



# MacKillop College

## Policy: Crisis Care and Critical Incidents

### Catholic Identity Statement

*MacKillop College supports the intrinsic dignity of every individual in its community and upholds the belief that all students, staff and visitors to the College have the right to feel safe and secure in the College environment. This includes the knowledge that the College will respond to any critical incident or emergency in an informed, caring and responsible manner in keeping with the Catholic faith of the community.*

### Context

The effective and efficient management of emergency incidents is critical to the safety and wellbeing of students, staff, parents/guardians and visitors to the College. Such events can impact considerably on the psychological wellbeing of all members of the school community, causing adverse effects in areas such as learning, occupational performance and family interactions.

MacKillop College aims to minimise traumatic effects of crisis situations both in the short and long term. This is best achieved by a coordinated, systematic response that restores stability and creates a sense of safety and security for members of the community.

### Definition

A critical incident may be defined as any event that:

- causes disruption to an organisation and/or
- creates significant danger or risk where staff, students, parents/guardians or visitors feel unsafe, vulnerable and under stress.

A crisis situation can derive from:

- sudden, unexpected events (or series of events)
- chronic or accumulative events (perhaps one event or longer term stressful events)
- critical incidents may impact on a limited number of a combination of students, staff, parents/guardians or visitors, or they can significantly affect the whole community.

Examples of crisis or critical events may include:

- the destruction of all, or part, of the College
- the accidental death, serious injury or terminal illness of a student or staff member
- major vandalism
- a situation that threatens the safety of students, staff, parents/guardians or visitors
- a group of students lost or injured on an excursion
- a tragedy involving a family in the school community
- students and/or staff witnessing death or serious injury
- extremely damaging media attention
- a sexual assault
- a bushfire or other major disaster in the community
- any situation that evokes a strong emotional reaction.

## **Principles**

MacKillop College is committed to:

- responding with precision and sensitivity to critical incidents as they affect members of the school community
- keeping members of the community informed of events and aware of follow-up procedures
- being inclusive of all who are affected by a critical incident
- being mindful of the safety and well-being of all members of the school community
- accessing professional support from agencies who are trained to deal with critical incidents.

### **Action to be taken as a result of a crisis/critical incident**

Because critical incidents come in various forms and sizes, it will not always be possible to predict the exact nature of the situation that may have to be dealt with, nor the best way in which a response should be initiated. For this reason, when responding to critical incidents it is useful to think in terms of three stages of response.

#### Stage 1: Emergency Response

This is the initial response to a disruption, which usually involves the removal or protection of people and property from immediate harm. Examples of emergency responses are the development of structured Evacuation Procedures and Lockdown Procedures.

#### Stage 2: Continuity Response

The Continuity Response commences once the initial emergency response (if any) has been completed. The continuity response involves re-establishing minimum acceptable levels of processes, controls and resources to ensure that MacKillop College continues to meet its critical operational objectives. Our Incident Communications Policy provides a good example of a continuity response.

#### Stage 3: Stabilisation Response

Finally, once minimum acceptable levels of processes have been re-established, controls and resources to ensure that MacKillop College continues to meet its critical operational objectives must be activated. The College may need to implement procedures that are designed to stabilise the College environment and return operations to normal over a period of time.

## **Implementation**

### **Principal's commitment**

The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that:

- appropriate staff are available to carry out the objectives of this policy
- resources and facilities are available to ensure the objectives of this policy are able to be implemented
- staff are aware of any mandatory reporting requirements
- reporting and recording of critical incidents are documented so that evaluation and review of systems, including the provision of care, can be undertaken.

**Staff commitment**

Staff are required to demonstrate a commitment towards the wellbeing of each member of the College community and should support those responsible for carrying out the objectives of this policy.

**This policy works in conjunction with the following policies, procedures, provisions and guidelines:**

All relevant MacKillop College Policies such as:

- OHS Policy
- Emergency Management Plan
- Child Safe Standard 5
- Responding to alleged sexual assault – PROTECT
- MacKillop College’s Incident Response Guidelines

Rory Kennedy  
(Principal)

Date: 2020