

## **Policy**

# **CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON**

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## **Preamble**

Most critical incidents occur unexpectedly and can find people unprepared. When large numbers of people are faced with an unexpected crisis, special strategies need to be put in place to ensure that all concerned can be assisted in processing their individual and collective reactions to the crisis.

## **Rationale**

As Catholic schools/colleges, we are committed to supporting all people in our communities, most importantly in times of crisis. A comprehensive, pastoral response to such critical incidents will assist the immediate and long-term recovery of those affected.

A critical incident is “any event which has a stressful impact, sufficient enough to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of either an individual or a group”. (Mitchell & Everly 1993)

Critical incidents may include, but not restricted to:

- Natural disasters; eg cyclones, floods, bushfires
- Industrial accidents; eg chemical spill, explosion
- Incidents relating to school activities; eg bus accidents, fire
- Death of a student or staff member
- Hostage situations or incidents resulting from child custody issues
- Incidents involving the use of drugs, illegal substances, unsanctioned substances
- Public displays of aggression or physical violence towards members of the school/college community.

## **Values**

The Mission of Jesus calls us to care for one another at all times (Matt 25:31 ff) and in so doing we are called to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8)

## **Policy**

**St Mary's has written plans and procedures for responding to critical incidents**

## **Implementation Issues**

1. Key personnel will be identified, designated responsibilities and given appropriate preparation and training to enable them to support members of the St Mary's community when needed.
2. The St Mary's community should be aware that an effective approach to critical incidents would include:
  - Appropriate education programs
  - Sound prevention practices to minimise risks and potential harm
  - Clear guidelines and strategies for interventions
3. All staff will be made aware of the critical incident policy as part of the induction process and in ongoing staff development (through the St Mary's Handbook)
4. Critical Incidents Management Guidelines are reviewed annually.

## **Reflection Material**

*Mindmatters: Critical Incident Management. Curriculum Corporation 2000.*

*Responding to Critical Incidents, Resource Guide for Schools, British*

*Columbia.*

*Crisis Management, Williamson J, Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn.*

*Responding to Critical Incidents In Schools, Department of Education Qld, 1996.*

*Guide to Crisis Care & Counselling, CCH School Health & Safety.*

Replaces Policy No.	2001-02 Critical Incidents In Catholic Schools and College of the Diocese of Rockhampton
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