

TALBOT PRIMARY SCHOOL

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING POLICY

RESPONDING TO A TRAUMATIC OR CRITICAL INCIDENT IN WHICH THE SCHOOL IS INVOLVED.

- Schools may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event.
- The incident may involve loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance.
- The incident may occur in the school environment or in the community.
- It may involve staff, students or those close to them.
- The network of those involved in a traumatic event can be wide, especially if it directly involves the school.
- Feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time.
- Counselling should be provided for all those who need it. This may include many who do not seem to be closely connected to the event or the individuals involved.
- The school may be in a position to help grieving families at difficult times. e.g. through the school's participation in the funeral service.
- While school should operate as normally as possible, some degree of flexibility should exist.
- It is essential that people be given clear, accurate information at all times.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF A TRAGIC / TRAUMATIC EVENT WHICH INVOLVES THE SCHOOL

Incidents vary in complexity. These guidelines provide a framework for action and would not necessarily be followed in all cases. However the following 4 principles must be followed: -

- * Provision of clear and accurate information.
- * Description of action to be followed.
- * Provision of help for all affected.
- * Maintenance of normal school program.

1. Obtain accurate information. Deal only with substantiated facts.
2. As soon as possible inform staff, especially those most directly involved and School Council president. Inform close friends and family individually. Allow questions and discussion as they arise. Dispel rumours.
3. Appoint a skilled Support Team to assist in the management of the incident. The team may include staff members, counsellors, external Department of Education and Training personnel, support agencies etc. The size and composition of the team will be related to the nature of the incident. Distribute names of Support Team members, and inform others of the role of the team.
4. As soon as possible provide information to the community as to what has happened and what is being done.
5. Emergency Management of DET will assist the school and would handle media requirements and advice on procedures and involve outside agencies.
6. Establish an open line of communication with the family or families directly involved.
7. Provide out of school hours contact if necessary. This could be as simple as circulating the Principal's telephone number. In more complex situations it may mean maintaining telephone contact at the school.

8. Continue contact with the family to identify their expectations of the school, e.g. student participation in funeral or memorial service.
9. Try to identify those most likely to need help, e.g. classmates, teacher, special friends.
10. Ensure that counselling help is available. Contact the Regional Office and/or DET if necessary. All emergency or criminal activity in which the safety or well-being of staff or students is at risk, or where there is a threat to property, must be reported immediately to the Department's 24 hour Emergency and Security Management Branch on ph: **(03) 9589 6266**
11. Continue to keep staff, students and parents informed, especially about what has happened and what the school is doing about it.
12. As soon as possible call students together and provide information about what has happened and what the school is doing about it.
13. Provide counselling for all. Ensure that there are suitable places in which this can take place. Be prepared to modify the timetable and other arrangements so that people are free to make use of available help.
14. The class teacher will be available for the students to turn to for help as they may be the person to whom students first turn to.
15. Children wishing to attend funerals should be encouraged to do so in the company of their parents. The school will provide meaningful participation for those not actually attending the service.
16. Continue normal routines at school but acknowledge the effect of tragedy on the school community. Be flexible with those in need of help. Be aware that many people may be deeply affected, e.g. an event may cause a person to recall some traumatic event involving them in the past. The anniversary may also be a difficult time.
17. Maintain links with the family. The school and family may wish to develop a memorial garden, erect a memorial plaque, or display a photo in a prominent position in the school.
18. Monitor, be sensitive to, and respond to staff and student's needs over a period of time.
19. Review this process after any significant incident.

Appendix A

Reportable Incidents

Some examples of the types of incidents that should be reported to ESMU:

- The death of (including suicide) or serious injury to, a student, parent, visitor or staff member
- Allegations of or actual serious sexual or serious physical assault of a student, staff member or a visitor
- **As a general rule, a serious incident is one requiring medical attention (physical assault) or a police investigation (sexual assault)**
- A serious fire involving death or serious injury
- Siege/Hostage situations
- Suspicious Person/s and/or Vehicles
- A serious fire/damage in schools resulting in closure or significant damage to parts of a building or its contents and/or which poses a threat to the health and safety of students, staff members or visitors
- Missing/Disappearance/Removal of student/s
- Unauthorised/Unexplained absenteeism from school

- Firearms, weapons or bomb threat
- Motor vehicle collision
- Impact by machinery, equipment, aircraft
- Fire on school grounds, bush or grass fire
- Fumes, spill, leak or contamination by hazardous material
- Outbreak or incidence of disease
- Flood or windstorm
- Earthquake or other natural event
- Criminal activity, burglary, theft, vandalism and graffiti
- Issues of negligence or legal liability
- Presence of toxic fumes or explosive conditions
- Need for the evacuation or lockdown of people
- A significant event that has a major impact on school operations
- An event that has the potential to involve the relevant Minister
- An event that has the potential to subject the Department to high levels of public or legal scrutiny
- Serious threats made against a student, visitor or staff member
- Unethical behaviour by staff, particularly if it involves taking advantage of a student, visitor or staff member
- Where fraud or theft has been identified
- Unsolicited correspondence to staff or students
- A student, visitor or staff member's behaviour that could result in potential risk to another student, visitor or staff member
- Incidents that did not lead to significant student, visitor or staff member injury or death, but very nearly did (hazardous condition observed/near misses).

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....	2015
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Principal's signature: _____

OH & S Representative's signature: _____

School Council President's signature: _____

Date: _____