

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Overseas Students Critical Incident Policy



Date **November 2024**

Review **November 2026**

Introduction

Standard 5.3.4 of the National Code mandates that the School establish a process to manage emergency situations and handle disruptions to welfare arrangements for overseas students under the age of 18.

Standard 6.8 of the National Code requires the School to develop and implement a documented policy and procedure for managing critical incidents that may impact an overseas student's ability to begin or complete their course. This includes, but is not limited to, incidents that could result in physical or psychological harm.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail the procedures to be followed if an overseas student is involved in a critical incident during their course at Lauriston Girls' School.

The School acknowledges its duty of care towards its students, and effective planning for the management of critical incident is crucial.

This policy should be read in alongside the School's *Critical Incident Policy*.

Critical Incident

The National Code defines a critical incident as a traumatic event, or the threat of such an event (either within or outside of Australia), that causes extreme stress, fear, or injury. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Serious injury, illness, or death of a student or staff member
- Students or staff being lost or injured during an excursion
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Physical assault
- Students or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence
- Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, windstorms, hailstorms, or extreme temperatures
- Fire, bomb threats, explosions, or gas/chemical hazards
- Social issues, such as drug use or sexual assault

Critical Incident Response Team

Lauriston Girls' School has developed a Critical Incident Management Plan, which includes a Crisis Response Team responsible for managing emergencies and their aftermath.

The members of the Critical Incident Team, as outlined in the School's Critical Incident Management Plan, may include:

- Principal

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- Deputy Principal - Head of Senior School or Vice Principal - Howqua campus
- Relevant Year Level Coordinator
- Member of the Howqua management team
- School Nurse or Howqua Nurse
- School Psychologist
- Armadale Property Manager or Howqua Property Manager

The team is tasked with managing critical incidents both on campus and off-campus for overseas students under the School's care.

The team's responsibilities include:

- Conducting risk assessments of potential hazards and situations requiring emergency action, and analysing the resources needed to address these hazards.
- Ensuring 24-hour access to contact information for all students, their families, and emergency contacts provided by student's family.
- Maintaining 24-hour access to contact information for all relevant staff members required in a critical incident, such as the Principal, Deputy Principal - Head of Senior School, Vice Principal - Howqua campus, School Psychologist, and legal services.
- Developing a critical incident plan for each identified incident, including arranging emergency or alternative accommodation, if necessary.
- Disseminating planned procedures
- Organising practice drills
- Regularly reviewing the critical incident plan
- Assisting in the implementation of the critical incident plan

Critical Incident Plans

All critical incident plans clearly assign responsibilities to relevant staff members, outline the necessary actions to be taken, and specify timelines for each step.

Immediate Action (within 24 hours)

- Identify the nature of the critical incident
- Notify the critical incident response team
- Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy, including arranging emergency or alternative accommodation if needed
- Assign duties and resources to school staff
- Seek advice and assistance from necessary emergency services, hospitals, or medical professionals
- Communicate information to parents and family members
- Complete a critical incident report
- Respond to media inquiries, if required (see below)
- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

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Additional Action (48-72 hours)

- Continue assessing the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved
- Provide staff and students with factual, accurate information as appropriate
- Work towards restoring normal school operations and functions

Follow Up - Monitoring, Support & Evaluation

- Identify additional individuals who may be affected by the critical incident and provide access to support services
- Maintain contact with any injured or affected parties
- Provide accurate information to staff and students, where appropriate
- Evaluate the effectiveness of critical incident management
- Be mindful of potential long-term impacts, such as inquests or legal proceedings

Resources

Due to the unpredictable nature of critical incidents, resources cannot always be allocated in advance. The critical incident response exercises discretion in providing the necessary resources - both physical and personnel - to effectively address the specific needs of each situation.

Managing the Media

- All media enquiries should be directed to the Executive Director – Marketing, Admissions and Communications
- The School will control media access to the scene, as well as to staff, students, and their families
- The Principal will work with the School Council to determine the official response. All facts must be verified before communicating with the media
- The Principal is the designated spokesperson during a crisis. If the Principal is unavailable, the acting Principal will take on this role. Depending on the nature of the crisis, the Chair of the School Council may also be required to speak to the media, possibly alongside the Principal. If accurate information is not yet available or the issue is sensitive, it should be communicated that questions cannot be answered at this time

Evaluation and review of management plan

Following each critical incident, the critical incident response team will convene to review the critical incident report, assess the effectiveness of the management plan, and make any necessary adjustments. If deemed appropriate, this process will include feedback from staff, students, and local community representatives.

Missing Overseas Student

If an overseas student is absent from school, the School will contact the parent before midday to seek an explanation. Every reasonable effort will be made to reach and locate the student immediately. If the student cannot be contacted and there are concerns for her welfare, the Deputy Principal -Head of Senior School will involve the relevant emergency services, such as the police, to assist.

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The School will then notify the parents, and appropriate government departments to report the situation and request assistance. The Principal will convene the Emergency and Critical Incident team to manage the immediate situation and provide ongoing support to the student and her family once the situation has been resolved.

Critical Incident Outside of School Hours

If an overseas student experiences an incident outside of normal school hours and is not involved in a school-related activity, the student should contact the Overseas Student Coordinator. If they are unable to reach the Overseas Student Coordinator, the Principal or Deputy Principal - Head of Senior School will be available to offer support. All overseas students and their parents are provided with contact details for out of hours emergencies via the Lauriston Girls' School Student Safety card.

The Overseas Student Coordinator is responsible for immediately informing the School about any incidents involving an overseas student, ensuring that details are recorded in compliance with ESOS standards. Lauriston Girls' School is committed to managing and resolving all incidents promptly in collaboration with the student and their family.

Once the School is informed of the incident, the Principal or delegated authority will contact the appropriate emergency services and/or dial 000 for support. The Principal will contact the student's parents to explain the situation and reassure them that the safety and wellbeing of the student is the School's top priority.

The Principal will also reach out to the following individuals to establish an emergency communication group:

- Deputy Principal - Head of Senior School
- Overseas Student Coordinator
- School Psychologist
- Emergency and Critical Incident team
- Year Level Coordinator
- Head of Admissions

The Principal, in collaboration with the School Psychologist, will contact the appropriate authorities, such as DHHS and the Department of Home Affairs.

Critical Incident Management Plan in the case of an injury to an overseas student

Immediate Action (within 24 hours)

Identify the nature of the critical incident

- The person first notified of the incident should get as much information as possible including:
 - Where did the injury occur? On Armadale campus, Howqua campus, or off-campus?
 - How severe is the injury?
 - Where is the student now?
 - Has an ambulance been called?
 - Is the student in the hospital?
 - Is an interpreter needed?
- The information should be documented for further reference.

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- Notification of the School Principal if they are not already aware of the incident.
- The initial responder should immediately notify the critical incident response team.

Assignment of duties to school staff

- The critical incident team leader will assign a staff member to take immediate action
- The incident will be referred to the identified staff member
- The responsible staff member should maintain close communication with the critical incident team leader and other staff as necessary.

Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy

If the student is on campus at Armadale or Howqua

- Ensure appropriate intervention to minimise further injury
- Provide first aid as needed
- Assess the seriousness of the injury
- Call an ambulance if required
- If an ambulance is needed, accompany the student to the hospital
- Assess the severity of the injury with hospital staff
- If ambulance is not needed, accompany the student to the relevant medical service (e.g. doctor)

If the student is off-campus

- If the situation appears serious, call an ambulance and either meet it at the student's location or the hospital
- If the situation is less severe, go to the student's location
- Provide first aid if necessary
- Assess the severity of the injury
- Call an ambulance if required
- If an ambulance is needed, accompany the student to the hospital
- Assess the severity of the injury with hospital staff
- If ambulance is not required, take the student to the relevant medical service (e.g. doctor)

If the student has already been taken to hospital

- Go to the hospital
- Assess the injury's seriousness with hospital staff

Disseminate information to parents and family members

- When multiple parties need to be contacted, attempt to contact everyone simultaneously.

Complete a critical incident report

Media response if required.

- The Principal to liaise with the Executive Director of Marketing, Admissions and Communications.

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- Inform the critical incident response team leader of any relevant factual information to be conveyed to the media liaison.

Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved.

- If the student is seriously injured or hospitalised, the School should engage overseas consular staff to assist the family, help with interpreting services if needed, and provide counselling as needed.
- The school should evaluate whether other staff or students have been affected by the incident and provide support and counselling as needed.
- The school should also inform the Department of Home Affairs about the incident.

Additional Action (48 – 72 hours)

Continuously assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved.

Provide staff and students with accurate, factual information as appropriate

- Depending on the nature of the incident, the Principal may address the school to inform them about the incident and provide an update on the condition of the affected student.

Work to restore normal school operations and functions

- If the incident occurred on school premises, additional procedures must be followed regarding safety concerns and the school's legal obligations. The critical incident response team will designate an appropriate staff member to handle these follow-up matters.

Monitoring, Support and Evaluation

Identify other individuals who may be affected by the critical incident and ensure they have access to appropriate support services.

- The impact of traumatic incidents may be delayed in some individuals, so the school should remain vigilant to any emerging need for support and/or counselling.

Maintain ongoing contact with any injured or affected parties

If the student remains in hospital for an extended period, the school must continue to stay in contact with both the student and their family.

- Provide support and assistance for the student and their family
- Depending on the student's condition, the school may provide schoolwork to help the student stay connected to school activities
- Discuss any necessary changes to the student's enrolment, such as suspension or cancellation, and update PRISMS accordingly

Provide accurate information to staff and students as appropriate

- Depending on the nature of the incident, the Principal may need to address the school to inform them of the details of the incident and the student's condition.

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Evaluation of Critical Incident Management

The critical incident response team should review the critical incident report and assess the effectiveness of the management plan, making any necessary adjustments.

Consider any potential long-term impacts on the school and student wellbeing, such as inquests or other ongoing consequences.

Ongoing Support – Welfare Arrangements

A debriefing session will be held with the emergency communication group and Principal once the incident has been resolved.

Ongoing support will be provided to the overseas student and their parent(s), which may include:

- Supporting the student through continued medical treatment, whether physical or psychological
- Collaborating with the family to ensure ongoing safety
- Arranging alternative accommodation if necessary, including placing the student with an approved relative if Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) arrangements can no longer be maintained
- Coordinating with the Department of Home Affairs to address or resolve any underlying issues
- Assisting the student with their academic needs
- Consulting with the student and their parents to agree on a suitable solution if the student is unable to complete their studies due to the incident

If CAAW arrangements are affected by a critical incident, the School will notify the Department of Home Affairs.

If a course transfer, cancellation, or suspension results from the incident, the procedures outlined in the ['Overseas Student Transfer Policy'](#) and the [Overseas Student Course Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy](#) will be followed. This includes notifying the required authorities and updating PRISMS with the new arrangements. However, the School will remain responsible for the student's welfare until all arrangements are finalised.

All communications, including timelines of key contacts, will be documented and retained in the student's file for a minimum of two years following the completion of their studies.

Record Keeping

The School is required to keep a written record of any critical incident and the remedial actions taken for a minimum of two years after the overseas student is no longer enrolled. These records will be maintained in compliance with the School's [Overseas Student Critical Incident Policy](#)

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed every two years with the next review due in November 2026. An interim review may take place following any changes in legislation.