

Critical Incident Policy and Procedures

Title: Critical Incident Policy and Procedures
 Author: General Manager
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Background

This policy is part of Morling College's overall risk management framework. MC will inform staff of this policy and procedures at the time of their induction and students at the time of their orientation.

Definitions

Critical incident	An event which results in or has the potential to cause serious harm to persons or property associated with Morling College. Serious harm includes trauma affecting victims and participants and where expert medical attention or professional counselling is required or the cost of structural repair is substantial. An emergency is also a critical incident.
Emergency	An event, actual or imminent, which occurs on or off-site, endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment of Morling College and requires a significant and coordinated response.
Emergency services	Consist of the core services – police, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services.
Leadership Team	Principal, Vice-principals, Academic Dean and General Manager together form the Morling College Leadership Team (MCLT)
Possible Emergencies and/or Critical Incidents	Emergencies and/or Critical Incidents, whether occurring on-campus or off-campus, during or outside normal hours of college activity, may include but are not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural hazards or human-made disasters or potential disasters • Fire, bomb threat, hazardous materials spillage, prolonged loss of a utility (e.g. water or power), cyclone and floods • Site invasion by those who cause harm to people or damage to property, whether by intent or not • Accident onsite or offsite causing death or serious injury, student or staff suicide, major vandalism • Acts of self-harm or social irresponsibility • Structural failure of building or equipment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts of terrorism • Riot or affray • Onset of physical or mental illness • Witnessing a critical incident affecting third parties including accident, assault, injury, death • Person or persons missing and presumed to be at substantial risk • Arrest • A crime such as robbery or assault
Staff	Members of MC's academic and administrative staff.

Policy

Morling College is committed to providing a duty of care to staff and students. This care will be demonstrated in the management of any critical incidents that may affect Morling College staff, students or property.

Responsibilities

Principal

The *Principal* has overall responsibility for oversight and authority of a critical incident.

The Principal will determine the level of response and specific actions taken by considering:

- the potential and likely impact of the critical incident on the MC community;
- the timing of the incident i.e. time of day, whether it occurs on a week day, weekend or in the holidays, as well as upcoming events e.g. exams, Open Day;
- the extent to which the incident is site-specific or community-oriented;
- the location of the critical incident; and
- the cumulative effect of other critical incidents which have affected the site in the recent past.

General Manager (GM)

In the event of the Principal being offsite, the *General Manager* shall be the responsible person. If neither the Principal nor General Manager are available then a Vice-Principal or the Academic Dean will be the person responsible. That person will be responsible to undertake the action steps outlined under *Principal or GM* below.

Staff and students

Staff and students are responsible for:

- following the *work health and safety, critical incident* and *evacuation* policy and procedures and published by MC;
- knowing to whom they report an incident or the potential for an incident;
- communicating promptly with MC staff if they have reasonable suspicion that a critical incident is happening or may be imminent
- not placing themselves or others at risk of injury or other trauma;
- supporting those with overall responsibility for oversight of the process; and
- availing themselves of the support mechanisms in the event of exposure to an emergency or a critical incident.

Summary of Actions Required

Action by witness or directly affected party

A person who witnesses an incident or is the first contacted will:

- Contact the Principal or GM;
- Act as directed by the Principal or GM;
- If directed or in the absence of obtaining immediate access to the Principal or GM, contact emergency services as soon as it is safe to do so;
- Take immediate action to minimise the risk of further injury or damage;
- Act to protect the safety and welfare of witnesses; and
- Assess the situation carefully and gather information.

Action by the Principal or GM

The Principal or GM will:

- Maintain oversight of the incident;
- Arrange for expert help as required;
- Establish communication systems to keep affected parties informed, including family and friends during the incident and throughout the follow-up period;
- Direct others to assist in the management of the incident;
- Ensure appropriate effective support is provided to affected parties;
- Protect the site or anything associated with the incident in case an the matter is investigated by the police and/or any other government agency;
- Set up a recovery room with appropriate furniture and resources as appropriate;
- Gather relevant information about the incident and interview affected parties;
- Assist staff and students to contact their family and/or close friends to advise them of the situation and provide other assistance as necessary and appropriate;
- Assist members of the public to contact their family and/or close friends, and assist them as appropriate;
- Inform the GM and Dean of Students of the situation;
- Debrief those who worked on the incident;
- Establish a means of keeping affected parties informed without compromising legal, insurance or reputational liability;
- Prepare or arrange for the preparation of a critical incident report;
- The GM would normally be responsible for seeing that this was completed satisfactorily and kept on file; and
- Assess implications arising for risk mitigation and arrange for their implementation.

Action by the GM or person designated by the GM

The GM, or designated responsible person, will:

- Assist in the documenting of the incident and preparing the incident report;
- Assess the implications for an affected student's study and assessment program;
- Under the direction of the Principal manage the follow up procedures (which are detailed below);

- Arrange for any necessary notification to relevant educational and government bodies, e.g. DIAC, consulate/embassy;
- Monitor or assist the Principal in monitoring investigations by any external agencies; and
- Maintain a complete record of critical incidents.

Procedures

Immediate Response (within the hour)

- Identify the location and the nature of the critical incident
- Notify the Principal or (if the Principal is not on site) another member of the MC Leadership Team
- Activate *First Aid Policy* for any injuries
- Contact emergency services, if required
- Secure or evacuate the area, if required. Refer *Evacuation Policy and Procedures* for details.
- Ensure safety and welfare of students and staff.

As Soon As Possible (within 24 hours)

- Liaise with emergency services, hospital and medical services, if required
- Liaise with government agencies, if required
- Contact and inform family members
- Manage media
- Identify students and staff most closely involved and/or at risk
- For international student/s liaise with DIAC and relevant consulate or embassy (Refer [ISANA Critical Incident Kit](#))

Secondary Response (up to 72 hours)

- Assess the need for support and/or counselling for those involved
- Provide students, staff and the wider MC community with information, as appropriate
- Debrief students and staff most closely involved and/or at risk
- Restore MC to regular routines and community life as soon as practicable
- Complete critical incident report

Ongoing follow-up response (72+ hours)

- Identify any other person/s who may be affected by the critical incident
- Provide access to support services for community members
- Provide accurate information to students and staff
- Arrange a memorial service and/or special chapel service, as appropriate
- Maintain contact with any injured and affected parties to provide support and monitor progress
- Monitor students and staff for signs of delayed stress and the onset of PSD (post--traumatic stress disorder), providing specialised treatment as necessary
- Evaluation of critical incident management
- Manage any possible longer term disturbances e.g. inquests, legal proceedings
- Notify relevant departments which may need to follow-up student records such as library, registrar, housing, finance

- Attend to personal effects of affected student/s in the case of prolonged or severe illness or death

Media Releases

In general all media releases are made by the Principal.

- The Principal gathers information, checks facts and determines the official MC response
- The Principal ensures training/advice is provided for all staff to respond to telephone or occasional enquiries following a critical incident
- The Principal will manage access of the media to the scene, students, staff and/or relatives

Evaluation and Review of Management Plan

- After each critical incident, a meeting of the MC Leadership Team will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications as required;
- The evaluation process will incorporate feedback gathered from students, staff and others; and
- An evaluation report of the incident will be kept on file and provided to the MC Leadership Team, Dean of Students, Dean of Academic Development, the Chair of MC Board and, if appropriate, others in the MC community.

Student Files

For the purposes of managing incidents student files should normally contain:

- Coloured passport sized photograph;
- Emergency contact telephone numbers, details of next of kin, agent or sponsor;
- Any other significant personal details: student ID, course details, medical conditions, allergy information etc;
- Medical insurance status; and
- For international students, a copy of the Australian visa page of their passport.



Related policies and procedure documents:

- Evacuation
- Evacuation– Residential
- First Aid
- Work Health and Safety

Related documents

National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (The National Code 2007)

<https://www.aei.gov.au/Regulatory-Information>

ISANA Critical Incident Kit

<http://www.isana.org.au/files/ISANACriticalIncidentsKit.pdf>

This kit is intended to serve as a useful resource for ISANA members handling critical incidents in the International Student Community