Mary MacKillop Memorial School

“This is what God asks of you only this
To act justly,
To love tenderly,
And walk humbly with your God”

Micah 6:8

Critical Incident Policy
MISSION STATEMENT

At Mary MacKillop Memorial School we, the parents, students and staff are committed to continuing the vision of our founders, Mary MacKillop and Julian Tenison Woods. We value and endeavour to provide an education of excellence and care in a family environment, being accessible to all while upholding the Catholic tradition based on the philosophy “In Omnibus Caritas” … In all things love and kindness.

RATIONALE

Mary MacKillop Memorial School has a Critical Incident Policy, which describes action to be taken when news is received of a tragic or traumatic event relating to an immediate member of the school community, i.e. staff or student. Insofar as it is focussed on sudden and unexpected death of staff or students, it is not designed to replace the normal response of the school in matters regarding a tragedy in the wider school community, i.e. parents and families of staff or students.

It provides a set of procedures to be followed to ensure that circumstances are handled compassionately and effectively. To a large measure, common sense will dictate the appropriate response. However, staff should familiarise themselves with this policy when the need arises.

Obviously the school as a whole, and individual members and groups, would make a response to tragedies in the wider community (e.g. the death of the parent or family of students or spouses or family of staff members) and where that involves participation by groups it would be normal to consult with the Principal (e.g. attendance of students at another student's family member's funeral).

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH CRITICAL INCIDENT OCCURS

Critical Incident occurs when student is not in school care

a. Staff member receiving the news directly from the family or other immediate source contacts the Principal.

b. Principal calls a staff meeting for all members of the staff. The Principal delegates a member of staff to take on role of Critical Incident Co-ordinator of response plan. The response procedure detailed in Section B below is then followed.

Critical Incident occurs in school day

a. Staff member first to student attends to the student involved, arranging any medical assistance and sends a student or teacher to locate the Principal.

b. Response procedure detailed in Section B below is then followed.

Critical Incident occurs on Excursion or Camp
a. Where a Critical Incident occurs on a school excursion or camp, the staff member in charge of the excursion or camp should:-

b. arrange required medical assistance

c. contact the Principal. The Principal will follow Section B below as appropriate.

SECTION B - CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCEDURES

The critical incident response team referred to in this section consists of the Principal, a Designated Member of Staff and the Class Teacher of student.

i. Principal advises Class Teacher of the circumstances and Principal visits distressed family. Principal asks parents/caregivers for permission to provide information on the death or situation to the school. Where there is a staff member who knows the family well, it may be appropriate for that person to accompany the Principal to visit the family.

ii. Depending on the perceived likely impact of the situation on the school community, external consultants may be asked to assist the school in providing support in implementing its response procedure. The Critical Incident Co-ordinator will contact relevant agencies if warranted (e.g. CEO). The need for support for staff will also be considered.

iii. In the case of the death of a student, attempts will be made at the meeting of the Staff to identify close friends of the student and plans made to locate them as soon as possible (which may be at the beginning of the next school day).

iv. If the Critical Incident occurs out of school hours, the staff will meet at 8.20 a.m. on the next school day. The Principal to contact the School Secretary. If news is received during a school day, a staff meeting is held at the next break - recess, lunch or end of school day.

v. At the staff meeting:-

Principal conveys the relevant facts of the situation to staff.

- Staff are given a written statement of the situation to enable them to present the matter to their class. Staff are given instructions on how to present the information and appropriate ways to respond to likely reactions.

- Staff will be advised that a meeting for interested staff will be held after school. to discuss any issues of concern arising from their experience with students during the school day.

vi. At the earliest possible time, the Critical Incident Co-ordinator locates immediate friends of the student who has died and together meets with them to convey the news and allow expression of responses associated with the event.
vii. Where it appears that a student has been particularly affected by the event, his/her parents/caregivers will be contacted directly by a member of staff to advise them of the situation and their child's response to it.

viii. The School Secretary is advised to put all telephone calls regarding the matter through to the Principal or Critical Incident Co-ordinator, except calls from the media, which are directed to the Principal. Information given will depend on the person calling. Standard responses will be prepared by the Principal in consultation with the CEO Principal’s Consultant.

ix. The Critical Incident Co-ordinator will arrange a staff meeting to review the situation within 24 hours of the staff meeting.

x. Religious Services:-
   - In the event of the death of a student, it is always a matter for the family of the student to choose a funeral service arrangement that meets their needs. This would usually be a parish matter. Unless otherwise requested by the family, the school will allow those students who wish to attend any religious service held for the deceased person to do so.
   - The Principal in consultation with staff members, will arrange an appropriate memorial prayer service at the school. Involvement with the service will be a matter of choice for students and staff.

xii. Parents/caregivers will be advised of the death of a member of the school community through an appropriate notice within the school Newsletter.

xiii. A staff meeting will be held one week after the initial meeting to review the situation in the school community and initiate any further responses.

xiv. Staff will be advised to be sensitive to "high risk" students for a period of at least six (6) months following the incident.

xv. A complete review of the school's responses to the Critical Incident and the effectiveness of the Response Procedures, will be undertaken by the staff at a date approximately one (1) month after the Critical Incident event occurs.

xvi. A checklist for staff is available from the Principal or CEO.

Development: 2003
Implemented: 2004
Reviewed: 2009
Ratified by School Board: 10/03/2009
Next Review: 2012