

Critical Incident Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Australian Lutheran College (ALC) is committed to providing a safe environment for students and staff. This policy informs students and staff of ALC's approach to critical incident management and how it will support students and staff in the event of a critical incident.

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 staff
- students or staff lost or injured during fieldwork experiences
- a missing student
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- physical assault
- student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incidence of violence
- natural disaster e.g. earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm, or extremes of temperature
- fire, bomb-threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
- social issues e.g. sexual assault, drug use, alcohol abuse.

Related legislation (or Legislative context)

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01182>

Standard 6: Student Support Services

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
<https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Documents/National%20Code%202018%20Factsheets/Standard%206.pdf>

Policy

ALC has support mechanisms and procedures for managing a critical incident to ensure that ALC has:

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

Responsibility

The Principal is responsible for

- managing a critical incident in the first instance, but may seek the involvement of the wider University
- notifying the religious order a student belongs to, if such a student is involved in a critical incident
- managing a crisis situation involving international students, if the incident can be managed locally.

The University Secretary

- notifies the Commonwealth Government department with responsibility for international students if appropriate to do so in a crisis situation involving international students.

The University Vice-Chancellor

- is the public spokesperson for the University in relation to critical incidents.

Critical Incident Management

1. ALC has a Critical Incident Team to assist the Principal in the prevention and management of critical incidents at ALC, or off campus in the case of an overseas student for whom ALC has undertaken care responsibilities.
2. The Business Manager is the critical incident team leader.
3. The critical incident team also includes:
 - a. the Principal (as ALC pastoral leader)
 - b. the Overseas Student Support Officer
 - c. work health and safety representative
 - d. student representative
4. The responsibilities of the team include:
 - a. risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action
 - b. analysis of requirements to address these hazards
 - c. establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, community emergency services, hospital, poisons information centre, community health services
 - d. 24 hour access to contact details for all students and their families (for overseas students this includes agents, consular staff, embassies)
 - e. 24 hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident e.g. critical incident team leader, Principal, Business Manager
 - f. development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified
 - g. assisting with implementation of critical incident plans
 - h. dissemination of planned procedures
 - i. organisation of practice drills
 - j. coordination of appropriate staff development
 - k. regular review of critical incident plans

Critical incident procedures

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

Immediate response

(within 24 hours)

- 1.1. identify the nature of the critical incident
- 1.2. contact emergency services (under no circumstances are students/staff to be transported in private vehicles)
- 1.3. if applicable secure the area
- 1.4. ensure safety and welfare of staff and students
- 1.5. notification of the critical incident team leader
- 1.6. implementation of appropriate critical incident plan
- 1.7. liaison with emergency services, hospital and medical services
- 1.8. managing media and publicity
- 1.9. contact and inform parents and family members
- 1.10. identify students and staff members most closely involved and at risk
- 1.11. assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

Secondary response

(48–72 hours)

- 1.12. assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing)
- 1.13. provide staff, students, and wider ALC community, with factual information as appropriate
- 1.14. arrange debriefing for all students and staff most closely involved and at risk
- 1.15. restore ALC to regular routine, program delivery, and community life as soon as practicable
- 1.16. completion of critical incident report

Ongoing follow-up response

- 1.17. identification of any other persons who may be affected by the critical incident and provide access to support services for community members
- 1.18. provision of accurate information to students and staff
- 1.19. arrangement of a memorial service and occasional worship as appropriate
- 1.20. maintain contact with any injured and affected parties to provide support and to monitor progress
- 1.21. monitor staff and students for signs of delayed stress and the onset of posttraumatic stress disorder; providing specialised treatment as necessary
- 1.22. evaluation of critical incident management
- 1.23. plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries
- 1.24. manage any possible longer term disturbances e.g. inquests, legal proceedings

Media releases

ALC 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, ALC 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 ALC response.
 - 1.2. The Principal ensures training/advice is provided for all staff to respond to telephone or occasional enquiries following a critical incident.
2. The Principal may delegate media liaison to another member of staff.
 - 2.1. The critical incident team leader is the delegated person to manage access of the media to the scene, and to staff, students, and relatives.

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 staff, students, and local community representatives.
3. An evaluation report will be made available to ALC management team and the wider ALC community.

Related policy

[Critical Incidents Policy](#) (University of Divinity)