

# CRITICAL INCIDENTS

**Scope:** This policy applies to all Catholic kindergartens, schools, colleges, and services (including the Catholic Education Office) conducted by Catholic Education - Diocese of Rockhampton (referred to as CEDR in the document).

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

Each Catholic kindergarten, school, college and service of the Catholic Education in the Diocese of Rockhampton (CEDR) will have written plans and procedures for responding to critical incidents.

## 2. DESCRIPTION

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 be restricted to:

- natural disasters e.g. cyclones, floods, bushfires
- industrial accidents e.g. chemical spill, explosion
- incidents relating to school activities e.g. bus accidents, fire
- death of a student or staff member
- hostage situations
- incidents resulting from child custody issues
- weapons brought to school
- incidents involving the use of drugs, illegal substances, unsanctioned substances
- public displays of aggression or physical violence towards members of the school/college community
- unauthorised incursions into school property or functions
- problematic sexualised student behaviour
- incidents involving significant physical injuries
- attempted suicide
- unplanned technological systems outage impacting critical systems
- breaches of information security
- cyber security attack
- serious data breach of organisational personal data.

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. CEDR has measures in place to manage critical incidents.



CEDR is committed to supporting all people in our communities but is most important in times of crisis. A comprehensive, pastoral response to such critical incidents will assist the immediate and long-term recovery of those affected.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

1. Key personnel will be identified, designated responsibilities and given appropriate preparation and training to enable them to support members of the Catholic school community when needed.
2. Catholic school communities 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 during ongoing staff development.
4. Critical Incidents Management Guidelines are reviewed annually.

### 4. REFLECTION MATERIAL

#### CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- *Critical Incident Management* v4 2023

#### RESOURCES

- CCH School Health & Safety *Guide to Crisis Care & Counselling* Mitchell and Everley 1993
- APS (Australian Psychological Society) website [www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au)