



Alkira
Secondary College

Personalised learning for all. Respect for the individual learner.

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International Students- Critical Incidents Policy

Rationale:

- To promote a healthy, supportive and secure environment for international students; and
- To provide guidance to school staff on handling a reported critical incident.

Policy:

- Critical incidents are to be reported and managed in accordance with the guidelines for local students, with additional overlaying responsibilities where appropriate for international students.
- A critical incident is an occurrence where an international student's health or wellbeing is, or has been, placed at risk. Some examples of critical incidents include: missing students, abuse, neglect, serious injury, self-harm, suicidal ideation, attempted suicide, fatalities and crime.
- Schools have a duty of care in prevention, intervention and reporting of such incidents.
- International students remain at risk and are especially vulnerable to potential harm. They are often exposed to a range of additional risks that must be addressed. These include their temporary status, the conditions of their visa, the implications of cultural differences and norms, their level of English language skill, access to immediate family, and social support relationships.

Response to a reported incident or threat of:

- Missing student
- Abuse
- Neglect
- Serious injury
- Self-harm
- Suicidal ideation
- Attempted suicide
- Crime
- Financial hardship

1. Emergency Response Team

Emergency Response Team Leader: Principal.

Deputy 1: Assistant Principal overseeing International Programs

Deputy 2: Another Assistant Principal

In the event that no principal is on site, the head of student wellbeing (on site) will be deputised to the role.

Oversee the direct management of the school's response including informing staff of the suicide or attempted suicide, chairing staff meetings and ensuring the critical incident reviews occur. The team leader should be made aware of all activities occurring in relation to the response to ensure co-ordination and efficiency.

2. Liaison with family, police and management of social media

Ideally the person assigned to this role should have an already existing relationship with the family, while also being confident in the area of social media. Following a suicide or attempted suicide, the family may be involved with social media and may need support from the school in managing this. Similarly, liaison with police during a reported critical incident or following a suicide (or attempt) is a matter which needs to be handled with the utmost sensitivity. The Principal, ISP Co-ordinator AP and Wellbeing Co-ordinator are likely to be involved in this process.

3. Liaison with mental health services and identification of vulnerable staff/students:

Head of wellbeing on site / Deputy 1: wellbeing staff member on site.

Holder of the role will liaise with the APs, SSLs and other relevant staff.

4. Liaison with Department of Education / relevant school body and mainstream media contact:

Principal / Assistant Principal of International Student Program (ISP) will liaise verbally and prepare written information for students, staff, parents and/or community. They will also be the primary contact point for parents and community members who have questions or concerns following the suicide or attempted suicide.

**** Alkira SC will always follow the critical actions in responding to critical incidents ****

Stage 1 – Identify

- When a critical incident occurs, immediate and effective steps must be taken to ensure the student's safety and that appropriate professional and specialist support services are put in place.
- If appropriate, the student may be referred to approved professionals and/or support agencies. Privacy of the student must be considered.
- Inform the PDO of the incident immediately. Information provided by the school must be succinct and accurate.
- DETs Program Development Officer (PDO) will advise the Coordinator, and/or the Manager of Program Planning and School Support Unit (PPSSU).
- Effort must be made to effectively and appropriately to inform parents, in consultation with the appointed welfare officer and the student.
 - Decision-making and consultation regarding this should take into consideration the age of the student (i.e. if the student is over 18 years of age).
- Schools should take the required steps to inform the DET Regional Office.

Stage 2 – Critical incident report

- Schools complete a Critical Incident Report for the Regional Director and the Deputy Secretary, Office of Government School Education (OGSE), including any actions taken and their outcomes.
- Schools forward a copy of the critical incident report required by the Regional Office to the PPSSU for records.
- Depending on the seriousness of the incident the PDO may also be required to write an incident report in consultation with the school.
- The completed Critical Incident Report, along with any relevant information is forwarded to the ISC or Principal for additional comments and signature.
- The Critical Incident Report is then forwarded to the Manager, PPSSU and the General Manager, IED, for risk assessment and authorisation.

Stage 3 – PPSSU Action

- The Manager and/or the General Manager will determine the best course of action based on the student welfare policy, the Department guidelines and a risk management assessment.
- The Manager of the PPSSU may be required to write a Ministerial Brief if the critical incident is judged to have a potential negative impact on the ISP.
- Accurate records must be kept on the school's student file regarding the incident and actions/decisions made, to ensure appropriate support and future incident review and investigation.
- Schools and the PPSSU will work in cooperation to ensure the compliance of the program and preserve the quality reputation of the Victorian Government School system.

Stage 4 – Follow up

- The school provides regular updates to the PPSSU on the student's progress post-incident, if the student remains at a Victorian Government School.
- Ensure that appropriate departmental policy and school welfare and support structures are in place to protect the student and any other students from potential and real harm/risk in the future.

Stage 5 – Notify DIBP

- The PPSSU must notify DIBP if an incident results in the deferral of a student's course, or any non-compliance by the student.

Self-Harm (actual or threatened) / Suicidal ideation

Response:

- Staff member who becomes aware of student self-harm must immediately notify the head of student wellbeing on site and the Principal.
- In the event that the head of student wellbeing / Principal is unavailable, one of the Assistant Principals must immediately be notified.
- The Assistant Principal will liaise with the SEIL / Regional wellbeing team / IED / Emergency Management, as required in the specific incident.
- The parent(s) will be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable by either the assistant principal or the wellbeing team member, depending upon the consultation between them.
- Psych triage may be called for advice depending on the severity and or frequency of the self-harm; the potential need for this should be assessed by the relevant assistant principal and the wellbeing team member and, where possible, the parent(s).
- A Safety plan will be developed for the student in consultation with the wellbeing team member, SSL and AP, as required
- Any staff involved in a self-harm incident can seek counselling via the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Staff can call directly or organize a free counselling session appointment.
- Staff can also contact Headspace on **1800 650 890** or **eheadspace.org.au**
Headspace is a confidential, free and secure service where staff can speak to a qualified mental health professional.

Attempted suicide (notification to school of real time critical incident)

Immediate response to report of student attempted suicide on site:

- The school principal and/or vice-principal and/or relevant member/s of the well-being team should take all reasonable steps to ascertain the whereabouts of the student.
- 000 must be called immediately, not the local police station.
- Principal or representative to be immediately notified.
- Parents/guardians notified as soon as is practicable by a member of the wellbeing team or the principal member.
- Principal team member to inform other members of principal team and head of wellbeing on site at the time.
- Head of wellbeing to liaise with principal team member and seek direction as required.
- Principal class notifies DET critical incidents (emergency management).
- Principal class to notify SEIL.

Immediate response to report of student attempted suicide off site:

- The school principal and/or Assistant Principal and/or relevant member/s of the well-being team should take all reasonable steps to ascertain the whereabouts of the student (such as contacting family, seeking information from person who notified of incident).
- 000 must be called immediately, not the local police station.
- Principal or representative to be immediately notified.
- If it is deemed appropriate by the police in consultation with the school principal and/or assistant-principal and/or relevant member/s of the well-being team to attend an offsite location, this should only be undertaken by the school principal and/or assistant principal and/or relevant member/s of the well-being team. No other staff members are to attend. Any attending staff member must not attend alone and should be accompanied by another staff member as specified in this paragraph.
- Parents/guardians notified as soon as is practicable by a member of the wellbeing team or the principal member.
- Principal team member to inform other members of principal team and head of wellbeing on site at the time.
- Head of wellbeing to liaise with principal team member and seek direction as required.
- Principal class notifies DET critical incidents (emergency management).
- Principal class to notify SEIL.

Once the immediate threat of harm to the student has passed:

- Inform police, as required, of the incident and the school's involvement (Principal or nominee).
- Inform DET- Critical incidents; that the situation has been contained (Principal).
- Debrief with appropriate staff (principal and head of wellbeing on site).
- Seek counselling through EAP if required on **1800 337 068**
- Contact Headspace on **1800 650 890** or **eheadspace.org.au**
- Liaise with parents as required (Principal and head of wellbeing on site).

Prior to the student's return to school:

- A school support team will be identified for the student. It will comprise of the parent/guardian, wellbeing team member, assistant Principal, sub school leader.
- The support team will liaise with a representative from the supporting agency/medical facility involved with the student, subject to having received the student's or parent's consent to doing so.
- With the agreement of the student and his/her family, a safety plan will be formulated and put in place prior to the return to school of the student.

For further information, see the DET *Guidelines to assist in responding to attempted suicide or suicide by a student*: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/health/suicideguidelines.pdf>

Self-Harm (actual or threatened) / Suicidal ideation / Attempted Suicide (outside of school hours)

Response:

- When the school becomes aware that a student has attempted suicide outside of school hours, it must promptly convene a meeting with an identified support group (Assistant Principal, parent, wellbeing team member, sub school leader, parent, student and agency representative as required) to develop a safety plan for that student.
- The student must not return to school until an appropriate safety plan has been developed and received by the school and the student and/or parents have been provided with a copy.
- The Principal reserves the right to refuse the return to school if it is deemed unsafe for the student to return (including consideration of any safety plan and any feedback from the student/ their parent's/ their treating doctor).

Suicide

Response

In the event that a student suicides, the principal will follow the DET Guidelines for managing the school's response.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in...

February 2017