



367 High Street
NAGAMBIE VIC 3608
T: 03 5794 2608
F: 03 5794 1435
M: 0417 489 577
E: principal@sjnagambie.catholic.edu.au
W: www.sjnagambie.catholic.edu

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Policy Developed 2011

Policy Reviewed 2019

Identity Statement

St Joseph's; a child safe school, is a Catholic Community in the Josephite tradition where we learn and grow in the Spirit together.

Vision Statements

St Joseph's; a child safe school, strives to be an educating community:

Where the total development of each child is nurtured.

Where an environment of trust, respect, hope and safety is built, with direct reference and consideration to child safe standards and policies.

Where families and the school work in partnership sharing the responsibility to educate the child.

Where school life is an integral part of parish and the wider community.

Where the students learn in a challenging, enjoyable and cooperative way.

Where the teachings of Jesus are taught, modelled and lived.

Graduate Outcomes

St Joseph's students learn to become:

Problem solving, inquiring, critical thinkers with high competencies in literacy and numeracy.

Technologically competent and ethical users of technology.

Hope filled, independent, resilient and confident young people.

Knowledgeable and appreciative of the Catholic faith.

Socially adept, respectful, just, environmentally conscious and appreciative of diversity.

At St Joseph's we are being our best when we are...

Being respectful;

Being friendly;

Being positive learners.

Rationale

St Joseph's Nagambie believes that a critical incident is something that cause normally stable and healthy people to experience strong emotional or physical distress that has the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the time of the event or later.

Loss is a crisis we may experience sometimes in our life. It can be sudden or occur over time and can impact in a variety of ways and in varying degrees throughout the school community.

Our school's critical incident management strategy is designed to assist and support staff, students and our local school community throughout such times of critical incidents.

Aims

- To provide support for, and try to meet the needs of persons affected by the crisis in both the short and long term.
- To provide a workable plan to ensure minimum disruption during the impact of the crisis.
- To provide professional help in order to try to minimise long-term negative consequences.

Planning

The policy and procedure for Critical Incidents will be attached to the Staff Handbook

This will be discussed and shared on the first planning day of the year. The contact list for all staff and emergency personnel will be updated on the first day of planning each year by Janelle.

The policy to be stored in the Admin Room in a labeled red box on the side counter, near the window.

This box will include all of the contact details for all staff and students, CEO personnel, CRT List.

The policy will be reviewed by the whole staff annually at a staff meeting in the first 3 weeks of term one.

A hard copy, of all emergency procedures, will be kept in all classrooms next to the Evacuation Procedures and also in the folder for new CRT's to the school. A copy will be kept on google drive, in the policy area.

New staff will be sent to Critical Incident Training Days.

Implementation

This policy takes place after the immediate critical incident has been dealt with. That is after emergency services have been called and those immediately affected have been notified.

At all times, it is important to speak the truth, be age appropriate and never say anything that needs to be retracted.

3 Questions

- 1. What is the level of distress & disruption we can reasonably predict in our school community today?**
- 2. Who might I reasonably predict will be distressed and disrupted?**
- 3. What type of response does it warrant?**

POSSIBLE CRISIS SITUATIONS

Death of a staff member, student or parent & serious injury, accident, illness or abduction

1. Collect accurate information

Principal (Leadership Team members in their absence) is to collect accurate information about the situation as soon as possible. **Appendix A.**

2. Assemble and Inform Crisis Response Team

In the event of a critical incident, a Crisis Response Team made up of key personnel should meet immediately to be fully informed of the situation.

Key personnel may vary depending on the nature of the critical incident, but should normally consist of the following.

Key Personnel Are:

1. Canonical Administrator
2. Principal
3. Leadership Team
4. Chaplain
5. Another coopted member if necessary, according to the needs and nature of the situation, e.g. CEO representative, counsellor, Home liaison person.

3. Critical Incident team to form a response plan.

Document procedure using **Critical Incident Action checklist.**

Response Plan

1. Consult process in policy.
2. Decide how to inform staff - The team is to decide how and when the staff is to be informed depending to the situation. This may mean certain members are to be told individually, in small groups or as a whole.
3. Identify staff whom may be too upset to cope.
4. Formulate letter to parents.
5. Set aside a support centre for distressed students, staff, parents e.g. library.
6. Arrange extra yard duty throughout the day.
7. Arrange CRT if necessary.
8. Plan any necessary changes to the timetable.
9. Inform the Nagambie Primary School and ask for staff support if necessary.
10. Plan school prayer/reflection.
11. Organise professional support services if needed.
12. Take a moment to pray as team.
13. Assist Police or other outside organisation if required.

4a. Inform Staff of the situation

Inform staff of the situation via a phone tree using the Buddies List

All staff would be told the same information with use of a scripted message ie.

- Identify self
- Statement of warning
- General statement that identifies the person and locator (ie. _____students name, in Grade__sibling of_____child of_____).
- Briefly explain incident
- Inform staff of staff briefing, time and location.
- Statement of concern/care
- Reiterate person and meeting details.

4b. Staff briefing at school

At staff briefing, provide staff with updated and relevant information. Inform staff of changes to school timetable ie. Prayer service, relief staff, support room etc.

Give staff clear guidelines and script, if appropriate, on how to inform students.

All efforts will be made to inform parents before students, however we recognise that this can depend on the nature and circumstances of the crisis.

5. Inform Parent Community

Inform parents through a letter as soon as possible. (Refer to Critical Incident Management Resource - Google Docs)
Send a text / app notification / email to let parents know to expect an important letter.

Staff are to restrict discussion with the parent community to information released in the parent letter to prevent breaching confidentiality and privacy laws.

6. Inform students

Students are to be informed at a whole school assembly, and then, in individual class groups, will be given the opportunity to ask questions or clarify information. A scripted message will be provided to assist staff with sharing of this sensitive information.

- Provide support.
- Settle group and talk about present feelings.
- Allow students to talk about the event/situation/person involved.
- Reminisce and tell stories about the person involved. Crying and laughing will possibly make students relax and be more at ease.
- Students will be encouraged to stay at school. Grief is best resolved in the context in which it happens.
- Pray and/or reflect together as a class.

Practical Options for Class Activities

- Postpone pre-planned work if needed.
- Provide opportunities for creative expression e.g. Poems, Art, Drawing, Writing, Clay Modelling, Music.
- Provide opportunities for physical expression e.g. Physical Education, Sport, Fun Games.
- Provide opportunities for small 'safe-group' activities such as board games, cards, and computer games.
- Organise activities in family groupings, if needed.

Support Room (Sensory Room) will be set up for children who are highly distressed to reflect and share feelings and memories. Parent Support Room (Library) will be set up separately for parents who need to reflect and share feelings and concerns.

7. Praying Together as a School Community

Organise a time and place to pray/ reflect together as a whole school, in units or in classes.

Prayer will be honest, age appropriate and not necessarily based on scripture.

8. Funeral Attendance (if applicable)

Every member of staff will be given an opportunity to attend the funeral.

If possible, Students will be encouraged to attend funerals with parents or guardian. This includes students who attend funerals to represent the school.

Students selected to represent the school at a funeral will be chosen after consultation with their parents.

The Principal or school representative will try to attend funerals of other family members linked to the school community.

The Principal will network with neighbouring schools to gain support during this time.

These steps are to be used as a guide and may vary with individual situations.

9. Media Protocol

Staff members are not allowed to make any comment to the media.

Staff are to direct all questions to the Principal or spokesperson appointed by the Crisis Response Team. This could be the CEO consultant or Director.

No media personnel are to be on the school grounds without the principal's permission. The principal will consult with the CEO before any decision is made.

No media personnel are to talk to children.

Consider distributing media information through a selected media representative.

10. School Recovery Suggestions

Allow opportunity for students to gather at the end of the day for prayer and reflection.

Allow opportunity for staff to gather at the end of the day for prayer and reflection.

Hold a Memorial Service, if appropriate.

Follow up service with class discussion/reflection.

Liaise with family via Principal, Wellbeing Officer/Chaplain or other personnel.

Monitor staff and students over time.

Plan an anniversary mass or paraliturgy if appropriate.

Recall professional services for follow up advice at regular intervals.

Provide opportunity for 'Seasons For Growth' Program to be implemented.

Appendix A

Possible questions to ask when ascertaining accurate information:

- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- Who was involved?
- Who was directly at the scene?
- Who witnessed the event and what did they see?
- Who knows about the incident?
- Are there siblings at the school?
- Have parents been contacted?
- What has been done so far?
- Is anyone in hospital, if so which hospital?
- Has there been police involvement?
- If so, what was the name of the attending officer?
- Has there been a priest involved or notified?
- Have other agencies been involved?
- Have neighbouring schools been notified/involved?
- Is there any immediate action the family would like the school to do?
- Has there been any media contact?

Appendix B

Response Plan

Consult policy – Yes/No

How and when will we inform staff?

Identify staff that may be too upset to cope

Who will formulate letter to parents?

List specific things to be mentioned in the letter.

Plan for telling students

Contact professional help Yes/No done by

Allocated support/withdrawal room will be?

Staff/specialists to supervise the above room

Yard duty changes

Casual Replacement Teachers (CRT) Yes/No

Extra admin staff Yes/No

Changes to the timetable

Inform Nagambie primary School and ask for staff support if necessary Yes/No

Staff and student prayer and reflection – when, where?

Appendix C

COLLECT ACCURATE INFORMATION



ASSEMBLE AND INFORM CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM



DEVELOP RESPONSE PLAN



INFORM STAFF



INFORM PARENTS



INFORM STUDENTS



PRAY TOGETHER



BEGIN SCHOOL RECOVERY