



SYDNEY COLLEGE OF DIVINITY

Excellence in theological education

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

This policy relates to critical incidents directly involving staff and/or students on any Sydney College of Divinity campus, which impact not only on the individual but also on other members of the College community. A critical incident is any event that causes a significant number of people to experience reactions that are beyond their normal emotional range.

IMPLEMENTATION

Stage 1: Identifying a critical incident

- This policy relates to critical incidents which fall within any of the following criteria directly involving staff and/or students of the Sydney College of Divinity and its member institutions:
 - An incident that results in a physical injury requiring professional medical treatment occurring within the SCD or its Member Institution's campus boundaries
 - An incident that results in significant damage to the SCD or its Member Institution's facilities or property
 - An incident that threatens the safety of staff and/or students within the SCD or its Member Institution's campus boundaries
 - An incident that impacts significantly on the normal emotional experience of the college community
 - An incident which may be identified as falling outside of boundaries of what would be considered normally appropriate (e.g. sexual misconduct, physical violence, intimidation, etc) which impacts significantly on student/student or staff/student relationships and interaction

Stage 2: Action to be taken

- Any critical incident must be reported to the Principal of the campus.
- Issues of safety must be immediately addressed (using evacuation procedures and/or calling emergency services where necessary).

- The Principal needs to ascertain the facts. The Principal must be able to verify what was 'reported to have occurred' (this will involve members who reported the incident and those involved). The reported facts will be documented at this stage by the Principal or an assisting member of staff.
- The Principal meets with and informs the "Executive Committee" of the campus. Appropriate steps to be taken are planned and documented (functioning as the critical incident team).
- Staff are informed by the Principal (as appropriate).
- The Student Support Officer and any additional counsellors required are contacted by the Principal.
- Contact clergy, where appropriate.
- The Principal communicates with the students and college community affected by the critical incident, being mindful of legal and privacy constraints.
- Siblings and close friends of the victims are told individually.
- The Principal informs the rest of the college if appropriate.
- All students are informed of counselling and assistance available.
- The Principal contacts organisations and individuals for additional assistance if required.
- Ensure that staff members have support and counselling if required.
- Maintain a supportive, calm atmosphere, by maintaining normal procedures as far as possible.
- The Principal plans the school's response to the media, as required.
- The Chaplain prepares memorials (prayer services) as required.
- The facts of the event and all steps that were followed are documented and held on file by the Principal.

Stage 3: Documenting

- Confirm that the initial documenting of the incident by the Principal has taken place.
- Ensure the steps taken by the Principal and his or her Executive Committee are documented.

- Ensure that the facts of the event and all steps that were followed including who, what, when, where, and how, have been documented.

Stage 4: Follow up

- Ensure that student support staff and any ‘outside professionals’ are able to meet the needs of the college community.
- Provision of reading/support material to staff and students.
- Aim to get back to the ‘normal routine’, within a time frame that is appropriate to the nature of the critical incident.