CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

1) Nambour Christian College recognises the duty of care owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential.

2) A critical incident is a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia) which causes extreme stress, fear or injury that may affect the student's ability to undertake or complete their course. This may include but is not limited to:

   a) Serious injury, illness or death of a student or staff

   b) Students or staff lost or injured on an excursion

   c) A missing student

   d) Severe verbal or psychological aggression

   e) Physical assault

   f) Student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence

   g) Natural disaster e.g. earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm or extremes of temperature

   h) Fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard

   i) Social issues e.g. drug use, sexual assault

3) Critical Incident Committee

   a) Nambour Christian College has a Critical Incident Committee to assist the principal in the prevention and management of critical incidents at the school, or off campus in the case of an overseas student for whom the school has undertaken care responsibilities.

   b) Geoff van der Vliet is the critical incident team leader.

   c) The Critical Incident Committee also includes:

      i) the principal,

      ii) staff members - members of Executive Team - Head of Senior School, Head of Middle School, Head of Junior School, Head of Early Learners, Director of Marketing, Director of Student Wellbeing, PA to Executive Principal and Head of Business Operations

      iii) the College Registrar

   d) The responsibilities of the committee include:

      i) risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action

      ii) analysis of requirements to address these hazards

      iii) establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, hospital, poisons information centre, community health services

      iv) 24 hour access to contact details for all students and their families and emergency contacts provided by the student's family (for schools with overseas students this will also include agents, homestay families, carers, consular staff, embassies and interpreting services if necessary)

      v) 24 hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident e.g. school counsellor, welfare officer, legal services, school security

      vi) development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified, including arranging emergency or alternative accommodation arrangements if necessary

      vii) dissemination of planned procedures

      viii) organisation of practice drills

      ix) regular review of the critical incident plan

      x) assisting with implementation of the critical incident plan

      xi) arranging appropriate staff development

      xii) budget allocation for emergencies

xiii) ensuring written records of any critical incident and remedial action taken by Nambour Christian College are kept on file for at least two years after the student ceases to be enrolled.

4) Critical Incident Plans

a) All critical incident plans assign responsibilities among relevant staff members; cover all the actions to be taken and timelines for doing so.

b) Immediate Action (within 24 hours)

i) Identify the nature of the critical incident

ii) Notification of the critical incident committee/team leader

iii) Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy, including arranging emergency or alternative accommodation arrangements if necessary

iv) Assignment of duties and resources to school staff

v) Seeking advice and help from any necessary emergency services/hospital/medical services

vi) Dissemination of information to parents and family members

vii) Completion of a critical incident report

viii) Media response if required (see below)

ix) Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

c) Additional Action (48 – 72 hours)

i) Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing)

ii) Provide staff and students, parents / family members with factual information as appropriate

iii) Restore normal functioning and school delivery

d) Follow-up – monitoring, support, evaluation

i) Identification of any other people who may be affected by critical incident and access of support services for affected community members

ii) Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties

iii) Provision of accurate information to staff and students where appropriate

iv) Evaluation of critical incident management

v) Be aware of any possible longer term disturbances e.g. inquests, legal proceedings

5) Resources

The nature of critical incidents is such that resources cannot always be provided in anticipation of events. The critical incident committee uses its discretion to provide adequate resources – both physical and personnel – to meet the needs of specific situations. Staff will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

6) Managing the Media

a) Manage access of the media to the scene, and to staff, students and relatives

b) The principal should normally handle all initial media calls

c) Determine what the official school response will be

d) All facts should be checked before speaking to the media

e) If accurate information is unavailable or the issue is of a sensitive nature, explain that questions cannot be answered at this time

f) Avoid implying blame or fault for any part of the incident as this can have significant legal implications

g) The principal may delegate media liaison to another member of staff

7) Evaluation and review of management plan

a) After every critical incident, a meeting of the critical incident committee will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required. If appropriate this process will incorporate feedback from all staff, students and local community representatives.

Example of a critical incident plan - injury to overseas student

1) Immediate Action (within 24 hours)

a) Identify the nature of the critical incident

b) The person, who is initially notified of the incident, be that the school secretary or homestay co-ordinator or international student co-ordinator, should get as much information as possible regarding the nature of the critical incident.

i) Where did the injury occur? On campus or off?

ii) How severe is the nature of the injury?

iii) Where is the student now?

iv) Is the student in hospital?

v) Has an ambulance been called?

vi) Is an interpreter required?

c) The information should be documented for further reference.

d) Notification of the critical incident committee/team leader

e) The person who is initially notified of the incident should notify the critical incident team leader immediately.

f) Assignment of duties to school staff

i) The critical incident team leader will identify the staff member responsible for any immediate action.

ii) The incident will then be referred to the identified staff member.

iii) The responsible staff member should keep in close contact with the critical incident team leader and any other staff members as required.

g) Implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy

i) If the student is on campus

- Ensure appropriate intervention to minimise additional injury
- Provide first aid where necessary
- Ascertain seriousness of injury
- Call ambulance if required
- If ambulance is required, accompany student to hospital
- Ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff
- If ambulance is not required accompany student to relevant medical service e.g. doctor

ii) If the student is off-campus

- If situation appears serious, call an ambulance and either meet the ambulance at the student's location or at the hospital
- Otherwise go to location of student
- Provide first aid where necessary
- Ascertain seriousness of injury
- Call ambulance if required
- If ambulance is required, accompany student to hospital
- Ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff
- If ambulance is not required accompany student to relevant medical service e.g. doctor

iii) If the student has already been taken to hospital

- Go to hospital
- Ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff

h) Dissemination of information to parents and family members

i) When there are a number of people to contact such as when a student is in a homestay, the school should attempt to simultaneously contact all parties.

ii) Contact the parents/legal guardian of the student

iii) Contact the carer of the student e.g. they may be living with a relative

iv) Contact any emergency contacts provided by the student's family

v) Contact the homestay family of the student

i) Completion of a critical incident report [see sample critical incident report]

j) Media response if required

k) Inform critical team leader of any relevant factual information to be conveyed to the media liaison.

l) Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

m) If the student is seriously injured or requires hospitalisation, the school should enlist aid of overseas consular staff to assist the family if they are travelling to Australia, with interpreting services to aid in communication with the relevant medical services and with counselling services if required.

n) The school should assess whether other staff and students have been affected by the incident and provide support and counselling as required.

o) The school should also contact Department of Home Affairs (Immigration) and inform them of the incident.

2) Additional Action (48 – 72 hours)

a) Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing)

b) Provide staff and students with factual information as appropriate

i) Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be appropriate for the principal to address the school and inform them of the facts of the incident and the condition of the student concerned.

c) Restore normal functioning and school delivery

i) Where the incident occurred on school premises, there will be other procedures to follow in relation to any possible safety issues and the school's legal obligations. The critical incident committee should identify the appropriate staff member to follow up these issues.

3) Follow-up – monitoring, support, evaluation

a) Identification of any other people who may be affected by critical incident and access of support services for affected community members

i) The effects of traumatic incidents can be delayed in some people; the school needs to be aware of any emerging need for support and/or counselling.

b) Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties

c) If the student is in hospital for some time, the school needs to maintain contact with the student and their family.

i) Support and assistance for the student and family

ii) Depending on the condition of the student, the school could provide school work for the student to enable them to remain in touch with school activities

iii) Discuss with the family any required changes to the enrolment of the student e.g. suspension or cancellation of enrolment and make any changes required on PRISMS

d) Provision of accurate information to staff and students where appropriate

i) Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be appropriate for the principal to address the school and inform them of the facts of the incident and the condition of the student concerned.

e) Evaluation of critical incident management

i) The critical incident committee should be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required.

f) Be aware of any possible longer term effects on the school and student well-being e.g. inquests, legal proceedings