SILVER TREE
STEINER SCHOOL

Critical Incident and Emergency Management Procedures

2026

Excludes bushfire *– refer to 'Bushfire Emergency and Management Plan.'*
Excludes Lockdown & Intruder *– refer to 'Lockdown Emergency Management Procedure'*

This policy applies to: Board of Governors, all staff, contractors and visitors.

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Background

All schools are legally required to provide a safe environment for students, staff, volunteers, and visitors. This duty of care includes having an effective and well-communicated emergency management policy that is regularly reviewed and practiced.

Under the Non-Government School Standards, schools must implement a Critical and Emergency Incidents Policy that covers all reportable incidents, ensures timely response and recovery, and prioritises student wellbeing. The policy must also require:

- Full documentation and reporting of all incidents
- Notification of the governing body by the Head of School
- Reporting of any reportable incident to the Director General within 48 hours, using the prescribed form

Purpose

This policy outlines Silver Tree Steiner School's approach to managing critical incidents and emergencies - excluding bushfires, which are covered separately in the Bushfire Emergency and Management Plan.

The procedures are designed to minimise harm, support recovery and ensure continuity of learning, with the health, safety and wellbeing of students as the highest priority. Led by the Head of School (or delegate) as Chief Warden, the School's response to on-site and off-site critical and emergency incidents will address both physical and psychosocial impacts on students, staff and other affected members of the school community.

Psychosocial considerations will be integrated throughout planning, response and recovery, including appropriate measures to reduce distress, identify and support individuals who may be particularly affected, and promote the ongoing recovery and wellbeing of the school community.

The School follows the principle of *prudent reaction and rapid de-escalation*, favouring a strong initial response that can be scaled back if needed.

To ensure readiness and effective management, the School will:

- Implement a Critical Incident and Emergency Management Plan structured around Prevention, Preparation, Response, Recovery, and Review
- Form a Crisis Management Team
- Maintain systems for rapid and coordinated responses
- Collaborate with emergency and support services as needed
- Provide training and induction for staff, especially in leadership roles
- Offer support and counselling to affected students, staff, and families
- Continually evaluate and improve its emergency response processes

Definitions

In the context of this policy, the following terms are defined to ensure consistent understanding and use within the school community:

- **Crisis**
  A significant event or situation that may threaten the school's safety, reputation, financial stability, or wellbeing of staff and students. A crisis may develop gradually or escalate suddenly if not managed effectively. It may involve an incident, an allegation, or emerging issue and does not always require immediate action, allowing time for considered planning.
- **Crisis Management**
  The structured approach an organisation takes to respond to and recover from a crisis, aiming to protect people, property, reputation, and operations.
- **Crisis Management Plan (CMP)**
  The school's documented strategy for identifying, responding to, and recovering from a crisis situation.
- **Crisis Management Team (CMT)**
  The group of people set aside to deal with a particular crisis or all crises. It would usually include senior leadership and governance personnel.
- **Critical Incident**
  An event likely to cause psychological or emotional trauma, either immediately or over time, and which may significantly disrupt the functioning of individuals, groups, or the school community.
- **Disaster**
  A sudden, often unpredictable event - such as a natural catastrophe or major accident - that results in extensive damage or loss of life.
- **Emergency**
  A situation requiring immediate response, typically characterised by:
  a) a threat to the school,
  b) an element of surprise, and
  c) limited time to make decisions.
  While some policies treat emergencies and crises differently, others view them interchangeably. For clarity, see also *Critical Incident*.
- **Emergency Management Team (EMT)**
  The team responsible for the initial response to an emergency. This may include leadership staff, first aid staff, grounds/maintenance staff, and designated teaching staff.
- **Grooming**

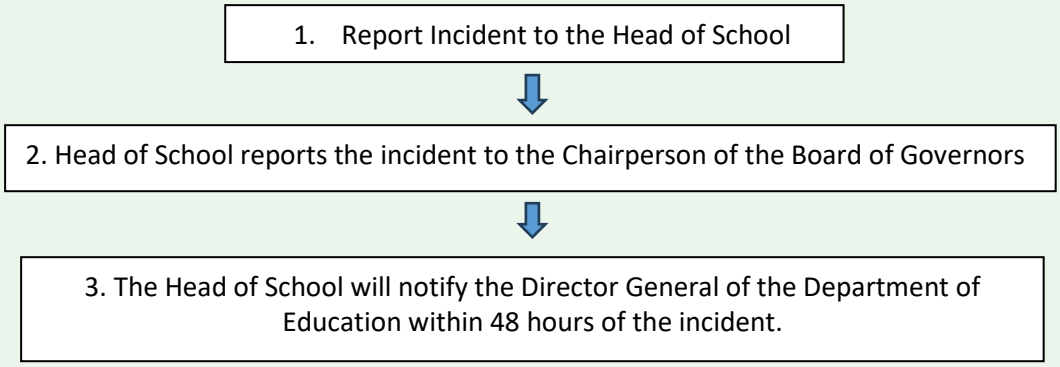
  In relation to Reportable Incidents, grooming is defined as the use of manipulative and controlling techniques to establish trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour, with the aim of facilitating exploitation and/or avoiding exposure.
- **Incident**
  A low-level issue or event with minimal immediate impact. While it may not require senior leadership involvement at the time, it must be recorded (e.g., in the Incident Register) to monitor trends and inform future risk mitigation strategies.
- **Incident Manager**
  The person responsible for leading the response to an emergency or critical incident, usually the Head of School or their appointed delegate.
- **Trauma**

  In relation to Reportable Incidents, Trauma is defined as a psychological wound or injury suffered at school or during a school-related activity.

Reportable Incidents

A 'subset' of all critical and emergency incidents is referred to as *'reportable incidents'*. Reportable incidents must be reported to the board of governors and must also be notified to the Director General of the Department of Education, as soon as practicable and in any event, within 48 hours of the incident. The Director General must be notified of a *reportable incident* using the *Reportable Incident Notification form*, that is available from the Department of Education's website.

Flow Chart for Reportable Incidents



The following are reportable incidents and must be reported to the Head of School, as required in Step 1 of the Flow Chart for Reportable Incidents. These events can occur at the school, offsite, and may occur outside of school hours.

- The death of a student, staff member or visitor who is at school or during a school-related activity, or following an incident at school or during a school-related activity.
- An incident requiring a police or other emergency services response when a student appears to have been taken or removed from the school or from a school-related activity without proper authority, or goes missing and cannot be accounted for.
- An incident requiring the school to be locked down or to evacuate staff and students, or reduce the number of students or staff attending, or to close for any duration for health or safety reasons.
- The receipt of a complaint or allegation of child abuse, including but not limited to sexual abuse, committed against a student by:
    - a staff member or another student; or
    - another person on the school premises or during a school-related activity; whether the abuse is alleged to have occurred recently or in the past.
- Issuing a formal warning, a suspension or ceasing the employment of a staff member for a breach of the school's Code of Conduct involving suspected grooming behaviour.
- An actual or potential injury, illness or trauma of a student, staff member or visitor who is at school or during a school-related activity, or following an incident at school or a school-related activity and where the incident has resulted or may result in significant impact.

  (The following guidance is provided re: Significant Impact Characteristics
    - Police, Ambulance, Fire and Emergency Services, WorkSafe or Child Protection and Family Support notified or involved.
    - In respect of an actual injury, illness or trauma the apparent medical prognosis at the time is that the incident is likely to result in longer term Physical or Psychological impairment.
    - Normal school operations or activities are significantly disrupted or cease.
    - School has commenced a review to mitigate future risk and/or action has been taken against students or staff to prevent imminent harm.)

It is a requirement that all critical and emergency incidents are documented at the school itself and that school policies and procedures are reviewed for their effectiveness and appropriateness after each such incident.

Some of the emergencies listed will have a specific policy response that has been developed. The Emergency Management Plan may describe the appropriate response to a number of emergencies that do not have their own dedicated policy response. See Section 2 for further detail.

The school commits to managing all incidents in the best interests of affected students.

Section 1: Prevention and Preparedness

This part of emergency planning focuses on identifying the risks the school may face and putting measures in place, both physical and procedural, to prevent emergencies or reduce their impact.

As part of emergency planning, the School will consider students, staff and other members of the school community who may be particularly vulnerable to psychological distress following a critical incident, including individuals with existing vulnerabilities, previous exposure to trauma or a close connection to persons involved in the incident. This will be coordinated by the Head of School.

Risk Analysis & Treatment

The Head of School will:

- Identify and assess all potential risks on-site and off-site that:
    - have the potential to become emergencies or critical incidents,
    - might affect site operations.
- Work with other agencies, like hazard management groups, to understand risks better.
- Follow the school's *Risk Management Policy* to assess these risks and come up with ways to reduce or prevent them.
- Implement strategies to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of emergencies or critical incidents.
- Communicating the plan to all staff.
- Organise training of key staff.
- Test and review the *Emergency Management Plan* annually.

Emergency Control Organisation (ECO) / Crisis Management Team (CMT)

Because Silver Tree Steiner School is small, the Emergency Control Organisation (ECO), Emergency Management Team (EMT), and Crisis Management Team (CMT) are all the same group. It will be referred to as the ECO throughout this document.

The ECO is a team of school staff who will respond quickly in an emergency to protect people, the school's property and reputation. They make fast decisions during a crisis to keep everyone safe: students, staff, visitors and contractors.

The School's Leadership Team will act as the Emergency Control Organisation.

See **Section 2** for details of ECO Roles and Duties.

Training Schedule & Arrangements

For emergencies to be handled well, everyone in the ECO, staff, and students need to know what to do.

The School will:

- perform annual Lockdown drills.
- perform building evacuation drills each year.
- deliver training to all staff, relevant to their role, as part of a staff induction.
- provide regular refresher training as needed.
- Implement psychosocial considerations into drills and debriefs.

Section 2: Response

Incidents are to be managed in such a way as to:

- Give the highest priority to the best interests of the student/s affected.
- Minimise trauma and distress to students and staff.
- Identify and respond appropriately to the psychosocial needs of affected members of the school community.
- Minimise property damage.
- Ensure the education program is maintained or resumed as quickly as possible.

Response Sequence

1. Assess the situation, call emergency services, assist those in danger.
2. Evacuate students, staff and visitors, if appropriate.
3. Inform the Board of Governors.
4. Organise resources, advise parents.
5. Enact recovery operations and return site to normal.
6. Report critical incident to the Director General of critical and emergency incidents within 48 hours, by using the critical and emergency incident report form

Emergency Contacts

Agency		Phone Number
WA Police	Life-threatening or time critical emergency	000
	Non-life-threatening incident requiring Police response	131 444
	Mundaring Police Station	9290 1900
Ambulance, Fire and Police		000
State Emergency Service		132 500
SJOG Midland Hospital		9462 4000
Poisons Information Centre (SCGH)		13 11 26
Gas (ATCO Gas Australia) – Faults & Emergencies		13 13 52
Electricity (Western Power)		13 13 51
Water Corporation		13 13 75
Health Direct		1800 022 222
Local Government – Shire of Mundaring		9290 6666
Environment Watch		1300 784 782
Mundaring Christian College (Parkerville Campus)		9295 2688
Parkerville Steiner College		6158 6738
Parkerville Children and Youth Care		9235 7000
Parkerville Grove School		6386 7900

See Appendix A for community contacts, including psychosocial supports. Emergency contact details for staff members are kept with the Head of School, School Officer and the emergency bag in the office.

Emergency Control Organisation (ECO) Roles and Duties

Positions on the Emergency Control Organisation shall consist of a Chief Warden as a minimum. Other positions as deemed necessary may include:

- Area Wardens
- Traffic Wardens
- First Aid Officer
- Communications Officer
- Evacuation Wardens
- Runners

All roles must prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of students above all other considerations.

The Chief Warden Role

(White Hat)

The Chief Warden is responsible for leading the school's emergency response and ensuring the safety of all occupants during an emergency or drill. The first available person in the following order will assume the Chief Warden role:

1. The Head of School
2. Education Coordinator
3. Business Manager
4. Operational Coordinator

Primary Responsibilities

- Take control of the emergency response and evacuation procedures until emergency services arrive and take over.
- Ensure the safety and well-being of all students, staff, and visitors during the emergency.

Actions During an Emergency

1. Upon activation of an emergency signal or notification, proceed immediately to the assembly point and take command of the situation.
2. Contact the relevant Warden(s) to gather information about the nature and location of the emergency.
3. If required, initiate evacuation of affected buildings or area(s).
4. Make sure that the relevant authorities have been notified, e.g. Fire Brigade, Police and/or Ambulance.
5. Ensure emergency services (e.g. Fire Brigade, Police, Ambulance) are contacted promptly.
6. Support and assist emergency services as needed when they arrive.
7. Confirm that all occupants have been evacuated by coordinating with Area Wardens mark off cleared areas on the checklist.
8. Maintain communication with the Wardens throughout the incident.
9. Once the situation is resolved or the drill has ended, notify all occupants when it is safe to return to the building.

Area Wardens Role

Every teacher at the school acts as an Area Warden and plays a key role in managing the safe evacuation of their classroom or area during an emergency.

Primary Responsibilities

- Take responsibility for their classroom/area during an emergency.
- Ensure all students and other occupants are safely evacuated from their classroom to the designated Assembly Area or Safe Building.

Actions During an Emergency

Upon receiving notification of an emergency:

- Prepare:
  - Collect emergency equipment (e.g. class list, student medication).
  - Remain at your classroom or designated area and await instructions from the Chief Warden.
- Evacuate (when instructed):
  - Begin evacuating your classroom or area when directed by the Chief Warden.
  - Ensure all individuals exit the area calmly and quickly.
- Check the Area:
  - Physically search your entire classroom or designated area, including storage areas and toilets.
  - If a door is locked, knock loudly and call out. If there is no response, move on.
- Assist Where Needed:
  - Help any person with a disability or requiring assistance to evacuate safely.
- Secure the Room:
  - Turn off air-conditioners, ovens, and lights.
  - Close all doors behind you during evacuation.
- Report to Chief Warden:
  - Once your area is clear and you arrive at the Assembly Area, report to the Chief Warden and confirm your area is cleared.
- Follow Further Instructions.

First Aid Officer

(Green Hat or White Hat with First Aid symbol)

The School Receptionist will perform the duties of the First Aid Officer. In their absence, another staff member with current First Aid qualifications may assume this role.

Primary Responsibilities

To provide first aid to anyone who is injured or in need of medical assistance during an emergency, while maintaining personal safety.

Actions During an Emergency

On being notified of an emergency:

1. Go directly to the nominated classroom or area where assistance is required.
2. Wait for directions from the Chief Warden before taking further action.

3. Provide first aid as instructed by the Chief Warden, until emergency medical services arrive or first aid is no longer needed. Prioritise safety—**do not put yourself at risk** while assisting others.
4. Evacuation Procedure:
    - If the evacuation signal is given, proceed to the Assembly Area.
    - Remain available for further instructions from the Chief Warden.

Important Note: First Aid Officers must not endanger their own safety in the course of providing assistance.

Psychosocial Response

Once immediate safety and emergency response requirements have been addressed, and as soon as practicable, consideration must be given to the psychosocial impact of the incident on students, staff and other affected members of the school community. The level and type of response will be proportionate to the nature of the incident and the needs of those affected.

The Head of School (or delegate), in consultation with appropriate wellbeing staff, will coordinate the psychosocial response. This may include:

- **Identifying those affected**, including persons directly involved or exposed to the incident and others who may be significantly impacted due to their relationship or connection to those involved.
- **Identifying individuals who may require additional support**, taking into account factors such as their level of exposure to the incident, developmental needs, existing vulnerabilities, previous experiences of trauma or loss, and observed level of distress.
- **Providing immediate practical and emotional support** in a calm, reassuring and developmentally appropriate manner, with a focus on promoting safety, stability and connection to trusted adults and support networks.
- **Minimising further distress**, including unnecessary exposure to distressing information, images, discussion or the incident scene.
- **Engaging appropriate internal or external support services** where the needs of an affected person are beyond the capacity of the School's immediate response.
- **Supporting affected staff**, including staff directly involved in the incident and those responsible for supporting students or managing the emergency response.
- **Communicating sensitively with parents/carers and the school community**, providing timely and factual information while respecting the privacy and wellbeing of those affected and avoiding unnecessary or distressing detail.
- **Monitoring the wellbeing of affected persons** during and immediately following the incident and ensuring that any identified need for ongoing support is incorporated into the recovery response.

Support should be responsive to individual circumstances. Students and staff should not be required to recount or discuss their experience unless necessary for safety, incident management or another lawful purpose. Where appropriate, parents/carers should be involved in decisions regarding ongoing support for a student.

Psychosocial support does not conclude when the immediate emergency response ends. Any persons identified as requiring ongoing monitoring, additional assistance or referral will transition to the psychosocial recovery arrangements outlined in the Recovery section of this Procedure.

Person/s Responsible	Psychosocial Responsibility
HOS / Incident Controller	Overall oversight and decisions
Leadership Team	Coordinate psychosocial assessment and support
Education Coordinator with assistance from Teachers	Identify and monitor affected/vulnerable students
Line Managers: HOS and Business Manager	Monitor and support affected staff
HOS	Ensure communications are timely, accurate and sensitive
Administration staff as directed by HOS/BM	Maintain appropriate records and contact information

Procedures for Specific Incidents and Emergencies Raising the Alarm

Raising The Alarm

If a staff member identifies an emergency, they must take the following steps:

1. **Notify Reception:**
    - Immediately inform the Receptionist of the emergency situation.
    - The Receptionist will then contact the **Head of School**, or if unavailable, a member of the **Leadership Team**.
2. **Emergency Services Notification:**
    - Direct the Receptionist (or another responsible adult) to:
        - Call **Emergency Services** by dialling **000**.
        - Stay in the office to manage incoming and outgoing calls—**only if it is safe to do so**.

False Alarms

If no fire / emergency is confirmed, the Chief Warden must:

1. Inform staff/visitors that it was a false alarm.
2. Meet the emergency service on arrival and update them on the situation.

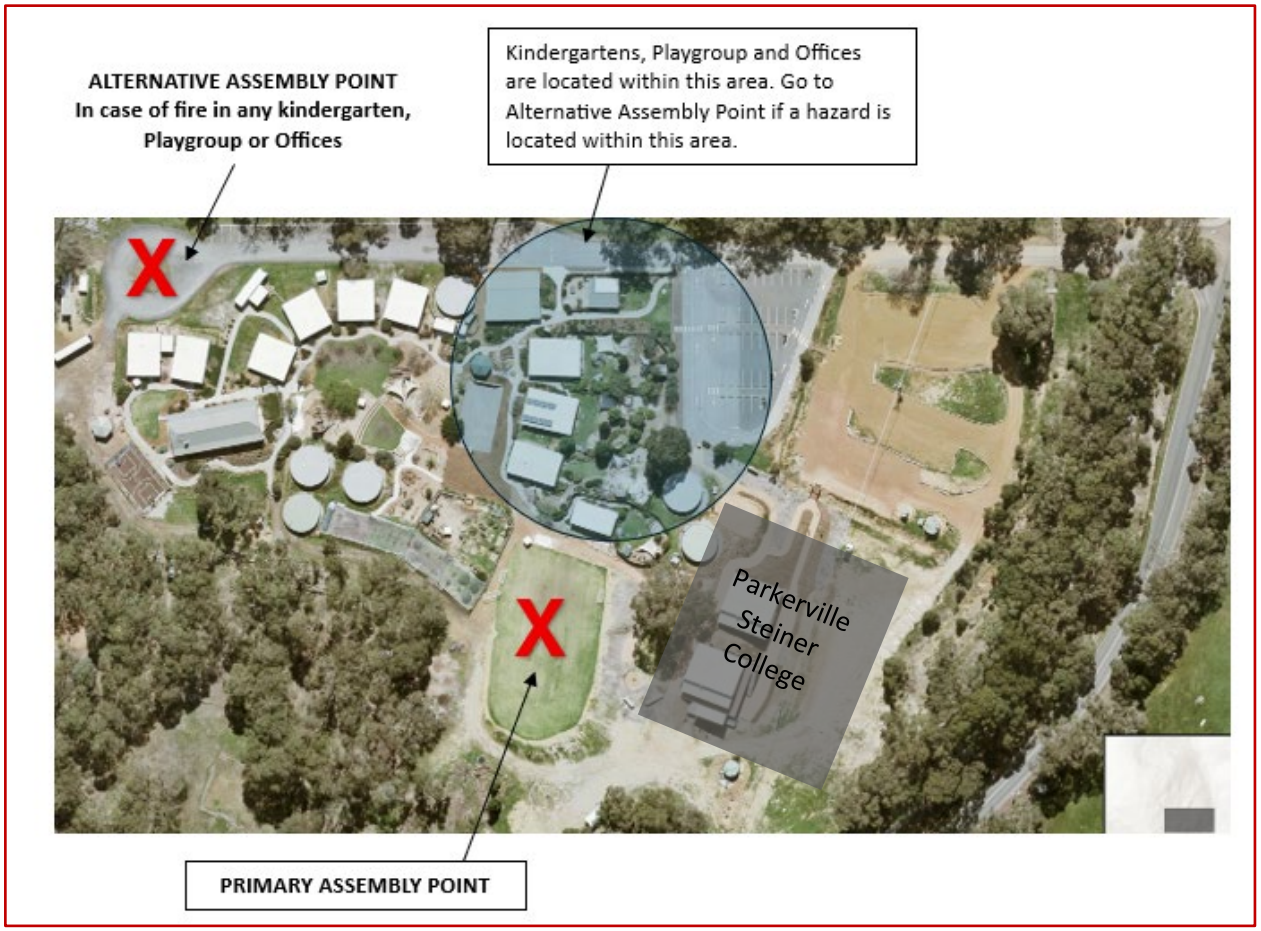
Assembly Points

When ordered to evacuate the building by the Chief Warden everyone must proceed to the following Assembly Point:

- **Primary Assembly Point** – *Grassed Oval next to Acacia Playgroup*

  When ordered to evacuate further, everyone must proceed directly to the primary Assembly point.
- **Alternative Assembly Point** – *Top of the turning circle near Mundaring Christian College*

  If unable to get to the Primary Assembly Point or the Primary Assembly Point is not acceptable and safe, then people/visitors/contractors should move to this area.


ALTERNATIVE ASSEMBLY POINT
In case of fire in any kindergarten, Playgroup or Offices
Kindergartens, Playgroup and Offices are located within this area. Go to Alternative Assembly Point if a hazard is located within this area.
X
X
Parkerville Steiner College
PRIMARY ASSEMBLY POINT

Evacuation Procedures

Building Evacuation

Chief Warden to initiate evacuation procedure using the megaphone and continuously ringing a hand bell whilst walking around the school. *Say: "Evacuate to Assembly Point".* Seek assistance if required. On hearing the constant ringing or whistling of the emergency bell or whistle, staff, students and visitors shall observe the following:

1. Reassure all students and visitors. **STAY CALM.**
2. The Head of School will designate roles within the ECO and other staff as required. Staff with designated duties should assume their role/positions.
3. Area Wardens to turn off lights, electrical appliances and air-conditioning units, and close all doors and windows if safe to do so. Teacher to pick up attendance roll and student medication (i.e. EpiPen and Ventolin).
4. Evacuate to the designated assembly point as directed by the Chief Warden via the safest route unless otherwise directed (See map on wall). Close doors behind you.
5. Area Wardens to check the roll for all students. If student missing, Chief Warden to nominate an adult to search for child. A teacher is to remain with each class or hand over responsibility to another staff member.
6. Do not return to the school buildings until "all clear" directions are given.
7. Reporting: Class Teachers to review attendance register and report missing students to the Chief Warden. All staff to report to the Chief Warden with information about their classes.
8. Head of School reports the incident to the Board of Governors;
9. Head of School reports the incident as soon as possible to the Director General of critical and emergency incidents, at least within 48 hours, by using the critical and emergency incident report form

Whole School Evacuation

1. **Chief Warden** to inform all teachers of the evacuation by following the evacuation procedures in the *Bushfire Emergency and Management Plan*:

Action	Responsible Person/s
1. Consult with or notify emergency services of decision to evacuate and confirm the safest route and destination. Organise buses for students and staff;	**Chief Warden (Head of School)**
2. Calmly notify teachers and staff that a bushfire evacuation is underway using telephone system and/ or megaphone;	**Evacuation Wardens**
3. Children to be informed and organised for evacuation by responsible teachers and staff, with roll check undertaken;	**Teachers and staff**
4. Collect any required documentation including student emergency roll, contact details, and visitors' registrations. Parents to be notified that an evacuation is in progress and they are not to drive to school;	**Admin Warden**
5. Assemble in the safer buildings (Kindergarten 1, 2 & 3 – Gumnut, Lilly Pilly and Marri) and conduct second roll check of children, visitors and staff;	**Chief Warden/Teachers**
6. Prioritise groups in an orderly manner to board buses with supervising teachers. Ensure the site is completely evacuated before the site is secured;	**Chief Warden**

7. Evacuate to Stirling Square, Guildford if safe to do so or away from the threat to a safer place as advised by Shire of Mundaring or DFES (if unavailable, then Mundaring Shopping Centre to the east if evacuation route is safe).	**Chief Warden**
8. On arrival at evacuation destination, send SMS to all parents and carers advising of the location and times for students to be collected;	**Chief Warden/ Admin Warden**
9. Mark children off roll when released to parents or carers;	**Supervising teachers**

2. Head of School reports the incident to the Board of Governors;
3. Head of School reports the incident as soon as possible to the Director General of critical and emergency incidents, at least within 48 hours, by using the critical and emergency incident report form

Evacuation For Disabled / Special Needs Personnel

1. When evacuation procedures are in place, people should be considered as disabled if they cannot evacuate without assistance, or if they take longer than an average person.

2. Area Wardens need to be aware of any disabled people in their area. When an evacuation is taking place, arrangements should be made for someone to be assigned to each disabled person to assist them. This should be someone within close proximity of that person and will need to assist the disabled person to a predetermined “safe” area. Fire Services will determine the method of evacuating disabled persons from these safe areas, if need be.

3. Area Wardens should inform the Chief Warden of the number of disabled persons, location, nature and extent of their disability at the completion of the general evacuation. The Chief Warden should then inform the Emergency Services, who will determine what further action should be taken for the safety of the disabled persons.

4. Disabled persons should participate in the regular fire drills that are conducted.

Evacuation Centres

The School’s primary off-site evacuation location is Stirling Square in Guildford, however the Chief Warden will consult with or notify emergency services of the decision to evacuate and confirm the safest route and destination.

The Shire also has nominated evacuation centres identified within Local Emergency Management Plans. The selection of a centre is made at the time of the emergency by the relevant authorities, this is then advised to residents by FESA, Shire and Police.

1. Fire – Building or Grounds

**For Bushfire – refer to Bushfire and Emergency Management Plan*

In the event of a building or grounds fire (not bushfire):

- Raise the alarm
- The Head of School will initiate an evacuation to an appropriate assembly point or if deemed safer, evacuate to the kindergarten safer buildings as per the *Bushfire and Emergency Management Plan*.
- Consideration should be given to the location of the fire and forecast weather conditions.

Refer to pages 12-14.

2. Armed Hold-Up

In the event of an armed hold-up situation:

1. Comply with the instructions given by the offender at all times. Try to **REMAIN CALM**.
2. Only do what you are told to do – **NO MORE, NO LESS**.
3. **DO NOT** argue with, threaten or stare at the offender.
4. **DO NOT** attempt to disarm or otherwise apprehend the offender.
5. Assume the offender is armed, even if a weapon cannot be seen.
6. If the offender is carrying a firearm, it should be regarded as being loaded.
7. Raise the alarm only if it is safe to do so.
8. Answer any question when asked.
9. Avoid any sudden movement that could panic the offender.
10. If students are present, try to shift the offender's attention away from them.
11. Observe as many details of the offender as possible.
12. Note any items and surfaces touched by the offender.
13. Immediately after the incident, the Head of School is to:
    a. secure the immediate vicinity (for example, lock the office/room in which the hold-up occurred);
    b. do not allow anyone to approach the area in which the offender was located;
    c. notify police;
    d. ensure students who are not in the immediate vicinity of the hold-up are kept away from it.
    e. attend to the post-incident needs of students and staff.

3. Civil Disorder and Illegal Occupancy

Based on the information available, the Head of School should consider the following operational levels:

Level 1 Normal operation

Level 2 Report of a potential situation

If there are indications that trouble is a distinct possibility and the information has been received from credible sources:

1. Notify police and request assistance
2. Restrict staff and students to designated areas and the immediate surroundings of the buildings
3. Secure perimeter gates
4. Prevent people leaving or entering the school site except by the main gate

Level 3 Incident is imminent

1. Notify police and request assistance.
2. Evacuate staff and students to a safer location away from the incident. Remain in the room, securing it if possible, or proceed to another room that can be secured.
3. Keep away from windows. If considered necessary and possible, lie prone on the floor.
4. Lock all other buildings if safe to do so.
5. Lock all perimeter gates.
6. Chief Warden to communicate with emergency services personnel.
7. Chief Warden to announce resumption of normal operation (Level 1) only after receiving advice from emergency services personnel.

Detailed information on civil disorder and illegal occupancy procedure guidelines are provided in section 6 of the Standards Australia AS 3745:2002 Emergency Control Organisation and Procedures for Buildings, Structures and Workplaces.

4. Lock Down Incident

Lockdown is the act of isolating students, staff and visitors from a perceived threat of physical harm at the school site by confining people to classrooms or other school buildings.

Refer to document, '*STSS Lockdown Emergency Management Procedure'*.

5. Intruder

Refer to document, '*STSS Lockdown Emergency Management Procedure'*.

6. Earthquake Procedure

INDOORS

1. Do not run from the building.
2. Safest places to be are:
    - Under your desk.
    - In a corner away from a window.
    - In a strong doorway.
3. Be wary of:
    - Falling plaster, bricks, light fixtures.
    - High bookcases, cabinets, shelves and other equipment/furniture which may fall or slide.
4. Stay away from windows and mirrors.
5. Remain indoors until otherwise instructed.

OUTDOORS

1. Move quickly away from buildings and power poles.
2. Evacuate to designated assembly areas.

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

1. Check attendance against class rolls at the designated assembly area.
2. Liaise with emergency services.
3. Check for injured people. Do not move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger. Wait for emergency services.
4. Survey damage.
5. Turn off electricity, gas and water supplies only when it is safe to do so.
6. Head of School and Maintenance Coordinator to check for damage, gas leaks, power failure and any other hazards. Ensure that no-one returns to any building unless authorised to do so.

7. Gas Leak Procedure

In the event of a gas leak being detected, you should (having due regard to own safety):

1. Assess the situation, being wary of ignition sources, and the inhalation of toxic gases.
2. Report the leak to the Chief Warden (Head of School), who will initiate the appropriate emergency service call.
3. Commence an immediate evacuation of people from the affected area to an assembly point. Rescue and evacuate any persons affected by the gas if it is safe to do so.
4. Arrange for first aid to be provided to injured persons.
5. Remain at the Assembly point until you are advised it is safe to return to the building by the Chief Warden.

8. Electrical Hazard

In the event of an electrocution from faulty electrical wiring or equipment, the following should occur (having due regard for personal safety):

1. Maintenance Coordinator to isolate the area/hazard, provided it is safe to do so.
2. If domestic electricity, switch off the current, do not cut the cable.
3. If high voltage electricity is involved (such as fallen power cables), wait until Western Power has deemed the area safe.
4. Do not touch any conducting material which is also in contact with the current until the current is disconnected. In the case of electrocution, this may include a person.
5. Act immediately to arrange first aid and contact Emergency Services. Any person who has received an electric shock MUST be taken to hospital for treatment, even if they appear ok.
6. Warn any onlookers of the danger.
7. Ensure any faulty equipment is tagged to prevent further use.

9. Explosion Procedure

In the event of a sudden explosion, you should (having due regard to own safety):

1. Assess the situation, being wary of fallen live wires, spilt flammable/corrosive liquids, the release of hazardous materials or flammable or toxic gases.
2. Report the explosion to the Chief Warden or Fire Warden, who will initiate the appropriate emergency service call.
3. Commence an immediate evacuation of people from the explosion-affected. Rescue and evacuate any injured persons, if it is safe to do so.
4. Arrange for first aid to be provided to injured persons.
5. If it is safe and you have been trained, fight any small fires that may have been lit as a result of the explosion.
6. Remain at the designated Assembly point until you are advised it is safe to return to the building by the Chief Warden.

10. Communicable/Infectious Diseases

1. Encourage staff to report injuries and illnesses.
2. Encourage parents or carers to report infectious conditions to the school or facility if a student is absent due to illness.
3. Notify the local Public Health Unit if many students or staff are absent and appear to have similar symptoms, as outbreak may be occurring.
4. Staff should monitor students for signs of infectious disease and act promptly if an infectious disease is suspected.
5. Seek medical help early for people that may be suffering from an infectious disease.
6. Liaise with the local Public Health Unit about the return of individuals or groups to the school. *See Appendix for contact details.*
7. Return the school to normal activities as soon as possible.

   (Refer to Student Healthcare Policy).

11. Pandemic

A **pandemic** is an epidemic of infectious disease that is spreading through human populations across a large region; for instance a continent, or even worldwide. (Source: Wikipedia)

Seasonal (or common) influenza is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted from person to person. Most people have some immunity, and a vaccine is available.

Pandemic influenza is virulent human influenza that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person.

Covid 19 is a highly contagious disease caused by a new form of coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections. Symptoms of Covid-19 can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily, and others may get very sick very quickly. The most common symptoms of Covid-19 are fever, coughing, sore throat and shortness of breath.

In the event of any staff or students having been diagnosed with infectious disease the school will need to decide to:

1. Close or exclude students/staff during a pandemic. It may be necessary to close a classroom or the school in order to prevent the spread of an outbreak. This will be guided by the Department of Health and/or the Department of Education.
   In general:
   a. Children with flu-like symptoms should not attend school.
   b. If a child becomes sick with flu-like symptoms at school, they should be sent home.
   c. Anyone in quarantine cannot attend school.
2. Looking out for outbreaks - Influenza is a mild disease in most cases but a severe disease in some people. Sign of likely outbreak of influenza would be the occurrence of three new cases of diagnosed influenza within a three day period in a single class within the school.
3. Any suspected outbreaks of influenza must be reported promptly to the local Public Health Unit in our state and territory. *See Appendix for contact details.*
4. Staff caring for students with flu-like symptoms should limit contact with other staff and students until the ill student's symptoms have resolved. Staff do not need to stay away from educational facilities unless they also develop flu-like symptoms.

The Department of Health is the department responsible for developing and implementing measures to respond rapidly and effectively to pandemics such as influenza and Covid-19. The Department of Health will be the source the school uses for information on pandemics.

Refer to Student Healthcare Policy.

12. Dangerous Goods/Hazardous Substance Spill Procedure

In the event of a dangerous goods/hazardous substance incident of any nature the following procedures are to be adhered to:

1. DO NOT touch, handle or move the item;
2. Immediately advise the Chief Warden of the incident;
3. The Chief Warden is to instigate the appropriate Evacuation Procedure (if deemed necessary) i.e. evacuate the entire School or cordon off the immediate area.
4. Depending on the level of hazard from the Dangerous Good/Substance, emergency services may need to be called, take note of:
   - Name of Substance

- Dangerous Goods Class
- HAZCHEM code

5. If there is a possible threat to the environment, due to toxic substances reaching stormwater drains, or leaching into soil, use bunting to protect drains or contain the spill, if safe to do so.
6. Any persons who may have come into contact with the dangerous good/hazardous substance must not eat, drink or smoke until decontaminated.
7. When the area has been declared safe and the dangerous/hazardous substance has been dealt with, relevant authorities will be notified by the Head of School.

NOTE: Any Dangerous Goods/Hazardous Substance spills should be cleaned up by a qualified contractor/service provider if they pose a risk to the health and safety of employees. See emergency contact details for SERS

13. Environmental Spill Procedure

In the event of an Environmental spill:

1. DO NOT attempt to clean up the spill unless it is non-toxic.
2. Immediately advise the Chief Warden of the incident.
3. The Chief Warden will decide what clean up procedure is appropriate
4. If the spill is a toxic or harmful product, then the Chief Warden is to instigate the appropriate Evacuation Procedure (if deemed necessary), i.e. evacuate the entire school or cordon off the immediate area.
5. Evacuate the area through your normal emergency procedures
6. Any remaining product from the spill should be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. Advice should be sought from a contractor/service provider if necessary on the correct disposal procedure.
7. If possible threat to environment, due to toxic substances reaching stormwater drains, or leaching into soil, use bunting to protect drains or contain the spill, if safe to do so.
8. Any persons who may have come into contact with a dangerous good/hazardous substance must not eat, drink or smoke until decontaminated.
9. If the incident has been serious, EPA or other relevant authorities will be notified by the Head of School.

14. Explosive Threat

If a suspicious item is found:

1. Do not touch it;
2. If it has been touched, place it gently on a level surface immediately.
3. Evacuate the immediate area, noting the exact location and description of object.
4. Notify the Head of School/site manager.
5. Chief Warden/Head of School to notify police.

The following signs should alert staff to the possibility that a suspicious item is dangerous:

- Unusual odour, such as marzipan or machine oil
- Grease marks on the envelope or package

- Heavy, bulky or oddly-shaped envelopes or packages
- Visible wiring or tinfoil
- Weight of envelope or package is unevenly distributed
- Hand delivery, over-stamping or an unusual place of origin; contact the sender if there is a name on the envelope or package
- Excessive wrapping
- Poor handwriting, spelling or typing
- A wrong or foreign address or no return address

15. Bomb Threat Via Telephone

1. Remain Calm.
2. Use the *Bomb Threat Check List* on the next page, to help you keep the caller on the phone.
3. Write down the **EXACT** wording of the threat and ask questions as per the checklist.
4. Attract the attention of the nearest work mate. Alert them to the fact that you are receiving a threat. They will contact the Chief Warden. (Do not use mobile phones if a Bomb Threat is being made).
5. **DO NOT HANG UP YOUR PHONE**.
6. Even if the caller hangs up, do not hang up your phone. The police will still be able to trace the call.
7. Advise the Chief Warden, they will contact the police.
8. Wait for instructions from the warden.

TELEPHONE BOMB THREAT Checklist – DON'T HANG UP

EXACT WORDING OF THREAT

.....

QUESTIONS TO ASK CALLER

When is the bomb going to explode? .....
In which building is the bomb? .....
Where did you put the bomb? .....
When did you put it there? .....
What does the bomb look like? .....
What kind of bomb is it? .....
What will make the bomb explode? .....
Did you place the bomb? .....
Why did you place the bomb? .....
What is your name? .....
Where are you now? .....
What is your address? .....

DON'T HANG UP, THE CALL CAN BE TRACED - REPORT CALL TO SUPERVISOR

RECORD CALLER'S VOICE DETAILS

Sex of Caller:	Speech: Normal ❑ / Fast ❑ / Slow ❑
Estimated Age:	Manner: Calm ❑ / Emotional ❑
Accent:	Diction: Clear ❑ / Muffled ❑
Did you recognise the voice:	Abusive ❑
If so, who do you think it was?	Taped Message ❑
.....	Read Message ❑
	Well Spoken ❑
	Irrational ❑
	Incoherent ❑

RECORD BACKGROUND NOISE DETAILS

Street Noises ❑	Machinery ❑
Aircraft ❑	Local Call ❑
Voices ❑	Long Distance Call (STD) ❑
Music ❑	Other
House Noises ❑	.....

CALL DETAILS

Date: ____/____/____ Time: ____ : ____am/pm Duration of call: .....

Phone number called: .....

RECIPIENT DETAILS

Name: .....
Telephone Number: .....
Signature: .....

16. Chemical and Biological Emergencies

IMPORTANT NOTICE - CHIEF WARDEN & AREA WARDENS

Should a possible biological and/or chemical incident be brought to your attention you should take the following steps.

1. Call 000 – ask for Fire Hazmat and report:
    a. exact location;
    b. estimated number of victims;
    c. wind direction (if chemicals suspected);
    d. directions to approach upwind (if chemicals suspected), and
    e. description of package and action taken (e.g. covered with cardboard box).
2. Secure scene, prevent others from entering, and evacuate building.
3. Turn off ventilation systems and any fans in immediate area.
4. Keep area secure until help arrives.

If a package or envelope **has not** been opened:

1. Place the item in a plastic bag, seal it. Place it in a second plastic bag and seal it again.
2. Keep your hands away from your face and avoid contaminating your eyes, nose and mouth.
3. Wash your hands if it is possible to do so without leaving your work area.
4. Stay in your office or immediate work area. This also applies to your co-workers in the same room. Prevent others from entering the area and becoming contaminated.
5. Head of School/site manager to call police on 000.
6. Wait for help to arrive.

If a package or envelope **has** been opened:

1. Do not disturb, move or touch the item any further. If material has spilled from the item, do not try to clean it up or brush it from your clothing.
2. Keep your hands away from your face to avoid contaminating your eyes, nose or mouth.
3. If practicable, place an object such as a rubbish bin over the package or envelope without disturbing it.
4. Wash your hands if it is possible to do so without leaving your work area.
5. Stay in your office or immediate work area. This also applies to your co-workers in the same room. Prevent others from entering the area and becoming contaminated.
6. Head of School/site manager to call police on 000.
7. Wait for help to arrive.

17. Medical Emergency

In case of Medical Emergency i.e. life-threatening condition where person has collapsed or is unconscious, in respiratory / cardiac distress or severe pain:

1. **DO NOT** leave the person unattended at any time.

2. Evaluate (D.R.S.A.B.C.D) and commence lifesaving procedures if necessary. Phone 000. Seek help from the First Aid Officer (Receptionist) where possible.
3. If alone, obtain assistance by any means available to you:
    a. Yell for help
    b. Phone if able
    c. Send student to seek assistance
4. Delegate a person to contact the office or use one of the emergency phones and give the following information
    a. condition of patient
    b. location of incident
    c. what assistance is required
5. If required, delegate a person to retrieve the Defibrillator from the main gate. Key for box is at Reception.
6. Stay with the person until help arrives.

18. Violence/Harassment or Bullying Behaviour

If faced by an aggressive, violent or bullying behaviour from parents, students or co-workers, do the following:

1. Ask the offender to STOP the inappropriate behaviour.
2. If offender is being aggressive, try to calm them down; acknowledge their feelings and ask them to explain in a civil manner the issue.
3. Get help from another person if they continue to behave aggressively or heatedly.
4. Withdraw from the situation if the behaviour continues and appears to be escalating. If you cannot withdraw, you are entitled to use reasonable force to protect yourself.
5. Establish a physical barrier between yourself and the person or take refuge in another room or office – do not put yourself at risk. Allow the person to leave the premises.
6. If you haven't been able to resolve the issue yourself, then report the problem to the Head of School.

NOTE: Any incidents reported will be investigated.

19. Pedestrian Accidents

In the event of a pedestrian accident, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. Notify Emergency Services on 000 (Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance as required).
2. Seek help from the First Aid Officer (Receptionist) where possible.
3. Apply first aid using standard precautions, i.e. avoid direct contact with blood and bodily fluids.
4. Notify the Head of School.
5. Head of School to notify parents or carers.

20. Severe Storms

In the event a severe storm is approaching, the following procedures will apply:

1. Listen to the local radio station for further information and advice.
2. Direct students and staff to stay indoors and stay well clear of windows.
3. Avoid using fixed line telephones.
4. If driving, put on your hazard lights and pull over to the side of the road, clear of streams, trees and powerlines.
5. If caught outdoors, seek shelter in a building or vehicle, but not under a tree.

21. Staff or Students Lost on Excursions

Should a Staff member or Student become lost during an excursion, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Confirm Staff or Student is lost and where they were last seen.
2. Contact Emergency Services and advise of the incident.
3. Contact the lost person's next of kin.
4. Implement search plan with emergency services (bushwalks).
5. Assist Emergency Services as required.

22. Students Left School Premises Without Permission

In the event that a student leaves the School premises without permission or becomes missing, the following shall occur:

1. Upon becoming aware that a student is missing, advise the Head of School immediately.
2. The Head of School will confirm with the appropriate teacher that the child has not been collected by parent or guardian or is absent with reason.
3. The Head of School will implement a search for the student.
4. Contact Emergency Services and advise of the incident.
5. Assist Emergency Services as required.

23. Suicide

Should a suicide or attempted suicide occur within the school community, increased monitoring of students is essential.

The following steps should be taken.

1. In consultation with members of the school, coordinate a response to the suicide or attempted suicide.
2. Provide affected staff and students with access to Employee Assistance Program and/or counsellors. *See Appendix for contact details.*
3. Continue school activities as normally as possible.

24. Death of Staff, Student or Visitor

AT SCHOOL

Should a death occur either at the school or offsite during an excursion/activity, or following an incident

at school or during a school-related activity, the following steps should be taken:

1. Call Emergency Services and advise of the incident.
2. Take steps to ensure the safety of other visitors, students and staff.
3. Isolate the victim, cordon off area and do not cover victim.
4. Notify the Head of School who will then contact relevant educational bodies.
5. Make arrangements with Police for parents/carers/next of kin to be notified.
6. Provide affected staff and students with access to Employee Assistance Program and / or counsellors

NOT SCHOOL RELATED

Should a death occur that is not work/school related, appropriate support should be given to staff and students to assist them to deal with the grieving process and to help students (particularly younger students) to understand their reactions to the death.

25. Cyber Attack

Should a member of staff suspect a cyber-attack on a School's computer, they should:

1. Immediately advise the School Receptionist who will disconnect the modem.
2. Advise the Head of School.
3. Contact current IT consultant and advise on details.

Should a loss of confidential information have occurred, refer to the *Data Breach Flow Chart* and the *Data Breach Notification – A guide to handling personal information security breaches*, both located at Reception.

Recording and Reporting of Incidents

All Critical and Emergency Incidents are required to be documented and held by the Head of School with the School's Critical Incident Register. *Refer to Appendix B: Emergency and Critical Incident Diary.*

The Head of School shall notify the Board of Governors of all critical and emergency incidents in a timely manner and will notify the Director General as soon as practicable and, in any event within 48 hours of the incident, using the critical and emergency incident report form available at https://www.education.wa.edu.au/ongoing-obligations

Critical and Emergency Incidents to be reported to the Director General include:

- Death, or life-threatening injury, of a student or staff member at school, or following an incident that occurred at the school, or through a related school-based activity or circumstance;
- Circumstances* that pose a critical risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of one or more students or staff;
- Receipt of an allegation of child abuse, including but not limited to sexual abuse, against a student by a staff member or student or other person, whether the abuse is alleged to have occurred recently or in the past;
- Issuing a formal warning to a staff member or ceasing the employment of a staff member for a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct suspected to be grooming* behaviour;
- Any incident requiring school closure, lockdown, or a reduction in the number of students or staff attending.

**A circumstance posing a 'critical risk' for the purposes of this definition is one which would, if action had not been taken or the risk otherwise averted, have resulted in death, life-threatening illness or life-threatening injury to one or more students and/or staff.*

If you are unsure if an incident needs to be reported, phone the Director General's office on 9441 1904.

Communication

Clear, concise communication within the school, to parents and the wider school community is essential in any crisis or emergency event.

Communicate immediately if only to acknowledge that something has happened, and you are looking into the episode.

Update early and often. Be proactive and early with sharing news, even when the whole picture isn't clear. Start with summary statements on what is known and provide updated action plans and new developments as early and as often as possible.

Be open and transparent in all communication to help maintain trust. Be factual, list key points of what has occurred and what actions the School has/will take.

Order of communication:

Internal communication to School staff
(Face to face or via email)
↓
Parents
(phone, SMS or email depending on urgency)
↓
Students
(Face to face)
↓
Wider community
(Silver Leaves newsletter, STSS Facebook page, media)

All communication regarding critical or emergency incidents or crisis will come from the Head of

School or Board of Governors Chairperson.

COMMUNICATION AND THE MEDIA

Only the Head of School or Board of Governors Chairperson has authority to speak to the media.

Communication with the media must remain clear, concise and factual.

Refer to Appendix C, D and E for considerations when communicating with the media.

Section 3: Recovery

Recovery From The Incident

Once the emergency is over and the site is declared safe, the normal running of the school should recommence as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances and nature of the emergency situation, the recovery stage may vary from a few hours to a few months.

Consider the following actions where appropriate to the nature of the emergency situation:

ACTIONS
Ensure the Director General is notified as soon as practicable and, in any event within 48 hours of the incident, using the critical and emergency incident report form available at: https:/www.education.wa.edu.au/ongoing-obligations
A staff briefing should occur as soon as possible following the incident.
Identify, monitor and provide targeted support for students and staff most affected, including reasonable adjustments, counselling and referrals to specialist services as required.
Provide recovery support and advice for students/staff/parents about the normal cycle of recovery and indicators that extra support may be required.
Follow up contact with family/families involved to express sympathy, arrange retrieval of personal items of student/staff member as appropriate and discuss school role in ongoing support.
Update information to staff, parents, and students, as appropriate. Rumour control.
Special considerations for suicide, including contagion effect.
Cultural considerations
Plan and coordinate death notices, memorial service, and funeral attendance in consultation with the family
Monitor psychosocial wellbeing and recovery over time, recognising that impacts may emerge or change following the incident, and review ongoing support needs in consultation with students, staff and parents/carers as appropriate.
Notifying staff who are not at school.
Alert teachers to be sensitive to curriculum content.
Maintaining comprehensive records of actions taken, decisions made and communications issued.
Ongoing liaison with other affected or vulnerable schools and external agencies as needed.
Consider appropriate support for former students and alumni impacted by the incident.
Implement visitor management processes for community members seeking to attend or engage with the school.
Coordinate with external agencies such as WA Police, DFES, Department of Communities, AISWA or CEWA, as required.
Links with school psychology support personnel / services.

ACTIONS
Provide reception/admin staff with clear scripts outlining what information can and cannot be shared.
Review effectiveness of the School's recovery response and identify any continuing or emerging needs.
Acknowledge people who have supported the school
Review school records/mailing lists and amend as appropriate
Operational debrief (see Appendix H for more information)
Inquest/court date(s) (arrange support for staff involved)
Review and modify *Critical and Emergency Incident Management Plan*
Plan sensitively for anniversaries and other significant dates connected to the incident.

Psychological First Aid

Psychological first aid (PFA) is an approach to support people in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident. It is designed to reduce initial distress, and to foster and promote both short and long-term coping through encouragement and support.

PFA can be provided by any appropriately trained staff member and emphasises practical help, emotional reassurance and connection to support.

During the recovery phase of an emergency or critical incident, The Head of School shall contact the AISWA School's Psychology Service (ASPS) which provides support to non-government schools in Western Australia.

Contact details for ASPS are available through the AISWA website member portal.

Useful resource documents, sent out to schools in 2018 by the ASPS team, are provided under *Appendix F – Information and advice for coping after a traumatic event.*

- After a disaster: providing pastoral support; and
- Information for people exposed to a distressing event

And:

- Australian Red Cross & APS Guide: Psychological First Aid: Supporting People Affected by Disaster in Australia (2024):

  https://www.redcross.org.au/globalassets/cms/documents/stories/psychological-first-aid-guide-2024.pdf

Appendix A - Community Contact Numbers

Emergency contact details for staff members are kept with the Head of School, School Officer and the emergency bag in the office. Emergency Contact details are tabled on Pg10.

AISWA School's Psychology Service (ASPS)
asps@ais.wa.edu.au
Lead Psychologist: Paul Russell
Phone: 9441 1674

Assure Wellbeing Gateway (Employee Assistance Program)
A professional and confidential counselling service for employers and employees
Phone: 1800 808 374

Local Public Health Unit
Metro Communicable Disease Control (MCDC)
Phone: 9222 8588 or 1300 623 292
Email: contactMCDC@health.wa.gov.au

Site Environmental and Remediation Services (SERS)
(For Emergency Spills)
Phone: 1300 542 315

Appendix B - Emergency and Critical Incident Diary

Incident:	
Page No:	
Compiled By:	
Date	

Time	Particulars	Action	
		Required	Taken

Appendix C – Crisis Communication and Negative Media Attention

Crisis Communications and Negative Media Attention

When it occurs:

Negative media attention occurs primarily when there are incidents of misconduct, mismanagement, an accident or more general misconceptions or misunderstandings about Steiner Education overall or your school in particular.

When a crisis strikes, adrenalin surges and often behaviour and speech become irrational. Hopefully you will have a **crisis communications plan already in place. Take 30 seconds to review this plan and list.**

Remember:

- **Short-term damage may occur;** reputational risk, negative perceptions, damage to the community; however, if handled well, a crisis can be an opportunity to enhance reputation and build trust
- **Communication is essential;** communicate immediately if only to acknowledge that something has happened, and you are looking into the episode
- **It is recommended** that whenever the school or organisation gets a call from a reporter asking for information and/or comment, only the identified school media spokesperson should handle the call
- **The school spokesperson** should be familiar with general misconceptions or criticisms of Steiner education and know how to handle the difficult questions; deliberately provocative or blatantly false statements by and large should be ignored and good sensible responses delivered

As recommended in the previous section, always ask the journalist:

- **What the story is about**
- **What the format will be**
- **Who else has the reporter talked to**
- **How will your comments be used**
- **Why you are being interviewed at this point (unless that is clearly obvious)**

Remember you do not have to respond immediately – you can always ask if you can call back in 15 minutes – in that time, you can collect your thoughts and prepare some brief, positive statements.

Helpful tips

- **Be positive**, truthful and not defensive
- **Create opportunities** to make your key points
- **Bridge** to your key points and repeat them often
- **Be simple** and direct
- **Speak** in terms the general public will understand
- **Answer all questions;** if you can't answer for legal or privacy reasons, explain why
- **Never say "No comment";** your refusal to comment may lead to suspicion in the eyes of the public and aggression on the part of the journalists
- **Offer another view;** give the reporter another angle or way of approaching the story; perhaps there is a human-interest side, or there is positive information related to the criticism
- **Assume the microphone is on** at all times; say only what you would want to see in print or hear over the airwaves

- **Remain calm**, confident and pleasant
- **Make your points**, but don't offer personal opinions or speculate
- **Refrain** from speaking negatively about critics
- **Don't restate a negative;** reframe the question
- **Don't repeat the criticism** or accusation; this puts the focus back on the criticism
- **State the positive** about how the situation is being addressed, how children are being helped and whether parents are satisfied
- **For TV**, remember to speak to the reporter and not the camera
- **When you have answered** the question, stop talking
- **Facts are not enough;** facts are important but perceptions can obscure them; a good crisis response should be aligned to your audience's most pressing concerns
- **Get it all out;** don't prevaricate – information usually gets out anyway and if you have tried to bury anything, it will have an ever more negative consequence

Steps to take in a crisis

- **Ensure the School Executive** is notified of the facts
- **Ensure the Chair of the School Board** or Council is notified of the facts
- Confirm and **inform the media spokesperson**
- **Notify the school's lawyer** if needed
- **Draw up a communications plan** – who, when, how
- **Notify the entire Board, faculty and staff** as to the issue, the communications plan, and the designated spokesperson; it is essential that everyone be on the same page; inform them all that they should direct all questions that may come their way to the designated spokesperson
- **Notify Steiner Education Australia;** as the national body, it is important that they be aware of the situation as early as possible; they will be able to provide support on a number of levels; it is also possible that the media will contact them so they need to be fully briefed
- **Prepare a statement** for the parent community, instruct parents to avoid speaking to the press, posting comments online and also to direct any questions to the media spokesperson
- **Notify State AIS's** for assistance if required

Samples of positive statements to emphasise if there is an opportunity

- Steiner education is committed to supporting the optimal health and well-being of each student
- Steiner education has a 100-year track record of success and there is a substantial body of literature supporting effectiveness of practice and pedagogy
- Steiner education is established in over 60 countries across 5 continents and has worldwide recognition as the largest international independent educational movement: 1100 schools and 2000 kindergartens
- Protection of childhood ensuring a healthy adulthood is fundamental to our approach
- Provision of specific teacher training ensures teachers have deep understanding of child development upon which our curriculum is based
- Diversity is valued: whilst Steiner schools are independent, they strive to keep fees as low as possible and in some countries are free; this educational approach is now working across many cultures and traditions
- Emphasis on development of positive relationships: with oneself, with others, with nature and with the culture and society of the time
- The approach to digital technology is to delay its introduction to students, not to oppose it; digital technology is a wonderful tool but particularly in the early years of a child's

development, our position is that students need to engage in active, experiential learning; we want students to avoid becoming overly dependent on, or even addicted to, technology from a young age; we hope our students will be masters of digital technology, not servants to it
- Anthroposophy is the underlining philosophy of the education; Rudolf Steiner established the foundations in the early 20th century; he was a visionary who founded many positive initiatives across diverse areas including agriculture, health, architecture, the environment and social and cultural change; his core concern was 'healing'
- *'Receive the child in reverence, educate the child in love and send the child forth in freedom'* (Rudolf Steiner)

The above statements are in no particular order.

Things to avoid when talking to the press

- **Detailed explanations or dissections of the curriculum;** it is better to use concrete examples lifted from the curriculum to illustrate a key message
- **Answering accusations** such as 'cult', 'religion', 'elite' in depth; have a simple statement prepared; example: are Steiner schools religious? Sample answer: "Steiner schools do not adhere to the beliefs of any particular religious viewpoint. The respective traditions and festivals of the culture in which the schools are based are observed and respected. Our approach is to awaken a child's sense for the spiritual realities within themselves and in the natural world."
- **Detailed discussion about Anthroposophy;** remember the audience you are communicating with
- **Getting overly emotional,** intense, defensive or reactive
- **Explaining our divergences in a negative way;** e.g. 'we don't teach academic subjects in kindergarten'; talk about what we do and why; be positive

Fingertip facts to keep up to date with

- Number of schools world-wide
- Number of kindergartens world-wide
- Number of schools in Australia
- Number of kindergartens in Australia
- How many students overall: world-wide, in Australia
- Growth rate in Australia
- Percentage of students who finish Year 12
- Percentage of students who attend university/TAFE/ other tertiary institutions
- Range of careers
- What graduates value about the diverse skills cultivated through their education

Appendix D – Template for Initial Media Release

For immediate release

Contact: NAME
Phone Number:
Date of release:

Headline: NAME OF SCHOOL, Incident

Describe Situation: At approximately TIME, DATE, TYPE OF INCIDENT occurred at SCHOOL NAME, LOCATION

Describe action being taken:
Our school response teams as well as emergency responders (LIST AGENCY NAMES) are on scene. Our major concern is for the safety of our students and staff.

List information for parents/staff:
Parents can meet their students at LOCATION ADDRESS.

Insert quote from Head of School/Board Chairperson:

For more information:
Hotline number:
Web Address:

Appendix E – Communication and the Media

(Taken from AISWA's Critical & Emergency Incidents and Crisis Management Guideline)

The following should be considered:

- The person responsible for talking or responding to the media should be trained
- Never say "no comment" as most people will assume that means you are hiding something
- Don't use jargon or technical terms. Clear communication reduces misinformation and it doesn't appear you are trying to confuse
- The media person should be confident, able to speak clearly and fluently, have good eye contact and not appear nervous
- Some responses can be discussed and pre-drafted by the CMT
- Communication should be quick, accurate and consistent
- Have the intranet and school website prepared to accept crisis information and be easily updated
- Always speak with one voice. Make sure everyone is getting and passing on the same information
- Express concern, empathy and sympathy with or for those involved. Avoid placing blame
- Make sure staff are kept up to date. Meet with them as soon as possible after crisis
- Deliver all information promised
- Talk to media off site if possible
- Issue an accurate, factual, basic initial statement as quickly as possible
- Designate a media area where all briefings will be held. Secure those areas you do not want media to enter
- Check legislation with authorities before releasing information
- Develop 2 or 3 key messages that are honest and consistent. Try to be positive and proactive
- Never guess or predict the future. Only release information that you have verified. Never go 'off the record'
- Hold regular media briefings. Keep to time. Make brief statements and then answer a few questions. Don't answer off topic questions
- Respect people's privacy. Be careful of allowing the release of photos.
- Be aware of how the media will operate. Below is an example of how situations can evolve:
    - First hours of the crisis: The media will make a mad scramble for information. Reporters will interview anyone willing to talk, often without verifying accuracy of information. The more information released, the less the media will have to rely on rumour and hearsay.
    - What and who: The media will want to know exactly what happened and who was involved — victims and perpetrators.
    - Why and how: The media will ask why the crisis occurred and how it evolved. There will be a step-by-step dissection of the crisis.

- Analysis of emergency response: The media will analyse how the crisis response functioned. Did first responders react appropriately? Did the school's crisis plan work?
- How could it happen? As the situation stabilises, the media will begin to look for causes of the tragedy and whether it could have been avoided. For example, they'll ask if proper security measures were in place.
- Second-day stories: The media will begin to look for a different spin or angles, emerging issues and people to interview. The media will also want to cover special events after an incident such as funerals

Appendix F – Information and Advice for Coping After a Traumatic Event

After a disaster: providing pastoral support

Following a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, most people will cope well with what is a very difficult situation, and it is certainly not the case that everyone who experiences a disaster event will be traumatised. In fact, most will not experience any long term negative psychological effects. While many people will experience a range of emotions (including grief, sadness, distress) these are normal emotions and would not be confused with or labelled as 'disorders', 'conditions' or 'even 'symptoms'.

Pastoral support after a wide spread trauma event (such as a bush fire or natural disaster) should occur alongside (or even after) the immediate practical support has been provided. The immediate aims in pastoral support after a disaster should be to ensure that people are safe, promote calm, encourage connectedness between people, and promote both hope and the reality that people can cope, can help themselves and do have the resources they need.
This pastoral support is NOT counselling, 'stress debriefing', or diagnosing. It IS a humane, pastoral and supportive response, for people who have experienced a difficult situation, who are suffering, and who may need support.

Some DOs …

- DO listen, keep calm, be responsive to what people want and need;
- DO acknowledge the skills people already have, what they have already done;
- DO promote recovery, self-efficacy, and hope.

Some DON'Ts …

- DON'T make assumptions about what people are feeling or what they need;
- DON'T assume everyone needs counselling or they everyone will be traumatised;
- DON'T pathologise (turn normal emotions and reactions into a mental condition);
- DON'T debrief, ask for details, speculate or offer inaccurate information, or, make promises you can't keep.

The aim of any pastoral support is to reduce distress, assist with any current needs, and promote adaptive functioning (including promoting self-efficacy and connectedness with other people and support services).

It is NOT the aim to 'get people to talk about it' or to elicit details of traumatic experiences and loses.

For those who work with children and young people:

Help children and young people to verbalise their feelings, concerns and questions using simple and appropriate labels (such as sad, mad, scared) – but avoid extreme words (like terrified, horrified). It is often better to help them to talk about the physical sensations they are feeling (like 'tight all over' or 'butterflies in the stomach');

Listen and respond appropriately. With adolescents talk 'adult-to-adult' to respect their feelings. With children crouch or sit so you are at their eye level, and use developmentally appropriate language. Note that some young people may show developmental regression in their behaviour and language.

Information of helping people with coping:

Some good strategies to help people cope with feelings of stress include:

- Talking to another person for support;
- Prayer and meditation;
- Getting adequate rest, sleep, nutrition and exercise. Don't skip meals or eat poorly;
- As much as possible, returning to a normal routine (including school or work routines);
- Reminding yourself that it is natural to be upset for some time, and, use calming self-talk;
- Participating in some pleasant activities (being with friends, sport or time-out activities);
- Using relaxation techniques (such as breathing), using strategies that have worked well in the past, journaling, or seeking counselling;
- Focusing on the practical things you can do;
- Take care not to withdraw (from activities, from friends and family, or through excessive computer games or alcohol/substance use);
- Seek help if you feel you're not coping or if you are getting violently angry.

Tips for relaxation:

While there is no quick-fix and tension and anxiety are common after a disaster, there are many ways to help calm yourself down. These include listening to relaxing music, yoga, meditation, prayer or exercise, or breathing exercises.

Using simple breathing exercises can be really calming and helpful.

For more information, the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian Red Cross and the (US) National Child Traumatic Stress Network all have some excellent on-line resources.

(Paul Russell MAPS Educational & Developmental Psychologist)

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE EXPOSED TO A DISTRESSING INCIDENT

There is a range of reactions that people might experience when they learn of or are exposed to distressing news or situations.

Common reactions many people experience include:

- Frequent thoughts or images of the incidents, thoughts or images of other incidents, attempts to shut out memories, dreams;
- Difficulty sleeping, restless sleep, feeling easily startled, difficulty relaxing, headaches, nausea, breathing difficulties;
- Shock, disbelief, fear, sadness, shame, anger; and

- Withdrawal from others, not wanting to talk about the event, irritability, loss of interest, increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other substances, change in appetite.

These are all quite common and normal reactions.
People's responses are also affected by their own life and past experiences, including being exposed to similar incidents or having close friends or family who they have supported during difficult times.

Some useful ways to manage your own feelings of distress include:
- Make sure that you are with people;
- Talk about the incident at a level you feel comfortable with;
- Remind yourself that the event is over, and that everyone is now safe;
- Get some physical exercise to help 'burn off' tension and anxiety;
- Avoid alcohol, sedatives, sleeping pills (they will only dull the experience and not allow you to deal properly with your feelings) and restrict stimulants (such as tea, coffee, chocolate, cola or cigarettes), as you do not want to make your body more agitated than it is already;
- Try to eat something, even if you do not feel like eating;
- If you cannot sleep, do not lie in bed tossing and turning - get up and do something relaxing until you feel tired and use arousal reduction techniques.

Overall, remind yourself that your reactions are a normal result of trauma and will pass in time and try to get back into your normal routine as soon as possible. If you feel uncomfortable, afraid, or anxious, take some long, slow breaths and remind yourself that you are safe and in control. Make sure that you are doing things that are relaxing and enjoyable and continue to talk to your family, friends and colleagues about the event, as this will help.

Dealing with the first few days:
The best advice is to ensure that you stick to what is actually known and avoid gossip or misinformation. Take care of yourself and your own feelings, using the strategies to manage your own feelings. Seek support, but also try to maintain good work and life routines.

Looking after Children
In general, after a serious incident children of most ages will most frequently show behaviours and emotional responses such as sadness, anger, or crying.

They may display a changed desire to attend school, complain of headaches or an upset stomach, sleep disturbances or persistent fears and night terrors.

The most important thing to be aware of would be changes in behaviour such as loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, or a regression to earlier child stages and behaviours.

Managing stress
In stressful situations, people can feel more in control through two strategies:
- Slowing down breathing to help calm the physical arousal symptoms
- Replacing frightening thoughts with more helpful ones ('self-talk').

Learning to breathe and think more calmly
To slow your breathing down, take smaller breaths and pause between breaths to space them out. When you have breathed out slowly, hold your breath for a count of three before inhaling your next breath. Sometimes people find it helps to breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth.

While concentrating on breathing out slowly, say to yourself ‘Relax', or ‘Stay calm', or ‘It's OK, I'm managing OK'. These are good words to use because they are associated with feeling relaxed and in control. Try not to dwell on the bad things that might happen, but instead tell yourself that the calmer you are, the better you'll be at managing exactly what needs to be done.

Remember you need to be able to draw on your own strengths and survival resources and your coping ability. It's important not to let unhelpful feelings and thoughts get in the way of careful and well planned actions.

Remind yourself that this is an emergency situation and that it's natural you are feeling anxious and stressed. You cannot directly control what's happening but you can manage your responses in this emergency and influence the impact on you and your family.

Helping others to cope with their feelings

- Teach others the simple breathing exercises.
- Be sensitive and supportive to them, rather than judging. They may be feeling scared, anxious or embarrassed if they are not coping as well as you.
- Encourage them to talk about how they are feeling with you.
- Assist them to find more helpful thoughts to say to themselves and others.
- Get people involved in occupying their time rather than worrying.
- Encourage them to take responsibility for a task that needs attending to.

After the event …

After the disaster or threat has passed it is helpful to check whether identifying and managing your feelings and thoughts helped you feel being better psychologically prepared and able to cope.

Were you able to anticipate how you might react and identify emotional responses? Can you practice breathing more slowly and calmly, and are you now able to make decisions more easily and attend to the necessary practical tasks?

Most people deal with traumatic events well, even if it is difficult, however you should seek professional assistance if the symptoms resulting from the trauma are too distressing or last for more than a couple of weeks. Warning signs may include being unable to handle the intense feelings or physical sensations, feeling numb and empty, continuing to experience strong distressing emotions, have physical symptoms of being tense, agitated, and on edge or continuing to have disturbed sleep and/ or nightmares. It is important to seek help if you have no-one to support you, if you are having relationship problems with friends, family and colleagues, or if you have increased your use of alcohol or drugs to try and cope.

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