; a student suicide or accidental death; a bomb threat; the death of a teacher; a violent assault; a terrorist attack.

If a member of the school staff community becomes aware of a critical incident, he/she should report the nature of the incident to the Principal, who will immediately convene the Critical Incident Management Team and set up an incident management room.

In making the report the member of staff/community should identify:

- location of incident;
- nature of the incident;
- number and names of those involved;
- name of person reporting the emergency;
- time of report;
- emergency service contacted and by whom;
- phone contact if the incident is remote from the workplace (e.g. on school camp).

Procedures when a critical incident occurs

When the Principal or designee is notified of an emergency or fatal crisis situation he/she will:

1. Tell the person giving the information not to repeat it anywhere in the school, unless notification is critical for the **immediate** safety of staff and students.
2. Tell office staff not to repeat or give out information within or outside the school until instructed by the Principal.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this policy is to the best of our knowledge and belief correct at the date of publication. However, no warranty or guarantee is or can be given by Blackall Range Independent School or any member of their staff, and no liability is or can be accepted for any loss or damage resulting from any person relying on or using the information contained in this policy.



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3. Verify the reported incident with police. Verify with police the timing of notification to family and the school if there has been a death. This notification will be made by police and it is critical that no announcements are made by the school until the families of victims of any incident are notified.
4. Verify with police who the school-police liaison person is and provide 24-hour contact details.
5. Notify the CIM Team who immediately initiate the actions assigned to their roles.
6. Direct CIM team member to locate, gather and inform closest student friends of the deceased or injured BEFORE any general announcement, and AFTER parents/families have been notified.
7. Notify the Chairman of the School Executive.
8. Prepare a formal statement to use for initial notification to the whole school. Include minimal details and note that additional information will be forthcoming.
9. Prepare a statement for telephone inquiries directed to office staff.
10. Decide on a time for an emergency staff meeting at which the injured/deceased student/staff member is identified, if applicable; the facts of the crisis are reviewed; support to staff is offered and guidelines are provided for helping students. Encourage staff to return their classes to normal routine as soon as possible and, whenever possible, to dispel rumour and discourage sensationalising of the crisis. Ask staff to identify those students who may require additional support. Request staff to meet 30 minutes early the next morning to update them on any additional information, review procedures and debrief.
11. Provided that the privacy of members of the school community is not infringed (check in with those personally concerned and outline what will be said, for the purpose of them to edit/agree/disagree), send home a letter at the end of the day/crisis outlining what has occurred and what has been done. Report back to the families, and give any relevant feedback.
12. Inform staff and students of the outcome of the crisis.
13. Supply the media with a fact sheet on the school and district as well as on the crisis outcome.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Critical Incident Management Team consists of six (4) members, who take responsibility in the following areas (Due to the size of the school our roles will be dictated by the nature of the incident).

:

- the Principal (or the Principal's nominee) – leads team, liaises with media, liaises with police, disseminates information;
- a member of staff – school & parent communication;
- the school counsellor/chaplain - counselling;
- a member of staff with first aid qualifications – medical;- unavailable

Training for the whole staff regarding their part in this team or supporting this team is undertaken on a regular basis and clear procedures are in place to ensure that team members understand their roles.

Role of Team before a Crisis Occurs

1. *Develop necessary forms and information sheets, including incident report forms, sign-in and out forms, lists of people to be notified (including siblings, bus drivers, feeder schools etc), debriefing sheets, phone lists etc.*
2. *Develop a plan for emergency coverage of classes.*
Teachers who will play a significant role in a crisis response need to be assured that their classes will be covered.
3. *Establish a code to alert staff.*
A code that can be used in notes to alert staff to the nature of an emergency situation will clarify a problem without unduly alarming students.
4. *Hold a practice 'crisis alert' drill.*
Provide inservice training for all staff to explain the crisis management plan and exactly what to do in a crisis. Where appropriate include police, community workers and other community members in presentations to staff.



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Role of Teachers during a Crisis

1. Remain calm.
2. Follow directives/instructions from the appropriate members of the Critical Incident Management Team or the Principal.
3. Provide accurate information to students, answer questions and lead class discussion if appropriate.
4. Dispel rumours and discourage speculation.
5. Model an appropriate response to the crisis.
6. Identify students who may need extra support.
7. Provide activities, through art, music and writing, to reduce stress and express emotions; and, as much as possible, ensure that students feel secure and remain calm.

Roles and Responsibilities of Critical Incident Management Team

The Principal

1. Mobilise the Critical Incident Management (CIM) Team quickly.
2. Direct the team and take charge of the situation.
3. Be visible, available and supportive to all.
4. Dispel rumours by giving everyone the facts.
5. Communicate with the school Board.
6. Contact families of students involved in the crisis.
7. Liaise with media.
8. Provide updated information to all concerned.

School Communicator

1. Decide who should receive information and how information will be disseminated to staff and students – public address, note to each class, assembly, alarm system (fire, flood etc) – or if a lockdown procedure is warranted.
2. Be aware of privacy and confidentiality in releasing information and remind staff of privacy and confidentiality issues.
3. Release follow up information as agreed upon with Principal, following the Principal's initial announcement.
4. Release only **necessary** details and make sure information is **factual**.
5. Include in communication information with regard to when and how students will be released to parents/caregivers, if applicable.
6. Make general announcements via public address system or note to classes when appropriate.

Parent Communicator

1. Use previously prepared emergency telephone contact list to ring parents where necessary.
2. Remind parents of the importance of confidentiality, where possible, and of dispelling rumour and speculation.
3. Organise and manage a hotline for parents to provide information and control rumour.
4. Inform office staff that parent inquiries are to be directed to the hotline (staff member).

Counsellor

1. Be available.
2. Cancel other activities and appointments.
3. Designate a counselling space.
4. Get extra assistance if warranted.
5. Support the school staff and students; and offer assistance to parents, if appropriate, after the Principal has made initial contact.



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Medical Contact Person

1. Before any event:
 - Keep a register of where the school can access advice and assistance.
 - Build a personal relationship with health and other resource groups such as police, fire, and rescue, social welfare, mental health services, juvenile justice and family support systems
2. Be available to assist staff and students who may require medical assistance.
3. Be available to parents who may need assistance/advice or referrals to health services.

POLICY RELEASE DETAILS

Date of Policy

January 2009

Approved by

Executive

Review Date

Annually

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Duty of Care Handbook
Child Protection Policy
Lockdown Procedure
Risk Management Policy