



CRITICAL AND EMERGENCY INCIDENT POLICY

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure all PVS staff are well prepared to implement safe practices in the time of emergencies. All incidents managed are in the best interest of the students. In line with *The Registration Standards of Non-Government Schools Standard 7- Critical and Emergency Incidents*, PVS implements an Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan that:

- (a) include all *reportable incidents* as well as other critical and emergency incidents;
- (b) enable and require incidents to be managed in such a way as to minimise trauma and distress to students and staff and damage to property and ensure the education program is maintained or resumed, while giving highest priority to the best interests of the student or students affected;
- (c) require all incidents to be reported and documented, including as required by standard 7.2 when applicable; and
- (d) enable and **require the Principal to notify the governing body of ALL incidents.**

Emergency and Incident Types

An emergency is defined as an event, actual or imminent, which

- occurs on or off-site;
- endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment; and
- requires a significant and coordinated response.

Examples of emergencies are: bushfire; bomb threat; hazardous materials spillage; prolonged loss of a utility (e.g. water, power and internet); and earthquake.

A **critical incident** includes reportable incidents as well as other critical and emergency incidents and is defined as an incident in which there is a high likelihood of traumatic effects. A critical incident evokes unusual or unexpectedly strong emotional reactions, which have the potential to interfere with the ability of the individual, group or system to function either at the time or later.

Examples of critical incidents are: an on-site accident causing death or serious injury; student or staff suicide; serious illness or death of a student teacher or parent; major vandalism; sexual assault at school; students lost or injured on an excursion; intruders on site who cause (or threaten to cause) harm to people or damage to property.

A **reportable incident** is defined as a 'subset' of all critical and emergency incidents. Reportable incidents must not only be reported to the governing body but must also be notified to the Director

General of the Department of Education, as soon as practicable and in any event, within 48 hours of the incident. The Director General must be notified of a *reportable incident* using the [Reportable Incident Notification form](#), that is available from the Department of Education's website.

The following are reportable incidents:

- (1) The death of a student or staff member at school or during a school-related activity, or following an incident at school or during school-related activity.
- (2) An incident involving injury, illness or trauma to a student or staff member at school or during a school-related activity requiring ambulance or hospital attendance.*
- (3) An incident requiring a police or other emergency services response when a student appears to have been taken or removed, or goes missing and cannot be accounted for, from the school or from a school-related activity without proper authority.
- (4) An incident requiring the school to be locked down or to evacuate staff and students, or reduce the number of students or staff attending, or to close for any duration for health or safety reasons.
- (5) The receipt of a complaint or allegation of child abuse, including but not limited to sexual abuse, committed against a student –
 - (a) by a staff member or another student; or
 - (b) by another person on the school premises or during a school-related activity;whether the abuse is alleged to have occurred recently or in the past.
- (6) Issuing a formal warning to or ceasing the employment of a staff member for a breach of the Code of Conduct suspected to have involved grooming behaviour.

A **foreseeable incident** is an incident that may have been reasonably anticipated. Emergency management plans are included in the School's Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan and all staff are trained in this. Examples of foreseeable incidents are outlined in the Definitions section of this policy.

Prevention and Preparedness for an Emergency or Critical Incident

Pioneer Village School takes action to prepare for and prevent emergencies and critical incidents. This includes:

- identifying on-site and off-site situations that have the potential to become emergencies or critical incidents that would affect school operations;
- considering the needs of those with a disability;
- determining, with other agencies (e.g. Hazard Management Agencies), potential risks associated with particular situations;
- using risk management practices to assess the potential risks and develop mitigation strategies;
- continued review of the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan;
- communicating the plan to all staff;
- training key staff;
- testing and modifying the plan annually; and
- practising evacuation/ lockdown drills once per term.

Response and Recovery from an Emergency or Critical Incident

The recovery of all affected students takes the highest consideration and in the event of an emergency Pioneer Village School has at hand practical information in the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan to guide response and aid recovery in order to:

- ensure a supportive, caring response that considers the mental health needs of all members of the school community;
- return to normality as soon as possible;
- enable continuation of school routine and an optimal learning environment; and
- minimise the adverse effects of such an event on the school community.

Reporting

The Principal shall ensure that the *Department of Education* is informed of any Emergency or Critical Incident within 48 hrs of the incident. A report regarding a critical incident will be provided to the Board. The Principal shall report the incident to the School Board and School Board Chair at the next Board meeting after the incident.

Required processes are:

- The Principal and Board will annually review the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan;
- The plans will be routinely tested with a schedule developed each year for drills; and
- The plans will be reviewed following any emergencies or critical incidents.

The Principal is responsible for management of on-site and off-site school related emergencies and critical incidents. Minimising trauma and distress to students and staff, as well as damage to property, is essential in ensuring the teaching and learning program is maintained or resumed.

Definitions:

Best Interests of Students

An individual student's best interests will vary depending on his or her particular needs and cultural, religious and other identity. Schools should know and understand each student's needs and identity and make appropriate efforts to consult students affected by critical incidents to ensure their best interests are identified and prioritised.

When an incident affects more than one student, it may not be feasible to assess each individual student's best interests, especially immediately following the incident; rather, the students' immediate best interests would be as understood by the school based on a general assessment of the incident. Schools should be alert to the needs of any students who may require specific and additional responses following such an incident.

Trauma

For the purpose of *reportable incident* (2) a trauma is defined as: a psychological wound or injury suffered at school or during a school-related activity [Australian Psychological Society].

Foreseeable Incidents

Foreseeable Incidents may include but are not limited to the following; earthquake, adverse weather, flooding, bushfire, bomb threat, armed intruder, threatening behavior and civil disorder, active shooter, animal hazard and medical emergency.

Grooming

For the purpose of *reportable incident* (6) grooming is defined as: the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject in order to establish trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or avoiding exposure. (*Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools* pgs. 26-27)

* **Clarification, from the regulator about definition 2** is: *Ambulance or hospital attendance must be “required” and not merely precautionary, for example as an alternative to GP or medical centre attendance. NB: An incident not initially reportable may become so as further information becomes available (such as doctor’s advice).*

Document Group	Welfare
Document Owner	Principal
Last Review	Feb 2022
Next Review	2024
Distribution	Internal/ External
Endorsed by the Governing Body 23.02.2022	