Policy Rationale

CCAE may become directly or indirectly involved in a tragic or traumatic event involving loss of life, serious injury or emotional disturbance. The incident may occur in the College environment or outside and may involve staff, students or those close to them. The network of those involved in a traumatic event can be wide, especially if it directly involves the College and feelings of grief and loss can continue over long periods of time.

Policy Aims

RESPONDING TO A TRAUMATIC OR CRITICAL INCIDENT IN WHICH THE CCAE IS INVOLVED.

- Counselling should be provided for all those who need it. This may include many who do not seem to be closely connected to the event or the individuals involved.
- CCAE should try to support grieving families at difficult times. e.g. through the College’s participation in the funeral service.
- CCAE should operate as normally as possible yet some degree of flexibility should exist.
- It is essential people be given clear, accurate information at all times.

Procedure

ACTIONS TO TAKE AS A RESULT OF A TRAGIC/TRAUMATIC EVENT INVOLVING CCAE

Incidents vary in complexity. These guidelines provide a framework for action and would not necessarily be followed in all cases. However the following 4 principles must be followed:

- Provision of clear accurate information.
- Description of action to be followed.
- Provision of help for all affected.
- Maintenance of normal College program.

1. Obtain accurate information. Deal only with substantiated facts.

2. As soon as possible inform staff, especially those most directly involved, and College Board of Management Chairperson. Inform close friends and family individually. Allow questions and discussion as they arise. Dispel rumours.

3. Appoint a Support Team to assist in the management of the incident. The team may include staff members, counsellors, external personnel, support agencies etc. The size and composition of the team will be related to the nature of the incident. Distribute names of Support Team members, and inform others of the role of the team.

4. As soon as possible provide information to the community as to what has happened, and what is being done.

5. The Manager and/or College Board of Management Chairperson will deal with all media requirements. A written press release may be useful. If necessary, protect others from contact with the media.

6. Establish an open line of contact with the family or families directly involved.

7. Provide out of College hours contact if necessary. This could be as simple as circulating the Manager’s telephone number. In more complex situations it may mean maintaining telephone contact at the College.

8. Continue contact with the family to identify their expectations of the College, e.g. student participation in funeral or memorial service.

9. Try to identify those most likely to need help, e.g. classmates, teacher, special friends.

10. Ensure that counselling help is available. Contact the Regional Office. All emergency or criminal activity in which the safety or well-being of staff or students is at risk, or where there is a threat to property, must be reported immediately to the police and Regional Office

11. Continue to keep staff, students and parents informed, especially about what has happened and what the College is doing about it.

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12. As soon as possible call students together and provide information about what has happened and what the College is doing about it.

13. Provide counselling for all. Ensure there are suitable places in which this can take place. Be prepared to modify the timetable and other arrangements so that people are free to make use of available help.

14. The class facilitator may be the person to whom students first turn for help.

16. Staff wishing to attend funerals should be encouraged to do. Students wishing to attend funerals should be encouraged to do so in the company of their parents. If at all possible the CCAE will provide meaningful participation for those not actually attending the service.

17. Continue normal routines at College but acknowledge the effect of tragedy on the College community. Be flexible with those in need of help. Be aware that many people may be deeply affected, e.g. an event may cause a person to recall some traumatic event involving them in the past. The anniversary may also be a difficult time.

18. Maintain links with the family. The College and family may wish to develop a memorial garden, erect a memorial plaque, or display a photo in a prominent position in the College.

19. Monitor, be sensitive to, and respond to staff and student’s needs over a period of time.

20. Look after yourself..........take a break!

**Evaluation**

Reviewed bi-annually and after any significant incident.