



**CORINDA STATE HIGH SCHOOL**

# **CRITICAL INCIDENTS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

INCLUDING EMERGENCY BUILDINGS  
EVACUATION AND EMERGENCY  
GROUNDS EVACUATION PROCEDURES

***OUR VISION***  
***TO DEVELOP GREAT LEARNERS,***  
***GREAT CITIZENS***  
***READY FOR GREAT FUTURES.***

2007



# CRITICAL INCIDENTS MANAGEMENT PLAN

CORINDA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

**PART A**      **Corinda SHS Critical Incidents  
Management Plan**

**PART B**      **Corinda SHS Workplace Health and Safety:  
External Threat Procedures  
Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

**PART C**      **Education Queensland  
Notifications**

**PART D**      **Checklists:  
What needs to be done and when?**

**PART E**      **Personal Support Kit**

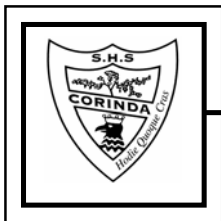


# CRITICAL INCIDENTS MANAGEMENT PLAN

CORINDA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

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## 2007 CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM AND

CORINDA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

## SUPPORT PERSONNEL

January 2007

### THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (GREEN TEAM)

**Principal:** Helen Jamieson  
**Deputies:** John Cleeton  
 Diane Aylward  
 Paul Robertson

**Guidance:** Margaret Cagney

**First Aid Officer:**

**Registrar:** David Holdcroft

### SUPPORT PERSONNEL

#### 1. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:

Neil Rogers                      Helen Little                      Ros Clark  
 Wayne Dunbrack      Meredith Gleadhill

#### 2. YEAR CO-ORDINATORS:

Grant Kirk-Lauritsen / Sally Tresillian (Year 8)  
 Louise Brier (Year 9)  
 Shane Pavitt (Year 10)  
 Susan Pedley (Year 11)  
 Carolyn Heaton (Year 12)

#### 3. OTHER SUPPORT PERSONNEL:

Workplace Health and Safety Officer: Sandra Gornik

#### 4. FIRST AID ASSISTANTS:

Marilyn Bromage  
 Caroline Heaton (CPR)  
 Dianne Aylward

Rescue Equipment: Industrial Technology Staff

### EXTERNAL SUPPORT

John Low	Senior Guidance Officer	Ph.: 3630 3324 Mobile: 0409 260280
Maggie Kerr	School Nurse (Community Health)	Ph.: 3275 5455
Andrea Erichsen	School Chaplain	Ph.: 3379 4704
Child and Youth Mental Health	Inala	Ph.: 3372 5577
	Yeronga	Ph.: 3848 8011

## 1. A CRITICAL INCIDENT (DEFINED)

- ◆ **IS ANY** situation faced by people causing them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the time or later.
- ◆ Evokes NORMAL REACTIONS TO ABNORMAL EVENTS. There is increased trauma if someone is exposed to Gruesome deaths, mutilations, violent deaths, massive deaths.
- ◆ Key aspects include:
  - SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED
  - UNTIMELY (e.g. Christmas)
  - VIOLENT AND SHOCKING
  - DEGREE OF SUFFERING
- ◆ Particularly Stressful Critical Incidents occur with:
  - Death or threat of or to a colleague in the line of duty
  - Injury to one of “own”
  - Suicide of one of “own”
  - Death to a child in tragic circumstances
  - Large number of casualties
  - Major disaster

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- ◆ Death from natural causes or which involves some degree of warning or inevitability may not be a critical incident for a school population. It may be a normal loss situation which involves normal grief processes for those involved.
- ◆ While most people will recover from, or at least learn to live with a traumatic experience with time and support, for some there may be long-term or permanent repercussions.
- ◆ For people exposed to trauma there is a cumulative effect.
- ◆ Critical incidents amongst school populations have long term implications for both victims and personnel involved in recovery. Sustained stress and tension produces physiological changes which pave the way for ill-health.
- ◆ Even for people who have experienced similar incidents previously it is often the difference that makes the incident traumatic.

## 1.1 RATIONALE: FOR A C.I. PLAN

This Critical Incident Management Plan.....

- ♦ Is designed with the intention of addressing the human needs of those involved as well as procedural matters which may be significant in the event of a critical incident.
- ♦ Attempts to minimise the negative effects for personnel as well as students involved in any critical incident by addressing the psychological needs of students and staff in the event of an unfortunate critical incident.
- ♦ The psychological wellbeing of staff and students is also addressed by Supportive School Environment policies and practices which support and encourage positive personal development through effective learning and teaching practices, student welfare and behaviour management programs, inclusive curriculum structures, and Human Relationships Education.
- ♦ The Critical Incidents Management Plan contributes to the achievement of the School Mission.

## ***OUR VISION*** ***TO DEVELOP GREAT LEARNERS, GREAT CITIZENS*** ***READY FOR GREAT FUTURES.***

## 1.2 RISK IDENTIFICATION:

(TYPE A) Major damage to facilities and assets when school is unoccupied.

- Fire, local flooding, explosion, farm devastation.

(TYPE B) Incidents affecting the school community.

On-campus activities:

- Student factors include possibilities of siege, invasion, accidents, cultural conflict, suicide, interpersonal distress, unlawful use of firearms.

(TYPE C) Community incidents which may affect school personnel.

- Proximity to industrial sites (gas, fumes etc).

## 1.3 FACTORS SPECIFIC TO CORINDA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Mobility and supervision of students with disabilities is a concern.

Corinda State High School has had relatively few incidents and they have not required full scale critical incident management.

Corinda State High School is a school with both large and growing numbers. Any relocation of students requires considerable organisation.

The school climate is one which school members normally experience finely turned organisation. School personnel and students may experience disorientation in the event of any incident which naturally brings with it an element of chaos.

Corinda State High School is under the flight plan of planes from Archerfield Aerodrome.

## 2. CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

The **Green Team** includes:

Principal  
Deputy Principals  
Guidance  
First Aid Officer  
Registrar

Where there is significant trauma, the **Green Team** is convened to plan response strategies.

The **Red Team** includes:

All available staff.

The involvement of this team would only occur during breaks. Where there is a need to provide a “show of strength” an alert for the Red Team will be called asking that group of people to move speedily to a designated area.

### **Emergency Building Evacuation Procedures**

Involve the speedy movement of students to the oval at the sound of the Australian Standard Evacuation Tone (AS2220).

### **Emergency Containment Procedures**

If before school or during a scheduled break students go to next timetabled class where practicable, or if already in class rooms are held indoors at the sound of alert tone (AS2220).

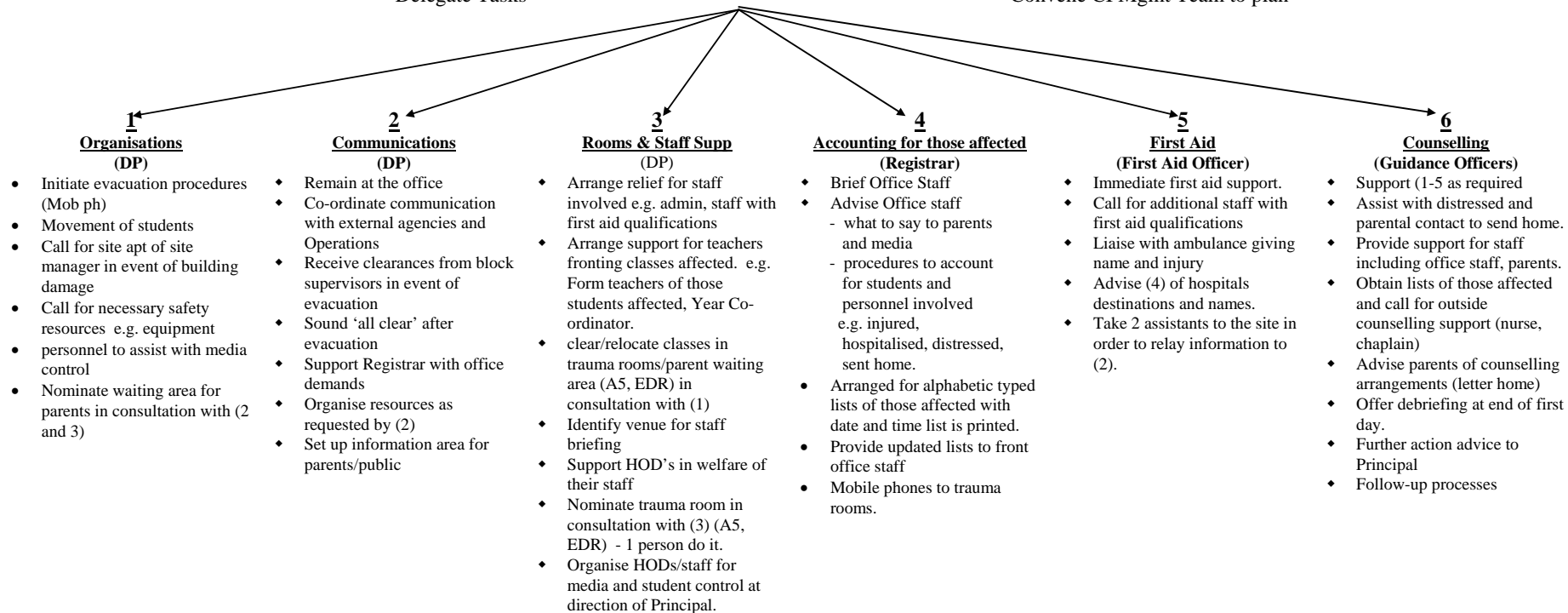
### 3. CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

#### 3.1

## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TASK ALLOCATION RED TEAM AND GREEN TEAM ALERTS

**PRINCIPAL**

- ◆ Ascertain extent of problem
  - ◆ Planning meeting (Admin, GO's, Registrar)
  - ◆ Call for outside assistance (Inform Dist. Office)
  - ◆ Delegate Tasks
- ◆ Media Release and Control
  - ◆ Staff Briefing - letter, meeting
  - ◆ Arrange letter home to parents
  - ◆ Convene CI Mgmt Team to plan



**1**  
**Organisations**  
(DP)

- Initiate evacuation procedures (Mob ph)
- Movement of students
- Call for site apt of site manager in event of building damage
- Call for necessary safety resources e.g. equipment
- personnel to assist with media control
- Nominate waiting area for parents in consultation with (2 and 3)

**2**  
**Communications**  
(DP)

- ◆ Remain at the office
- ◆ Co-ordinate communication with external agencies and Operations
- ◆ Receive clearances from block supervisors in event of evacuation
- ◆ Sound 'all clear' after evacuation
- ◆ Support Registrar with office demands
- ◆ Organise resources as requested by (2)
- ◆ Set up information area for parents/public

**3**  
**Rooms & Staff Supp**  
(DP)

- ◆ Arrange relief for staff involved e.g. admin, staff with first aid qualifications
- ◆ Arrange support for teachers fronting classes affected. e.g. Form teachers of those students affected, Year Co-ordinator.
- ◆ clear/relocate classes in trauma rooms/parent waiting area (A5, EDR) in consultation with (1)
- ◆ Identify venue for staff briefing
- ◆ Support HOD's in welfare of their staff
- ◆ Nominate trauma room in consultation with (3) (A5, EDR) - 1 person do it.
- ◆ Organise HODs/staff for media and student control at direction of Principal.

**4**  
**Accounting for those affected**  
(Registrar)

- ◆ Brief Office Staff
- ◆ Advise Office staff
  - what to say to parents and media
  - procedures to account for students and personnel involved e.g. injured, hospitalised, distressed, sent home.
- Arranged for alphabetic typed lists of those affected with date and time list is printed.
- Provide updated lists to front office staff
- Mobile phones to trauma rooms.

**5**  
**First Aid**  
(First Aid Officer)

- ◆ Immediate first aid support.
- ◆ Call for additional staff with first aid qualifications
- ◆ Liaise with ambulance giving name and injury
- ◆ Advise (4) of hospitals destinations and names.
- ◆ Take 2 assistants to the site in order to relay information to (2).

**6**  
**Counselling**  
(Guidance Officers)

- ◆ Support (1-5 as required)
- ◆ Assist with distressed and parental contact to send home.
- ◆ Provide support for staff including office staff, parents.
- ◆ Obtain lists of those affected and call for outside counselling support (nurse, chaplain)
- ◆ Advise parents of counselling arrangements (letter home)
- ◆ Offer debriefing at end of first day.
- ◆ Further action advice to Principal
- ◆ Follow-up processes

## 3.2 SUPPORTING NOTES (ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES)

### **PRINCIPAL/ACTING PRINCIPAL**

- ♦ Overall Co-ordination and Support.
- ♦ Ascertain extent of problem.
- ♦ Contact Emergency Services AND/OR activate safety procedures (in the case of threat).
- ♦ Allocate tasks to Deputy Principals
  - i.e. Organisations
  - Communication
  - Rooms and Staff Support
  - Account for those affected
  - First Aid
  - Counselling
  - Appoint a site manager if required and inform members of CI Management Team.
- ♦ Liaise with District Office.
- ♦ Convene a meeting with CI Management Team/Green Team to confirm management plan.
- ♦ Record date/time and specific details on own personal log.
- ♦ Supervise recovery procedures.
- ♦ Prepare standard information statements for teachers to pass onto students at the time of crisis.
- ♦ Prepare information statements and call for briefings of staff, students, parents and media at a time which is appropriate to the situation.
- ♦ In conjunction with Guidance Personnel arrange for staff debriefing at the “end of the day” and discussion of needs.
- ♦ On confirmation of death, contact relatives personally.
- ♦ Be mindful of those staff members under extreme stress.

### **OFFICE STAFF, TEACHER AIDES, JANITOR/GROUNDS STAFF**

- ♦ Carry out Internal/External Evacuation Procedures as directed.

#### **Office Staff**

- ♦ Report all incidents to a member of the Administration.
- ♦ When an incident is reported record the following details:
 

Location of incident	Nature of incident
No. involved	Person reporting
Phone contact if applicable	Time incident reported
See Appendix A “Telephone Threats”	
Appendix B “Siege/Hostage Questionnaire”.	
- ♦ Should the situation arise where a member of the administration is not on hand, contact the police and ask the most senior staff member available and ask that person to go to site with mobile phone.
- ♦ Log all incoming calls/faxes.
- ♦ Record and dispatch to the relevant Deputy Principal any names of those involved or injured, the degree to which they are affected, information passed on to parents, or updates received about welfare/whereabouts of those involved.
- ♦ As phones may become jammed, emergency services should be provided with the school’s fax number and mobile phone number.
- ♦ Initiate a phone roster during the period of a critical incident.

#### **Teacher Aides**

- ♦ Provide administrative support.
- ♦ Assist First Aid Officer and Year Co-ordinators with the relaying of information about students to the Deputy Principal accounting for students.
- ♦ Assist with the supervision of students.
- ♦ Look after visitors to the school.

**Janitor/Grounds Staff**

- ♦ Co-ordinate provision of equipment as requested.
- ♦ Provide access to locked areas.
- ♦ Assist in the normal running of the school and assist Administration and Office staff in any area required.

**SUPPORTING NOTES FOR TEACHERS, HODS, YEAR CO-ORDINATORS, FORM TEACHERS IN THE EVENT OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT**

The **Green Team** includes:

Principal  
Deputy Principals  
Guidance  
First Aid Officer  
Registrar

Where there is significant trauma, the **Green Team** is convened to plan response strategies.

**Red Team** call over PA System:

- ♦ This call would only be made during breaks.
  - ♦ It requires all **available** and **willing** teachers to go straight to a designated area in order to assist.
  - ♦ In this instance the Admin may decide to confront/negotiate with any intruders.
  - ♦ It is the role of staff to move students away from the trouble area, to be distant but imposing by their attendance.
  - ♦ One teacher should remain in each staffroom rather than leave staffrooms unattended.
  - ♦ If teachers have access to camera, notepaper and pen, these should be taken to record important observations/events.
- However, speed of response is the highest priority.

**EMERGENCY BUILDING EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

**It is a legal requirement that all members of staff sign the Emergency Evacuation Register, located in the Office, at the beginning of each year. Would all members of staff please ensure that they have read the attached document and then sign the register at the office as soon as possible.**

An Emergency Evacuation is defined as the ordered movements and management of all school students and personnel to a safe area in the event of a threat to people or property. The most likely causes are a fire or a bomb threat. These procedures are presented in the context of a school fire.

**GENERAL PROCEDURE:**

1. The teacher/person who first locates the fire should:
  - (a) clear students from the immediate areas.
  - (b) notify the Office by runner or phone.
  - (c) begin evacuating the building/area in which the fire began.
2.
  - (a) The Fire Brigade or Bomb Squad will be contacted by the Registrar or a member of the office staff as soon as notification of the fire/bomb threat is received.
  - (b) When necessary a call will be made over the loudspeaker for the LIFT team to come to the affected Block.
  - (c) The Emergency Evacuation will be signalled either by the sound of the **Australian Standard Evacuation Tone (AS2220) (whoop, whoop, whoop)** through the school PA system or by a continued ringing of a hand bell.

**3. When the Emergency Evacuation Signal is heard:**

- (a) Each teacher in charge of a class should ask the students to stand and file from the classroom. All books, equipment and school bags are left. (Teachers leaving Science, Home Economics, Manual Arts classes should ensure that all gas outlets, burners, or other heating apparatus is turned off before leaving the room).
- (b) Teachers who have students who use wheelchairs in their class, should take the whole class via the nearest ramp on to the oval. The teacher should ensure that the student in the wheelchair locates and joins their Form class before checking their own class roll. If a staff member from the Corinda Learning and Support Services (CLASS) is assisting in your classroom at the time of the evacuation that person can accompany the student in a wheelchair to the oval, whilst you take the rest of the class via the nearest set of steps.
- (c) The following procedures have been developed to provide for the quick and safe evacuation of students who use wheelchairs from a block where access to ramps is blocked.
  - A response team has been formed whose responsibility will be to proceed, as soon as practicable, to the area in which the emergency exists. This team will be called the **LIFT TEAM**. The team will consist of
    - HOSES.
    - Teaching staff from CLASS.
    - Teacher Aides from CLASS.
    - 1 member of Administration
    - Block Supervisors from the affected Block
    - Other staff members designated by HOSES
  - Staff from CLASS will need to promptly hand over any students with a disability, whom they are accompanying, to a Class Teacher or the Form Teacher on the oval. They will then proceed immediately to the affected Block. The staff members who have been working in G Block should take the spare manual wheelchairs and the hoist sling with them to the affected Block.
  - Relevant Block Supervisors will attend.

The following steps will be taken:

1. An announcement will be made over the loudspeaker system calling for the **LIFT TEAM** to make their way to the Block in which the emergency exists. This should be made before the fire alarm is sounded to ensure that the message is heard.
2. The first CLASS staff member to arrive will ascertain how many students are involved, decide on the most suitable lifts and estimate how many people will be required to carry out the evacuations.
3. When the HOSES arrives he/she should check which lifting procedures have been decided on and supervise the carrying out of the evacuation.
4. Students will be carried away from the building and onto the oval or onto the footpath, whichever is closest and safest. If the students are on the footpath a **LIFT TEAM** member must report to the oval, where possible to ensure students are marked off the roll.

It is desirable to remove electric wheelchairs as it will reduce the carrying distance that will otherwise need to be undertaken. Also many students have very specialised chairs and could be stranded for months if their chair is lost. However, **electric wheelchairs should only be removed during an emergency evacuation if there are sufficient members of staff and time, to do so safely.**

Teachers should count the number of students as they leave the room, noting any who have left for books, roll, toilet, illness or library reasons.

- (d) Each teacher should check that the class either side of his/her room has heard the alarm and is responding appropriately.
  - (e) **All** persons without exception must evacuate the buildings and walk swiftly to the oval via the shortest, safest route, in full view of and under the strict supervision of their classroom teacher. **These routes are indicated on the classroom evacuation plans.**
4. On reaching the Main Oval (or designated assembly point)
- (a) the class teacher takes the class to the year level area where the class group disperses and students line up behind their Form marker. **Form Teachers** now take responsibility for the Form Group.
  - (b) teachers responsible for students in wheelchairs should determine the student's form class, and accompany the student to his/her form class marker. Responsibility for the student now passes to the Form Teacher formally through verbal acknowledgment.
  - (c) Year Co-ordinators collect the Year rolls from the Teacher Aides and disperse these to Form Teachers who mark the roll and quickly return the roll to Year Co-ordinators reporting any student who is missing. Teachers who supervised a Form Class for Form Group meetings in the absence of the usual form teacher will mark the form roll for the evacuation.
  - (d) Year Co-ordinators report an "all accounted for" or (Student Names) missing to the Deputy Principal - Operations.
  - (e) Form Teachers must stay with their class, positioning themselves behind the class, until the "all clear" is given. If the Evacuation is a result of a bomb threat students may be dispersed to shade areas, students remain the responsibility of the Form Teachers.
  - (f) Staff who do not have a form class should report to the Deputy Principal - Operations to be accounted for and then move to the back of the assembly.
5. Building Checks  
 The designated Block Supervisor or his/her nominated reserve should check allocated buildings thoroughly for students, visitors, teachers, note any suspicious objects and also check gas mains and electricity power boxes to ensure they have been turned off. Block Supervisors or their reserve should then report the "Block clear" or otherwise to the Deputy Principal - Communications stationed at the main office, **only on Extension 202**. If contact with the Office cannot be made, physically come to the Administration Block.

BLOCK	SUPERVISOR	RESERVE (To perform duty if Supervisor is absent)
Administration	Mr John Cleeton	Mr David Holdcroft(Register)
A Block	Ms Margaret Jacobs	Ms Sue Pedley
B Block	Mrs Meredith Gleadhill	Ms Sandra Gornik
C Block	Mr Jon Rehder	Mr Brian Fox
D Block	Ms Margaret Cagney	Mr Kev Mc Mahon
G Block	Ms Ros Clark	Ms Melanie Mace
E Block / F Block	Mrs Ann Nolan	Mr Kym Garrett
Farm	Ms Janna Jacobs	Mr Ian Hutchinson
Library Technology Lning Centre	Ms Dolor Milford	Ms Pam Lanham
Manual Arts, Hall	Mr Neil Rogers	Mr Dennis Collier
Music Block	Mr Kent Gibbins	Ms Jodie Schlottmann
Performing Arts Centre	Mrs Julie Peachey	Ms Nancy Francis
Physical Education Centre	Mr Geoff Palmer	Mr Gerry Poon
Science & Multistrand Lab	Mr Wayne Dunbrack	Ms Dorothy McCullough

If a Block Supervisor is absent the designated reserve automatically conducts the Block search and reports to the Deputy Principal - Communications stationed in the office.

**The Block Supervisor(s) should move immediately to assist the Lift Team (if it is operating in their Block) before their “Block Clear” message is delivered to the Deputy Principal - Communications.**

6. Emergency Evacuation before school, at lunch or after school  
If an Emergency Evacuation is signalled at these times it is expected that all students will move promptly to the main oval via a route away from buildings and verandahs, and assemble in the usual area. All staff should then assume their designated Emergency Evacuation role.
7. **Specific Tasks**
  - (a) **Deputy Principal (Communications) will:**
    - ♦ remain at the office to Co-ordinate communications with the Fire Brigade, the main oval, and the Block supervisors.
    - ♦ receive clearances from Block Supervisors.
    - ♦ receive parent calls.
    - ♦ sound the “ALL CLEAR”.
  - (b) **Deputy Principal (Operations) will:**
    - ♦ on receiving an evacuation message sound the evacuation alarm.
    - ♦ supervise the organisation of students and classes in conjunction with Year Co-ordinators.
    - ♦ supervise the isolation of the student body by directing teachers to circle the student body.
    - ♦ receive notification of missing students from Year Co-ordinators.
    - ♦ arrange for Block supervisors to re-check block/room, where the missing student was last seen.
    - ♦ sound the “ALL CLEAR” when received from the Deputy Principal - Communications.
    - ♦ supervise students as they return to class or break.
  - (c) **Office Staff:**
    - ♦ When notification of a fire is received, the Registrar will: immediately inform a member of the Administration team and contact the Fire Brigade. The Electric Bells will be used to signal the evacuation to school personnel.
    - ♦ Organise five copies of the day’s page of the Late Book, the Early Departure Books and the Sick Bay Book.
    - ♦ Organise the Teacher Aides and Office staff to take the Rolls, in year level bundles, to the oval where each set of the year level rolls should be given to the appropriate Year Co-ordinator.
    - ♦ Organise that one set of photocopied pages of the above mentioned books be taken to the oval and given to each Year Co-ordinators.
    - ♦ Supervise the Evacuation of student in Sick Bay, persons meeting in the Conference Rooms, Visitors waiting in the foyer.
  - (d) **Year Co-ordinators will:**
    - ♦ move quickly to the main oval and Co-ordinate the positioning of classes in their Year level.
    - ♦ collect rolls from Teacher Aides and distribute these to Form Teachers
    - ♦ receive photocopies of the current days pages of the Late Book, Going Home Book, Sick Bay Book.
    - ♦ receive reports of absentees from Form Teachers.
    - ♦ cross check absentees against the Late Book, Going Home Book, Sick Bay Book and report the name and class of any students unaccounted for to the Deputy Principal - Operations.
  - (e) **Form Teachers will:**
    - ♦ evacuate their subject class and accompany either the whole class, or disabled students in their class to the main oval.
    - ♦ on reaching the main ovals, disperse the subject class to Form Class areas.
    - ♦ move quickly to the marker designating your Form Class and arrange students in alphabetical order at the marker.
    - ♦ receive the roll from your Year Co-ordinators and accurately mark roll.

- ♦ return roll to the Year Co-ordinator and report the name and class of the absent students who are marked present on the roll.

- ♦ move to the back of your form class and help create a barrier between the student body and any other persons who may wish to contact students. No person is permitted to sit on the banks of the oval during an evacuation.
  - ♦ remain in this location, supervising students until the “ALL CLEAR” is given.
- (f) Heads of Department will:
- Clear the block (as per evacuation role)
  - Move to the oval
  - Move to assigned year level group and attempt to assist the Year Co-ordinator by marking rolls of any Form class teacher who is absent. ( see table below)
  - Move to deputy Principal on oval to have your name marked off the attendance sheet, and then move to the back of the student body.

<b>Head of Department</b>	<b>Designated year level</b>
Margaret Jacobs	Year 12
Julie Peachey	Year 11
Meredith Gleadhill	Year 10
Geoff Palmer	Year 9
Jon Rehder	Year 8
Ann Nolan	Year 12
Ros Clark	Year 11
Wayne Dunbrack	Year 10
Neil Rogers	Year 9
Dolor Milford	Year 8
Sue Howell	HOSES - Special Education Unit
Annette Hilton	Year 8

- (g) **Non Form Teachers will:**
- ♦ Report to Deputy Principal - Operations to be accounted for.
  - ♦ mark rolls of classes whose Form teacher is absent as directed by the Deputy Principal – Operations.
  - ♦ otherwise move to the back of the student body and help create a barrier between the student body and other persons.
  - ♦ remain in that location until the “ALL CLEAR” is given.
- (h) **The Resource Centre Staff & IT Staff will:**
- ♦ take the markers to the oval, and locate these in a straight line South to North, Year 12 to Year 8.
  - ♦ Report to Deputy Principal - Operations
  - ♦ move to the back of the student body and help supervise students and create a barrier between the student body and other persons.
  - ♦ after the “ALL CLEAR”, collect the markers and store in Resource Centre.
- (i) **Teacher Aides: (CLASS, Library, Home Economics, Manual Arts)**
- ♦ CLASS Teacher Aides assisting students in class, at the time of the evacuation should accompany students to the oval and then formally pass responsibility for the student to the Form Teacher. CLASS Teacher Aides may also be involved in the Lift Team.
  - ♦ Office Teacher Aides to transport rolls to the oval and disperse to Year Co-ordinators.
  - ♦ On arrival at oval report to Deputy Principal – Operations to be accounted for.
  - ♦ Other Teacher Aides should proceed to the main oval and form a line behind students.
- (j) **Janitor:**
- ♦ Moves to the Office depending on circumstances.
  - ♦ Assists Deputy Principal - Communications with phone calls, and direction of Emergency Services ie. Fire Brigade, Police or Ambulance.
  - ♦ Unlocks bollards at end of A Block.

- (k) **Tuckshop staff will:**
- ♦ turn off all stoves and electrical appliances.
  - ♦ move as a group to the main oval area.
  - ♦ Convenor reports all staff accounted for the Deputy Principal - Operations.
- (l) **Grounds staff will:**
- ♦ move to the main oval and report to Deputy Principal - Operations.
  - ♦ be prepared to provide water to the students should the “ALL CLEAR” be a long time coming.
- (m) **Laboratory Assistant will:**
- ♦ move briskly to the Farm, and check that the evacuation has been received and acted upon.
  - ♦ report to the Deputy Principal - Communications that the Farm has been cleared.
  - ♦ secure the chemical storage rooms.
  - ♦ move to the Farm road gate and control traffic.
- (n) **Resource Scheme staff:**
- ♦ Turn off electrical equipment.
  - ♦ Secure room.
  - ♦ Assemble all staff including volunteer staff.
  - ♦ Move to assembly area on the oval and report to Deputy Principal – Operations to be accounted for.

### 3.4 CONTAINMENT PROCEDURES

Containment is the securing of persons within a building to prevent a potential threat of harm or injury to students, staff, visitors and contractors.

**Examples of external threats include:**

- Dangerous or suspicious people coming onto the Corinda State High School site
- A major incident in the vicinity of the school e.g. Toxic spill (Chemical truck accident close to the school)
- A swarm of bees roaming the grounds
- Airborne particles
- Livestock
- Toxic spill (Chemical truck accident in the vicinity of the school)
- Extreme weather conditions

#### **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

##### 1. **NOTIFICATION of a Potential Threat**

The teacher/person who first identifies the threat should immediately contact the school Office by phone **Ext 248, 3379-0222** or using **Ext 777**, which automatically connects to all Administration telephones. If use of the phone is not possible a staff runner could be used if it is safe to do so.

Provide as much information as you can to allow the Administration team to make their decision on how to proceed

##### **What, Where Who and How**

- Time and nature of incident
- Details of Threat / offender.
- If armed what type of weapon
- Description of the suspicious article / activity

As soon as the information has been given secure yourself in a safe room. During the **Containment** all communication should be directed through **Ext 202** (Deputy Principal Communications)

##### 2. **The emergency “CONTAINMENT” will be signalled by sounding Australian Standard Alert Tone (AS2220) (Ping, Ping, Ping).**

NOTE : The Alarm may change to a buildings evacuation signal should the conditions deem it necessary

##### 3. **Procedures for CONTAINMENT**

- All personnel are to remain in, or proceed as quickly as possible to the safest classroom, staffroom or building. Teachers on PGD should hasten the movement of students into rooms.
- Teachers are to take charge of any students, visitors or contractors in their vicinity at the time of containment. Students should take their bags into the room with them if possible.
- Secure room, lock doors and windows and use discretion to ensure student safely out of sight. Have the class maintain quiet, and reduce all additional noise i.e. turn off air conditioners, fans and mobile phones
- Keep a low profile **out of sight** until a staff runner, under the direction of a Deputy Principal, personally releases you from the room. The staff runner will identify themselves, say **All Clear**, state **a password** (provided confidentially to staff at the beginning of each school year) and give a **direction** to move all occupants in the room to move promptly to the sports hall with bags for a full school assembly, roll mark and debrief.

**These are the only instructions you should respond to.**

- Staff and volunteers at the school canteen should remain in the canteen, lock all shutters and doors and remain quiet until a staff runner to personally releases you.

**All Clear** as well as a **password** and a **direction to move promptly to the hall** for a full school assembly, roll mark and debrief is the only instructed you should respond to.

When specific classrooms need to be evacuated, according to the circumstances, instructions for this evacuation would be given by a Deputy Principal (Operations) at the location.

## **PROCEDURES for an EMERGENCY SITE EVACUATION**

An Emergency Site Evacuation of the school would occur only in extreme circumstances where there was a potential threat to the whole school site. This evacuation of the school site would occur under the direction of a Deputy Principal (Operations), to locations such as Dunlop Park, Benawarra Park or Pony Club.

### **SPECIFIC TASKS FOR CONTAINMENT**

#### **A. Green Team**

Administration, Guidance, Registrar, First Aid Officer meet at the Principal's discretion.

**When Police/ Emergency Services arrive, the Principal will advise them of the situation, hand over control to them and provide assistance as required.**

#### **B. Deputy Principal (Communications) will:**

- Switch bells to manual
- Sound the siren (if applicable).
- Remain in the Office to Co-ordinate communications with the Police etc., and the staff.
- Receive parent calls.
- When the site is clear allocate staff runners to specific areas throughout the school to release teachers and students from the classroom.
- Switch bells to automatic

#### **C. Deputy Principal (Operations) will:**

- Ensure the school grounds are clear of all personnel
- Determine if any rooms are not staffed, by touring the school where possible
- Run the full school assembly and debrief students and staff at the conclusion of the containment.

#### **D. Office Staff**

- Notify Administration immediately a potential situation is received  
The Principal will be responsible for deciding on the action to be taken.
- Contact the police and/or emergency services if necessary, giving as much information as possible
- Move visitors in the foyer of the office into the general office work area
- Office staff will remain in the Office to organise official form rolls, and five copies of the Late Book (relevant pages), Early Departure Book and Sick Bay Book for the Deputy Principal (Operations).
- Organise the Teacher Aides and Office Staff to take the rolls and one copy of each of the photocopied pages of the above books in year level bundles to the sports hall, for distribution to the appropriate Year Level Co-ordinator
- Students and staff in the sick bay remain in the sick bay and keep **out of sight** until a staff runner, under the direction of a Deputy Principal, personally releases you from the room. The staff runner will identify themselves, say **All Clear**, state a **password** (provided confidentially to staff at the beginning of each school year) and give a **direction** to move all occupants in the room to move promptly to the sports hall with bags for a full school assembly, roll mark and debrief.

**These are the only instructions you should respond to.****E. Class Teachers**

- Move to the nearest unlocked room or a close room you have a key to if it safe to do so. Move all students in the vicinity into the room as quickly and quietly as possible. School bags should be taken into the classroom if possible.  
**Once inside do not leave the room or send a student to Office**
- Lock all doors and windows, have the class maintain quiet, and reduce all additional noise i.e. turn off air conditioners and fans.
- Instruct students to turn **Mobile phones off**
- Teachers to use discretion to secure students within the classroom with whatever means are available e.g. barricade windows and doors, hide under desks, hide in hallways and storerooms
- Maintain the above conditions until a staff runner, under the direction of a Deputy Principal, personally releases you from the room.  
The staff runner will identify themselves, say **All Clear**, state **a password** ( This will be provided confidentially to staff at the beginning of each school year) and give a **direction** to move all occupants in the room to move promptly to the sports hall with bags for a full school assembly, roll mark and debrief.  
**These are the only instructions you should respond to.**
- If students ask questions about the situation, advise students that all you know is, that we have been requested to remain indoors until further instruction
- On arrival at the sports hall carry out the duties of form teacher or year Co-ordinator and then have you name marked off the staff roll( This person will be identified by the Deputy in charge of the assembly)  
If you do not have a form group report to the appointed deputy and have your name marked off immediately.

**Year Co-ordinators will:**

- Follow the procedures for class teachers until the emergency is over
- Move quickly to the sports hall and co-ordinate the positioning of classes in their year level
- Collect rolls from teachers aides and distribute these to Form teachers
- Receive photocopies of the current pages of the Late, Going Home and Sick Bay books.
- Receive reports of absentees from Form teachers and check these against the above mentioned lists
- Report the name and Form Class of any student **UNACCOUNTED** for to the Deputy Principal Operations.
- When duties are complete have your name marked off the staff roll ( This person will be identified by the Deputy in charge of the assembly)

**Form Teachers will:**

- Follow the procedures for class teachers until the emergency is over
- On reaching the sports hall move quickly to your Form Class and arrange your students in an orderly line.
- Receive the roll from the Year Co-ordinator and **accurately** mark the roll
- Return the roll to the Year Co-ordinator and report the name and class of absent students
- When the roll has been marked have your name marked off the staff roll (This person will be wearing an orange vest) and the move to the back of your Form Class for the debrief



**What to do in the case of a Critical Incident**

Report any serious incident directly to the Principal.

During any incident:

- ♦ When in charge of a class, take responsibility for students in that class. Look after any visitors to the class.
- ♦ During and following the incident, **remain MOBILE and VIGILANT** of developing problems, particularly in the grounds during breaks.
- ♦ Assist Year Co-ordinators in the collection of information about those students overcome with distress. e.g. name and phone number.
- ♦ **Do NOT allow any student to leave the school without having their parents or caregivers sign them out at the Office.** The Deputy Principal accounting for those affected must know the whereabouts of all students.
- ♦ Avoid passing on information which may be ill-informed, wait for a prepared statement from the Principal.

**After the Incident:**

- ♦ Monitor students' welfare and provide support.
- ♦ Be aware that acting out behaviour can sometimes be a way of dealing with grief, either at the time of the incident or in the weeks afterwards.
- ♦ Understand that counselling/debriefing takes place 24 to 72 hours after the incident, not immediately. The immediate need of victims is to feel cared for, supported and safe, whatever their involvement has been. Direct all affected students to the recovery room. (The designated room is normally the Paradox Room)
- ♦ Provide ongoing peer support for those teachers affected. As a result of past experiences it is possible to be affected severely even though not particularly close to the situation.
- ♦ When voluntarily relieving affected teachers from classroom duties, advise the Deputy Principal (Rooms/Resources) as well as the Deputy Principal accounting for those affected so that the staff member is not overlooked for counselling support.
- ♦ Following the incident students who are continually acting out should be referred for counselling support.

**Heads of Department**

- ♦ Be concerned for the welfare of staff in the department (either directly or by delegation).
- ♦ Assist with communication difficulties should the need arise.
- ♦ Identify any staff within the Department/area who require any form of relief or personal assistance and advise Administration and/or Guidance as appropriate.
- ♦ Organise curriculum support materials for relief persons.
- ♦ Monitor students acting out or with severely withdrawn behaviours, especially those who show a marked change in behaviour/personality.

**Year Co-ordinators**

- ♦ Provide support for those distressed.
- ♦ Liaise with First Aid Officer and Guidance for those requiring assistance.
- ♦ Obtain factual information as appropriate and pass this on to the Deputy Principal accounting for those affected.
  - e.g. Is mum at work today?
  - Do you have a brother or sister at the school?
  - Do you have a relative who would pick you up?

**Form Teachers**

- ♦ At the first form meeting following the incident, disseminate **factual information as determined by the Principal.**
- ♦ Inform students of available counselling.
- ♦ Allow for student discussion.
- ♦ Direct affected students to the recovery room/Guidance.
- ♦ Monitor all students' welfare.

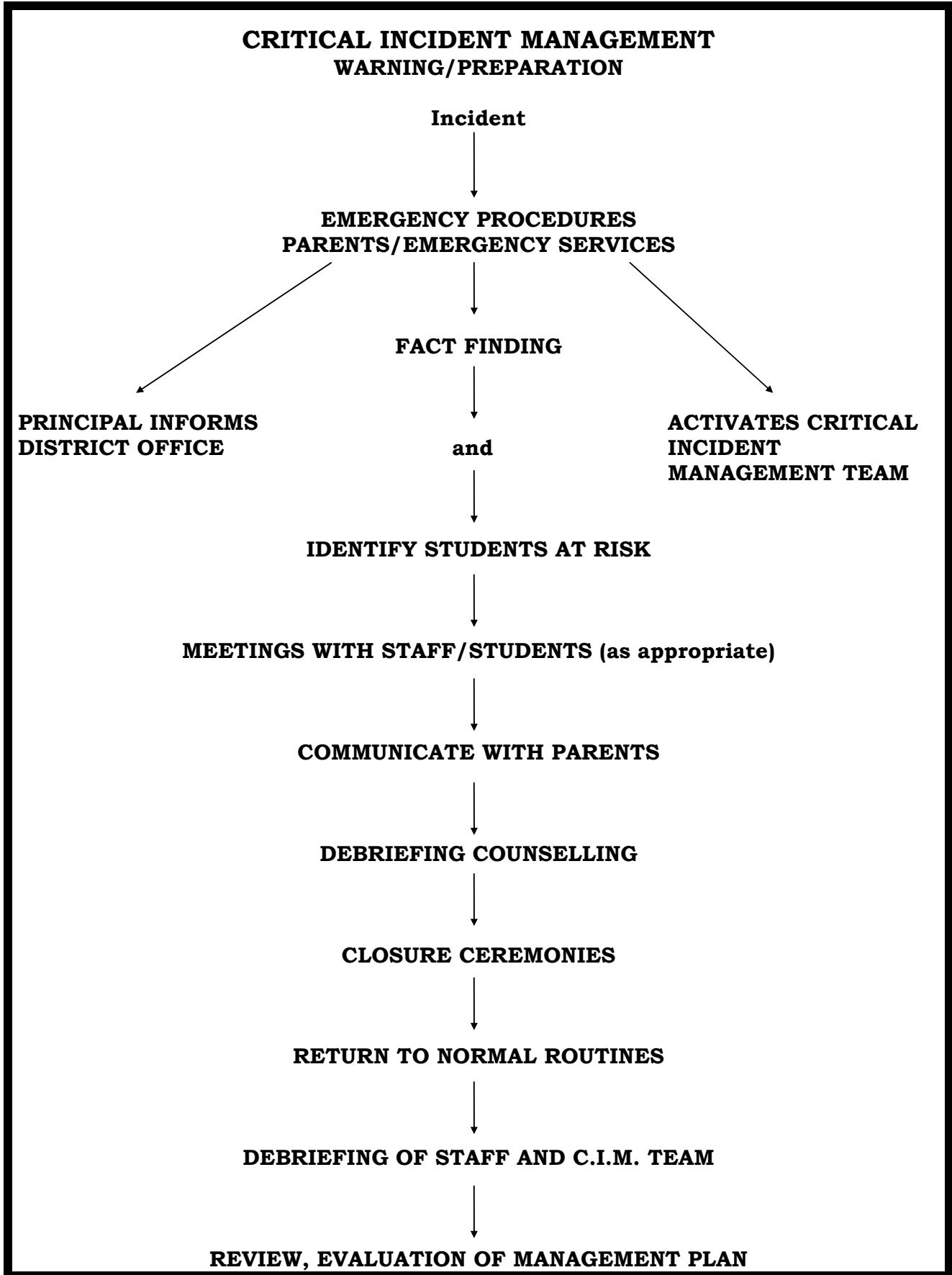
**NOTE:** Staff should **NOT** speak with the media. This task is the **Principals Sole responsibility.**

**4. LOCAL/EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS**

<b>EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS</b>		
POLICE	INALA SHERWOOD (8-4) JAB INALA PATROL CARS	3364 6309 3278 3033 3372 9299 3364 6464
AMBULANCE		000
FIRE		000
STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES (BRISBANE CITY)		3403 8888
ELECTRICITY	ENERGEX	136 262
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT	Education House Corinda District Office Q Build	3237 0111 3379 0500 3235 9830
COUNSELLING SUPPORT	Corinda District Office Critical Incidents Stress Debriefing Team (Corinda District Office) Aboriginal Community – Sigrud Nilsen Vietnamese Community – Mrs Hanh Dang-Thi Interpreter Service/TIS	3379 0500 3379 0500 3372 2300 3372 2655 1314 50 (24 Hours)
MEDICAL SUPPORT	Drug and Alcohol Information Service (24 Hr) Hospitals: Queen Elizabeth II (QE II) Princess Alexandra (PA) Medical Centres: Corinda Medical Centre School Nurse: Maggie Kerr	3236 2414 3275 6111 3240 2111 3379 1303 3373 4555
PARENTS AND CITIZENS SUPPORT	President: Mrs M Schloss	3372 6694
VENUES FREQUENTLY USED BY CORINDA SHS STUDENTS	Golf Course Dunlop Pool, Corinda Acacia Ridge Squash Iceworld, Acacia Ridge Oxley Golf Range Richlands Bowl (10 Pin) Corinda Lawn Bowls Valley Pool	3379 7836 3379 1630 3275 1963 3277 7563 3379 2078 3375 1166 3379 2338 3852 1231
SCHOOLS	Corinda Primary School Sherwood Primary School Oxley State School Graceville State School	3379 1609 3379 1341 3379 6903 3379 1765
TRANSPORT	South Western Transit (Inala Service) Queensland Rail (Emergencies & Accidents) Corinda Station Oxley Station Taxis Black and White Yellow Cabs	3372 1444 3606 5970 3235 1857 3379 1625 131 008 131 924
MEDIA	Paul Reynolds	3237 0258

<b>CORINDA SHS INCOMING PHONE LINES</b>			
Main Office	3379 0222	Blue Phone	3379 1731
Fax (Office)	3379-6958	Spec. Ed. Unit	3379 0249
Guidance Office	3379 0205	Tuckshop	3379 0223

### 5. CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE STEPS



## 6. SPECIFIC RESPONSES

### 6.1 CRITICAL INCIDENTS INVOLVING FEAR/THREAT

When there is physical threat as in the case of an individual with a firearm or the invasion by a threatening gang, or some other threat not within the power of the school to control, the following precautions may be necessary:

- ♦ In the first instance, Police should be contacted.
- ♦ Teachers may be signalled via the PA system with a message to the effect:

**“All students and staff should remain in their classrooms till further notice. Any student in the grounds at this moment must go to the NEAREST classroom. Teachers, please secure your rooms”.**

- ♦ Runners may be sent to rooms advising staff:  
“We have a Critical Incident, retain your students till further notice”.

#### 6.1.1 TELEPHONE THREATS

See Appendix A for Data Gathering Questionnaire.

#### 6.1.2 ARMED HOLDUP (Demands of Cash or Items of Value)

In the event of an armed holdup or threatening situation the person/persons under threat should

- ♦ Not antagonise intruder.
- ♦ Immediately give into the intruders demands e.g. hand over valuables/cash, open safe.
- ♦ Allow intruder to leave unchallenged.
- ♦ Contact police.
- ♦ Signal ‘containment’.
- ♦ Confirm facts of the situation (see Appendix B for data gathering questions)

#### 6.1.3 SIEGE/HOSTAGE RESPONSE

- ♦ Confirm facts of the situation.  
(See Appendix B for Data Gathering Questionnaire)
- ♦ Contact Police.
- ♦ Evacuate as required.
- ♦ Meet with personnel who have a direct knowledge of events leading up to the situation, building layout, knowledge of the hostage or the assailant.

### 6.2 NATURAL DISASTERS

#### 6.2.1 SEVERE STORM/CYCLONE THREAT

- ♦ Monitor radio warnings and reports.
- ♦ Doors or windows may be taped or covered.
- ♦ Disconnect all electrical appliances for thunderstorm.  
In the case of cyclones and evacuation warning, turn off electricity, gas etc. and follow evacuation procedures.
- ♦ If the storm/cyclone strikes before evacuation, keep students away from windows and skylights.
- ♦ Do not use telephones.
- ♦ Beware of the calm “eye” of cyclones. Retain students inside till emergency services or weather bulletins advise the danger has passed.

### 6.2.2 FLOOD

- ♦ Monitor radio warnings and reports.
- ♦ Evacuate students and staff upon advice from the Police or SES.
- ♦ Organise for early release of students and staff in flood prone areas and arrange billets for those stranded.
- ♦ Upon severe flood warning remove electrical items, chemicals, fuel to a high secure place.
- ♦ Remove or secure heavy objects that could float and cause damage.

## 7. ISSUES AND PROCEDURES

### 7.1 COMMUNICATIONS

On receiving advice of a major incident, the Office staff will immediately notify the Principal/Administrative person immediately available.

### 7.2 STUDENT PROTECTION

When students are assembled in evacuation areas, or for briefing sessions, they should be contained by locating staff on all sides of the assembled group.

### 7.3 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

It may not always be appropriate to notify students immediately about the facts of a situation. In deciding when to notify large school populations about death or horrifying circumstances it may be appropriate to arrange for students to be in the care of their families when they hear distressing news.

### 7.4 ACCOUNTING FOR STUDENTS AFTER AN ACCIDENT

It is important that all those involved in Critical Incident are accounted for.

#### ***For students/personnel injured:***

- ♦ The First Aid Officer and any staff able to assist will record details of those injured as follows:

Name, age, address

Suspected injury

Location of name of hospital where injured is being taken.

This information should be despatched as quickly as possible to the Deputy Principal/Officer-in-Charge via a runner.

#### ***For those affected though not seriously injured:***

- ♦ All personnel involved in recovery operations should note the names of those affected and dispatch to the Administration. See Appendix C “Keeping Track of Those Affected”.
- ♦ Note: People severely affected can easily be overlooked in the recovery process. It is important that recovery workers note names along with any specific information which may be helpful at a later date.
- ♦ **Staff should search for students who may have been overcome by hysteria or a need to “hide” themselves.**
- ♦ Staff and recovery personnel should refer all enquiries about welfare of victims to the Administration in order to prevent misinformation.

**Keeping track of those affected:**

- (1) Casualties
1. *Required urgent hospitalisation*
  2. *Medical treatment sometime*
  3. *Walking wounded*
- (2) Groups Requiring Counselling
- |           |   |                                     |
|-----------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Primary   | - | Directly Affected                   |
| Secondary | - | Relatives/Friends                   |
| Tertiary  | - | Response Personnel                  |
| 4th Level | - | Adjacent Community/Those Who Arrive |
| 5th Level | - | Fragile Others                      |
| 6th Level | - | “Could have been .....me!”          |

APPENDIX A

WORDING OF THREAT:
(Try to record exact words)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

(KEEP THE CALLER TALKING - try to obtain as much information as possible)

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- 1. When is bomb going to explode?
2. Where is it right now?
3. What does it look like?
4. What kind of bomb is it?
5. What will cause it to explode?
6. Who placed the bomb?
7. Why?
8. Where are you?
9. What is your name?
Estimated age of caller
Sex Intoxicated?
Number at which call is received.
Time Date
Name
Position

CALLER'S VOICE
(Tick all applicable boxes)

Table with 2 columns of voice characteristics: Calm, Angry, Excited, Slow, Rapid, Soft, Loud, Laughing, Crying, Normal, Distinct, Slurred, Nasal, Stuttering, Lispng, Raspy, Deep, Ragged, Clearing Throat, Deep Breathing, Cracking Voice, Disguised, Accent, Familiar.

If voice is familiar, whom did it sound like?

.....
.....

BACKGROUND SOUNDS

Table with 2 columns of background sounds: Street Noises, Crockery, Voices, PA System, Music, House Noises, Motor, Office, Machinery, Children, Factory Machinery, Animal Noises, Clear, Static, Local, Long-distance, Booth, Other.

THREAT LANGUAGE

Table with 2 columns of threat language: Well spoken (Educated), Foul, Irrational, Incoherent, Taped, Message read by threat maker.

REMARKS

.....
.....
.....

REPORT CALL IMMEDIATELY TO:

- Building Fire Warden
Floor Fire Warden
Police

EVEN THOUGH THE CALLER MAY HAVE DONE SO
DON'T HANG UP YOUR TELEPHONE

APPENDIX B

SIEGE/HOSTAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. TIME REPORTED..... BY.....

2. EXACT LOCATION OF HOSTAGE INCIDENT .....

.....

.....

3. NUMBER OF HOSTAGES .....

4. NAME(S) OF HOSTAGE(S) .....

.....

5. IF NAME(S) UNKNOWN:

Height: .....

Sex: .....

Colouring: .....

6. NUMBER OF ASSAILANTS .....

7. NOTABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF ASSAILANT(S) .....

.....

8. NUMBER OF WEAPONS .....

9. DESCRIPTION OF WEAPONS .....

10. MOOD OF ASSAILANT(S) (e.g. calm, irrational, nervous) .....

.....

11. OTHER INFORMATION .....

.....

.....

.....







APPENDIX F

**OFFICE RECORD OF CALLS (INCOMING/OUTGOING)**

**DATE:**..... **TIME:** .....

**CALLER'S NAME:** .....

**STUDENT'S NAME:**..... **YEAR LEVEL:** .....

**MESSAGE:** .....

.....

.....

**RESPONSE GIVEN:**.....

.....

.....

**TAKEN BY:** .....

**DATE:**..... **TIME:** .....

**CALLER'S NAME:** .....

**STUDENT'S NAME:**..... **YEAR LEVEL:** .....

**MESSAGE:** .....

.....

.....

**RESPONSE GIVEN:**.....

.....

.....

**TAKEN BY:** .....

## APPENDIX G

### THE CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS DEBRIEFING PROCESS

*Professor Jeffrey T Mitchell is a world authority on critical incident stress. He is Associate Professor at the Emergency Health Services Department, University of Maryland, and has written many articles on the problem. Prof. Mitchell visited Australia on a lecture tour in 1986 and was a guest lecturer at an international conference dealing with Stress and Trauma in Emergency Services held in Melbourne in August this year. Here is part of a paper written by Prof. Mitchell explaining the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Process.*

In an effort to reduce the number of psychological casualties among emergency service personnel, a relatively new form of crisis intervention that is specifically designed to assist them had been under development at the Emergency Health Services Program of the University of Maryland Baltimore County. It is called "Critical Incident Stress Debriefing" and its main goal is to support those who are involved in emergency operation under conditions of extreme stress. A critical incident stress debriefing will generally alleviate the acute stress responses which appear at the scene and immediately afterwards and will eliminate, or at least inhibit, delayed stress reactions. These emotional aftershocks can appear days, weeks or even months later and can seriously affect a person's performance within the emergency organisation as well as his relationship within his family.

#### **The Critical Incident**

A critical incident is any situation faced by emergency service personnel that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to a function either at the scene or later. A major disaster is one type of critical incident that comes to mind, but a situation does not have to be of this magnitude to classify as a critical incident. All that is necessary is that the incident, regardless of the type, generates unusually strong feelings in the emergency workers. The following are examples of critical incidents:

- ◇ The serious injury or death of an emergency team member in the line of duty
- ◇ The serious injury or death of a civilian resulting from emergency service operations. This would include a shooting by a police officer or a civilian injury or death caused by the collision of emergency units responding to a fire or Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls
- ◇ Almost any case which is charged with profound emotion such as the sudden death of an infant under particularly tragic circumstances
- ◇ Almost any case which attracts extremely unusual attention from news media
- ◇ Any loss of life which follows extraordinary and prolonged expenditures or physical and emotional energy in the rescue
- ◇ Any incident which can be considered a serious physical or psychological threat or a sudden loss to the rescuers
- ◇ Almost any incident in which the circumstances are so unusual or the sights and sounds so distressing as to produce a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction that surpasses the normal coping mechanisms of emergency personnel.

#### **Stress Response Syndromes**

Critical incidents produce a characteristic set of psychological and physiological reactions or symptoms (thus the term syndrome) in all people, including emergency service personnel.

The physical and emotional symptoms which develop as part of a stress response are considered normal in every way. They develop in most people facing stress, threat or loss, and are primitive responses of the mind and body designed to help the person survive. The stress response syndromes, although normal, have the potential to become dangerous to the emergency service workers health if symptoms become prolonged. They sap energy and leave the person vulnerable to illness. Under certain conditions, they may have the potential for life long after affects. They are especially destructive when a person denies their presence or misinterprets the stress responses as something going wrong with him.

### **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing**

There are many methods to deal with a stress response syndrome. Among them are strenuous physical exercise and special relaxation programs within 24 hours after the critical incident. But one of the most effective methods to deal with a stress response syndrome, especially in emergency personnel, is a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD).

The CISD is an organised approach to the management of stress responses in emergency services. It entails either an individual or group meeting between the rescue worker and a caring individual (Facilitator) who is able to help the person talk about his feelings and reactions to the critical incident. Basically, the CISD has three parts. The first part allows for an initial ventilation of feelings by the rescuer and an assessment by the facilitator of intensity of the stress response in the workers. Part two of the CISD entails a more detailed discussion of the signs and symptoms of the stress response and provides for support and reassurance from the facilitator. The third part of the CISD is the closure stage where resources are mobilised, information is provided, a plan of further action may be designed and referrals, if necessary , are made.

The victim of stress response syndrome responds remarkably well to this supportive crisis intervention format if the intervention takes place early. Within 24 to 48 hours is the ideal time for intervention. As the length of time between the incident and the CISD grows, the effectiveness of the intervention decreases. After about six weeks the effectiveness is minimal and the person is then considerably more vulnerable to lifelong emotional fallout from the incident.

### **Types of Debriefings**

There are essentially four types of Critical Incident Stress Debriefings. Each has its own purposes and goals are basically the same: to protect and support EMS personnel and to minimise the development of abnormal stress response syndromes which may cause lost time and effectiveness at work and problems within the family.

#### **The On-Scene or Near-Scene Debriefing**

This is the briefest form of CISD. It is typically performed by a mental health professional familiar with emergency operations but may be performed by a chaplain or an officer not directly responsible for the management of the scene. In any case, the facilitator functions as an observer / adviser and watches for the development of acute reactions. Checklists of symptoms are available from several sources and should be utilised, since a single symptom is not indicative of an acute stress reaction. The facilitator briefly checks on the well-being of the personnel, offers encouragement and support and suggests to command officers which individuals or groups may need a break or a change in duties. The facilitator spends one time with those who are resting and allows some ventilation of feelings and reactions. A key to helping the personnel here is a good listening ear .

#### **The Initial Defusing**

The initial defusing is a form of CISD which is usually performed very shortly (within a few hours) after the critical incident. It may be led by a mental health professional but it is more often organised and led by command officers. At times there is no designated leader. The whole initial defusing may be quite spontaneous as those who had been involved in the critical

incident gather around after cleaning equipment and preparing their units for the next call. They start talking about their feelings and reactions to the incident and the defusing is underway.

It really does not matter whether the initial defusing is led by a specific person or completely spontaneous. What does matter is that the atmosphere of the initial defusing is positive, supportive and based on care and concern for the team members. No one should be criticised for how they feel. Instead, they should be allowed free expression of feelings with acceptance, support and understanding from each other and their leaders.

The best format for this initial defusing would be a mandatory team meeting as soon as possible after the conclusion of the incident. About one hour is usually enough to go through the process. During this time, the team members and leaders should check on each other's wellbeing and provide support and friendship to those who seem to be hardest hit by the incident. No responsibility for malfunctions should be distributed to any of the team members: just understanding.

### **The Formal CISD**

The formal CISD is typically led by a qualified medical health practitioner 24 to 48 hours after the conclusion of the incident. A skilled professional is usually necessary in this debriefing because the emotional content released during the session may overwhelm an untrained facilitator. The facilitator should be skilled in human communications and should have a fairly good background in group dynamics or group interactions. A good working knowledge of stress response syndromes and the operational procedures of the emergency service group are essential for the success of the debriefing.

In the majority of cases, a formal CISD is generally not organised for the first 24 hours because the EMS personnel are still too worked up to be able to deal appropriately with an indepth group discussion of the incident, especially as it relates to their inner feelings. They are trained to suppress emotional reactions during and for a brief time after an incident. Natural feelings of denial and avoidance predominate during the first 24 hours. Often emergency service workers attempt to intellectualise about the incident, and they run it through their minds over and over as they try to make sure that they handled their part correctly. Several hours after the incident their cognitive activities decrease and fairly intense feelings may then come to the surface. This is the time for a CISD. (In some situations this may occur earlier than 24 hours. The one-day time limit is only a guide).

The formal CISD should be mandatory for all personnel involved in the scene. At times a joint debriefing between police, fire and EMS personnel is extremely beneficial. Again, this is not an incident critique. The tone must be positive, supportive and understanding. Everyone has feelings which need to be shared and accepted. The main rule is - no criticises another; all listen to what was, or is, going on inside each other.

The formal CISD follows this general format:

- a) **Introductory phase:** The facilitator begins by introducing himself or herself. The rules of the process are then described. The need for absolute confidentiality is carefully explained. Members are encouraged to make a pact with each other to be silent forever regarding details of the debriefing, especially any details which could be associated with any particular individual. Participants in a debriefing need to be assured that the open discussion of their feelings will in no way be utilised against them under any circumstances.
- b) **The fact phase:** Most facilitators begin this phase by asking the participants to describe some facts about themselves, the incident and their activities during the critical incident. They are asked to state who they are, their rank, where they were, what they heard, saw, smelled and did as they worked in and around the incident. Each person takes a turn adding in the details to make the whole incident come to life again in the CISD room.

- c) The feeling phase: Once all participants have shared sufficient factual information to bring the incident into vivid memory, the facilitator begins to ask feeling-oriented questions. "How did you feel when that happened?" "How are you feeling now?" "Have you ever felt anything like that in your life before?" Again each person in the room gets a chance to answer these and a variety of other questions regarding their feelings. At times, a facilitator has to do very little. People start talking and the whole process goes along with only limited guidance from the facilitator. What is important under these circumstances is that the facilitator makes sure that no one gets left out of the discussion and that no one dominates the discussion at the expense of others. People will most often discuss their fears, anxieties, concerns, and feelings of guilt, frustration, anger and ambivalence. All of their feelings, positive or negative, big or small, are important, and need to be expressed and listened to.
- d) The symptom phase: This phase of the debriefing concerns itself most with answering the questions, "What unusual things did you experience at the time of the incident?" "What unusual things are you experiencing now?" and "Has your life changed in any way since the incident?" The participants are urged to discuss what is going on now in their homes and in their jobs as a result of their experiences. In other words, they are describing their own versions of stress response syndromes.
- e) The teaching phase: The facilitator takes this opportunity to teach the group something about the stress response syndromes. The emphasis is on describing how normal and natural it is for emergency service people to experience a variety of signs, symptoms and emotional reactions to the critical incident they lived through.
- f) The re-entry phase: This final phase seeks to wrap up loose ends, answer outstanding questions, provide final reassurances and make a plan of action. Groups often need a direction, or specific activity after a debriefing and this is an opportune time to work out a plan for such an activity. For example, in one case where a drunk driver killed several people, EMS personnel made a plan to appear in court at the trial in full uniform as a form of protest against light sentences for drunk driving. It gave them a sense of purpose and unity . Summary comments are then offered and the personnel are advised about getting additional help should they need it.

All six segments of the CISD usually take three to five hours to complete.

The Follow-up CISD is performed several weeks or months after a critical incident. It is not always necessary, but when it is, its main purpose is to resolve some issue or problem that came up as a result of the critical incident and is still present. The follow-up CISD may be performed with the entire group, a portion of it, or with an individual. It is by far the most difficult CISD for the facilitator to perform and is closely identified with a therapy process. More than one session may be necessary to achieve the goals of relieving emergency personnel from a set of painful psychological and physical reactions, but the end result is well worth the extra effort. Once freed from frustration, anxiety and guilt, emergency personnel are able to function happily again in their jobs and in their homes.

## **Conclusion**

The simplicity of the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing should not cause one to underestimate its value. Well-executed CISDs have an enormous potential to alleviate overwhelming emotional feelings and potentially dangerous physical symptoms. When used properly, they can extend the careers of personnel, thus saving great outlays of resources to replace perfectly good men and women who have seen too many broken bodies and too much human misery.