



## CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

**POLICY NUMBER:** NC18-PP007  
**RESPONSIBILITY:** MANAGING DIRECTOR

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#### 1. Critical Incident Policy

WAIFS acknowledges that critical incidents can arise that may seriously impact on the safety and security of staff, students, visitors, and/or business continuity. The Institute further recognises that effective planning, management and rehearsal are key in successfully managing a critical incident.

#### 2. Purpose

This policy aims to assist in the planning and implementation of an inclusive response to manage any critical incident effectively and to restore a sense of safety and security.

Particularly, the National Code, Standard 6.8 requires:

The registered provider must have and implement a documented policy and process for managing critical incidents that could affect the overseas student's ability to undertake or complete a course, such as but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm. The registered provider must maintain a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken by the registered provider for at least two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

#### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all WAIFS staff, students, visitors and suppliers who have been exposed to a critical incident – either on-campus or off-campus including staff on business related travel interstate and overseas.

Where an event occurs that may indicate/ be considered a critical incident, the policy and procedures should be followed.

Where an event occurs, which may escalate to a critical incident, the policy and procedures should be followed.



#### 4. Policy Dissemination

Available on Staff shared drive – all staff to receive an email when updates occur.

#### 5. Staff Training

Student Administration Services employees are required, and other student support staff are encouraged, to undertake staff development programs to prepare them to deal with critical incidents.

It is WAIFS policy that there is to be at least one employee with a current First Aid Certificate on campus at all times. WAIFS will provide, as a minimum, annual:

- Staff training and/or awareness sessions on critical incident response and management, and;
- Whole of campus participation evacuation drills.

#### 6. What is a critical incident?

The National Code 2018 defines a 'critical incident' as "a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury." A Critical Incident can include but is not limited to;

- Natural Disaster
- Drug and Alcohol abuse
- Domestic/ Racially-motivated violence/abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Missing Student
- Student suicide attempt
- Student robbery/physical assault or other personal attack
- Acute illness (physical or mental)
- Student death
- Students in legal difficulties
- Chemical, radiation or bio-hazard spillage
- Fire, explosion, bomb threat
- When welfare arrangements are disrupted for students under 18 years of age

#### 7. Contact details in case of a critical incident

**Office Manager: Erin Butterly**

T: 6200 6210

E: [erin@waifs.edu.au](mailto:erin@waifs.edu.au)

**CEO: Louise Edwards**

E: [ceo@waifs.edu.au](mailto:ceo@waifs.edu.au)

M: 0430 965 368

**Operations Manager: Wendy Xu**

T: 6200 6204

E: [wendy@waifs.wa.edu.au](mailto:wendy@waifs.wa.edu.au)

**Managing Director: Sean Tuhakaraina**

E: [sean@waifs.edu.au](mailto:sean@waifs.edu.au)

M: 0430 965 389

#### 8. Overseas/Interstate Travel

Staff undertaking travel for business related purposes will be given information on what to do and who to contact should they experience a critical incident whilst interstate or overseas. This information should include the policy and contact numbers of WAIFS' Travel Insurer along with a summary of allowable claims.

#### 9. Who does what and when

The **Designated Officer** is any WAIFS staff member who is either a witness to, or first to be informed about, an actual or potential critical incident.

The Designated Officer is to assume responsibility for alerting the most senior member of WAIFS staff available as soon as possible.

There may be a period of time when The Designated Officer will need to assume temporary control of a critical incident site and assign duties to available persons (such as calling emergency services, alerting other staff, assisting with first aid, crowd control etc).

This period will depend upon the severity of the incident and the demands on the Designated Officer's time. Where an



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incident requires immediate response and decision-making to protect lives and/or safety, the Designated Officer MUST deal with these issues BEFORE dealing with any administration/ notification of other WAIFS Staff/Management relating to this policy.

### **PEOPLE AND SAFETY COME FIRST – PAPERWORK CAN FOLLOW.**

When all issues requiring immediate response have been resolved and it is safe to do so, the Designated Officer is to inform the most senior WAIFS staff member available.

#### **10. Response to Critical Incident**

##### **Immediate Response**

Gather background details of the incident from the informing source if possible and appropriate. The Designated Officer assesses the risk to student, others and self and acts to make the student safe from further harm.

Where there is a risk of further harm to the student, harm to the Designated Officer, or other life or property the assistance of emergency services must be requested immediately.

Arrange medical treatment as soon as possible if necessary, and provide immediate appropriate personal support, and other assistance reasonably required.

Identify the full name and student identification number of the international student/s involved in the critical incident, if possible.

The Designated Officer is to make notes of key facts of the incident at the first available opportunity. This phase is completed when the student is safe from further harm, in receipt of necessary immediate support and services, and in a stable care environment.

If emergency services attend the incident, they will be given authority to assume control of the critical incident upon arrival. If a Designated WAIFS Officer is in attendance, their role will be to act in the best interests of any student/staff member/visitor affected by the incident.

Under the Privacy Act 1988, individuals are entitled to the protection of their personal and private information. Where a critical incident raises the issue of confidentiality, WAIFS is committed to maintaining this right to privacy in line with legal requirements, however, WAIFS may exercise its discretion and disclose information as necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of a student or of another person.

In the event welfare arrangements are disrupted for students under 18 years of age, the Designated Officer must act immediately to ensure the students welfare and wellbeing is managed in line with WAIFS' under 18 policy, this will include notification of the Parent and/or legal custodian and may include collection of the student.

##### **Secondary Response**

The Designated Officer responding to the situation should discuss the critical incident with the most senior WAIFS staff member available.

The most senior staff member available will arrange for a Critical Incident Team (CIT) to be formed. The CIT will generally comprise some/all of the below:

- (i) CEO;
- (ii) Managing Director;
- (iii) Campus Manager/Office Manager;
- (iv) Operations Manager;
- (v) The original "Designated Officer" as they have the most detailed current knowledge of the situation.

The Head of the CIT (who will be appointed by the team based on seniority) will then delegate tasks as required to members of the team.

If Welfare arrangements are disrupted for students under 18 years of age, the CIT will liaise with the Parent/Legal Custodian and organise new appropriate welfare arrangements (in line with WAIFS Under 18 policy and procedure) and send Notification to DoHA of the change in welfare arrangements.

Issues which will be considered at this stage, include:



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- Interested parties who may need to be notified or may be affected by the incident - appropriate communication and support response to be identified;
- Sensitivity to the student's wishes in terms of contact and notifying others must receive high priority where it does not conflict with statutory obligations placed on the Institute and staff.
- If the Critical Incident involves international student/(s), WAIFS may need to advise the appropriate Consulate/Embassy (as they often provide support such as travel for the family).
- There may be a need to identify others who may be affected by the incident to provide re-assurance and minimise distress. It is important to return to normality as soon as possible.
- Arranging access to counsellors and/or pastoral care for students and staff affected, as required.
- Establishing an information point for students, family and others who have a legitimate interest in the matter.
- There may be a need to issue a written statement to staff and students, within the guidelines of the Privacy Act.
- Assessing whether emergency funds or other resources are required (this will usually be decided by the CEO/MD).
- Agents: If applicable, the agent(s) involved with the student(s) involved in a critical incident should be contacted. Often parents/family will contact the agency directly. It is important to contact the family directly, but if going through an agent, be absolutely clear about details, what message to convey and how it is to be conveyed.

Agents in the home country of the student(s) affected by the critical incident may need guidelines about what information to disclose. If the matter is complex, a written bulletin may be necessary.

- Legal Issues: After the emergency response, the Critical Incident Team is to assess whether legal assistance might be required and refer accordingly.
- Insurance: Where damage to building or grounds has occurred or where WAIFS may be liable for personal or property damage, the relevant insurance bodies should be informed as soon as possible.
- Student Records: Student Records should be adjusted to reflect changes to a student's status, where applicable. A pop-up alert to be created to ensure any subsequent correspondence to the student is approved by the CEO or Managing Director.
- Media Liaison: All Media Liaison will be dealt with by the CEO or Managing Director – depending on who is available.

No staff member should answer any media enquiries about the Critical Incident personally. WAIFS would not want any staff member to make any comments to the media which may be misinterpreted or not represent the views of WAIFS.

Additionally, exposure to the pressure of dealing with media enquiries may be too much for staff members to deal with at times of Critical Incident.

Staff will be informed of the specific Media Contact as soon as is practicable. Should of media contact staff before this news has been disseminated, staff contacted should direct Media enquiries to the MANAGING DIRECTOR/CEO/OPERATIONS MANAGER in that order.

If required, a press release will be prepared and will address:

1. What happened?
2. How?
3. When?
4. Where?
5. Why?

And any other information considered necessary/ relevant, based on the circumstances of the incident (with regards to Privacy requirements).

The press release will also include an expression of regret and compassion for the family/friends of the victim.



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If necessary, a comment will be issued on what measures will be put in place to ensure any future events of the same kind are avoided.

- Confidentiality and Privacy: Permission must be sought from the student to disclose personal information as outlined in the Privacy Act except in the case that the information is disclosed to lessen or prevent a serious and imminent threat to the students' life, health or safety.

### Concluding Steps

In the event of a student death:

- (i) An appropriate person, who has had some relationship or contact with the student, is to compose a letter conveying condolences. The Head of Department MUST be consulted to assist in identifying someone who was familiar with the student.
- (ii) Adjust Student Information System details (refunding fees as entitled) and advise Accounts, Admissions (cancellation of enrolment). Set up "pop-up" alert informing that no further information/ correspondence is to be sent to the student/Next of Kin without the approval of the CEO/MD.
- (iii) Ensure that any personal effects are returned to the next of kin. For international students, bank accounts may need to be closed, and any other personal property disposed of, in consultation with the family.

In All Cases

- (iv) The CIT will meet as soon as is practicable after the conclusion of the critical incident, to debrief about the incident.
- (v) A final written report on the incident will be prepared, updating the initial information prepared by the designated officer.
- (vi) Where the incident relates to a student of WAIFS, a copy of the final report will be placed on both the student file and in the Critical Incidents File (filed by date order)
- (vii) The final report will include all feedback from the Designated Officer and CIT on the management of the critical incident and include suggestions for improvements in the management of such situations for the future.
- (viii) Amendments to the critical incident policy will occur as soon as is practicable after the event and will be the responsibility of the Managing Director.

### 11. Guidelines for making contact with next of kin

Generally, it is the Managing Directors role to notify the next of kin of the incident with the consent of the student (if applicable).

The following should be considered before calling:

- It should be established if the next of kin is fluent in English, if not an interpreter will be required.
- How to give the facts clearly and precisely.
- In the case of a critically ill international student, ensure the next of kin has control over issues such as life support and resuscitation
- In the case of a student death or serious accident the relevant consulate should be contacted, and the respective roles and responsibilities discussed regarding contacting next of kin and repatriation of the deceased's body and effects. If WAIFS is responsible for this, the family's wishes, in relation to burial and services, need to be established.

### Generic Guidelines - Response to Missing Person(s) Report

From time to time, parents or other family members of a student or recent graduate may contact the Institute to report that student or graduate as missing. These enquiries should be referred to the Managing Director.

In the first instance, the relative should be referred to the Police.

However, there are circumstances where the family may be reluctant to pursue that option and if so, the following



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charitable organisations may be a suitable alternative. Depending on the advice provided by the family, you may wish to check with the Managing Director to ascertain whether they have had any contact with the student and have current contact with them, through which a message may be passed.

If a current student address is on the system, you may offer to send a letter on behalf of, or from, the family to that address or to call phone contact numbers on the student's record.

Generally, you must be very aware of the privacy constraints in passing any information to the family.

### Salvation Army - Phone (61 +8) 9442 5777

The Salvation Army have a family tracing service, however, due to their international protocol they will not initiate the enquiry in Australia. The relatives must contact the Salvation Army in their home country (they operate in 100 countries) and they in turn contact Australia. This applies even if the family have arrived in Australia to look for their relative. If the Salvation Army find the "missing" person, they in turn ask them to let their family know they are all right.

## 12. Useful Contact Information

State Emergency Services	
<b>Ambulance, Fire, Police</b>	For <u>emergencies</u> call 000, or 112 on mobile or if out of range.  For non-urgent matters call Police on 131 444
Free Support Services	
<b>Lifeline Australia</b> Provides crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health support services across Australia. These can include stresses from work, family or society and physical and mental wellbeing. Lifeline offers support services by phone or through their online chat available on their website.	<a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au/Home">www.lifeline.org.au/Home</a> T: 13 11 44
<b>Beyond Blue</b> Promotes good mental health, tackles stigma and discrimination, and provides support and information on anxiety, depression and suicide	<a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a> T: 1300 224 636
<b>Samaritans</b> Provides support to people in need of emotional support, helping people dealing with feelings of sadness, depression, loneliness or despair to work through their emotional difficulties	<a href="http://www.thesamaritans.org.au">www.thesamaritans.org.au</a> 24 hr crisis line T: 135 247
<b>Q Life</b> <i>LBGTI Support</i>	<a href="http://www qlife.org.au">www.qlife.org.au</a> T: 1800 184 527
<b>Sexual Assault Resource Centre</b> A free 24 hour-7 days a week emergency service specialising in counselling and medical services for men, women and children over 13 years who have suffered recent sexual assault or childhood sexual abuse.	<a href="http://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/services/sarc/">www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/services/sarc/</a> 24hr crisis line T:1800 199 888 OR 6458 1828
<b>Sexual Health Quarters</b> <i>Formerly known as the Family Planning Association of WA, SHQ offers confidential advice on sexual health matters, family planning, clinical services, education, contraception, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.</i>	<a href="http://www.shq.org.au">www.shq.org.au</a> T: 9227 6177
Help With Addiction	
<b>Counselling Online</b> Free drug and alcohol counselling 24/7	<a href="http://www.counsellingonline.org.au">www.counsellingonline.org.au</a> T: 9442 500
<b>Gambling Help WA</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/gamblinghelpwa">www.facebook.com/gamblinghelpwa</a> T: 1800 858 858
Interpreting Services	
<b>Translating &amp; Interpreting Service (TIS)</b>	<a href="https://www.tisnational.gov.au">https://www.tisnational.gov.au</a> T: 13 14 50

### Police Involvement



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The police are required to investigate all cases of sudden unexpected death. Police actions include:

- Reporting such death to the Coroner
- Notifying next of kin
- Obtaining official identification of the deceased (this must be done by someone who has known the deceased for some time)
- Conducting investigations on behalf of the Coroner - for example, interviewing witnesses and others who may have been involved, collecting clothing and other items for use in evidence, delivering specimens for analysis.

### Coronial Investigations

Every death reported to the Coroner must be investigated. The body of the deceased will be taken to the morgue where it may be viewed by the relatives but not touched. Once the coronial inquiries are complete (and this may take some time), the body will be released to funeral directors to await instruction from the next of kin. At this stage the body may be touched.

### Post Mortems (Autopsies)

Most reported deaths require a post mortem examination to determine the medical cause of death. This usually involves an internal and external examination of the body, and of tissue, organ and blood specimens taken from the body. Cultural and religious objections to a post mortem may be discussed with the coroner or a court social worker. However, these objections very rarely influence the coroner's decision to conduct an autopsy.

### Inquests

An inquest is a public hearing before a coroner (and occasionally a jury) to decide the circumstances of death. Once initial investigations are completed, the Coroner may (as in 90% of cases) dispense with an inquest. However, the Coroner may order an inquest or, in certain circumstances (such as murder), an inquest may be legally required.

More detailed information can be obtained from the relevant State Coroners Courts. This information generally outlines coronial procedures, deals with the legal rights of members of the public involved in these procedures, and indicates what advice and specialised counselling may be available.

### Funeral Information

Inquiries may be directed to:

Australian Funeral Directors Association  
PO Box 291  
Kew East VIC 3102

AFDA Funeral Advice Line: (03) 9859 9966 or check the white pages for the local branch number in your state.

### Arranging a Funeral

When faced with having to make funeral arrangements, most people have no prior experience in organising such an event, and little idea of what to do. Initial interviews with the funeral director can be at a location nominated by you.

While some people may have a fairly clear knowledge of the arrangements they want to make, others may want to consider a myriad of alternatives before making any decisions. The funeral director is there to guide and advise on the many matters which need to be considered. Decisions to make will include:

- Time and location of the funeral
- Type of service
- Burial/cremation (reflection of the religious or ethnic attitudes and family traditions)
- Type of coffin
- Viewing arrangements
- Choice of participants
- Floral arrangements, motor vehicles and other relevant matters

### The Funeral Director

The funeral director will take responsibility for arranging, with the family concerned, the time and place for an appropriate funeral service by coordinating and liaising with clergy members, doctors, hospitals and cemetery or crematorium officials.

The funeral director will lodge notices in the press, arrange floral tributes, provide a hearse and other vehicles, a funeral



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chapel and any other facilities and personnel required to carry out the wishes of the family being served.

All official forms must be completed and taken to the appropriate people at the right time. The funeral director, for example, registers the death with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

The funeral director ensures that human dignity of both the deceased and the survivors is preserved, and performs tasks in a sensitive and understanding manner.

Kindness, helpfulness, understanding and the empathetic handling of funeral arrangements are the vital psychological components of the funeral director's role.

### **When Someone Dies**

When death occurs, the first practical consideration in most cases will be the need for a doctor's attendance. In Australia today, relatively few people die at home and in most cases the medical necessities and formalities will be taken care of by the relevant hospital or other authorities.

The deceased's doctor or the hospital authorities will explain what steps, if any, are required to establish the cause of death and complete the necessary death certificate. Meanwhile, the family may begin making their desired funeral arrangements, which can be completed when the death certificate has been signed.

### **The Funeral Ceremony**

All reputable funeral directors are able to provide a broad range of services to suit the precise requirements of the bereaved family. Funerals can be as different as the people they are for, with their main purpose being to help the bereaved in the first stages of grief. The order, style and content of service can all be varied to suit the family's needs. A personal tribute from a family member or close friend, or perhaps including appropriate cultural traditions, may make the service more meaningful.

### **Special Circumstances, when there is no body**

Deaths from Suicide and AIDS may sometimes present special problems because of old religious discrimination and/or social stigma. Nevertheless, the need for people to mourn and the rituals of the funeral are still essential for friends and family.

When there is no body (eg: drowning accidents, abduction) it is still important to acknowledge the life of the deceased and help the family and friends to accept that death has occurred. A special memorial service to allow everyone to say goodbye and be able to get on with their grieving is essential. The use of photos, significant objects associated with the deceased's life, and perhaps candles are a great help to use in place of the body.

### **Grieving**

Grief is not a single response, but a complicated series of feelings, emotions and even physical manifestations of a person's reaction to the bereavement.

Grieving is an intensely personal process. Each death is unique, and everyone affected will respond differently. Most survivors however, will pass through similar stages of grief from initial shock, numbness, and often denial and anger to realisation, acceptance and finally re-adjustment.

The intensity of grief experienced will be affected by many factors, including the degree of attachment to the deceased and the duration and quality of relationship with them. The greater the attachment, the longer it is likely to take to resolve grief.

However, it is not the passage of time itself which brings resolution, but the working through of stages of grief. A meaningful funeral service can play a significant part in the crucial early stages of grieving.

### **Death of a child**

There is probably nothing more traumatic than the death of a child. Most children's deaths are unexpected. The parents have no warning and no opportunity to prepare for their grief or to plan to say goodbye. This intensifies the acuteness of loss.

Even when a child dies from a prolonged illness the sense of loss is heightened because the parents feel the loss not





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only of the child that they have known, but also of the person that child would have become. Such parents cannot gain the consolation of recalling a life lived that helps them to cope with an older person's death.

It is therefore normal for parents' grief to be more intense if they lose a child. In addition to the usual symptoms of grief, reaction to the loss may be characterised by acute shock and disbelief, tremendous pain, anger and guilt. Parents may also fear for the safety of other children in the family.

When a child dies, great strains can be placed on the family. Members of the family need to be able to recognise and understand each other's feelings. Support groups are available to help. The funeral director can direct you to the appropriate organisation for assistance.

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