

# Seventh-day Adventist Schools (South Queensland) Limited



Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

[Enter School Name]

## School Critical Incident Management

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this policy is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To prevent an emergency situation escalating into a potentially catastrophic one.</li> <li>To help those affected by the crisis to return, as quickly as possible, to pre-crisis functioning.</li> <li>To decrease the potential long-term effects of a crisis on functioning.</li> </ul>	
<b>Scope:</b>	Students and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements at Seventh-day Adventist Schools (South Queensland) Ltd.	
<b>References:</b>	•	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Supersedes:</b> SQS024.001.ADM
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Seventh-day Adventist Schools (South Queensland) Limited	
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Education Director	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> 5 August 2019
<b>Approved by:</b>	This procedure has been ratified by the Board of Directors of Seventh-day Adventist Schools (South Queensland) Limited as the <b>School Critical Incident Management</b> procedure for Seventh-day Adventist Schools (South Queensland) Limited.	
	<b>Pr Brett Townend</b> Board of Directors Chairperson:	<b>Date of Approval:</b> 6/08/2019
	<b>Pr Colin Renfrew</b> Board of Directors Secretary:	<b>Date of Approval:</b> 6/08/2019
<b>Review Cycle:</b>	Reviewed Biennially (every two years)	<b>Next Review Date:</b> Term 3 - 2021
<b>Review Team:</b>	Board of Directors, NSSAB, Chief Executive Officer, Project Officers	
<b>Revised by:</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Details of Changes</b>
Vanessa Woodman (5 August 2019)	Whole document	<b>Updated</b> formatting to the New Template
Jack Ryan (5 August 2019)	Section 2.2.4 – Student File Essentials	<b>Added</b> 'All information regarding incidences and actions taken regarding a critical incident are kept on file for 5 years after the student ceases to be enrolled at the College.'

# Seventh-day Adventist Schools (South Queensland) Limited

## Table of Contents

1. Definitions .....	3
1.1 Critical Incident .....	3
2. Procedure .....	3
2.1 Incidents On School Premises .....	4
2.2 Incidents Off School Premises .....	5
2.2.1 The Coordinating Team/Group .....	5
2.2.2 Immediate response .....	6
2.2.3 Ongoing and follow up response .....	6
2.2.4 Student File Essentials .....	7
2.3 Critical Incident Staff Training .....	7
2.3.1 Stress Management .....	7
2.3.2 Skills and knowledge .....	7
2.3.3 Things to remember: .....	8
2.3.4 Preparing yourself .....	9
2.3.5 Critical Incident Recovery Timeline .....	9
2.3.6 Media hints .....	10
3. Sample letters .....	11
3.1 Letter to parents (sample letter in the event of a tragedy) .....	11
3.2 Letter to parents (sample letter requesting consent for involvement of outside professional/s – for under 18 students) .....	12
Appendix 1 – Acknowledgement of Compliance with Controlled Document Procedure .....	13

# 1. Definitions

## 1.1 Critical Incident

A critical incident is a crisis situation that has a significant effect upon the school and the school community. It does not always involve a death. It is defined by the National Code as 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'.

A critical incident is characterised by:

- Unusually Strong Emotions
- Inability of Individuals to Function Normally
- Having a limited duration

Examples of Critical Incidents that affect schools:

- Sudden death of a student or staff member
- Suicide or attempted suicide of a student or staff member
- Murder of a student or staff member
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression between students and/or staff
- Lost or significantly injured student or staff member
- Sexual assault
- Domestic violence
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- A serious vehicle accident
- Groups of student and staff who witness sudden death or severe injury, whilst travelling to or from school, or on school excursions
- A disaster on school premises
- Major vandalism of school property
- Natural or community disaster
- Unusual and unfavourable media attention

## 2. Procedure

1. The teacher in charge contacts Emergency Services as appropriate (Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance) by dialling 000.

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

2. Teacher in charge contacts the School Emergency Response Coordinator (a person nominated by the Principal) or Principal.
3. After the incident is being managed effectively, the Principal should immediately contact the Conference Education Director or the Conference Emergency Response Coordinator.
4. The Conference Education Director or Conference Emergency Response Coordinator takes over the responsibility for managing the incident.
  - i. Talk with the teacher in charge and the Principal to determine the needs in regards to resources, counsellors, and media liaison.
  - ii. Complete a Critical Incident Details Form.
  - iii. Appoint an On-site Coordinator.
  - iv. Together with the On-site Coordinator, arrange the remainder of the Emergency Response Team.
  - v. Refer to On-site tasks, local resources, counsellors, Head Counsellor and program coordinator.
  - vi. Continue to manage issues until de-activation of the Emergency Response Team.
  - vii. Debrief between the teacher in charge, Conference Emergency Response Coordinator and On-site Coordinator (preferably the School Emergency Response Coordinator).
5. The On-site Coordinator is to take charge of managing the incident on the site by doing the following:
  - i. Arranging briefing prior to arrival (discussing the incident with the Conference Education Director or Emergency Response Coordinator and the Principal, and developing a response approach and plan).
  - ii. Managing the Emergency Response Team
  - iii. Organising transport to the site (if necessary)
  - iv. Communicate regularly with the Conference Education Director and Principal and report progress
  - v. Refer any Media to the Conference Education Director or to the Conference Emergency Response Coordinator.
6. The teacher in charge manages the situation until the Conference Education Director or Conference Emergency Response Coordinator arrives (if applicable) by doing the following:
  - i. Secure the safety of self and the students
  - ii. Remove them from danger/ incident
  - iii. Check and secure equipment
  - iv. Engage the group in some activity
  - v. Refer any Media to the Conference Emergency Response Coordinator or Conference Education Director.
7. The teacher in charge maintains contact with the Conference Emergency Response Coordinator and then with the Onsite Coordinator.
8. Complete an Incident Report as soon as the Critical Incident has passed.

All incidents involving injury to a person or property damage should be reported. The Conference Emergency Response Coordinator will also complete a Critical Incident Details Form and the Serious Incident Investigation Form.

## 2.1 Incidents On School Premises

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

If the incident is on school premises, the first action will be to contact emergency services (Fire, Ambulance or Police) then the Principal. The Conference Education Director must also be contacted immediately when the incident involves death, serious injury or a threat to life or property.

## 2.2 Incidents Off School Premises

If the critical incident involves a student or staff member and is off school premises, the person receiving the information must immediately contact the Principal and the Conference Education Director who will communicate with other staff as appropriate.

Key details should be reported. Refer to School Incident Report Form.

Key details include:

- Time
- Location and nature of the incident (e.g. threat, accident, death or injury)
- Names
- Roles of persons involved (e.g. staff, student, visitor).

The staff member receiving the news contacts the Conference Education Director, who urgently deals with an emergency situation then calls a meeting with the staff involved to make decisions as to how to proceed. The staff most likely to be present will be:

- Conference Education Director or Conference Emergency Response Coordinator
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Counsellor/chaplain
- Other key stakeholders (e.g. the On-site Coordinator - may be called depending upon the situation)

### 2.2.1 The Coordinating Team/Group

At the initial meeting, the task of the group is to:

- Create for themselves a clear understanding of the known facts.
- Plan an immediate response.
- Plan ongoing strategies.
- Allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks.

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

### 2.2.2 Immediate response

Issues to be considered:

1. Contact with next of kin/ significant others – what is the most appropriate manner of contact?
2. Arrangements for informing staff and students.
3. Guidelines to staff about what information to give students.
4. A written bulletin to staff if the matter is complex.
5. Briefing staff and delegating a staff member to deal with telephone/counter inquiries.
6. Managing media/ publicity
7. Identification of those students and staff members most closely involved and therefore most at risk.
  - o Those directly involved
  - o Personal friends/family of those involved
  - o Others who have experienced a similar past trauma
  - o Other students, staff, supervisors etc.
8. Arrange a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with Counsellor/s.
  - o In this session, an opportunity is given to share the impact of the event, discuss various interpretations of the event in cultural/ethnic terms, the resulting sense of vulnerability, the experience of painful emotions and the normalisation of reactions.
9. Organise a tasks timetable for the next hour/s, day/s etc.
10. Plan ongoing feedback and regular meetings so that the coordinating team is continually in touch and working together.
11. Confirm access to emergency funds if necessary.

❖ NOTE: one member of the team should scribe for all meetings to keep records of content and decisions.

### 2.2.3 Ongoing and follow up response

These issues may need to be discussed at subsequent meetings.

- ◆ WHO is the DECISION MAKER?
- ◆ WHO will FOLLOW UP?
- ◆ Availability of mobile phones
- ◆ Notification of a liaison with Sponsor/ Agent if applicable
- ◆ Arrangements for visits to/from Family
- ◆ Liaison with Police, Doctors, Hospital Staff
- ◆ Death Notices
- ◆ Funeral/Memorial Service Arrangements
- ◆ Copy of Death Certificate
- ◆ Consideration of personal items and affairs (household and academic)
- ◆ Insurance Matters, Ambulance Cover

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

- ◆ Formal Stress Management interventions required for students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, rescheduled assessment or exams)
- ◆ Liaison with Teaching Staff
- ◆ Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required
- ◆ Legal Issues: helping families get access to legal assistance if required
- ◆ Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required
- ◆ Follow up condolence or other letters to Family
- ◆ Financial Assistance for families of affected person(s)
- ◆ Organising students/staff for hospital visits

#### 2.2.4 Student File Essentials

Employ and use a file note system, keeping hard copies of student details in the Enrolments files. Files kept will enable you and others to monitor student issues. All information regarding incidences and actions taken regarding a critical incident are kept on file for 5 years after the student ceases to be enrolled at the College. Information regarding student files should include the following:

- Coloured Photograph
- Student's address and telephone number
- Emergency contact telephone, with next of kin details, agent or sponsor (if applicable)
- Any other identification details – student ID, medical conditions, allergy information etc.

### 2.3 Critical Incident Staff Training

It is important for staff to be aware of the existence of the Critical Incident Management Plan.

#### 2.3.1 Stress Management

1. Debriefing as soon as possible after the event on an individual or group basis
2. Further debriefing – one or more days after the incident (group basis)
3. Follow up 2-6 weeks later – (individual or group basis)
4. Ongoing counselling as required
5. Recovery time for staff involved and the Coordinating Team members.

#### 2.3.2 Skills and knowledge

- Cross Cultural Skills
- Awareness of one's own values and biases and how they may affect the students

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

- Knowledge of resources on and off school premises
- Uninterrupted access to those resources
- Communication skills
- Organisational skills
- Liaison skills
- Networking skills
- Stress Management skills
- Delegation skills
- Maintenance of clear and direct communication channels with decision makers
- Panic diffusion skills
- Skills to eliminate time lags
- Sensitivity to the issue of confidentiality
- Sensitivity towards different cultural expressions of grief and other emotions
- Diplomacy skills
- Debriefing skills
- Monitoring skills for those affected by incident
- Recognition skills re: warning signs of risk to students affected by the incident
- Follow up skills
- Advocacy skills (for students)
- Referral skills to legal, medical, religious assistance
- Recognition of one's own limitations
- Self care skills

### 2.3.3 Things to remember:

1. **In the event of any critical incident, the first thing to do is calm the affected party/parties down and offer hope.**  
Communicate simply, take control and give clear and practical directions in order to reduce the anxiety and connect the logic of the affected party/parties.
2. **You are not super human.**  
Managing a critical incident can be a very lonely time, especially if you are regarded as the focal link with international students at your school. While you are busy providing care or support to those directly affected by the incident, your own health and emotional well-being may be at risk. Self-care should NOT be forgotten in your management strategy.
3. **Take time out each day to telephone or e-mail another colleague.**  
This will give you not only a chance to debrief, but also to compare notes with sympathetic colleagues who have had similar experiences and a real understanding of what you are feeling. You are helping others while you help yourself.

Update the resources as necessary

Insert as many local telephone numbers and contacts, and as much information as you can so that you can refer to the resources thereby allowing you to take effective and immediate action.

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>



### 2.3.4 Preparing yourself

How does one prepare for dealing with a critical incident? The attitude you assume is of the utmost significance:

- Expect the unexpected. Not everything occurs between 9am and 5pm.
- Do not be easily upset or disturbed by even the most extreme situations.
- Convey empathy and respect for the emotions of those involved.
- Worry and fear should not be conveyed to the person.
- Provide a sense of stability and strength.
- Be able to alleviate tension and anxiety.
- LISTEN – to what is said.
- LISTEN – to what is not said.
- Create a personal equilibrium between your own values and those of a different value system, but keep the values of the client foremost in your mind.
- There will be times when you are unavailable. Don't be consumed by guilt. As long as policy and procedures are in place, there will be someone else who can step in and fulfil the required role.
- Network with the local community. Keep a list of useful contacts who may be able to assist in matters not directly related to the school: family support, interpreters.
- It is not always important to remain within the specific religious affiliation to receive help in an emergency situation. Helping, coping, counselling skills are not religiously oriented... sensitivity is common to all members of the clergy. Keep this in mind when seeking assistance.

### 2.3.5 Critical Incident Recovery Timeline

In order to successfully manage a critical incident, Adventist Schools, where possible, will take appropriate action and provide support during and after a critical Incident.

The recovery timeline following a critical incident will vary depending on the circumstances

Gather the facts;

#### 2.3.5.1 Immediately (and within 24 hours)

- Ensure safety and welfare of staff and students and arrange for first-aid if necessary;
- Where possible notify the time and place of the debriefing to all relevant persons;
- Manage the media;
- Set up a recovery room;
- Keep staff, students and parents informed;
- Arrange counselling as needed;

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

### 2.3.5.2 Within 48-72 hours

- Provide opportunities for staff and student to talk about the incident;
- Provide support to staff and helpers;
- Debrief all relevant persons;
- Restore normal functioning as soon as possible;
- Keep parents informed;
- Arrange a memorial service, if appropriate;

### 2.3.5.3 Within the first month

- Encourage parents to participate in meeting to discuss students' welfare;
- Identify behavioural changes and the possibility of post traumatic stress disorder and refer to health Contacts for Mental Health Services;
- Monitor progress of hospitalised staff or students;
- Monitor mental and physical health of all helpers;
- Monitor staff and students for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post traumatic stress disorder – refer for specialised treatment;

### 2.3.5.4 In the Longer Term

- Provide support if needed;
- Plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings

### 2.3.5.5 In the Long Term

- Access specialist support if needed.
- Staff training and recovery management
- Sample documents
- Media hints

### 2.3.6 Media hints

In many cases, the organisation would prefer not to issue a press release upon the death of a student. However, in anticipation of some requests for comment from the media, it is advisable to have a press release drafted just in case.

Listed below are some helpful hints, which can be used and applied within the role of the Coordinating Team:

1. "No Comment" = Not a good idea.
2. A good press release should answer the following questions: What? How? When? Where? Why?

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

3. Add a joint statement from the Conference Education Director and the Student Committee (or from staff representatives with a student support focus) which will signify unity and dissuade the press from looking for an 'alternative angle' on the story. The statement should include an expression of surprise and sadness at the tragedy, as well as compassion for the family of the victim.
4. A comment should be included explaining the school policy on responding to this kind of situation. In addition, if the situation warrants, it would be appropriate to comment on what measures will be put in place to ensure that any future events of this nature are avoided.
5. A telephone contact for further information is always left at the bottom of a press release. The Conference Education Director will be responsible for media inquiries, and all staff should be alerted to the procedure for directing media inquiries to this person.

### 3. Sample letters

#### 3.1 Letter to parents (sample letter in the event of a tragedy)

Dear Parents,

The school has experienced (the sudden death, accidental injury) of one of our students. We are deeply saddened by the death/events.

(brief details of the incident, and in the event of a death, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person lost.)

We have support structures in place to help your child cope with this tragedy. (Elaborate)

It is possible that your child may have some feelings that he/she may like to discuss with you. You can help your child by taking time to listen and encouraging them to express their feelings.

If you would like advice or assistance you may contact the following people at the school:

Conference Education Director

Counsellor

Yours sincerely,

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

### 3.2 Letter to parents (sample letter requesting consent for involvement of outside professional/s – for under 18 students)

Dear Parents,

Following the recent (tragedy,...) we have arranged professional support for students in school who need particular help. (...) is available to help us with this work. This support will usually consist of talking to children, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis and offering reassurance and advice as appropriate.

Your son/daughter has been identified as one of the students who would benefit from meeting with the psychologist. If you would like your child to receive this support please sign the attached permission slip and return it to the school by \_\_\_\_\_.

If you would like further information on the above or to talk to the psychologist, please indicate this on the slip or telephone the school.

Yours sincerely,

.....

I/we consent to having our daughter/son met by a psychologist.

I/we understand that my daughter/son may meet the psychologist(s) in an individual or group session depending on the arrangements which are thought to be most appropriate.

Name of student:

Date of Birth:

I would like my daughter/son ..... to avail of the support being offered by the psychologist.

Signed: ..... (parent/guardian)

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: <b>Procedure</b>
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: <b>5 August 2019</b>
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: <b>Term 3 - 2021</b>

## Appendix 1 – Acknowledgement of Compliance with Controlled Document Procedure

Name of Department / Facility Education

Document Controller Vanessa Woodman

I hereby acknowledge receipt of Controlled Document number SQS024.002.EDU

I have replaced all printed copies of previous versions and destroyed them.

School \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this completed form within one week of receipt to the person who issued this document (The Document Controller).*

Department: <b>Education</b>	Description: Procedure
Administrative Area: <b>Risk Management and Compliance</b>	Type: <b>Highly Recommended</b>
Document Name: <b>School Critical Incident Management</b>	Issue Date: 5 August 2019
Document ID: <b>SQS024.002.EDU</b>	Review Date: Term 3 - 2021