INTRODUCTION

St Patrick’s Primary School exists to lead its members to come to a better knowledge and deeper experience of the God who loves them. From our origins, St Patrick’s Primary School has been characterised by a strong family spirit. It is in this context that pastoral care of all members of the school community becomes a high priority, particularly for those most in need of help and support.

A management plan for Critical Incidents is an important part of the pastoral planning within St Patrick’s Primary school. The existence of such a plan will help ensure that the school responds to such incidents responsibly, compassionately, immediately and comprehensively. In this way it will best care for all its members, promote their wellbeing and deepen their faith.

A Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) provides St Patrick’s Primary school with a standard procedure to follow in its response to critical events. It maps out the initial steps to be followed, through to the provision of closure, as well as suggesting specific strategies that might be employed to return to an acceptable situation or to mitigate the effect of the incident.

Rationale

Natural forces and tragic circumstances are generally beyond our control. For this reason, it is not possible to predict the type of Critical Incident which might destabilise St Patrick’s Primary School. However, a general response can and should be identified in the procedures that follow.

Definition

A ‘critical incident’ is defined as an event which causes significant disruption to individuals, relationships and operations within an organisation. Such an incident may create extreme risk and a situation where staff, students and parents feel unsafe, vulnerable and under stress.

Values

All responses to critical incidents should reflect the values held by the school. These values focus on community and incorporate love, compassion, respect, forgiveness, empathy, faith, courage, hope and justice.

Policy Statement

St Patrick’s Primary school community has developed its own critical incident plan that shall be implemented in response to a critical event. This plan will outline the procedural requirements to make this policy effective.
Consequences

- Principal, Acting Principal or member of the Executive Team be appointed to co-ordinate the Critical Incident Plan.
- That a sacred space be designated for the purposes of grieving, praying and caring.
- That an appropriate team of professional counsellors be engaged when necessary by the school to work within the community. This team should be drawn from the local/cluster/ regional level and they should be comfortable with the ethos of a Catholic school.
- That the way in which information is conveyed to staff, parents and students be recognised as critically important. It should be clear from the Critical Incident Plan as to how this will happen and what methodologies will be employed.
- That a designated area be assigned as a coordination centre.
- All individual’s rights be recognised at all stages of the implementation of the policy.
- That professional development for all members of staff in the area of Critical Incident Management will occur.
- That a strategy for media management be part of the Critical Incident Plan.
- That a flowchart/checklist be formulated, transparent and available for all the school community.
The Principal/Educational leader is to ensure the following tasks are undertaken:

- All administrative and teaching staff are aware of the policy.
- A member of staff has been appointed as coordinator and deputy coordinator of the Critical Incident Plan.
- Procedures have been developed that will give direction to the plan. This will include the roles of various personnel and their duties such as notifying the parents, other staff and the community (including the Director, Catholic Schools Office).
- Notification and in-service of staff on the procedures.
- The designation of a sacred space for reflection and prayer.
- An accessible and current record of personnel who may need to be notified in the case of a critical incident. This may include counsellors, Centacare, Parish Priests/Co-ordinators, etc.
- Designation of a place to act as a coordination centre. This may change depending on the incident.
- Procedures for documenting information leading to the critical incident.
- Appropriate debriefing mechanisms are in place.

Sandra Campbell
Principal

Craig Yardley
Chairman of the Board