Rationale

Critical Incidents can impact considerably on the psychological well-being of students, teachers and families causing adverse effects in areas such as well-being, learning, occupational performance and family interactions. Nagle College is concerned to reduce the traumatic effects of crisis situations both in the short and longer terms and accordingly shall aim to ensure that adequate and appropriate measures are in place to manage the response to traumatic events.

A critical incident differs from an emergency in that while a critical incident may involve individual injuries, it is usually an isolated event without wider safety consequences for the school community. A critical incident may, however, cause emotional and psychological distress.

Nagle College has a duty of care to students, staff and other visitors to aim to ensure that they are kept safe from harm. A critical Incident Management Plan assists in ensuring the safety and well-being of students, staff and members of the College community that may be impacted by a critical incident.

Scripture

‘All members may be concerned for one another. If one member suffers, all members suffer: if one member is honoured, all members share this joy. You then are the body of Christ.’

(I Corinthians 12:25-27)

Vision

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 10:10

Inspired by the life of Christ, our Presentation Heritage and the Salesian Charism, Nagle College is a Catholic community that welcomes, builds strong relationships, evangelizes and prepares young people for life.

Mission

So that all members of the Nagle College community can live out the College motto “Let your light shine”, we will:

- Develop a safe, nurturing and hope-filled community based on Christ’s message of love, justice and service.
- Build a culture that promotes and accepts personal excellence.
- Be people of dignity, respect, compassion, resilience and unconditional love.
- Continue to build sustainable relationships with faith communities, other educational institutions, and community organisations and businesses.
Policy Statement

Effective preparation for responding to and managing critical incidents affecting schools is essential. In the event of a critical incident it may be the difference between a minor crisis becoming a major crisis, or even the difference between life and death. Over reaction to a situation can be as bad, if not worse, than an under reaction. Following a Critical Incident affecting a school not everyone is traumatised and in need of counselling. It is essential that the college has appropriate procedures and protocols in place to deal with critical incidents.

This Policy provides guidelines for responding appropriately to a range of critical incidents that could occur at the College and/or to a member of the College Community.

Definitions

**Emergency:** An emergency is an actual or imminent event that endangers or threatens to endanger life, property and/or the environment and requires an immediate, significant and coordinated response.

An emergency differs from a critical incident in that while a critical incident may involve individual injuries, it is usually an isolated event without wider safety consequences for the school community. A critical incident may, however, cause emotional and psychological distress

**Critical Incident:** An event or circumstance can be described as a critical incident when it causes normally stable and healthy people to experience strong emotional or psychological distress which has the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at a time of the event or later. This distress may be present as trauma responses, grief responses, stress responses, a combination of any of the previous three. (Jackson, 2005, p5)

As a general rule, a critical incident is **determined by its impact** on individuals and the community as a whole, **rather than by any predetermined list of events.** (Jackson, 2005, p5).

Critical incidents that may affect the College Community include but are not limited to:

- The death or critical injury of a student, staff member, parent or prominent college community member.
- The destruction of the whole or part of the College.
- Major vandalism.
- Death or serious injury on College excursion.
- Terminal illness of a member of the College Community.
- Use of violence and/or weapons in the school.
- Aggressive intruders onto College grounds.
- Disappearance of a student or staff member.
- Social abuse of staff or students.
- Student, staff member or parent being taken hostage.
- Self-harming behaviours.
- Student absconding.
- Significant disruptive behaviour.
- Groups of students and staff who witness sudden death, severe injury or disaster on school premises, whilst travelling to and from the College or on school excursions.
Critical Incident Management Team

The Critical Incident Management Team will be drawn from the College Leadership Team and other co-opted staff members as required.

Goals of the Critical Incident Management Team (CMIT)

Nagle is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all our employees, students, visitors and guests. Given the diverse nature of possible traumatic events and the variance of potential impacts on members of the school community, it is not possible to establish a single response strategy for all situations. In these circumstances it is our policy to:

- Provide psychological support to all students and staff where they are experiencing, or may be at risk of experiencing, emotional distress in the aftermath of a traumatic event;
- Presume that a traumatic event will occur within the school community and make appropriate preparations to ensure that the school is in the best possible position to respond when the event takes place;
- Establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) that responds to the emergency situation and to manage the response to traumatic event;
- Ensure that the CIMT will develop a Critical Incident Management Plan for each traumatic event following the guidelines set out in this policy;
- Ensure that the Critical Incident Management Plan is clearly communicated to staff and members of the school community;
- Liaise with relevant organisations, external to the school, that may also be involved in responding to a particular situation; and
- Ensure that all staff receive appropriate briefings to ensure that they are able to carry out their roles in any Critical Incident Management Plan.

Critical Incident Management Plan

Nagle College will have in place a Critical Incident Management Plan. This plan will be published to all members of the College Community.

The Key principles of the Critical Incident Management Plan include:

- Safety
- Containment of crisis, information and people involved – “trauma is contagious”
- Validation and normalisation
- Reassurance that the adults are in control of the situation and providing strategies for self-care and supporting others.

This plan will cover areas including but not limited to:

- The Roles and Responsibilities of the Critical Incident Management Team.
- The dissemination of factual and appropriate information – who disseminates it, how is it disseminated and to whom is it disseminated.
- Providing relevant information to staff members regarding identification and management of critical incidents.
- Procedures for providing for all staff members are briefed on how to spot students at risk and what to do with these more ‘at risk’ students and staff members.
- Identifying and responding to all members of the community affected by the critical incident (parents, staff, and students).
• Process for regular evaluation of the Critical Incident Management Plan.
• Strategies for re-establishing safety, caring for personnel and assisting community members in the recovery process.
• Processes and protocols for reporting to external agencies such as the Catholic Education Office and Worksafe.

Related Policies & Procedures

Nagle College Emergency Management Procedures
Occupational Health and Safety Policy
Workplace Equal Opportunity Policy
Staff Wellbeing Policy
Professional Learning Policy
First Aid Policy
Pastoral Care Policy
(Anti) Bullying and (Anti) Harassment Policy (Staff)
(Anti) Bullying and (Anti) Harassment Policy (Students)

References:


Complispace: Critical Incident Management.