

## Introduction

In the event of a critical incident, Moore Theological College (MTC) recognises that appropriate infrastructure must be in place beforehand to ensure the provision of all necessary support services.

This document outlines MTC policy, support mechanisms and procedures for managing a critical incident. This policy will ensure that MTC has:

- an effective approach in responding to critical incidents as they occur;
- appropriate support and counselling services available to those affected; and
- appropriate training and information resources provided to faculty and staff.

## Definition

A critical incident is defined by the National Code [under Standard 6] as 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such [within or outside Australia], which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'.

Critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:

- serious injury, illness, or death of a student or faculty member or staff member;
- students or faculty members or staff members lost or injured during fieldwork experiences;
- a missing student;
- severe verbal or psychological aggression;
- physical assault;
- student or faculty members or staff members witnessing a serious accident or incidence of violence;
- natural disaster e.g. epidemic, earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm, or extremes of temperature;
- traumatic incident within an international student's home country, such as a political coup, religious persecution, natural disaster;
- fire, bomb-threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard; or
- social issues e.g. sexual assault, drug use, alcohol abuse, internet abuse.

## Critical Incident Team

1. MTC has a Critical Incident Team to assist the Principal in the prevention and management of critical incidents at MTC, or off campus in the case of an overseas student for whom MTC has undertaken care responsibilities or other students, staff and Faculty involved in MTC-related activities.
2. The Chief Emergency Warden/OHS Officer (currently the Finance and Administration Manager) is the critical incident team leader.
3. The critical incident team also includes:
  - 3.1. the Vice Principal;
  - 3.2. the Dean of Students;
  - 3.3. the Overseas Student Advisor;
  - 3.4. a representative of the occupational health and safety committee (apart from the OHS Officer); and
  - 3.5. the student representative on the Board of Studies.
4. The responsibilities of the team include:
  - 4.1. risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action;
  - 4.2. analysis of requirements to address these hazards;

- 4.3. establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, community emergency services, hospital, poisons information centre, community health services;
- 4.4. 24 hour access to contact details for all students and their families [for overseas students this includes agents, consular staff, embassies, interpreter services];
- 4.5. 24 hour access to contact details for all relevant faculty or staff members needed in the event of a critical incident e.g. Principal, critical incident team leader (Finance and Administration Manager);
- 4.6. development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified;
- 4.7. assisting with implementation of critical incident plans;
- 4.8. dissemination of planned procedures (including provision of a brief summary of the Critical Incident Policy in plain English and highlighting the critical incident contact person for distribution to all students, and especially international students);
- 4.9. organisation of practice drills;
- 4.10. coordination of appropriate faculty and staff development; and
- 4.11. regular review of critical incident plans (including an annual review of contact numbers to ensure currency).

### **Critical Incident Procedures**

MTC critical incident plans assign responsibilities among relevant faculty and staff members, and cover all the actions to be taken and timelines for doing so.

1. Immediate Response [within 24 hours]
  - 1.1. Identification of the nature of the critical incident;
  - 1.2. notification of the critical incident team leader;
  - 1.3. implementation of appropriate critical incident plan;
  - 1.4. contact emergency services [under no circumstances are students/faculty/staff to be transported in private vehicles]<sup>1</sup>;
  - 1.5. if applicable secure or evacuate the area;
  - 1.6. ensure safety and welfare of students, faculty and staff;
  - 1.7. liaison with emergency services, hospital and medical services;
  - 1.8. liaison with appropriate government agencies (e.g Dep. of Health);
  - 1.9. managing media and publicity;
  - 1.10. contact and inform parents and family members;
  - 1.11. identify students and faculty and staff members most closely involved and at risk;
  - 1.12. assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved; and
  - 1.13. in the case of involvement of international student(s) liaise with Department of Immigration and appropriate embassy.
2. Secondary Response [48–72 hours]
  - 2.1. assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved [ongoing];
  - 2.2. provide students, faculty and staff and wider MTC community, with factual information as appropriate;
  - 2.3. arrange debriefing for all students, faculty and staff most closely involved and at risk;
  - 2.4. restore MTC to regular routine, program delivery, and community life as soon as practicable;
  - 2.5. completion of critical incident report; and

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<sup>1</sup> The appropriateness of this requirement is to be further researched with other providers who have already complied with the National Code.

- 2.6. Confirm availability of emergency accommodation in need for overseas relatives of international student(s).
3. Ongoing Follow-up Response
  - 3.1. identification of any other persons who may be affected by the critical incident and provide access to support services for community members;
  - 3.2. provision of accurate information to students, faculty and staff;
  - 3.3. arrangement of a memorial service and/or special chapel service as appropriate;
  - 3.4. maintain contact with any injured and affected parties to provide support and to monitor progress;
  - 3.5. monitor students, faculty and staff for signs of delayed stress and the onset of posttraumatic stress disorder; providing specialised treatment as necessary;
  - 3.6. evaluation of critical incident management;
  - 3.7. plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries;
  - 3.8. manage any possible longer term disturbances e.g. inquests, legal proceedings;
  - 3.9. notify relevant departments within the College which may need to follow-up student records such as Library, Registrar, Housing, Finance; and
  - 3.10. attend to personal effects of affected student(s) in the case of prolonged severe illness or death.

### **Media Releases**

MTC 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 to ensure the provision of accurate information, MTC has developed an agreed approach to media management.

1. The Principal normally handles all media releases
  - 1.1 the Principal gathers information, checks all facts, and determines the official MTC response;
  - 1.2 the Principal ensures training/advice is provided for all faculty and staff to respond to telephone or occasional enquiries following a critical incident;
2. The Principal may delegate media liaison to another member of faculty or staff
  - 2.1 the critical incident team leader is the delegated person to manage access of the media to the scene, and to students, faculty, staff and relatives
3. Where a media release is judged appropriate an email copy of the release will be provided to all students, faculty, staff and Governing 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 management plan 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 made available to the Principal, Academic Dean, Dean of Students, the Bursar, the Governing Board's Compliance Committee and the wider MTC community.

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