



CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE POLICY

BLACKBURN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Florence Street Blackburn 3130

RATIONALE

Blackburn Lake Primary School may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event. The incident may involve loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance. The incident may occur in the school environment or outside. It may involve staff, students or those close to them. The network of those involved in a traumatic event can be wide, especially if it directly involves the school. Feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time.

AIM

To ensure all members of the community are informed, helped and counselled appropriately so that school programs can continue as normally as possible.

IMPLEMENTATION

Incidents vary in complexity. These guidelines provide a framework for action and would not necessarily be followed in all cases.

However, the following 4 principles must be followed:

- provide clear, accurate information
- describe the actions to be followed
- provide help for all affected
- maintain a normal school program as close as possible

Immediate actions to be taken by the school:

- All emergency or criminal activity, in which the safety or well-being of staff or students is at risk, or where there is a threat to property, must be reported immediately to the Department's 24 hour Emergency and Security Management Branch on (03) 9589 6266.
- Appoint a skilled Critical Incident Recovery Team (to assist in the management of the incident. The team may include staff members, psychologists, counsellors, external DET personnel, support agencies etc. The size and composition of the team will be related to the nature of the incident.)
- Distribute names of the Critical Incident Recovery Team members, and inform others of the role of the team.
- Obtain accurate information. Deal only with substantiated facts.
- As soon as possible inform staff, especially those most directly involved. Inform close friends and family individually. Allow questions and discussion as they arise. Dispel rumours.

Communication

- As soon as possible provide information to the community as to what has happened, and what is being done. Establish an open line of contact with the family or families directly involved.
- Continue to keep staff, students and parents informed, especially about what has happened and what the school is doing about it.
- Provide out of school hours contact if necessary. This could be as simple as circulating the Principal's telephone number. In more complex situations it may mean maintaining telephone contact at the school.
- Continue contact with the family to identify their expectations of the school, e.g. student participation in funeral or memorial service.

- As soon as possible call students together and provide information about what has happened and what the school is doing about it. A follow up letter home may be important.

Media

- The Critical Incident Recovery Team will seek advice from DET Emergency Communications Centre and the DET Media Unit in regards to media responses.

Wellbeing

- Try to identify those most likely to need help, e.g. classmates, teacher, special friends. Some students not directly affected may become distressed.
- Ensure that counselling help is available. Contact the Regional Office and/or DET if necessary.
- Ensure that there are suitable places in which counselling can take place. Be prepared to modify the timetable and other arrangements so that people are free to make use of available help.
- Be sensitive to staff and students' needs over a period of time.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed within 3 years.

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL **October 18th 2016**

PRINCIPAL: Loisia Steed **SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT:** Mark Eaton