

Critical Incident Policy and Procedure

As per **Standard 6 of National Code 2018**, Riverdale Institute has developed a Critical Incident Policy and Procedure. This standard requires Riverdale Institute to have a documented critical incident policy together with procedures that cover the action to be taken in the event of a critical incident, the required follow-up to the incident, and what records of the incident must be kept including a record of what action was taken.

The National Code defines a critical incident as “a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury”.

Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- missing students
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- a serious traffic collision
- death, serious injury or any threat of these
- fire
- natural disaster
- issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug, or alcohol abuse
- a hold up or attempted robbery
- Non-life-threatening events could still qualify as critical incidents

POLICY

This policy/procedure supports ‘Standard 6 – Student Support Services’ of the ‘National Code of Practice for Providers of Education & Training to Overseas Students’, which states:

“The registered provider must have a critical incident management policy.”

This procedure ensures that any critical incident occurs, is documented, reported and appropriately actioned by Riverdale Institute (Riverdale).

SCOPE

To articulate Riverdale’s practices applicable to students and Staff in compliance with the ESOS legislation. The critical incidents covered in this procedure may occur at the teaching location or after hours.

DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident: Is a traumatic event, which is likely to cause extreme physical and/or emotional

distress involving Riverdale Institute, its staff and/or students.

Death: Accidental, Suicide, Death as a result of injury or terminal illness, or Murder.

Serious Illness: Illness, which prevents or severely affects the student's ability to continue with or complete the course.

Requirements

This policy and procedures covers the:

- a. actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident
- b. required follow-up to the incident
- c. records to be kept of the incident and action taken. Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:
 - missing students
 - severe verbal or psychological aggression
 - death, serious injury or any threat of these
- natural disaster
- issues such as domestic violence, physical, sexual, or other abuse and
- another non-life threatening events

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

For international students, when a student dies or sustains serious injury, the Institute may be required to assist the student's family. This may include:

- hiring interpreters
- making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation
- obtaining a death certificate
- assisting with personal items and affairs, including insurance issues
- assisting with visa issues (in the case of international students).

Response to the critical incident needs to be analysed to contribute to the continuous improvement of the Institute's policy and procedures.

Where a Critical Incident is identified the following procedures must occur. As part of the reporting process the Compliance officer/Training Manager / CEO will confirm that the incident falls under the definition of a 'Critical Incident'.

PROCEDURE

Any Institute staff member receiving news or information regarding a critical incident must contact the Compliance officer/RTO Manager / CEO, or the nominee, as soon as practicable. If this is not possible, then the most senior person available must be contacted and informed.

On receipt of news or information regarding a critical incident, the Compliance manager /Training Manager / CEO, nominee, or most senior person must:

- create for themselves a clear understanding of the known facts
- contact the relevant emergency services by phoning 000 if an emergency exists
- contact the Translating and Interpreting Service by phoning 131 450, if translators are required
- contact Life Line on 131 114, if counselling services are required
- plan an immediate response
- plan ongoing strategies
- allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing incident management.

Based on an evaluation of the critical incident, the Compliance officer/Training Manager / CEO, nominee, or most senior person must, where appropriate, implement the following:

- contact with next of kin/significant others, if applicable
- identify students and staff members most closely involved with the incident and ensure they are offered support and counselling if necessary
- arrange a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with counsellor/s or other relevant personnel
- inform Institute staff and students where appropriate
- prepare a guideline for staff about what information to give to students
- prepare a written bulletin for staff and students if the matter is complex
- brief staff and delegate a staff member to deal with telephone/counter inquiries
- manage media/publicity
- arrange access to emergency funds if necessary.

Record the incident and include the following key details in a report:

- the time of the incident
- the location and nature of the incident
- the names and roles of persons directly involved in the critical incident
- the action taken by the Institute, including any opportunities for improvement as per the continuous improvement policy and procedure
- the organisations and people contacted by the Institute.

Confer a meeting with relevant parties to:

- review the Institute's handling of the critical incident
- implement improvements to the policy and procedures to ensure the institute is well prepared should an incident occur again.

All information relating to any critical incident must be kept by Riverdale Institute and made available to any authorised group or individual (i.e., Police, Immigration).