

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE POLICY

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy and related procedure is to assist institute staff and students in the management of critical incidents in accordance with the ESOS National Code 6.4

2. SCOPE:

- 2.1.** This policy applies to all JMC Academy staff, students and visitors who have been exposed to a critical incident – either on-campus or off-campus (students & staff) including staff on business related travel interstate or overseas.
- 2.2.** Where JMC Academy staff witness an event that may be considered a critical incident, the policy and procedures should be followed.
- 2.3.** Where JMC Academy staff is aware of an event which may either indicate or escalate to a critical incident, the policy and procedures should be followed.

3. RELEVANT STANDARD FROM AUSTRALIAN QUALITY TRAINING FRAMEWORK/ ESOS Act:

ESOS Code 6.4:

“The registered provider must have a documented critical incident policy together with procedures that covers the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, required follow-up to the incident, and records of the incident and action taken.”

4. DEFINITION:

A critical incident is: Any extraordinary and unpredicted traumatic event affecting an individual that requires the implementation of special arrangements involving a number of areas of the institute in order to prevent/minimise any negative impact on their health and welfare.

Critical incidents include but are not limited to:

- Medical emergencies involving a student
- Critical illness of a student
- Student death/suicide
- Traumatic events that affect students; such as
 - Sexual Assault
 - Mental Health Crisis
 - Drug / Alcohol Overdose
 - Campus Disturbance / Riot
 - Fire / Explosion with Injuries or Significant Damage
 - Natural Disasters (in Australia and overseas)
 - Airplane Crashes

- International Hostage Situations/ Kidnappings
- National Emergencies
- Hate/Bias Incidents

5. COMPLIANCE EVIDENCE:

A documented critical incident policy and procedures, and evidence that staff members have an understanding of the critical incident policy.

6. PROCEDURE:

- 6.1.** The Academy is advised of a critical incident. The Campus Manager is usually the first line.
- 6.2.** The Campus Manager makes a decision on 'critical incident' ie does the event meet the critical incident definition?
 - If yes, the Campus Manager convenes the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT);
 - If no, advises on appropriate course of action.
- 6.3.** The CIRT is chaired by the Campus Manager and membership can include:
 - Heads of Department
 - Manager of Student Support Services
 - Head of International Services
 - Administration Manager
 - Marketing/Media Manager
 - Nominated trained staff member, agency or counsellor.
- 6.4.** The role of the CIRT is to effectively manage critical incidents with clear actions and procedures that are humane, sensitive, and responsive to the needs of students, staff and the broader institute community. Intervention procedures may reduce the intense reactions of students and staff to an incident and assist them in returning to their normal studies and/or duties.
- 6.5.** The operations of the CIRT involve activities prior to, during and after periods impacted upon by the critical incident, and include
 - Preparing/informing students and staff on actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident
 - Initial Action
 - Stabilising the Academy community
 - Debriefing
 - Personal support

- Media management
- Corporate review
- Reports and Records management

6.6. CIRT role in preparing students/staff for a possible critical incident.

The role of the CIRT includes:

- Informing students and staff of the role and activities of the CIRT;
- Assisting/advising on the development of positive working relationships and morale across the institute;
- Establishing contacts with and/or developing suitably trained internal or external debriefers;
- Assessing the institute environment for the potential for critical incidents;
- In consultation with students and staff, developing agreed procedures for responding to critical incidents:
 - Medical emergencies involving a student,
 - Critical illness of a student,
 - Student death,
 - Traumatic events that affect students;
- Ensuring that students/staff are familiar with these procedures.

6.7. CIRT Initial Action

Critical incidents may trigger a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms, including increased heart rate, high blood pressure and anxiety. The initial action of JMC institute is to calm students and staff following a critical incident and to ensure that their immediate needs are met. A member of the CIRT, who was not involved in the incident, or affected by it, is responsible for this initial action.

A demobilisation takes place before the end of a shift or before those involved in the incident disperse. Strategies include:

- Convene a meeting for those involved as soon as possible.
- Summarise the incident and clarify uncertainties.
- Invite questions and discuss issues of concern.
- Show care and support.
- Draw up a plan of action, taking into account the needs of the students/staff.
- Make short-term arrangements for study/work responsibilities.
- Offer information on defusing and debriefing.

6.8. CIRT role in Stabilizing the Academy Community

The role of stabilising the Academy community is assigned to a trained person and is designed to bring the experience of the incident to a conclusion and provide immediate personal

support. The aim is to stabilise the responses of students/staff involved in the incident and allow an opportunity for them to express any immediate concerns. This step should take place within 12 hours of the incident.

Strategies include:

- Review the event.
- Clarify student/staff questions and concerns.
- Encourage student/staff to talk about what happened.
- Identify current needs.
- Offer student/staff advice, information and handouts on referrals and support agencies.
- Arrange debriefing and follow-up sessions to provide additional information about the event when available.

6.9 *Incident involving or directly impacting on overseas student*

If an overseas student is directly involved in a critical incident and the CIRT determines that the student's family must be notified:

- A member of the International Services team is delegated to contact the relevant agent (if any) to relay a message to the parents. If the agent is willing to contact the parents, check that they have the necessary contact details. If not, the student's record file will have their nominated emergency contact details. Ask the agent to notify the team when the agent has spoken to the next of kin.
- If the agent is not willing to contact next of kin, then the Campus Manager [or a member of International Services](#) does so.
- If the student does not have an agent the Campus Manager or a member of International Services contacts the next of kin.
- The team contacts other relevant people such as the Homestay or other accommodation provider and Embassy of the student's home country.
- In the case of an overseas student's death, or an absence affecting attendance, the incident is reported through PRISMS to DEEWR & DIAC.

6.10 *CIRT role in Debriefing*

Debriefing is usually carried out within three to seven days of the critical incident, when students and staff have had enough time to take in the experience. Debriefing is not counselling. It is a structured voluntary discussion aimed at putting an abnormal event into perspective. It offers students/staff clarity about the critical incident they have experienced and assists them to establish a process for recovery.

Debriefers help the students/staff to explore and understand a range of issues, including:

- The sequence of events
- The causes and consequences
- Each person's experience

- Any memories triggered by the incident
- Normal psychological reactions to critical incidents
- Methods to manage emotional responses resulting from a critical incident

6.11 CIRT role in personal support

An immediate and primary role of the CIRT is to determine how the institute can support the individual student(s) and their families involved in the incident.

The Campus Manager manages all agreed communications and support mechanisms with affected students and their families.

The CIRT, through the Student Support Services Manager, arranges for particular students most closely related to the student(s) involved in the incident to receive personal support.

6.12 CIRT role in Media management

All media enquiries, press releases and institute website postings related to the critical incident are managed by the CIRT.

The Campus Manager or Marketing/Media Manager will be the only people approved by the CIRT to deal with communications with the media.

The CIRT has a responsibility to impress upon students and staff that there may be pressure on students/ staff to provide photos to the media. Out of respect for the students/staff and their families and to protect the integrity of the institute, no photos other than those approved by the CIRT should be released to the media.

6.13 CIRT role in the corporate review

A corporate review is held a few weeks after the incident. The CIRT reviews all aspects of the incident to uncover deficiencies in the handling of the incident, and provide corrective solutions. The review looks at how the incident was handled, how it could have been handled better and the effectiveness of the intervention strategies. Related institute policies, safety regulations, safe work procedures are also reviewed.

6.14 CIRT role in Reports and Records management

The Manager responsible for administration across the institute who is a member of the CIRT has the responsibility for ensuring that

- Minutes and agendas of ongoing CIRT meetings are maintained
- A file is raised each time the CIRT is convened to deal with a specific critical incident. This file (electronic and/or hardcopy) includes but is not limited to records of:
 - The incident:
 - The nature of the incident
 - The people involved in the incident
 - How the institute became aware of the incident
 - Student support measures;

- Communications with
 - external bodies (Police/emergency services/DEEWR /DIAC/VRQA /ACPET),
 - media outlets and
 - particularly members of student families;
- Reports from
 - defusing and
 - debriefing sessions;
- Action plans;
- Corporate review report and
- Subsequent amendments to institute policies and procedures.

7 RESPONSIBILITY

Campus Manager

8 PROCEDURE OWNER

The owner of this procedure is the Campus Manager.

Critical Incidents Reporting and Procedure Flow Chart

