

## DEALING WITH CRITICAL INCIDENTS POLICY



### 1. RATIONALE

Gleeson College is committed to ensuring all members of its community are provided with a safe and healthy environment. This will be achieved, in part, by minimising the impact of critical incidents.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all staff are aware of what to do when a critical incident arises directly involving Gleeson staff and/or students and/or caregivers.

These procedures are in addition to the usual wellbeing support and pastoral care offered to staff, students and families.

Critical Incidents are defined as: events or information that have, or have the potential to, significantly harm either individuals within our schools or the reputation of Catholic Education or the Catholic Church. This will include all serious matters and any matters of child protection, historical abuse cases, or which involve SAPOL or potential interest from the media or leaders in Church or Government. Critical Incidents occur when a person experiences or witnesses a sudden traumatic stressor which has the potential to harm life or wellbeing. This sudden unexpected event may be violent and shocking. Such events can challenge our ability to cope and our sense of security. They could include:

- Major injury
- Serious traffic crash/accident
- Death – accidental or following an illness
- Violent or difficult family break-up
- Suicide or attempted suicide
- self-harm
- Abduction
- Intruder on campus
- Bomb threat
- Sexual assault
- Terminal illness – staff or student or parent
- Fire
- Hazardous substance spill or explosion
- Natural disaster (bushfire, earthquake, flood, violent storm)

In the event of a critical incident, it is important that Principals receive timely, first responder advice. The Schools Performance Leader (SPL) associated with a school is the immediate point of contact for critical incidents.

### 2. AIMS

- 2.1.** To respond to any traumatic event in an informed and supportive manner, which respects the requests of families involved, as well as supporting the needs of individuals and the community
- 2.2.** To respond to any traumatic event in a manner that reflects the Catholic ethos of Gleeson College
- 2.3.** To provide support to all members of the Gleeson College community who are affected, enlisting support from agencies or individuals from the wider community as appropriate

- 2.4. To maintain the healthy functioning of Gleeson College life at all times
- 2.5. To clarify the responsibilities of those dealing with traumatic events so they can respond in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration and in a way that reflects our mission as a Catholic Secondary College
- 2.6. To follow an agreed best practice protocol, which is readily available to members of the Gleeson community.

### 3. BROAD POLICY

The Gleeson College community may from time to time be faced with traumatic events that affect individuals in the community and/or the life of the College community as a whole.

The Gleeson College community is characterised by both diversity and interconnectedness, and therefore, the lives of individuals affect the community as a whole.

The Gospel values invite us to welcome and care for all people, to give special care to the vulnerable, and to practice justice and service. These values call us to respond to traumatic events in the Gleeson College community with well-planned guidelines that are respectful of all.

We seek to provide an environment, which provides physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing and security at all times, especially when managing traumatic events.

Our actions and response give witness to our life as a Catholic College.

### 4. GUIDELINES

4.1 *The Principal will follow Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) guidelines and make contact with CESA as required and will:*

- 4.1.1 Provide clear guidelines and procedures to staff through the Critical Incident Protocol document.
- 4.1.2 Provide relevant professional development in traumatic event management.
- 4.1.3 Ensure that the values of justice, service, respect and confidentiality are modelled and supported in all traumatic event management procedures
- 4.1.4 Communicate with families and media in a sensitive manner when necessary.
- 4.1.5 Ensure that the spiritual and emotional needs of the community are met.
- 4.1.6 Encourage those affected by a traumatic event to seek support and help.

4.2 *All staff members will:*

- 4.2.1 Ensure that they are accurately informed about any traumatic events, so they in turn understand any confidentiality issues and inform students accurately and appropriately so as to minimise rumours.
- 4.2.2 Offer support for students and families in their care.
- 4.2.3 Support the Gleeson College community in managing a traumatic event.
- 4.2.4 Allow open discussion of the event, working with counsellors.
- 4.2.5 Direct all media enquiries to the Principal.
- 4.2.6 Seek personal and/or professional help where needed, to assist their response.
- 4.2.7 Document their own, and student responses and needs, as required.

4.3 *Students will:*

- 4.3.1 Be reassured and supported by Gleeson College through its staff and appropriate external agencies.

N/A	Policy Number	Implemented	2012
APSD	Evaluation Group	Evaluated	2023
3 years	Evaluation Frequency	Next Evaluation	2026

- 4.3.2 Be aware of, and take responsibility for, their own behaviour in response to traumatic events.
- 4.3.3 Respect and support the rights of other students, staff and themselves to continue to participate as far as possible in the teaching and learning processes when there is a traumatic event.
- 4.3.4 Offer care and support to their peers in an appropriate and confidential manner, seeking help where necessary.
- 4.4 *Parents/Caregivers will:*
  - 4.4.1 Be actively involved, as primary role-models and partners in the education process, in discussion and decision making about this policy.
  - 4.4.2 Encourage their children to respect and support the rights of others and to be sensitive to the needs of those affected by critical traumatic events.
  - 4.4.3 Inform Gleeson College of any traumatic event which is likely to affect their children's life at the college and/or impact upon others in the community.
  - 4.4.4 Read all communication from Gleeson College, so that they are informed of any traumatic event and therefore respond to their children's needs effectively.
  - 4.4.5 Support the planned implementation of this policy and its regular review.

## 5. BASIS OF DISCRETION


- 5.1 The Principal will follow CESA guidelines and contact the CESA as indicated.
- 5.2 The Principal is responsible for ensuring adequate resources are made available to implement this policy. The Principal is also responsible for the implementation of this policy by ensuring all staff understand the policy and appropriate procedures, including confidentiality issues.

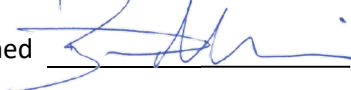
### ***Critical Incident Response Team Members***

- Principal
- Deputy Principal/Assistant Principal (Student Development)
- Counsellor/s
- House Leader/s
- Principal Consultant (School Performance Leader SPL)
- 5.3 In dealing with the media, the Principal (or nominee) is the official spokesperson for the school. The Principal may obtain assistance from the Principal Consultant (School Performance Leader SPL) to work with the media.
- 5.4 For other enquiries from parents, the Executive Assistant and office staff will refer phone and other enquiries to the Principal, or any of his/her designated representatives, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Counsellors or House Leaders.

## 6. EVALUATION

The Leadership Team is responsible for the evaluation of this policy which will take place every 3 years. The policy should be considered by members of the Leadership Team as the key team within Gleeson College for Planning, Policy and Review. They may wish to seek opinions from other staff, parents and students as to the effectiveness of the policy.

Signed  Principal or delegate Dated 05/05/2023

Signed  Chairperson of Board or delegate Dated: 7.5.23

*This Policy now replaces all previous versions and evaluations of this Policy originally implemented in 2012.*