

# CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

## POLICY STATEMENT

**Brisbane School of Theology (BST)** is committed to providing a support system to manage critical incidents in the interest of safeguarding the welfare of those who come into contact with the college, including students, staff, volunteers, residents, visitors and contractors.

The Critical Incident Policy aims to ensure that BST:

- has adequate procedures in place to respond appropriately to critical incidents
- has an ongoing review and monitoring process to manage risks associated with critical incidents
- provides appropriate training and information to faculty and staff, and
- provides a supportive work environment that facilitates care for individuals affected in a critical incident.

## BACKGROUND

As an affiliated college of the Australian College of Theology, BST is required to have measures in place to respond adequately in the event of a critical incident occurring. This is in compliance with the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training Overseas Students 2007* (The National Code 2007).

## CRITICAL INCIDENT DEFINITION

According to The National Code 2007, a **critical incident** is defined as:

"A traumatic event, or threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury."

The Australian College of Theology Critical Incident Policy, as a guide, deems that in determining what is "critical could be where expert medical attention or professional counselling is required or the cost of structural repair is substantial".

Critical incidents, whether they happen on-campus or off-campus, may include, but are not limited to:

- the occurrence of natural hazards, disasters or threat of potential disastrous invasion that leads to harm whether by intent or not
- accident onsite or offsite
- acts of self-harm or social irresponsibility
- structural failure of building or equipment
- riot or affray
- onset of physical or mental illness
- witnessing a critical incident affecting third parties, including accident, assault, injury or death
- person or persons missing and presumed to be at substantial risk
- arrest
- acts or omissions of staff, students and/or contractors

- being the victim of a crime – robbery, assault.

## **RESPONSIBLE PERSON**

BST designates a Responsible Person to oversee and be responsible for managing the response to a critical incident. The appointed Responsible Person is the Property and Construction Manager of BST. In the absence of the Property and Construction Manager, the Principal may delegate to another staff member of BST the role of Acting Responsible Person who will then be responsible for overseeing and managing the response to a critical incident.

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM**

A Critical Incident Team is established by BST to assist the Principal in the prevention and management of critical incidents for BST-related activities, whether on or off-campus.

The Responsible Person is the Critical Incident Team leader.

The Critical Incident Team consists of the following members:

- (a) Principal
- (b) Responsible Person
- (c) Operations Manager
- (d) Dean of Students (English Program)
- (e) Dean of Students (Chinese Program)
- (f) Registrar (Overseas Student Advisor)
- (g) A representative of the work health and safety committee (other than the WH&S Officer) and
- (h) A student representative of the Student Council (usually the President).

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM**

The responsibilities of the team include:

1. Assess the risk of hazards and situations which may require emergency action.
2. Analyse requirements and provide recommendations on appropriate measures to address these hazards.
3. Establish a clear system for communicating with relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, community emergency services, hospital, poisons information centre and community health services.
4. Facilitate a system that ensures that the Principal, Responsible Person or authorised persons have 24 hour access to up-to-date contact details (including hardcopy) of all current students, staff, volunteers, residents and their respective emergency contacts. For overseas students this includes agents, consular staff, embassies and interpreter services.
5. Maintain an up-to-date and 24 hour accessible register of contact details (including hardcopy) for relevant people required to respond in the event of a critical incident e.g. Responsible Person, Principal, emergency contacts and counselling support.
6. Develop a critical incident plan for identifiable critical incidents that are relevant to the activities of BST.
7. Assist with the implementation of critical incident plans.

8. Disseminate planned procedures. This includes the provision of a brief summary of the Critical Incident Policy in plain English, for distribution to all students (especially international students) and highlighting the critical incident contact person.
9. Coordinate practice drills where necessary.
10. Coordinate appropriate faculty and staff training to respond to critical incidents.
11. Conduct a regular review and analysis of critical incident plans, including a regular review of contact numbers to ensure currency.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Critical Incident Policy is incorporated within the risk management framework of BST. BST will ensure that the Critical Incident Policy and associated procedures are made known to students, staff, volunteers, residents and contractors at orientation, induction or, in the case of a contractor, at the time when they are contracted for their services. Whenever the Critical Incident Policy document and associated procedures are updated, all relevant parties will be notified.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF, STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS, RESIDENTS AND CONTRACTORS**

Staff, students, volunteers, residents and contractors of BST are responsible for:

- a) observing and following the Critical Incident Policy and associated procedures of BST
- b) knowing to whom they should report a critical incident or the threat of a critical incident
- c) not exposing themselves or others to risk of injury or trauma
- d) supporting those with overall responsibility for oversight of the process, and
- e) availing themselves of the support mechanisms in the event of exposure to a critical incident.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **PROCEDURE FOR A DIRECTLY AFFECTED PARTY, WITNESS TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT, OR PERSON NOTIFIED OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT**

A directly affected party of a critical incident, a person who witnesses a critical incident, or a person other than the Principal or Responsible Person who is first notified of a critical incident must respond accordingly:

1. Identify the nature of the critical incident.
2. Contact the Responsible Person or Principal.
3. Act in accord with the directions of the Responsible Person or Principal.
4. If directed or in the absence of obtaining immediate access to the Responsible Person or Principal, contact emergency services as soon as it is safe to do so.
5. Take immediate action, where possible, to minimise the risk of further injury or damage.
6. Avoid intervening in circumstances where you may place yourself and others at greater risk of harm.
7. Assess the situation carefully and gather information.

### **PROCEDURE FOR RESPONSIBLE PERSON**

The Responsible Person must act immediately on receiving notification of, or being made aware of a critical incident. The Critical Incident Team may provide support to the Responsible Person as requested. The Responsible Person must:

1. Maintain oversight of the incident.
2. Implement the appropriate critical incident plan.
3. Arrange for expert help as required.
4. Contact emergency services. Under no circumstances are students/faculty/staff to be transported in private vehicles in the event of physical injury.
5. If applicable, secure or evacuate the area.
6. As far as possible ensure the safety and welfare of all affected people.
7. Liaise with emergency services, hospital and medical services.
8. Liaise with appropriate government agencies.
9. Establish communication systems to keep affected parties informed, including family and friends during the incident and throughout the follow-up period.
10. Direct others to assist in the management of the incident.
11. Manage media and publicity, directing enquiries to the Principal.
12. Produce the necessary incident report.

### PROCEDURE FOR CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM

After the immediate response has been acted upon, the Critical Incident Team is responsible for the subsequent response within 48 hours:

1. Ensure there is appropriate support for affected parties.
2. Protect the site, close the site or block off relevant areas, if necessary, to ensure the safety of people and to ensure there is ease of access for emergency services or other government authority.
3. Set up a recovery room with appropriate furniture and resources if appropriate.
4. Gather relevant information about the incident and interview affected parties.
5. Assist affected parties to contact their family/close friend(s) to advise them of the situation and provide other assistance as appropriate.
6. Where members of the public seek information about a critical incident or individuals affected (or potentially affected) by a critical incident, direct those inquiries with care and attention. Care should be taken to consider the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of matters that could impact the good reputation of BST.
7. If the incident has impacted an international student, inform the International Student Contact Officer and make appropriate arrangements to ensure the well-being of the affected student(s).
8. Provide opportunity for debriefing sessions with those who worked on the incident.
9. Ensure that any necessary follow up relating to the Critical Incident Report is actioned, and where requested by the Responsible Officer, assist in completing the Critical Incident Report. The Critical Incident Report is then to be provided to the Principal for final sign off. The Operations Manager is required to maintain and file Critical Incident Reports securely, with access to these reports limited to authorised persons at BST or, if required by law (e.g. subpoena), to disclose documents to external parties.
10. Assist the relatives of international student(s) to find suitable emergency accommodation if they travel to Australia as a result of the critical incident.

BST will do its best to help family members find suitable emergency accommodation after an incident.

11. Make recommendations to the Principal about ways in which future incidents may be managed.
12. Assess the safety implications arising from the incident and recommend possible risk mitigations to the Principal.

## ACTION BY THE OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Operations Manager is responsible to:

1. Ensure that the Responsible Person completes the critical incident report and that the Principal has reviewed and signed off on the document. Once the critical incident report has been completed, file the document in a secure location.
2. Determine the implications for an affected student's study and assessment program in consultation with the Registrar.
3. In liaison with the Responsible Person, manage the follow-up procedures.
4. Ensure that the ACT Dean or his delegate is contacted, advising of relevant matters.
5. Arrange for the necessary notification to relevant educational and government bodies (e.g. DIAC, Consulate/Embassy etc).
6. Monitor, or assist the Principal in monitoring, investigations by any external agencies.
7. Maintain a complete record of critical incident reports.

## MAINTAINING STUDENT FILES

To support the effective management of incidents, student files are to be maintained to include the following:

- Photograph
- Emergency contact name, phone number and relationship to student
- Any other significant personal details – medical conditions, allergy information etc.

In addition for international students:

- a copy of the title and Australian visa pages of their passport
- Medical insurance status.

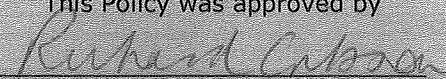
## **MEDIA RESPONSE**

BST recognises that each critical incident is unique and the dynamics of each situation will need to be assessed when it occurs. To protect the privacy of individuals and the integrity and good reputation of BST, the Responsible Person, Principal and Critical Incident Team will seek to ensure that only relevant information, or information that is required by law to be disclosed, is released to the public or parties seeking information from BST. In the event of a public inquiry or instances requiring a response in the form of a media release, the Principal has the final approval for statements that are to be made to the public. The Principal is the official spokesperson for BST. No other person is permitted to make a public statement about a critical incident unless authorised by the Principal, or as required by law.

1. The following procedure will be followed in relation to public statements regarding a critical incident:
  - 1.1. The Responsible Person and Critical Incident Team will provide all relevant information to the Principal.
  - 1.2. The Principal will assess the relevant information provided and formulate an appropriate response for the public.
  - 1.3. The Principal will brief all staff and faculty with the appropriate response to any public inquiries about a critical incident.
  - 1.4. The Principal may delegate media liaison to another member of faculty or staff.
2. The Responsible Person, only in consultation with the Principal, will liaise with the media if access to site, students, staff, faculty or persons affected by a critical incident is required. Media is not permitted onsite unless authorised by the Principal.
3. Where a media release relating to a critical incident is approved by the Principal, an email copy of the release will be provided to all students, faculty, staff and Board members no later than the time of release to the media.

### EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. After each critical incident, a meeting of the Critical Incident Team will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the response, and to make modifications as required.
2. The evaluation process will incorporate feedback gathered from all students, faculty, staff and local community representatives.
3. An evaluation report will be submitted to the Principal and the BST Board.

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