

Critical Incidents Policy and Procedure

Australian Sovereign College is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for staff and students. This policy underpins our approach to respond to critical incidents that may occur and impact on the people both studying and working at Australian Sovereign College. We are particularly mindful of our responsibility to support our students from overseas that do not have access to a normal support network.

Australian Sovereign College will advise students and staff on the actions they can take to enhance their personal security and safety. Australian Sovereign College will provide information on safety and awareness relevant to life in Australia and how to seek assistance for, or to report an incident that may impact their wellbeing.

A Critical Incident: is any sudden or progressive development (event) that requires immediate attention and decisive action to prevent / minimise any negative impact on the health and welfare of one or more individuals. Critical incidents may include (but are not limited to) events such as:

- Death/suicide.
- Serious accident or injury.
- Death or serious illness of a student's family or friends overseas (in their homeland).
- Removing an individual's liberty under duress, threats of violence, assault, rape/sexual assault, aggravated burglary, biological or chemical weapons found/ present.
- Fire, bomb, explosion, gas/chemical hazards, discharge of firearms.
- Threat of widespread infection or contamination.
- Civil unrest.
- Serious damage to essential facilities and or extreme disruption to operations at Australian Sovereign College; and
- Information which has the potential to negatively affect the reputation of Australian Sovereign College in the media and/or wider community.

Staff Responsibility

In the first instance the designated officer is any member of the staff who is witness to /or receives the information which triggers the critical incident.

If possible, the Chief Executive Officer is to be immediately called to the situation to assume control. In all cases the procedure below is to be followed:

Critical Incident Procedure

1. The Designated Officer (see definitions) is to assess the situation and consider any apparent risks to their own safety and those present.
2. Where the Designated Officer considers a critical incident involving threat to life or/ and triggering an emergency situation is occurring the Designated Officer is to contact Emergency Services by dialling 000 immediately and being put through to the appropriate service. See Accompanying contact numbers.
3. Provided there is no threat to personal safety in doing so, the Designated Officer is to take steps to minimise further damage or injury. This may involve organising willing bystanders to provide support.
4. The Chief Executive Officer or most senior staff member available is to assume responsibility for assessing the incident and forming a Critical Incident Team if deemed necessary.
5. As soon as practical the Chief Executive Officer or the most senior staff member available is to prepare a Critical Incident Initial Report outlining details re: the type of incident, the exact location and details of any person or persons who might be injured, or in distress and in need of counselling or at risk. Where persons affected include current students, a copy of the Student Written Agreement should accompany the report.
6. The Chief Executive Officer and Critical Incident Team/ other staff members, will review the situation, set priorities, allocate tasks/responsibilities and coordinate an immediate response including communications (to staff, students, families of those involved, helpers, and the media).
7. Where a staff member has assumed management of the critical incident, this person will consult with and/or take instruction from the Chief Executive Officer as necessary.
8. The Critical Incident Team will organise ongoing response/follow up (including staff briefing, counselling, review and reporting) as part of the process.
9. The Critical Incident Team will organise a de-briefing session to evaluate response procedures and make recommendations for ongoing actions if required.

10. The Critical Incident Team will produce a final report and make recommendations about handling any future critical incidents. Revision of this procedure may be part of that report.

Tasks and Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer or most senior staff member available will:

1. Head the Critical Incident Team.
2. Liaise with emergency services.
3. Liaise with Diplomatic Post/Embassy/Consulate.
4. Provide notification of critical incident to most Senior Staff Member.
5. Liaise with immediate family members or guardians if appropriate.
6. Convene Critical Incident Team.
7. Formulate and execute critical incident plan.
8. Organise debriefing, counselling, and follow-up; and
9. Oversee the retention and secure storage of all records relating to critical incident handling.

Informing the Police

The police must investigate all sudden unexpected death. Police actions include:

- Reporting the death to the coroner.
- Notifying Next of Kin.
- Obtaining official identification of the deceased (this must be done by a person who has known the individual for at least the past year); and
- Conducting investigations (interviewing witnesses or others involved).

Notifying Next of Kin

Once death/injury has been confirmed, the initial contact with next of kin / significant others needs to be considered carefully. The following questions may be helpful:

- What is the appropriate manner of contact?

- What were the circumstances of the tragedy?

Ongoing support

Maintain contact with those who may need ongoing support, often at times and in locations outside of the normal class routine. The following should be considered:

- Consideration should be given to personal contact with victims and those affected by the incident outside of normal hours. Family and friends are a priority. The Critical Incident Team will assess those affected by the incident and make referrals for counselling and/or advice to agencies outside of those normally used.
- Appropriate cultural responses may be put in place, interpreters may be provided, and overseas authorities, such as embassies and legations, notified.
- Where appropriate, staff and students may need to be directed to seek professional counselling. Counselling of staff and students will be a priority for incidents where trauma may be experienced. Special Leave will be considered where necessary.
- There may be a need to issue a written statement to staff and students, within the guidelines of the Privacy Act 1988 to inform them of the incident.
- There may be a need to identify others who may be affected by the incident to provide re-assurance and minimise distress.

It is important to return to normality as soon as possible. The Chief Executive Officer should meet with staff at the end of the working day to debrief staff and assist in the recovery process.

Dissemination of this Policy

A copy of this policy will be available on the Australian Sovereign College website. An emergency evacuation drill will be conducted by staff and include all new students at the commencement of each semester. This policy and procedure will be reviewed as part of the continuous improvement actions of Australian Sovereign College.

Record retention requirements relating to critical incidents.

Australian Sovereign College must maintain a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken for at least two (2) years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student. The CEO is responsible to oversee the retention and secure storage of all records relating to critical incident handling.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency and Support Services

Australian Sovereign College Emergency Contact details are included in the Student Handbook.

Service	Phone Number
Police	000
Fire Brigade	000
Ambulance Service	000
State Emergency Service	03 6173 2707