



Saltwater P-9 College

Critical Incident Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Saltwater P-9 College on 03 8366 7700 or saltwater.p9.co@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Saltwater College is well-prepared to prevent, respond to, and recover from critical incidents and emergencies. This policy outlines the processes and responsibilities for managing incidents that have the potential to impact the physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing of students, staff, and the school community. It aligns with the Victorian Department of Education's policy on [Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning](#).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school staff, students, volunteers, contractors, visitors, and community members engaged in school activities, both onsite and offsite, including camps and excursions.

POLICY STATEMENT

Saltwater College acknowledges that schools may be directly or indirectly involved in traumatic or critical incidents involving students, staff, or members of the wider school community. Such incidents may involve serious injury, death, natural disasters, fires, violence, or other distressing events.

The College recognises its duty of care to plan for and respond to such incidents in a way that promotes safety, wellbeing, and recovery. The College will ensure its response is timely, coordinated, and sensitive to the needs of those affected.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Saltwater College will implement the following key procedures in accordance with the Department's Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning guidelines:

1. Emergency Management Plan (EMP)

- The school will develop and maintain a current, site-specific Emergency Management Plan (EMP) via the Department's Online EMP Portal.
- The EMP will identify local hazards, risk assessments, emergency roles, communication procedures, evacuation protocols, and emergency contact information.
- The EMP will be reviewed and updated **at least annually**, and **after any major incident**, and **submitted by 1 September each year**.

2. Critical Incident Response

In the event of a critical incident, the Principal or delegate will:

- **Activate the EMP** and determine the appropriate response (evacuation, lockdown, etc.).
- **Notify emergency services by calling 000.**
- **Contact the Department's 24-hour Emergency and Security Management Branch** on (03) 9589 6266.
- Assemble a **Critical Incident Support Team**, including:
 - Principal and/or Assistant Principal
 - Wellbeing Coordinator
 - First Aid Officer
 - Regional support staff (if required)
 - External agencies as needed
- Provide accurate, timely, and sensitive communication to staff, students, families, and relevant stakeholders.
- Appoint a **Media Coordinator** to manage all media communications, in line with DET guidance.
- Establish a **Recovery Room** for affected students or staff.
- Maintain **ongoing contact with affected families** and offer participation in memorials if appropriate.

3. Communication

- The school will communicate with the school community during an incident through pre-identified channels (Compass, SMS, email, phone, or letters).
- Letter templates provided by the Department will be used where possible.
- Information provided will be factual and respectful of privacy and trauma.

4. Support and Recovery

- Short- and long-term support, including psychological first aid and counselling services, will be offered to students, staff and families as needed.
- DET Student Support Services may be engaged for additional recovery assistance.
- Recovery activities may include memorials, adjustments to routines, and individualised wellbeing planning.

5. Training and Drills

- Emergency response drills (e.g., evacuations, lockdowns) will be conducted at least once per term.
- All staff will be trained in emergency management procedures, including relief and casual staff.
- Students and other regular site users will be familiarised with relevant procedures.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed:

- **Annually**, before 1 September;
- **After any critical incident** to ensure continuous improvement; and
- **In response to any updated DET guidance.**

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- [Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning Policy – DET](#)
- Saltwater College Emergency Management Plan (EMP)
- Emergency and Security Management Branch – (03) 9589 6266 (24-hour line)
- EMP Online Portal

- [Emergency Management Resources – DET](#)

REVIEW CYCLE

Policy last reviewed	April 1, 2025
Consultation	Jackie Daniali Wellbeing Team School Council Student Representative Group Consultative Committee
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	April 1, 2026