ECA COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

CHSQF019 Critical Incident Policy & Procedures

Contents

1 Purpose 2
2 Scope 2
3 Definitions 2
4 Policy Statements 2
5 Procedures 3
5.1 Process to manage critical incidents 3
5.1.1 Critical phase 3
5.1.2 Ongoing supervision and follow-up 3
5.1.3 Investigation process 3
5.1.4 Reporting 4
5.2 Overseas Students 4
6 Responsibilities 5
College Responsibilities 5
7 Monitoring and Improvement Process 5
8 Records 6
9 Related Documents 6
10 Related legislation 6
11 Version Control 6
Appendix 1 7
Procedures in Case of a Student Death 7

1. Purpose

This policy is intended to provide a clear framework for managing critical incidents involving students to minimise the risk of uncontrolled action and to ensure that each case is managed effectively and compassionately.

2. Scope

Unless otherwise stated this policy applies to all CHS students, whether on or off-campus. Some overseas students may require additional support because they will not have close family available and the College will endeavour to assist in these cases as much as possible.

3. Definitions

A critical incident is defined in the National Code as 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'.

Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- Serious injury or death
- Sexual assault, sexual harassment or abuse
- Violence, threats or abuse
- Robbery with violence
- Sudden or unexpected death or suicide of colleague, classmate, teacher
- Natural disasters
- Terrorist attacks including bomb threats
- High publicity violent crimes.

4. Policy Statements

Critical incident management constitutes part of the College's approach to Risk Management. Procedures forming part of this policy will enable key management staff to deal with both the immediate and longer-term consequences of critical incidents that impact on the College. CHS recognises the duty of care owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential. In all cases, the response needs to be timely and professional. Incidents may vary in terms of scale, the level of response required and the level of media interest. The response of the College officers should be tailored within this policy framework to meet the needs of each incident.

Any critical incident either on or off-campus must be reported to the Campus Manager in the first instance. If unavailable, contact should be made to the after-hours emergency contact. A critical incident report must include the following information:

- time
- location

- nature of the incident (e.g. threat, accident, death or injury), names and roles of persons involved (e.g. staff, overseas or domestic student)
- any other information that may be relevant to the incident or of assistance to authorities.

The Campus Manager will record each critical incident report in the Critical Incident Register.

5. Procedures

5.1 Process to manage critical incidents

The following steps outline the process to manage a critical incident. It applies to all CHS staff including sessional staff members who may be present when the incident occurs or who may be the first point of contact for the student.

5.1.1 Critical phase

The critical phase is the time immediately after the incident has occurred, or the point in time when the student or staff member first contacts CHS. Staff should assess the situation and ensure that they consider the following:

a) Ensure that the student is safe and is receiving adequate medical supervision in a safe environment
b) Ensure that other students are safe
c) Determine if evacuation procedures are required to be implemented
d) Report incident to the relevant CHS Manager (e.g. Campus Manager)
e) Contact relevant authorities as appropriate (e.g. police, ambulance)
f) If necessary, call an interpreter and have them stand by for assistance
g) Once the student is out of danger and receiving medical attention resume activities if appropriate
h) At the earliest time interview the student to ascertain what happened and any ongoing problems
i) Support other students or arrange for counselling to occur
j) Address any other immediate needs, i.e. additional support, police report, report stolen goods etc.; and
k) Follow the procedures outlined in Appendix 1 in the case of a death of a student.

5.1.2 Ongoing supervision and follow-up

Once the incident has been managed and necessary contact has been made with relevant personnel, it is important that the Welfare Officer follows up with the student. This may include:

- Keeping in contact with the student and relevant family members or close friends while observing the Privacy Policy. Monitor the situation with a daily call
- Checking that the student is receiving ongoing medical help and counselling
- Passing on findings to the appropriate manager and other relevant authorities while observing the provisions of the Privacy Laws fully as in *CHS Privacy Policy*

5.1.3 Investigation process

To ensure that the incident is accurately recorded and managed, the Campus Manager or the designated officer shall:

a) Collect facts about the incident (e.g. injuries to person, any witnesses, information from the scene). This may be in written form or through the use of media such as photographs, as appropriate.
b) Examine any work/operating procedures or training that may have impacted the incident.
c) Determine the cause of the accident/incident paying attention to contributing factors, environmental factors, mechanical failure, and systems failure.
d) Review work procedures, training, and/or safe operating procedures.
e) Document recommendations and communicate results of investigation to the relevant persons or parties.

5.1.4 Reporting

- The Incident Report form is to be completed and provided with any verbal reports to the Campus Manager including any recommendation on ways to prevent similar occurrences.
- Media enquiries should be referred to the Principal. Social media is to be monitored and responded to by the Welfare Officer.
- Written reports, endorsed by the student, are to be put on the student's file on the Student Management System, and on CHS's Critical Incident Register and sent to the parents of the student and other relevant authorities with student's written permission.

5.2 Overseas Students

In the case of a death of an overseas student, there are additional reporting requirements under the ESOS Act.

- The Compliance Manager (or delegate) must be advised of the death as soon practical after the death.
- The Compliance Manager must advise the Department of Immigration of the circumstances of death.
- It is especially important to contact the State Immigration Office, prior to reporting on PRISMS, so the Liaison Officer may prevent a letter being sent to the student's most recent recorded address thus minimising the possibility of further distress for the student's family.
- Using PRISMS to report the student's death, the Compliance Manager will enter the student course variation reason/code as below against the student's Electronic confirmation of enrolment (eCoE):
  - Reason for Student Course Variation - Termination of student studies prior to completing the course.
  - Termination Reason – provider decision to cease student enrolment
  - Provider decision to cease student enrolment reasons- student has died including full details in the comment field as per death certificate and state that the Department of Immigration has been notified by email and provided supporting documentation.
- The Compliance Manager (or delegate) should also advise the Dean of the student's death who will check the student's course progression in case the student may be eligible for a Posthumous Award.

6. Responsibilities

College Responsibilities

The College Is responsible for:

- compliance with ESOS National Code 2018 Standards and the Work Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2011 and Work Health and Safety Act (Qld) 2011 or other applicable legislation;
- exercising its duty of care to its students, staff and other persons visiting the College premises;
- developing and implementing procedures for appropriate, effective and speedy response to, and management of, critical incidents;
- reviewing and evaluating the performance of the critical incident policy periodically, by examining trends present in the Register of Critical Incidents and the effectiveness of the procedures adopted for dealing with critical incidents. Procedures for reviewing and updating all CHS policies are outlined in the *CHS Policy FrameworkPolicy.*

The Director of Administration and Student Services will:

- review the College's capability in planning, implementing and managing the response to each critical incident consistent with this policy and procedure; and
- make any needed or desired adjustments or improvements to the critical incident policy and procedures pursuant to the review process.

The Campus Manager assisted by the relevant Welfare Officer is responsible for:

- implementing this policy
- coordinating the necessary action following an incident; and
- maintaining the Register of Critical Incidents.

The Principal (or nominee) is responsible for responding to media enquiries and making statements on behalf of the College. The relevant Director of Studies is responsible for approving leave from study requests by a student as a result of a critical incident, and for providing further advice to other relevant parties, such as finance, the library, and Student Services.

7. Monitoring and Improvement Process

CHS will apply the following process to monitor and propose actions to be taken to address the underlying causes of critical incidents:

- The Director of Administration and Student Services will prepare a report that will contain an analysis of the underlying causes of critical incidents as recorded in the Critical Incident Register at the end of each calendar year (or shorter period when critical incidents repeats are experienced);
- The report will propose changes to the management of the critical incidents based on the analysis of the underlying causes, including improvements needed to procedures for safety, security and well-being of staff and students;

- The report will be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee by the Principal for consideration and appropriate recommendations to the Board of Directors;
- The Board of Directors will consider the ARC's recommendations, will deliberate and decide on the underlying causes of the critical incidents, then direct action. Examples actions include:
    - Request the Principal for further information and or clarification of the underlying causes of critical incidents, including seeking expert advice where needed;
    - Direct the Principal to implement specific measures and initiatives, that may include recommended by the ARC within an appropriate timeline;
    - Request the Principal to report back to the Board on the effectiveness of specific measures taken; and
    - Other actions, as deemed appropriate.
- Actions may include changes to the policy and procedures, additional staff training, awareness and information dissemination about personal safety, risks and or well-being, campus security and safety arrangements, student online conduct, counselling services.

8. Records

Records associated with this policy will be maintained according to the *CHS Records Management Policy* and *Record Retention and Disposal Schedule*.

9. Related Documents

- CHS Employee Manual Incident Report Form
- CHS Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures

10. Related legislation

- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code 2018)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

11. Version Control

Document ID	CHSQF019
Category	Governance
Document Owner	Principal
Approved By	Board of Directors

Version	Summary of changes	Approval date	Review Date
1.0	Document Established	Academic Board: 11 September 2018 Board of Directors: 18 September 2018	20 September 2020
2.0	Monitoring process added. Minor editing and improvement	Board of Directors: 17 August 2020	31 July 2022

2.1	Minor changes in definition for CRICOS	Principal	31 July 2022

Appendix 1

Procedures in Case of a Student Death

In the case of a critical incident that results in the death of a student the Academic Registrar should form a taskforce comprising relevant officers. The taskforce is responsible for:

- Assessing risk and planning immediate response actions
- Liaising with emergency and other services
- Allocating individual roles and responsibilities for tasks
- Contacting appropriate persons which may include:
- Next of kin
  - Other students (those involved, friends)
  - Hospital
  - Counselling/support staff
  - The person assigned to deal with the media
  - Teaching/academic and other relevant staff
  - Student representatives
  - Contact Immigration Department (if relevant) or the Consulate, Sponsor, Accommodation provider (for overseas students).
- Liaising with other external bodies
- Arranging counselling of students and staff not directly involved in the incident
- Keeping careful records throughout the process
- Establishing what costs can be met by CHS
- Discussing fee reimbursement
- Investigating any insurance issues
- Arranging condolence letters to everyone involved
- Arranging Thank you letters
- Offering follow up support to those involved
- Reviewing critical incident procedure
- For overseas students, the responsibilities of the taskforce may also extend to:
  - Arranging a funeral or memorial service
  - Obtaining a copy of the death certificate and related documents
  - Arranging for repatriation
  - Arranging for the student's possessions to be stored or sent to his/her family.