CRITICAL INCIDENT
POLICY

This policy should be read and considered with the School's Emergency Management Plan, which is up-dated on an annual basis each November.

Reporting and managing emergencies and incidents

Purpose of this policy

To ensure expert response and management of all school emergencies and incidents, including incidents that occur during, camps, excursions or outdoor adventure activities, weekends and holidays, travel to and from school and non-school hours.

Schools, regions and central Department staff responding and managing emergencies and incidents must use the key actions outlined in the [School Incident Management System](#) (SIMS) Policy and Guidelines.

The policy applies to all government schools and all services delivered by school councils within the school environment.

Policy

Schools must:

- call **000 immediately** to report any incident threatening life or property, this includes:
  - police for crime, injury that may not be accidental or assault
  - ambulance for injury and medical assistance
  - fire brigade for fires and incidents involving hazardous and dangerous materials (report all fires, regardless of state and size, even if extinguished).
- after contacting **000**, notify the Department's Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on **1800 126 126**.

Note: Prompt incident notification enables Incident Support and Operations Centre staff at the Communications Centre to provide security related support and advice to schools. This helps to resolve emergencies quickly while minimising the risk to personal safety.

Scope

The scope of this policy is limited to:

- incidents where the subject is a student who is under the care or supervision of the school;
- when an incident impacting a student is brought to the attention of the school, regardless of when or where it occurred, provided it is impacting on the student or other students within the school setting;
- incidents that impact the continuity of school operations, including property damage and emergencies;
- incidents requiring a notification to police; and/or
- incidents impacting on the health, safety and wellbeing of staff where the incident also impacts on student health safety and wellbeing and/or continuity of school operations. Note that these incidents will also need to be reported in eduSafe if the workplace health and safety policy applies.
- Principals, or their delegates, may also elect to apply this policy to incidents that impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of staff in the event that additional support is required from the region or DET Central beyond that which is available following a report in eduSafe.

Roles and responsibilities

Under this policy, the Principal is responsible for the initial incident severity rating and reporting, with support from the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126. This responsibility can be delegated to other school staff at the Principal's discretion. It is recommended that the list of delegates include at least one school staff member outside the school's leadership team.

Where an incident is rated as either Extreme (Red) or High (Orange), the Area Executive Director and/or the Director SEMD will also have governance and oversight of incident management, particularly in relation to reviewing the categorisation of the incident. The nature of this responsibility will vary depending on the severity of incident and the level of support required by the Principal, as outlined in this policy.

- Low (Blue) incidents: Principal manages and governs incident.
- Medium (Yellow) incidents: Principal manages and governs incident. Region and Central have visibility of incident.
- High (Orange) incidents: Principal manages incident. Area Executive Director governs incident and coordinates supports. Central has visibility of incident.
- Extreme (Red) incidents: Principal manages incident. Area Executive Director supports. Director, SEMD (or rostered DET Central Incident Commander) governs incident.

School Incident Management System

The SIMS provides:

- a six-stage approach to 'end to end' management of incidents
- an incident severity triaging based on the impact of the incident
- clear and consistent accountability.

The six steps are:

1. **Identify and respond**: describes how to identify an incident, and what immediate general actions should be undertaken.

2. **Reporting an incident**: describes the four incident severity ratings- low (blue), medium (yellow), high (orange) and extreme (red), including incidents that should automatically be rated as Extreme (red). A severity-rating decision matrix helps determine the severity level. The severity or seriousness of the incident determines how it needs to be reported and within what timeframe, and inform the level of regional and central departmental support. To access the matrix click ⬇here (pdf - 34.04kb)

Note: Some incidents will trigger other internal and external reporting obligations, which are also outlined in this section.

3. **Ongoing support and recovery**: sets out the process for providing an ongoing response to incidents, and supporting any required recovery efforts. It summarises key policies and worked examples.

4. **Investigate**: sets out the process for referring a relevant incident for investigation. This policy does not create an investigation power, however, incidents captured by the policy may trigger investigations under other policies and legislative schemes. The section proves an overview of potential investigations.

5. **Review and close**: outlines what incident reviews are, when they should be undertaken and who should be responsible. Reviews are discretionary.

It also outlines the process for incident closure, which is a formal process. An incident is closed with comments once the responsible authority is confident that appropriate ongoing supports are in place and, if relevant, pending investigations are underway and/or reviews have been completed and recorded. Closure of incidents must be determined in consultation with the principal.

6. **Analyse and learn**: provides an overview of the data analysis framework, descriptive analysis summary reports and diagnostic analysis reports which can be developed by monitoring, interrogating and acting on trends identified through the analysis of incident information.

Reporting incidents

Following notification to 000 schools must report to ISOC any incident:

- posing a risk to the safety of a student, parent, visitor or staff member including:
- o serious injury or death
- o allegations of or actual physical or sexual assault
- o threat to property or the environment

o	the use of seclusion or physical restraint of a student in response to an incident, see: Restraint of Student

Reportable incidents

As a general rule, a serious incident is one that requires medical attention or a police investigation. Examples of reportable incidents involving schools include:

- death or suicide of a student, staff member or member of the school community
- self-harm/injury or threats of suicide
- injuries requiring treatment by a doctor, transport by ambulance or hospitalisation
- concerning mental health and traumatic incidents requiring peer
- professional or clinical support
- incidents that did not lead to injury or death but very nearly did
- incidents of a sexual nature
- abuse or risk of abuse or neglect including online child abuse (mandatory reporting obligations may also apply)
- missing student
- online bullying, inappropriate use of social media and/or mobile phones.
- damage to parts of a school building or its content
- loss of essential service
- emergency situation and warnings
- bomb threats
- alleged criminal activity
- aggressive behaviour or actions or behaviours of concern
- forced marriage or human rights abuse
- family violence
- human trafficking
- sexual exploitation
- suspicious activity within or near school environment.

Note: Schools should also report any nuisance activity which may not have led to damage, but could lead to crime at a future time. This information is used to implement pro-active security measures such as targeted security patrols, temporary surveillance and intruder detection systems to prevent criminal activity.

Bomb threats or threatening calls

If a bomb threat or threatening call is received via a telephone call, follow your Emergency Management Plan.

1. call police on **000**
2. notify the Incident Support and Operations Centre on **1800 126 126**
3. implement the school's emergency management plan
4. do not search for the bomb
5. do not allow a search by students or staff
6. if a bomb or other explosive device is sighted in the school grounds, keep staff, students and other visitors to the school calm and promptly clear the area in an orderly and calm manner
7. do not impede an explosives inspector from entering school premises
8. do not handle any explosives found at school.

Note: an inspector of explosives may interview students at school on the same basis as a police interview.

Fires

All fires, including those that have been extinguished and regardless of their size, must be reported to the relevant fire service for the particular locality by contacting **000** and the ISOC.

Helicopter landings in schools in an emergency

The Department has given a general authorisation for the use of school grounds as helicopter landing sites during emergencies for the: air ambulance, fire reconnaissance or crime prevention.

The urgent nature of an emergency may preclude advance notification. The pilot is responsible for ensuring that the:

- area chosen for landing is suitable
- safety of those on the ground is not compromised.

If a landing occurs during school time, students must remain at a safe distance, clear of the departure, and approach paths.

The Department has not given approval for media, commercially or privately operated helicopters to use school grounds. They must obtain permission from the principal before landing.

Note: If the principal or school council consider helicopter arrivals or departures from the school grounds for non-emergency purposes there are stringent requirements for the safety of spectators and protection of the environment. Schools must contact the Aviation Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities and the Environment Protection Authority Victoria for advice.

Managing trauma

Exposure to trauma can have significant long-term adverse effects for students, staff, parents and carers. The Managing Trauma guide supports principals, Student Support Services (SSS) and recovery teams in leading the emotional and psychological recovery at a school following a school-based incident.

The guide supports principals and SSS to plan for, and lead an effective recovery. This can significantly reduce trauma and protect students, staff and school community members from physical, psychological and emotional harm.

Related policies

- Emergency Management and Security Services Support
- Emergency Management Planning
- School Equipment Reinstatement Scheme
- Worksafe Notification

Related legislation

- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Emergency Management Act 1986
- Emergency Management Act 2013

Department resources

- Visit the Department' s Manage school incidentsintranet webpage for further information.
- A Guide to Managing Incidents in your School
- eduSafe
- ISOC lanyard card
- Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors
- School Incident Management System (SIMS) poster

Evaluation:

To be reviewed as part of the school's annual review process.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in	**May 2019**

Cavendish Primary School is committed to Child Safety – We have a zero tolerance for child abuse.