

National Laws and Regulations Addressed

Education and Care Services National Regulations	
Regulation	Description
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, Injury, trauma and illness record
97	Emergency and Evacuation Procedures
136	First Aid Qualifications
National Quality Standards for Children's Education and Care Services	
Quality Area	Description
QA 2	Children's Health and Safety
2.1	Each child's health is promoted.
2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Work Health and Safety Act, 2011	
Regulation	Description
38	Duty to notify of notifiable incidents
39	Duty to preserve incident sites

Related Policies and Procedures

CE ELC Emergency Management Plan
 CE ELC First Aid, Incident, Injury Trauma and Critical Illness Policy
 CE ELC Mandatory Reporting
 CE Legal Responsibility and Authority Policy
 CE Work Health and Safety Policy

Purpose

This policy has been developed to ensure that Early Learning Centres (ELC) within the Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CE) are prepared to effectively respond to emergency situations and critical incidences through the appropriate use of resources. Preparing for emergencies through the implementation of Emergency Management Plans (EMP) and procedures developed to address certain critical situations prior to such situations arising significantly increases the ELCs capacity to provide a considered, effective and coordinated emergency response in a timely manner. The effective planning, management and rehearsal of responses to critical incidents has proven to be vital to an organisation's ability to prevent such situations from worsening, and minimise future adverse ramifications. It also allows schools to identify appropriate training for key staff members to prepare them for such incidents arising.

CE aims to ensure that appropriate resources are available to respond to all aspects of a critical incident, including:

- management of risk in situations which could potentially affect the physical and psychological safety and wellbeing of individuals affected
- implementation of physical and emotional support for all individuals involved in a critical incident, whether directly or indirectly
- identification of interventions required at different stages of both a critical incident, and the aftermath.

While the preparing and practising of EMP associated procedures is important to increase an ELC's preparedness, it is important to acknowledge that such incidents also require an individualised response plan in order to correctly identify their effects. While ELCs are encouraged to prepare response plans for certain incidents, these plans must still be altered to account for individual circumstances and to correctly identify affected persons and groups. In the event of a critical incident, it is important to contact the Head of Directorate Services to assist with the development and implementation of responses, and the co-ordination of an appropriate response to enquiring media.

It is important to ensure that parents and the wider school community are familiar with the EMP, including situations involving bushfire and lockdown. This ensures that parents are not panicked should such a situation occur, and that they are aware of the correct location to collect their children.

Definitions

Critical Incident

an unexpected traumatic event involving personal or professional threat which evokes extreme stress, injury or fear. Providing appropriate support following a critical incident through emergency management is necessary to mitigate and prevent potential harm.

Critical incidents may include:

- serious injury, illness, fatality or near fatality likely to affect a member of staff and/or students
- serious or traumatic traffic incidents
- disappearance of a student or staff member
- serious threats of violence towards staff and/or students
- hold-up, attempted robbery, major theft or vandalism
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- serious damage to property
- student or staff members witnessing a serious accident or incidence of violence
- natural disasters (i.e. storms, earthquakes, bushfires or floods)
- fire, bomb-threat, explosions, gas or chemical hazard
- physical or sexual assault
- public health matters such as contagious diseases subject to mandatory notification
- murder or suicide (or attempted suicide) involving staff and/or students
- staff arrest
- an incident that has the potential to have a negative impact on the reputation of the ELC, School or the CE.

It is very common and normal for people to experience a range of reactions to critical incidents which may be cognitive, physical, behavioural or emotional in nature. People need reassurance that these reactions are a normal part of dealing with shock, loss and grief.

Emergency Critical Incident

an unplanned or imminent event threatening the health, safety or welfare of people, property and infrastructure. Such events require a significant and coordinated response to mitigate harm and potential hazards. The defining characteristic of an emergency is that usual resources are overwhelmed, or have the potential to be overwhelmed.

Emergency management

the management of an emergency situation, and coordination of a response to mitigate associated risks. The aim of emergency management is to minimize damage to all persons involved, as well as assets, operations and reputation.

Non-Emergency Critical Incident

critical incidents which do not involve the need for an initial emergency response, but which nevertheless involve the possibility of physical and/or emotional distress to staff and other visitors to CE Schools; and which may be regarded as outside the normal range of experience for those involved.

Crisis

is an emergency or critical incident that is beyond the capacity of the School or delegated authority (eg. Critical Incident Response Team, etc.) to successfully manage; or a series of events that have the potential to seriously damage stakeholders. Appropriate emergency management can prevent situations from reaching crisis levels. In the event that a crisis occurs, it is important to contact the CEO immediately for support.

Traumatic events

are events in which a person experiences, witnesses or is confronted by experiences that involve actual, threatened or perceived death or serious injury and/or threat to the physical and emotional integrity of themselves or others.

Critical Incident Response Procedure

The aim of the Critical Incident Response Procedure and the associated EMP templates is to provide a framework within which the CE, ELCs and Schools can best operate during and immediately after a critical incident, with the objective of:

- Dealing effectively with the immediate and long-term health, safety and wellbeing of persons involved in or affected by critical incidents, and dealing with any issues that may arise as a consequence
- Promoting effective and appropriate communication to all persons affected
- Promoting collaborative working relationships within the CE, and with appropriate community agencies
- Complementing CE's existing policies and procedures with respect to first aid, emergency evacuation and Work Health and Safety
- Restoring the ELC to its regular routine as quickly as possible.

There are a number of vital phases when dealing with critical incidents:

- Phase One: Preparation and Planning
- Phase Two: Critical Incident Immediate Response and management
- Phase Three: Post-incident recovery
- Phase Four: Review and Evaluation of Critical Incident Response, associated emergency plan templates and their implementation.

The phases are detailed in the **Critical Incident Response Procedure section** of the Management of Critical Incidents Handbook.

Reporting Requirements

Recording of Incidents:

ELCs are legally required to ensure that a record containing specific information is created within 24 hours for any incident, injury, trauma or serious illness of a student or employee. A template for this record can be found in the ELC First Aid, Incident, Injury Trauma and Critical Illness Policy. These records are required to be stored in compliance with the CE Privacy Policy until the age of 25 for students and for a minimum of 7 years for employees.

Reporting to the Catholic Education Office

CE requires ELC Directors to report any critical incident or medical emergency as soon as possible, using a [School Incident Recording, Notification and Management Form](#). As CE are required to report such incidences to the Minister for Education and Training in a timely manner, this form must be completed and returned to the CE Head of Directorate Services within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

Reporting to ACECQA

ELCs are legally required to report to ACECQA any serious incident involving:

- The death of a child:
 - while in the ELC's care
 - following an incident which occurred in the care of the ELC.
- Serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while in the care of the ELC, which:
 - a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner, or
 - for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital (eg. whooping cough, fractured limb, anaphylactic reaction, etc.)
- The attendance of emergency services (either Ambulance, Fire Brigade or Police) at the ELC was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought
- Any circumstances where a child being cared for by the ELC:
 - appears to be missing or unaccounted for
 - appears to have been removed from the ELC in a manner which does not comply with the regulations (see the *CE ELC Refusal of Authorisation for a child to leave the service* Policy).
 - is mistakenly locked in or out of the education and care service premises, or any part thereof.

It is the responsibility of the ELC Director to ensure that Serious Incident Records are filed with ACECQA within an appropriate timeframe. To do this, Directors are required to complete a Serious Incident Form ([SI01](#)) and submit this form along with any appropriate documentation to the ACT Children's Policy and Regulation Unit of the Education and Training Directorate, either by emailing it to the ELC Service Advisor or to CPRU@act.gov.au. If this form is being emailed directly to the general CPRU email address Directors should include the name and location of the ELC in the subject field.

Reporting to WorkSafe ACT

All workplaces in the ACT have a legal requirement to report serious incidents (according to their definition) to WorkSafe ACT on 6207 3000. WorkSafe ACT defines a serious incident as:

- Fatalities
- Hospitalisations (i.e. injuries requiring immediate treatment as an inpatient in hospital)
- Medical treatment for: serious lacerations, serious head injuries, amputations, degloving, scalping, electric shock, loss of bodily functions, etc.

- Chemical Exposure (i.e. when a person requires medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a chemical)
- Incidents or near misses where a person in the immediate vicinity is exposed to an immediate risk from the collapse of a building or an excavation, explosion, fire, the spillage of dangerous goods or the fall from a height off any plant or equipment, etc.

Reports made to WorkSafe ACT are required to be made as soon as practicable following a serious incident, and must be filed within 48 hours. It is important to ensure that Reports to WorkSafe ACT should always be made in conjunction with advice from the CE Work Health and Safety Officer. If the incident is reportable to WorkSafe ACT, ELCs are required to not disturb the incident location (even to clean up bodily fluids or shattered glass) unless there is an imminent threat to others which cannot be avoided by blocking off access to the space, or another means of precaution.

Notification to parents or carers

It is a legal requirement that Parents or Carers of any ELC student who is involved in any incident, injury, trauma or serious illness while in the care of the ELC are informed of their child's involvement within 24 hours.

References

- ACT Department of Education and Training, [Critical Incident Management Guidelines](#), January, 2014
- South Australia Department for Education and Child Development, [A Critical Incident – Emergency and Crisis Management](#), accessed February 2015
- Australian Government Attorney General's Department, [Australian Emergency Management Knowledge Hub](#), accessed February 2015
- Deakin University Australia, [Critical Incident Management Plan \(2.1\)](#), 17 December 2013
- Twiss, C., Kasperczyk, R., [Critical Incident Management](#), resolutions RTK, November 2009.

Forms

- CE ELC Student Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record.
- [CE School Incident Recording, Notification and Management Form](#)
- [Initial Injury Notification Form \(for staff related injuries\)](#)
- CE ELC Emergency Management Plan

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