



St. Thomas School & Pre-School

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Critical Incident and Trauma Policy

Rationale

Our school community may from time to time be faced with traumatic events that affect individuals in the community and/or the life of the school community as a whole.

Our school community is characterized by both diversity and interconnectedness, so that the lives of individuals affect the community as a whole.

The Gospel values invite us to welcome and care for all people, give special care to the vulnerable and to practice justice and service. These values call us to respond to traumatic events in the school community with well-planned guidelines that are respectful of all.

We seek to provide an environment which provides physical, spiritual and emotional security at all times, especially when managing traumatic events.

Our actions and responses give witness to our life as a Catholic school.

Purpose/Aims

Through the application of this policy, we St Thomas School & Pre-school aim to:

- Respond to any traumatic event in an informed and supportive manner which respects the requests of families involved as well as supporting the needs of individuals and the community
- Respond to any traumatic event in a manner that reflects the Catholic ethos of the school
- Provide support to all members of the school community who are affected, enlisting support from agencies or individuals from the wider community as appropriate
- Maintain the healthy functioning of the school life at all times
- Clarify the responsibilities of those dealing with traumatic events so they can respond in a spirit of co-operation and collaboration and in a way that reflects our mission as a Catholic school.

Guidelines

In support of this policy:

The Principal will:

- Provide clear guidelines and procedures to staff
- Provide relevant professional development in traumatic event management
- Ensure that the values of justice, service and respect are modelled and supported in all traumatic event management procedures
- Communicate with families in a sensitive manner
- Encourage those affected by a traumatic event to seek support and help
- Liaise with the Catholic Education Office regarding any matter involving the media

Staff members will:

- Ensure that they are accurately informed about any traumatic events so that they inform students accurately and appropriately and combat rumours
- Offer support for students and families in their care
- Support the school community in managing a traumatic event
- Allow open discussions of the event, working with counsellors if available
- Direct all media enquiries to the Principal
- Seek personal and/or professional help where needed to assist their response
- Document their own and student responses as required

Students will:

- Be reassured and supported by the staff and outside agencies if required.
- Be aware of and take responsibility for their own behaviour in response to traumatic events
- Respect and support the rights of other students, staff and themselves to continue to participate as far as possible in the teaching and learning processes when there is a traumatic event
- Offer care and support to their peers in an appropriate manner, seeking help where necessary

Parents and Caregivers will:

- Be actively involved, as primary role models and partners in the education process, in discussion and decision making about school policy
- Encourage their children to respect and support the rights of others and to be sensitive to the needs of those affected by critical traumatic events
- Inform the school of any traumatic event which is likely to affect their children's life at school and /or impact upon others in the community
- Read all the communication from the school so that they are informed of any traumatic event and so respond to their children's needs effectively
- Support the planned implementation of this policy and its regular review

Reporting a Serious Incident

A serious incident is 'an injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child' for which the attention of a medical practitioner was sought or ought reasonable to have been sought or the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital. [Regulation12(b)].

The notification of such incidents informs the regulatory authority that a serious incident has occurred so that it is able to take appropriate action, for instance an Authorised Officer may contact the service to seek further information or visit the service to investigate the matter.

A serious incident needs to be reported to the regulatory authority within 24 hours of the incident, using the S101 form. If it is not practical to notify using this form the important thing is for the notification to be made within 24 hours.

Related Documents

- [SMMS Emergency Evacuation Plans](#)
- [Administration Roles for Emergency Evacuation](#)
- [Catholic Safety, Health and Welfare S.A. Accident/ Incident/ Near Miss Reporting Policy](#)
- [Notification of Serious Incident Form S101](#)