



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
COMMISSION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Policy:	Crisis Management Planning in Catholic Schools
Sub-Committee:	Audit and Risk Sub-Committee
Originally Released:	2010
Date for Review:	2018

1. Rationale

Catholic schools have a responsibility to provide a safe and supportive environment for staff, students and members of the community. Every aspect of the school's life should reflect a Christian pastoral dimension. The pastoral dimension of a Catholic school needs to include the mutual care and support staff demonstrate both towards each other and for their students. (Mandate,1-3).

Learning outcomes for students and the wellbeing of students, staff and community members can be adversely affected by crisis events. Appropriate planning and intervention can reduce the likelihood of such events and mitigate the impact should a crisis occur.

2. Definitions

Events that cause severe emotional and social distress may occur at any time and without warning. Such occurrences have been variously called Traumatic Incidents, Critical Incidents, Crises, Disasters and Emergencies.

Brock (2002) defines *crises* as 'Sudden, uncontrollable and extremely negative events that have the potential to impact an entire school community'.

Flannery and Everly (2000) describe a *crisis* as a response condition and the precipitating event, the stimulus, as a critical incident.

In schools, a crisis might be considered as any situation faced by staff or students that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions. These may have the potential to interfere with their ability to perform at the scene or later. Crises tend to be far outside of the normal experience of those involved and indeed of most of the population. Accordingly, the individual has little by way of guidelines from past experience on how to deal with the event or the reactions to it. Students have even less experience to draw on than adults and usually have a more restricted repertoire of coping responses. Sense of control and self-efficacy are likely to be reduced. Students are likely to be looking to those adults who usually provide support, guidance, direction and leadership to continue to fulfil these roles.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Catholic schools in Western Australia.

4. Principles

- 4.1 Catholic schools are safe and supportive environments where the 6 principles and 9 key elements of the National Safe Schools Framework (2011) are practised.

- 4.2 Catholic schools owe a duty of care to their students, staff and others who may visit the school or be involved in school activities.
- 4.3 Catholic schools take actions to:
- prevent crises or reduce the chance of these occurring and, where these may still occur, acting to mitigate the impact
 - prepare for crisis events by appropriate planning, training and education
 - respond with a rapid, organised and effective implementation of actions and mobilisation of resources
 - facilitate recovery by recognising that this is founded within the Planning, Preparation and Response elements (as described in the previous 3 bullet points) and by providing appropriate levels of support to the school community
- 4.4 Establishing an effective Crisis Management Plan requires a whole of school community approach that is consistent with the CECWA's Pastoral Care Framework, the school's Pastoral Care practices and the school's plans for more routine kinds of emergencies such as fire evacuation.
- 4.5 The response to particular kinds of crises, such as suicide, may increase the risk of imitative behaviour and require an approach which is different to that needed in other kinds of crises. Appropriate actions can reduce risk and have a protective influence.
- 4.6 The involvement and support of any bereaved parents/caregivers/family and other parents/caregivers who are closely involved are particularly important when putting in place support and recovery processes within the school.

5. Procedures

- 5.1 All schools shall develop a school-based Crisis Management Plan based on the Prevention, Preparation, Response, Recovery (PPRR) model. Alternatively, another similar, comprehensive approach may be followed as approved by the Coordinator, Psychology.
- 5.2 The Crisis Management Plan shall be informed by a comprehensive safety audit and assessment of vulnerabilities that might precipitate a crisis.
- 5.3 The Crisis Management Plan shall include statements defining the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school's Crisis Management Team, give indication of the kind of crisis the school might face and give broad information on the supports that might be available to aid recovery. Additionally, all staff members shall be made aware of their own responsibilities in crisis situations, where there is potential criminal activity Mandatory Reporting applies.
- 5.4 Schools in areas vulnerable to Bushfire or Catastrophic Weather conditions shall ensure appropriate attention is given to timely evacuation procedures. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES, formerly FESA, The Fire and Emergency Services Authority of WA) - Prepare, Act, Survive; Planning for Bushfire Protection Guidelines; Bushfire Survival Plan; and, Bushfire Factsheets and the Department of Education's The Principal's Guide to Bushfire are recommended for consideration in planning.
- 5.5 The Crisis Management Plan shall be developed using a broad, consultative, participative and educative process involving students, staff and parents whenever possible and appropriate. The completed Plan shall refer to any other relevant policies or procedures and shall be disseminated and promoted to the school community.

- 5.6 The Crisis Management Plan developed by schools shall be monitored and reviewed regularly. A recommended period is annually or immediately following any incident that invokes use of the Plan.
- 5.7 Key staff members shall undertake training in Crisis Management Planning in order to establish a knowledge base within the school.
- 5.8 When schools intend to use external agencies as part of crisis management, these agencies shall be involved from the planning stage so that there is agreement on roles and responsibilities.
- 5.9 Schools shall provide professional development and appropriate resources to meet the needs of their staff in implementing the school's Crisis Management Plan. This includes providing opportunities for appropriate drills or simulations.
- 5.10 Schools shall establish a record keeping process such that timely, comprehensive documentation is made and maintained on any incident which invokes use of the school's Crisis Management Plan.
- 5.11 Schools shall plan a communication process that is effective in difficult circumstances and that allows information to flow in a timely manner to and from those who need to know what is occurring, particularly when this is to include parents/caregivers.
- 5.12 Principals shall ensure that the Executive Director of Catholic Education and, for Order owned schools, the Congregational Leader are advised in a situation that would involve enactment of the school's Crisis Management Plan.
- 5.13 As part of the Non Government Schools Registration Standards, the Director or the Director's representative must notify the Department of Education Services of any critical and emergency school incidents, including:
 - circumstances that pose a critical risk to the health, safety or well-being of one or more students or staff;
 - incidents requiring school closure, lockdown, or reduction of number of students or staff attending;
 - death, or life-threatening injury, of a student or staff member at school, or following an incident that occurred while being educated.
- 5.14 Schools shall strive to maintain normal functioning during crisis situations.

6. References

- Bishops of Western Australia 2009, *Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia: 2009-2015*.
- Brock, S.E., *Crisis theory: a foundation for the comprehensive crisis prevention and intervention team*, 2002
- Brock, S.E., Lazarus, P.J. and Jimerson, S.R., *Best practices in school crisis prevention and intervention. Bethesda, Maryland, US: National Association of School Psychologists*, 2002
- Flannery, R.B.Jr. and Everly G.S.Jr., *Crisis intervention: A review*. International Journal of Emergency Mental Health, 2(2), 2000, 199-225
- Curriculum Corporation (2011). National Safe Schools Framework, <http://www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0>

Department of Education (2011) The Principal's Guide to Bushfire,
http://det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/cms-service/download/asset/?asset_id=13403357

Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) Prepare, Act, Survive and Planning for Bushfire Protection Guidelines,
http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/bushfire/BushfireManualsandGuides/FESA_Bushfire-Prepare_Act_Survive_Booklet.pdf

7. Related Documents

CECWA Child Protection policy

CECWA The Management of Confidential Information in Schools policy

Non Government Schools Registration Standards 2013,
http://www.des.wa.gov.au/Documents/Searchable/NGS_Registration_Standards_2013.pdf

CEWA, *Framework for the Development of Pastoral Care in Catholic Schools*, 2007

8. Related Proformas and other Forms

Nil.

9. Review History

Year of Review:	Reviewed by:	Amendments/Review
2010	SPC	Originally Released
2010	CEOWA	Reformatted
2013	SPC	Reviewed
2017	CEWA Policy Group	Reformatted

10. Next Review

Year:	Sub-Committee Responsible
2018	Audit and Risk Sub-Committee