



SHAFSTON
www.shafston.edu

Critical Incident Policy

Critical Incident Policy

In the event of a critical incident, Shafston recognizes that appropriate infrastructure must be in place to ensure the provision of all necessary support services.

The document outlines Shafston's policy, support mechanisms and procedures for managing a critical incident. This policy will ensure that Shafston 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.

Elements required in a Critical Incident Policy

1. Preamble – key components of National Code 2007 Standard 6
2. Principles
3. Definition
4. Critical Incident Team
5. Action to be taken – action plan
6. Media management
7. Reporting and recording of incident and action taken
8. Follow-up and evaluation
9. Summary – Flow chart

The policy will also be accompanied by a detailed action plan and flow chart of activities.

1. Preamble

Under Standard 6 of the National Code 2007, Student Support Services, Registered providers must support students to adjust to study and life in Australia, to achieve their learning goals and to achieve satisfactory academic progress towards meeting the learning outcomes of the course.

The intention of standard 6 is to ensure that appropriate support services are available to international students to ease the transition into life and study in Australia and allow access to appropriate assistance for the student as needed.

In addition Registered providers must support students to adjust to study and life in Australia, to achieve their learning goals and to achieve satisfactory academic progress.

2. Principles

Shafston recognizes the duty of care owed to its students and that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential.

3. Definition

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

Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- Missing students;
- Severe verbal or physiological aggression;
- Death, serious injury or any threat of these;
- Natural disaster; and
- Issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse

Non life-threatening events could still qualify as critical incidents

4. Critical Incident Team / Coordinating Group

When a critical incident occurs the General Manager will call a meeting with the appropriate staff to form a Critical Incident Team.

The Critical Incident Team is responsible for:

- Assessing risks and response actions
- Liaison with emergency and other services
- Contact with students relatives and appropriate contacts
- Liaison with other external bodies, such as homestays, carers or foreign embassies, and
- Counselling and managing students and staff not directly involved in the incident

5. Action Plan

The Critical Incident Team will set in motion, a critical incident action plan to manage various aspects arising from the incident, including communication strategies. The General Manager or nominee, will call a meeting with the following staff or their nominees as a Critical Incident Team:

- Director
- General Manager
- International General Manager
- Director of Studies
- Heads of School
- Marketing Manager
- Course Coordinator(s)
- Counsellor(s)

At the initial meeting, the task of the group is to:

- Create for themselves a clear understanding of the known facts;
- Plan an immediate response;
- Plan ongoing strategies;
- Allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks.

Immediate Response

Issues to be considered:

1. Contact with next of kin/significant other(s) – what is the most appropriate manner of contact?
2. Arrangements for informing staff and students
3. Guidelines to staff about what information to give students
4. A written bulletin to staff if the matter is complex
5. Briefing staff and delegating a staff member to deal with telephone/counter inquiries
6. Managing media/publicity

7. Identification of those students and staff members most closely involved and therefore most at risk
 - Those directly involved
 - Personal friends/family of those involved
 - Others who have experienced a similar past trauma
 - Other students, staff, supervisors, etc.
8. Arrange a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with Counsellor(s). In this session, an opportunity is given to share the impact of the event, discuss various interpretations of the event in cultural/ethnic terms, the resulting sense of vulnerability, the experience of painful emotions and the normalization of reactions.
9. Organise a tasks timetable for the next hour(s), day(s), etc
10. Plan ongoing feedback and regular meetings so that the coordinating team is continuously in touch and working together.
11. Confirm access to emergency funds if necessary.
12. Ensure one member of the team is the scribe for all meetings to keep records of content and decisions.

6. Media Management

In many cases, the institution would prefer not to issue a press release upon the death of an international student. However, in anticipation of some requests for comment from the media, it is advisable to have a press release drafted by Media staff just in case.

Each critical incident is unique and the dynamics of each situation will have to be assessed when it occurs. It is important that a structured approach to media management is developed and is included in the management plan to ensure the most positive and supportive response from the media.

Take the media calls

The General Manager or nominated person should handle the initial media call. Be sure to return media call as soon as possible.

It is important that the department has an input in media coverage so that the story is balanced. Therefore avoid answering questions with "no comment". Respond to questions accurately, however it may be necessary to explain to the media that you are unable to answer their questions at this time because i) of the sensitive nature of the issue or ii) you do not have the information available. It may be necessary to check with the police, ambulance, or fire brigade, etc, before making a statement.

Channel all media inquiries through one person

The General Manager will liaise directly with the media as more details are known.

Determine what the official response will be

Media liaison officers and/or the Marketing Department may be able to provide advice to staff about other developments or broader issues that may need to be considered when framing the response. They may also be able to offer advice about the most effective methods of responding to newspaper, radio and television interviews.

It is appropriate, for example, to:

State the facts about what has occurred and what is being done (what action is being taken).

For example, when and where it occurred, how many people were involved or injured, how much damage has been done, etc.

Describe the assistance being provided for students and staff that may have been traumatized.

Explain that the whole college has been deeply shocked, that all available resources and support services have been gathered and what steps are being taken to rectify the situation and get things back to normal as soon as possible.

It is imperative to avoid making comments which imply blame or fault for any part of the incident, as there could be significant legal implications.

7. Reporting and record of incident and action taken

The Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) requires Shafston to notify DEEWR and DIAC as soon as practical after the incident and in the case of a student’s death or other absence affecting the student’s attendance, the incident will need to be reported via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS).

Key Details to be Reported

Key details to report include the time, location and nature of the incident (e.g., threat, accident, death or injury), names and roles of persons involved (e.g., staff, international or domestic student).

8. Follow up and evaluation

At the first opportunity when the event(s) has settled down, a thorough follow up and evaluation should take place to assess how well Shafston dealt with the event(s) and provide valuable information should there be a re-occurrence.

This checklist is to be filled out following a critical incident by those people that Shafston feel are able to provide constructive feedback about the Procedure for dealing with a critical incident, this may include; the Critical Incident Coordinating Group, the General Manager, etc.

The following is a list of questions regarding Shafston’s handling of a critical incident, please rate how well you feel Shafston handled or performed in the following areas with 1 meaning that Shafston acted or responded poorly 5 meaning that the actions of Shafston and its staff were appropriate and warranted.

1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good, 5=Excellent

Questions	1	2	3	4	5
Decisions were clear?					
Follow up on decisions was clear?					
Availability of mobile phones?					
Arrangements for visits to/from family?					
Liaison with Police, Doctors and Hospital Staff?					
Hiring Independent Interpreters?					
Death Notices?					
Funeral/Memorial Service Arrangements?					
Refund of Students fees to pay repatriation or associated expenses?					
Copy of Death Certificate?					
Consideration of personal items and affairs (household and academic)?					
Insurance matters, OHSC coverage, Ambulance cover?					
Formal Stress?					
Management Interventions required for students and/or staff (release					

from classes, leave, rescheduling assessment or exams)?					
Liaison with academic staff?					
Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required?					
Liaison with Department of Immigration and Citizenship if studies will be interrupted?					
Fees issues resolved for students unable to continue with their studies?					
Helping students gain access to legal aid if required?					
Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required?					
Follow up condolence or other letters to the family?					
Financial assistance for families of affected person(s) if residing in Australia?					
Organising staff/students for hospital visits?					

PREPARING OTHERS

Many staff members may respond that they are not qualified to handle international students in crisis. Eradicate this “us and them” attitude by engendering team-work among staff with regard to assisting international students. Let them know that they can be of invaluable assistance in a crisis by offering short-term training and workshops.

Establish and maintain your own network of ‘contacts’. Try to include as wide a variety of types and levels of staff as possible.

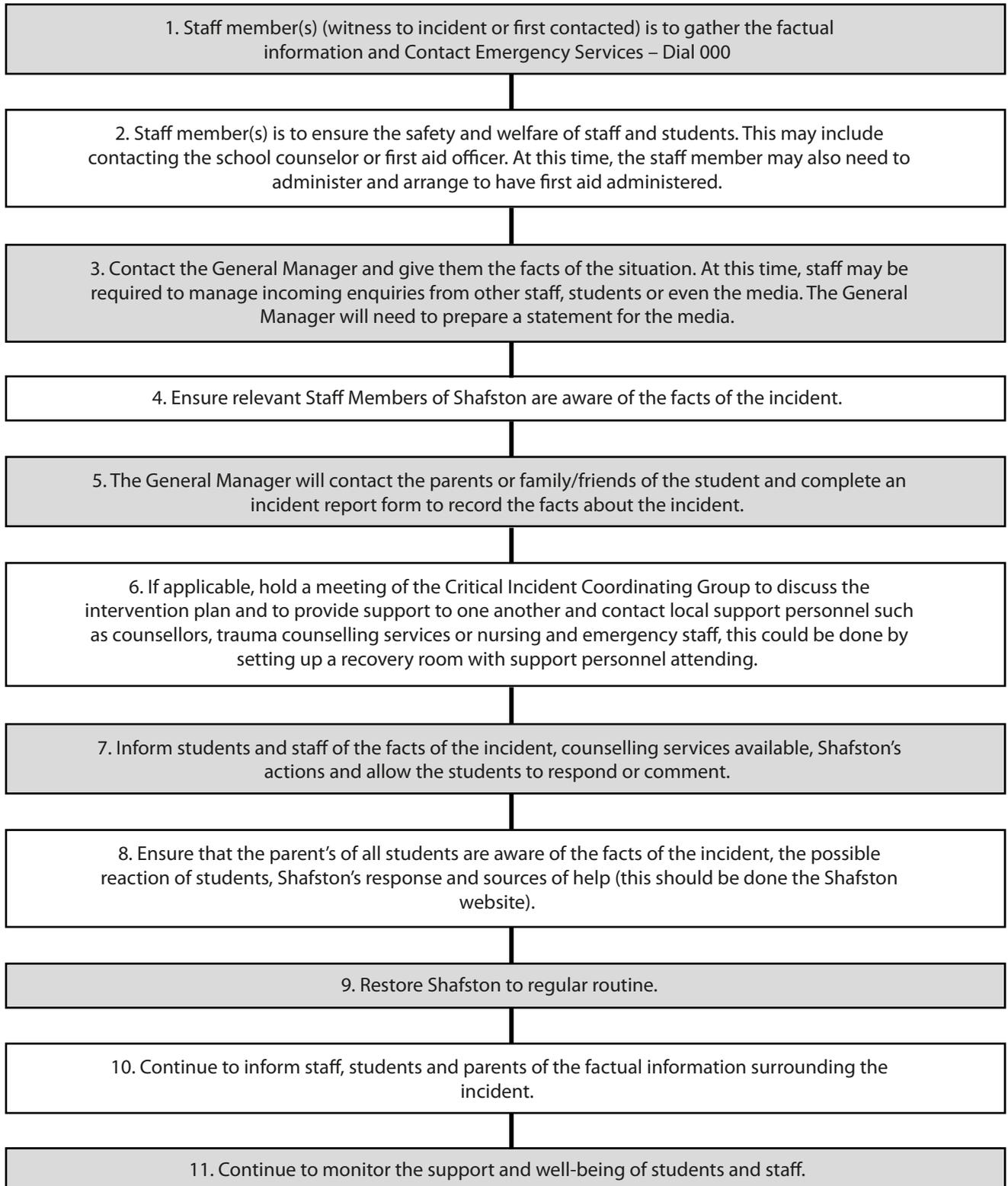
Keep in regular contact whether formally or informally, as these contacts will be your most reliable allies at a moment’s notice.

Conduct training regarding the Critical Incidents Policy for International Students. It is important for staff to be aware of the existence of such a policy.

Conduct a resource workshop to locate all relevant community resources in your immediate local area: Funeral Directors, Police and Medical Authorities, Religious Leaders Ethnic Group Leaders, Media Representatives, Insurance Representatives, local Embassy or Consular representatives.

Coordinate and conduct a mock exercise to simulate a Critical Incident. Have the exercise observed and assessed by an outside party.

Critical Incident Procedure



**CRITICAL INCIDENT EMERGENCY NUMBERS
AND CONTACT DETAILS**

POLICE 000
AMBULANCE 000
FIRE 000

- 1. Dial 000 and request the service that you need**
- 2. Remember to remain as calm as you can**
- 3. Speak clearly and give the requested details**

Type of Service	Name of Service	Tel. Number
AIDS advice and Counselling	AIDSLINE	1800 133 392
Abortion and Grief Counselling	Abortion and Grief Counselling	1300 363 550
Alcohol and Drug Counselling	Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Services	1800 177 833
Drug Counselling	Family Drug Support	1300 369 186
Coroner's Office	Office of State Coroner	07 3239 6193
Funeral Director	Australian Funeral Directors Association	03 9859 9966
Sexual Assault	Centre Against Sexual Assault	1800 806 292
Crisis Care	Crisis Care	1800 177 135
Pregnancy	Crisis Pregnancy	1800 650 840
Domestic Violence Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence 24X7	1800 811 811
Animal Diseases	Emergency Animal Disease Watch	1800 675 888
Problem Gambling Counselling	Gamblers Anonymous	1800 002 210
Quit Smoking	Quit Line	131 848
Suicide Help	Suicide Helpline	131 114
Poison Information	Poison Information Centre	131 126
Grief Counselling/Suicide Prevention	Salvation Army	1300 363 622
Interpreting Services	Qld Government Telephone Interpreters	131 450
Local Embassies or Consular Representatives	Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade	1300 555 135
Australian Search and Rescue	Australian Search and Rescue	1800 815 257

Notes

Critical Incident Recovery Timeline

Immediately (and within 24 hours)

- Gather the facts
- Ensure safety and welfare of all students and staff and arrange for first-aid if necessary
- Manage the media
- Set up a recovery room
- Keep staff, students and parents informed

Within 48-72 hours

- Arrange counselling as needed
- Provide opportunities for staff and students to talk about the incident
- Provide support to all staff and helpers
- Debrief all relevant persons
- Restore normal function as soon as possible
- Keep relevant parties informed

Within the first month

- Arrange a memorial service if appropriate
- Encourage parents to participate in a meeting to discuss the student's welfare
- Identify behavioral changes and the possibility of post traumatic stress disorder and refer to Health Contacts for Mental Health Services
- Monitor progress of hospitalized students or staff
- Monitor mental and physical health of all helpers

In the longer term

- Monitor staff and students for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post traumatic stress disorder – refer for specialized treatment if required
- Provide support if needed

In the long term

- Plan for and be sensitive for anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings