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CRITICAL INCIDENTS POLICY

St. Agnes' Primary School



RATIONALE:

It is the responsibility of all members of the Catholic school community to collaborate in the provision of a caring environment.

In today's society, people can be exposed to a crisis situation, which could have serious effects. The school community is such a group. A sensitive awareness of the varying needs and circumstances of students, staff and families is important in such a crisis.

Arising from the duty of care that Principals and staff owe to students for whom they have responsibility, planning for the management of an abnormal or critical incident is essential.

A critical incident may be defined as an event which causes disruption to an organisation, creates significant danger or risk and which creates a situation where staff, students and parents feel unsafe, vulnerable and under stress. Examples of Critical Incidents may include:

- Serious injury, illness or death of a member of the school community
- Violent assault of a member of the school community
- Students or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence
- Fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard, flood, earthquake and extremes of temperatures.

Although such situations may be relatively unusual at St. Agnes', it is important to have guidelines such as these to be prepared for action.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Stay Calm:** First prioritise the safety of the students. Instant solutions may not be possible. Beyond taking safety precautions, little more may be immediately achievable.
- **Get the Facts:** When trying to find out the information it is important for the teacher to try and remain calm and non-threatening.
- **Ensure Safety:** Ensuring the safety of the student and others is the teacher's first priority. Take quick commonsense action to ensure safety. This may be to summons first aid, evacuate and assemble for a roll call in the designated area (refer to Appendix A - Fire Drill/Emergency Evacuation or Appendix B - Lockdown Procedures), isolate a student or any other sensible action.
- **Seek Assistance:** Teachers must always seek the help of the Principal and Executive when dealing with such incidents.

- **Involve the School Administration:** All details of the teacher's involvement should be documented and sent to the Principal.
- **Public/ Press Announcement or Releases:** Any public or press releases must be directed by the Principal or delegated authority.

FOLLOW UP

- **Class / School Community:**

Particular situations may require follow up. This may occur within a class group or as a school community. Should this be the case, teachers will provide students with opportunities for children to share and communicate their concerns. This may require the Principal to intervene and it is desirable for support to be offered for all including students and staff members.

If possible, resume normal duties as soon as possible once the event has been officially acknowledged.

- **Parents / Carers:**

If the situation arises and there is a need to contact parents / carers a flow of information is important, as is consistency and mutual support between school and home. This will be done with the discretion of the Principal.

- **Community Services and Agencies:**

The Principal may find it necessary to contact community services such as Counselling, the Department of Health and Community, Police etc... Again this will depend upon the incident at hand and will be done with the discretion of the Principal.

Appendix A – Lock Down Procedure

Related Policy: Bushfire Evacuation Plan

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Ratified: February 2011
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IMPORTANT

- ❖ An announcement will be delivered through the PA, indicating the need to initiate an Emergency Lockdown Procedure.
- ❖ A code of “Lockdown” is to be given in message. Teachers and children are to move into procedures immediately.
- ❖ Office staff are to call emergency services depending on information received.
- ❖ Office staff to lock all doors to Admin Block.
- ❖ Office Staff/specific staff member to be given time to write down details of incident/information given in readiness for Police.
- ❖ Office staff are to call Preschools, OOSH, bus company and JOPRIM to inform.
- ❖ A message via Skoolbag app will be sent outlining:
 - Your Children are safe,
 - The school has received information to cause it to initiate Lockdown procedures.
 - Emergency Services have been called.
 - For your safety and the safety of staff, do not come to school, as access will be denied during Lockdown.
 - You will be informed when you can access your children, only when deemed safe by emergency services / Principal decision.
 - Alternative pick up locations and procedures may be in place – classroom collections only. Please be patient with us at this time.
- ❖ Assistant Principal to secure all boundary fencing gates, but to try out of sight as much as possible.
- ❖ Classrooms with Students are to
 - Lock all external doors.
 - Close and lock all windows.
 - Draw curtain and blinds (Classrooms to go ‘dark’)
 - Children are to stay away from windows, under desks, out of sight.
 - No child or staff member will be able to leave classrooms at this time.
 - Noise levels are to be kept to a minimum.
 - Class phones are to be kept clear. Only incoming calls from office.
 - Children from other classrooms are to stay in the classroom they are in with teachers.
 - If lockdown occurs during lunchtime all students will be moved as quickly as possible back to classrooms
- ❖ Office Staff to contact classrooms to account for children missing from classrooms – to maintain one-way, clear lines of communication
- ❖ Office staff to contact staffroom/PLT/staff work area and inform those in office area of Lockdown and to stay put.

- ❖ Creative Arts team with classes are to keep children with them.
- ❖ Gates are to be locked, teachers coming up off playground duty are to ensure locking of gates
- ❖ If procedures need to occur at lunchtime or whilst children are at play. Signal of PA will sound, and staff and children are to leave playground / staffroom and re-join class groups as quickly as possible.
- ❖ If procedures need to occur whilst visitors are present in classrooms or working volunteers - they are to stay with the class they are with or within the building they are in.
- ❖ Follow-up information will be delivered to classrooms via phones.
- ❖ During Lockdown, no access will be given to phones or other electronic devices - not to be used during lockdown. All Staff members are to abide by this directive.
- ❖ When given the 'all clear' by emergency services, the school will revert to 'Safe Mode'. Safe mode is a step above 'normal operation'. Safe Mode means children will be picked up by parents from the classrooms. Apps Alert will be sent to parents to advise.
- ❖ Safe Mode consists of limiting outside access, allowing children to desks and move around and escorts to toilets or around school.
- ❖ Maintenance Staff will meet Emergency Response Team at the gates, but will stay out of sight until they arrive.
- ❖ Parish Staff will contact various media outlets to inform wider community.
- ❖ In the case of Lockdown occurring at end of day – Staff (Leadership) to man gates
 - An SMS message will be sent to parents to inform them of lockdown dismissal procedures
- ❖ A debriefing session will be available to all staff after critical incident
- ❖ When performing practise drills - they will be announced to staff via message after buzzer sounds.

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