



MANAGING A SERIOUS INCIDENT

Definition:

A Serious incident is broadly defined as: 'an event which causes disruption to an organisation; or creates significant danger or risk that could traumatically affect individuals within the organisation; or impacts on the effective operation of workplaces; or attracts negative media attention or a negative public profile for the workplace'.

1. How to respond to a serious incident

Actions to be taken by the principal and other key staff should include the following:

1.1 Immediately

- assess the situation; contact emergency services, if necessary;
- arrange first aid and appropriate intervention to minimize additional injury, if required. Attend to injured persons.
It is vital that trained first aid staff provide emergency care for those with physical injuries, where possible.
Seek the assistance of relevant emergency services personnel upon arrival;
- if evacuation is required, implement the school's **evacuation plan** and manage the evacuation;
- ensure telephones are not used for anything other than the emergency;
- where there are threats of violence from individuals coming on to school property, explosions or any other incident of an exceptional nature where a rapid response is required, contact the school principal (or the delegated authority) for confirmation to call the police.
- contact injured person's parents or family, if required; and
- the principal should ensure that the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the school's public relations' representative is immediately aware of the situation, and, if required, seek on site support to deal with the media and provide advice to parents or family.

1.2 As soon as possible

- ensure (if applicable) a media release statement is prepared.
- the school's liability Insurer is aware of the situation (if applicable), and any requirements are adhered to.
- offer support and facilitate counseling for those directly and indirectly affected.
Organise support groups and counseling.
- organise assistance, such as transport home, for staff or students who are distressed;
- provide staff and students with accurate information about the current situation and update this over subsequent days, unless there is a legal or privacy issue that prevents this from occurring;
- act quickly to dispel rumours;
- forward an accident report form to WorkCover within seven days in the event of death or serious injury at the workplace, or in the event of a dangerous occurrence at the workplace;
- consistent with the welfare needs of students and staff, return the workplace to a normal situation in as short a time as is practicable.

- it is important that all staff are aware of emergency plans and procedures, so that the plan can be implemented if workplace managers or other staff with key responsibilities are unavailable or injured at the time of a serious incident occurring.

2. Calling & Helping Police in the event of a serious crime

- In the event of a serious incident which requires Police attendance, principals should:
- prevent any actions which could lead to loss or disturbance of evidence.
- the area should be cordoned off if possible and nothing touched or moved.

2.1 In particular, DO NOT:

- pick up a weapon, look at it and put it back
 - use or flush a toilet that could lead to loss of evidence
 - use telephones that might result in the loss of fingerprint evidence
 - remove items from the scene
 - walk unnecessarily around the scene.
- Trace evidence, footwear and tyre impressions can easily be obliterated in this way
- drive over and destroy the tyre prints of offenders' vehicles.

3. Principals should also consider the following when assessing the scene of an incident:

- Hazards including blood which may be contaminated when arranging or rendering assistance to any person in need.
- Maintenance of locks and shutters to prevent intrusion by unauthorized people, intruders, or students who have been 'locked out' as part of a 'lock down' procedure.

4. Reporting on a 'Serious Incident':

- The Joseph Varga School follows the same procedure for reporting 'Serious Incidents' as it does for reporting 'Critical Incidents', with the addition that emergency services will be involved.
- Differentiating between 'Serious' and 'Critical' Incidents at JVS requires more professional development and policy and procedure revisions and updates.

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