

# Critical Incident Management Plan Policy



<b>Document Title</b>	NQS7.63 Critical Incident Management Plan Policy	<b>Version</b>	1a
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<b>Warning - Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.</b>			
DCC Network/All Organisation Information/DCC Policies/Quality Area 7 – Leadership & service management			

## 1. Policy Statement

Disasters, emergencies and other traumatic incidents can undermine the ability of River Region Early Education to achieve its purposes. Good planning is essential to assisting River Region Early Education to respond and recover from such events.

## 2. Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that River Region Early Education undertakes appropriate planning to enable it respond and recover from disasters, emergencies and other traumatic incidents.

## 3. Definitions

**Critical incident** - an unexpected traumatic event, involving personal or professional threat, which evokes extreme stress, fear or injury. Providing appropriate supports following a critical incident is part of emergency management.

**Emergency** - an unplanned or imminent event that affects or threatens the health, safety or welfare of people, property and infrastructure, and which requires a significant and coordinated response. The defining characteristic of an emergency event or situation is that usual resources are overwhelmed or have the potential to be overwhelmed. Emergencies may be a specific event with a clear beginning, end and recovery process, or a situation that develops over time and where the implications are gradual rather than immediate.

**Emergency management** - the coordination of an emergency response and management of recovery. The aim of emergency management is to minimise physical and psychological impacts on all parties and to minimise damage to assets, operations, reputation and staff productivity.

**Traumatic event** - one in which a person experiences, witnesses or is confronted by experiences that involve actual, threatened or perceived death or serious injury and/ or threat to own or others physical and emotional integrity. This may include the death of a child or educator. The person's response may then include intense fear, feelings of helplessness and horror, which impact on their sense of 'self'.

**Critical Incident Debriefing (CID)** - a preventative health measure to minimise the impact of traumatic events and the development of major psychological health problems such as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) Disorder.

## 4. Guidelines

### a) Risk Register

A Risk Register will be maintained by River Region Early Education which is reviewed annually. This identifies threats and potential crisis events.

- Such events could include anything which threatens the health and wellbeing of the staff of River Region Early Education, the assets of River Region Early Education, the reputation of River Region Early Education, the effective functioning of the administrative systems of River Region Early Education, or the services provided reputation of River Region Early Education.
- Identify the likelihood of such events.
- Assess the consequence of such events.
- Ensure that risk mitigation and/ or management strategies are in place to deal with such events.
- Staff, Board of Management members, students, volunteers and families are expected to behave in a way which minimises the risk of emergencies occurring.

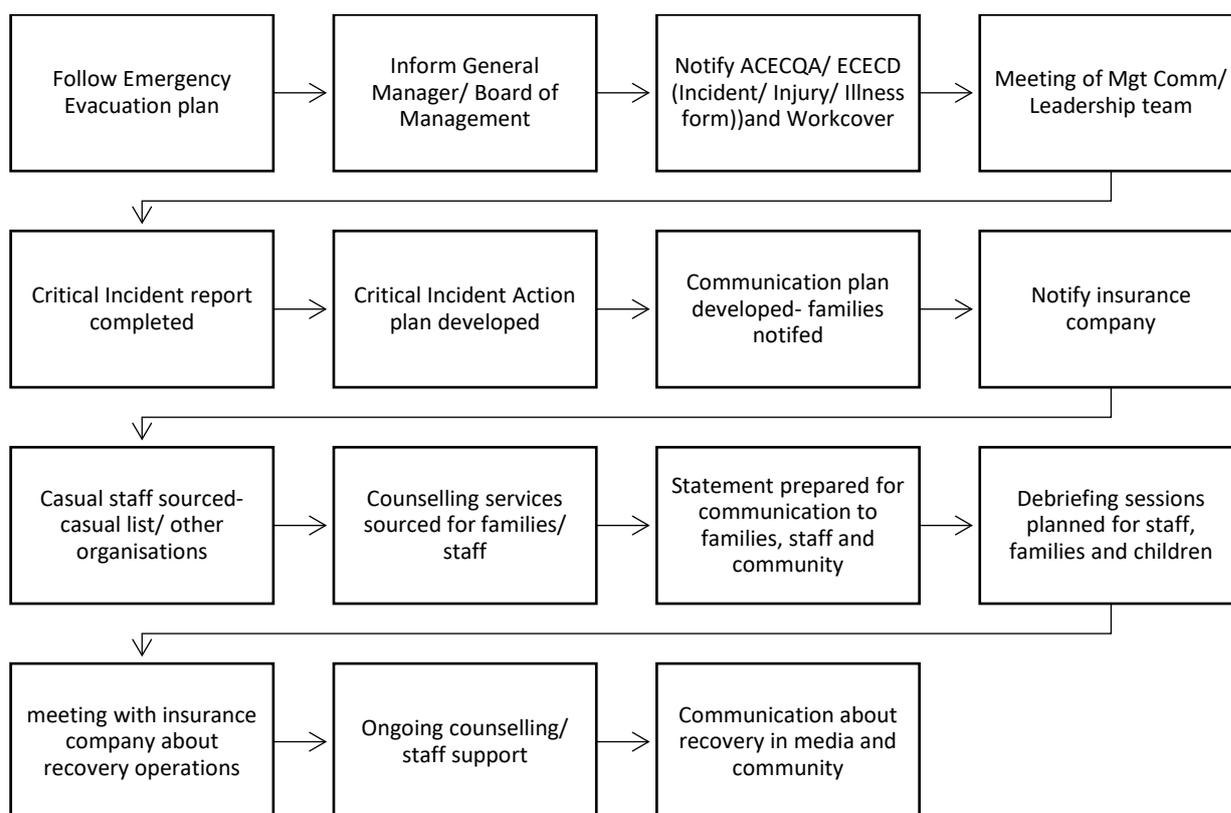
### b) Emergency Response Plan

When an emergency situation arises, follow the *Emergency Management Plan*. The primary aim of the response is to ensure the safety of all people on the premises.

- All staff, Board of Management members, students and volunteers familiarise themselves with emergency evacuation procedures, including their responsibilities and the emergency evacuation assembly point.
- Emergency evacuation drills are undertaken in all sites quarterly under the instruction of nominated Supervisors as per the Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy (DCC Policy 2.8).
- Emergency services are informed of the incident as part of the *Emergency Management Plan*.

## 5. Procedure

### a) Critical Incident Flowchart



### b) Critical Incident Action Plan

1. Follow the Incident Response Plan (on display in all staff areas)
2. As soon as it is safe to do so, notify the General Manager and Administration
3. Responsible Person complete Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Form (2.11 A1) and given to the General Manager as soon as possible after the incident (this is to contain as much information as possible and indicate the people directly involved in the incident.)
4. Any educators or staff members directly involved in the incident or notification of the incident should complete a Generic Incident Form as soon as possible after incident.
5. The General Manager will ensure that the person(s) identified in the critical incident receives appropriate support.
6. The General Manager will complete Critical Incident Action plan (7.63 A1) in conjunction with Board of Management and Nominated Supervisor to assess the Critical Incident and implement a plan of action to follow up.
7. Where required, a meeting of the Board of Management and Leadership team will be organised to complete a Critical Incident Action Plan to determine issues and responsibilities relating to:
  - Assessing risks and response actions
  - Follow up Liaison with emergency and other services
  - Contact with the affected person's relatives and other supports
  - Contacting casual staff and other services to access staff to relieve employees adversely affected by the incident

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- Liaison with other organisations
  - Counselling and supporting staff, Board of Management members, volunteers, students and consumers not directly involved in, but affected by, the incident.
  - Media management (if required) See communication guidelines below.
8. Where appropriate River Region Early Education may be required to provide support to the family in the form of:
- hiring interpreters
  - making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation
  - obtaining a death certificate
  - assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues

### **c) Critical Incident Debriefing**

1. Critical Incident Debriefing (CID) will occur within 48-72 hours after the incident.
2. Debriefing may include individual and group counselling, where the aim is to:
  - Decrease feelings of isolation
  - Provide people affected by the incident with a facilitated session to assist them to normalise their thoughts and feelings. Groups assist people to explore their differing perspectives of the incident and share their similar thoughts and feelings.
3. There will usually be an initial counselling session, followed up with one or more debriefing sessions.
4. Initial counselling will occur as soon as possible after the incident, preferably immediately or within a few hours. Depending on the type or severity of the critical incident, initial debriefing may include:
  - A short factual statement about what is known about the incident, the possible effects on those involved, what is being done for them and what is going to happen in the future, eg; planned debriefing sessions.
  - Information on acute stress response (what is happening to people now) and how people can care for themselves.
  - An arrangement for a structured debriefing session within 48-72 hours.
  - The provision of different levels of service for those differently affected. This will include staff, children and families.
  - Referrals to various resources including counsellors
5. River Region Early Education will maintain confidentiality to ensure that: only a record of when and where a debriefing took place will be kept; and no information will be released without the agreement of the individual or group.

### **d) Communication in a Critical Incident**

- The General Manager/ Board of Management shall ensure that the leadership team are informed of a critical incident. This information will be communicated with their teams prior to any communication with the public/ media. Where possible a meeting shall be convened away from children to convey this information.
- In relation to any emergency/ critical incident only the General Manager or the Board of Management are authorised to make a statement to the Media.
- Where information or public comment is requested or required, the General Manager/ Board of Management shall determine the most appropriate person to respond.

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- A series of Crisis ready statements based on identified scenarios will be prepared and available to the General Manager/ Board of Management for use in dealing with the Media (7.63A2 Crisis ready statements)
- Families will be informed about Critical Incidents through email data bases, and Storypark Community posts. Social Media will only be used to refer families to these communication platforms. Updates will be made regularly to reassure families.
- Debriefing meetings for staff and for families will be convened by the General Manager/ Board of Management (see above)
- Information will be kept factual, and will consider legal and emotional implications.
- Critical incident debriefing sessions will be offered to families and children (see above)
- After the critical incident, the General Manager/ Board of Management will make a statement about plans for recovery.

## 6. Sources

- Crisis Planning for Business- Victoria Government

## 7. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards

Legislation	
Education and Care Services National Regulation	
National Quality Standards	
2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.
Child Safe Standards	
Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes	
Early Years Learning Framework Principles	
Early Years Learning Framework Practices	

## 8. Related Documents

Doc #	Attachments
NQS7.63 A1	Critical Incident Action Plan Template
NQS7.63 A2	Crisis Ready Prepared Statements
NQS7.63 A3	Risk Register Template
NQS7.63 A4	Briefing Session After the Death of a Child

Doc #	Intersections with other key documents
NQS2.11 A1	Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Record
NQS2.11	Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy
NQS2.80	Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy

## 9. Document Control

Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
NQS7.63	Critical Incident Management Plan Policy	1	September 2021	September 2024
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