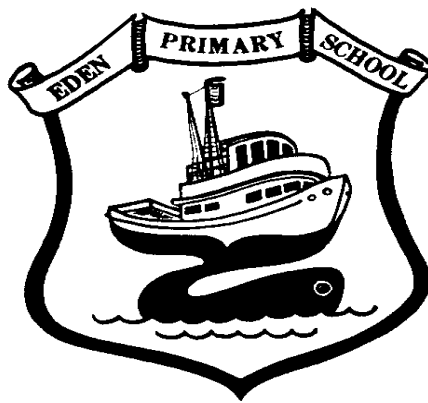


EDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



SERIOUS INCIDENTS POLICY

2008

Serious Incidents in schools

DEFINITION

A serious incident is an event which:

- causes disruption to the school; or
- creates significant danger or risk that could traumatically affect individuals within the school; or
- impacts on the school's effective operation; or
- attracts negative media attention or a negative public profile for the school or the Department of Education & Training.

EXAMPLES OF SERIOUS INCIDENTS

The following are example of incidents affecting schools that are regarded as serious.

- The death of a student or staff member;
- Student or staff suicide;
- The serious injury of a student or staff member;
- Students or staff members viewing serious injury or death;
- Violence between students, or assault of a student or a staff member;
- Threats to the safety of students or staff, including the presence on site of an individual behaving in a dangerous or threatening manner;
- The discovery of suspected illegal drugs on site;
- A major disruption to school routine requiring the school to be evacuated, e.g.: fire, bomb threats, gas leaks, chemical spills, serious storms, floods, industrial or transports accidents, earthquakes or tsunami;
- A natural or other major disaster in the community;
- Destruction of whole or part of the school;
- A break-in accompanied by major vandalism;
- Serious fraud or theft;
- Students or staff lost on an excursion;
- Students or staff members being taken hostage;
- Injury or death of animals at the workplace or during an associated activity;
- Issue of improvement notices by WorkCover NSW following a review of OH&S matters on site;
- The presence of emergency services (police, fire brigade, ambulance, SES) on site because of an incident, or the presence of police who are in pursuit of offenders thought to be on DE&T property ; or
- Unfavourable media or community attention, including major complaints or criticism of DE&T activities, programs or curriculum.

REPORTING SERIOUS INCIDENTS

In the majority of cases incidents are reported by a telephone call. There is no longer a requirement to complete an incident report form.

Incidents must be reported as soon as possible and **within 24 hours** so they can be properly managed using the contacts shown on the next page.

It is important for principals to ensure executive and administrative staff are fully aware of the incident reporting procedures so that reports can be made when the principal is not on site.

Incidents involving violence, weapons, illegal drugs or criminal activity must be reported to the School Safety and Response Unit.

Reporting incidents to the School Safety and Response Unit (SSRU)

The SSRU hotline is a 24 hour, 7 day per week service for principals or site managers. Principals can contact this hotline any time of day or night for immediate advice or assistance in managing an incident.

Information is taken by an officer in the unit and a report is generated. This report is then emailed to the principal and School Education Director (SED). Where the incident is of a serious nature the report will also be emailed to relevant personnel e.g. media unit, regional director or the Minister's office.

Reports following an incident should be called in during office hours (Mon – Fri). Officers will take the details of the incident and generate the report. Principals need all details of the incident available such as:

- When did the incident occur?
- Where did it occur?
- Who was involved in the incident?
- Have emergency services been contacted?
- Has anyone been injured?
- Has the victim been given first aid or offered counselling?
- Have parents or carers been notified?
- Has the SED been notified?

Reporting OHS incidents to the Illawarra and South Coast Regional Office

OHS incidents to be notified via free call number – **1800 811 523**. An incident notification will immediately be emailed to the school email account, Staff Support Officer and Injury Management Centre. A written response is not required if the free call number is used.

WHERE EMERGENCY SERVICES ARE REQUIRED
CALL 000 IMMEDIATELY

INCIDENT INVOLVING:	REPORT TO:	PHONE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence (including threats & intimidation) • Weapons (including ammunition) • Illegal drugs • Other criminal activity 	School Safety & Response Hotline	1300 363 778
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury to staff member - Major injury e.g. fatality, explosion - Other injuries 	OHS Directorate Fax report to Injury Management Centre	(02) 9266 8955 (02) 9266 8066 (fax)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury to student e.g. accident, motor vehicle accident, self harm 	Regional OHS liaison manager	(02) 4221 6432
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allegation of a child protection nature against staff member • Misconduct by staff member 	Employee Performance and Conduct Unit (EPAC)	(02) 9266 8070
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural disaster e.g. bushfire, flood • Other disasters e.g. chemical spill, gas leak 	School Education Director Media Unit	(02) 4475 3300 (02) 9561 8501
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious damage • Break and enter • Fire • Major graffiti • Security breaches 	School Security Unit Hotline	1300 880 021

SERIOUS INCIDENTS COMMITTEE

The school's Occupational Health and Safety Committee will be responsible for the management of serious incidents impacting on the school.

Its responsibilities will include:

- Developing in consultation with staff , an effective *Serious Incident Management Plan*;
- Advising staff and students of planned procedures such as lockdown or emergency evacuation procedures;
- Undertaking risk assessment and risk management as part of emergency planning;
- Assessing situations that may require emergency action;
- Analysing requirements to address these situations;
- Liaising with all relevant emergency services;
- Facilitating the provision of counselling where necessary;
- Ensuring all staff understand the *Serious Incident Management Plan*;
- Ensuring all emergency phone numbers are displayed in prominent locations;
- Organising practice drills to test the *Serious Incident Management Plan* (SIMP);
- Implementing the SIMP, including distribution and communication of the plan to new and current staff;
- Arranging relevant T&D of staff as necessary;
- Regularly evaluating the SIMP, including evaluating the SIMP after each serious incident or trial assessing how effective the plan was.

RISK MANAGEMENT

- ***Identify the hazards*** in the school and the potential risks associated with those hazards.
- Take account of previous incidents or near misses.
- Establish [hazard reporting](#) procedures.
- Assign appropriate staff to conduct [regular workplace inspections](#) e.g. OHS Committee.
- ***Assess the risks*** using the [risk assessment matrix](#). Determine the seriousness of the risks by considering both the likelihood of the incident to cause harm and severity of the outcome. This provides a priority order for dealing with OHS issues.
- ***Eliminate or control the risks*** using the [hierarchy of controls](#). Develop the most suitable strategies to eliminate or control the risks.
- ***Consult with staff*** throughout the risk management process.
- ***Document the risk management plan*** using the [proforma](#), [guidance](#) and [sample](#).
- ***Communicate the plan*** to staff and others needing to know, providing relevant information as required.

- **Monitor and review** the effectiveness of controls and change if necessary. Consider whether staff are aware of control measures, if new hazards have been identified and what further actions may be required.
- Review risk assessments where there is a significant change in the workplace or if risk controls are not effective (e.g. an incident occurs).
- **Seek assistance** from relevant regional or state office staff where sufficient expertise is not available at the workplace.

INCIDENT PREVENTION

Information obtained through risk management activities will be use to develop strategies for serious incident prevention. The aim of incident prevention strategies is to eliminate the risk of serious incident or minimise its impact.

Strategies for safety management may include;

- Collection and analysis of available data e.g. previous serious incident reports
- Examination of school layout including entry and exit points, car parks, lighting, obscured areas and unused spaces/rooms
- Investigation of activities undertaken on site and off site including cash handling, travel, excursions, sport, playground and normal class routines
- Assessment of security, access by visitors, attendance procedures, in-school communication and possible safe areas
- Appropriate procedures to ensure safety in the event of a serious incident and training in these procedures to ensure all aspects are covered including evacuation, lockdown, lockout, response to specific incidents, steps for accessing emergency assistance and counselling if required.

SERIOUS INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Action to be taken by Principal and key staff.

In the case of a serious incident the Principal and key staff will:

- Assess the situation;
- Arrange appropriate intervention to minimise additional injury including the provision of first aid and contacting emergency services, where necessary;
- Ensure telephones are not used for anything other than an emergency;
- Attend to injured persons. It is vital that first aid staff provide emergency care for those with physical injuries where possible;
- Contact injured person's parents or family immediately
- Immediately report the incident to the State Office serious incident line on **02-9561 8501** where a rapid response is required by the DET – (violence or threats of violence from individuals coming on to school property, explosions, major fires, and serious injury.
- Report the incident to the Education Area Director on **02-4470 3300**;
- Offer support and counselling for those directly and in-directly affected. Refer students to the school counsellor, staff to EAP;

- Organise transport home where appropriate for staff and students who are distressed;
- Manage media access to the scene of the incident, staff and students. The Principal will handle initial media contact, making certain of the facts before speaking. The DET Media manger or liaison officer must be contacted ASAP;
- The media manager or media liaison officer will provide advice regarding further media contact.
- Provide staff and students with accurate information about the current situation and up-date this over subsequent days, unless there is a legal or privacy issue that prevents this;
- Act quickly to dispel rumours;
- Fax or email the Education Area Director a serious incident report as a priority;
- If required notify WorkCover and/or GIO; and
- Consistent with the welfare needs of students and staff, return the school to a normal situation in as short as time as is practicable.

Emergency Evacuation Training, Practice and Monitoring

Trial emergency evacuations will be held to assess the effectiveness of the procedures. The evacuation plan (see following) should be modified, if necessary, as a result of issues that arise during trial emergency evacuations.

When the procedures have proved to be effective, on-going practices will be conducted on a six monthly basis. Evacuation plans must be updated every twelve months.

At the conclusion of each practice, the OH&S Committee will evaluate and record the effectiveness and efficiency of the emergency evaluation procedures to determine whether further modifications are required.

The evaluation will benefit from consideration of the following factors:

- Response times during the practice;
- Effectiveness of communication during the practice;
- Co-operation and response of evacuees;
- Currency of rolls, plans and other documentation; and
- Accessibility of exit points and evacuation assembly areas

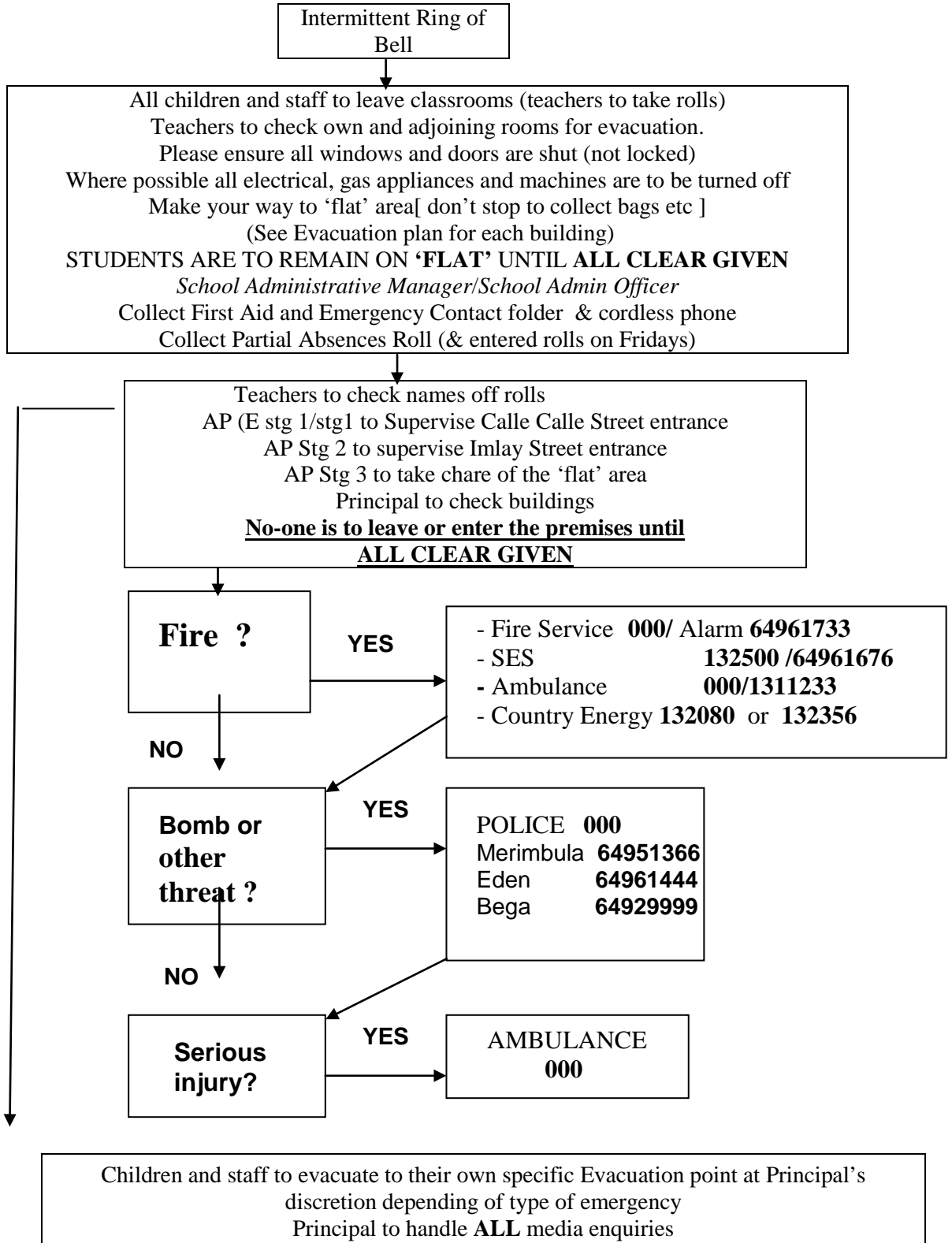
FLOOD / FIRE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

School to remain contact centre

Children to stay at school until contacts organized

Continuous update via ABC Regional Radio (64916011)

SCHOOL EVACUATION PROCEDURES



Lockout management procedures

This procedure is to be used to prevent unauthorised persons from entering the school and will be used when the threat is general or the incident is occurring off the school site. School activities will continue as normal during the outside disruption.

Steps to implement lockout:

1. The school bell will sound with three short rings followed by three long rings to alert the school to implement lockout.
2. Any student in the playground will be directed to the nearest school building and classroom by the teacher on duty, principal or executive staff member.
3. The Principal or a designated executive staff member will ensure that all doors and perimeter fence, if appropriate, are secured.
4. Teachers will return to their rooms and make sure that all students are safe and accounted for. Support and administrative staff will also make sure that any children that have been sent to their rooms/area as the nearest building are safe and accounted for.
5. Administrative staff will contact NSW Police or other emergency services to ensure that the school is provided with any and all support necessary to keep staff and students safe and well.
6. The only entry to the school for the period of the lockout should be through the main entrance.
The Principal should ensure that access is monitored and that only authorised personnel have access.
7. The Principal will liaise with NSW Police or emergency services if necessary, to develop and implement a transport plan for students to depart at the end of the school day if the incident is still continuing.

Lockdown management procedure

This procedure is to be used when there is an immediate threat to the school e.g. school intruders. Lockdown minimises access to the school and secures staff and students in rooms. Everyone must remain in their room until the situation has been declared safe by an authorised person e.g. principal or police officer.

Steps to implement lockdown:

1. The school bell will sound with a long, continuous ring to alert the school to implement lockdown. A message will also be delivered through the PA system that lockdown is in place.
Staff identifying an intruder will ring the Principal or administration manager using the internal school phone system or their personal mobile phone. The Principal or a designated staff member will determine if lockdown should be initiated.
2. Principal, designated staff member or administration manager ring 000.
3. All staff must lock and secure the doors and entrances nearest to their classroom or work station.
4. If safe to do so the Principal or a designated staff member will wait outside the main entrance of the school to direct emergency services. Only authorised personnel should be allowed access to the school site.
5. All outside activities will cease immediately. All children will be directed to the nearest school building or classroom. If off site when lockdown implemented, then all students and staff will move to Eden Marine High School using the quickest, most direct route.

6. All doors are to be secured and children removed from line of sight.
 - Early Stage One into the reading storeroom in KBV
 - Stage One into the computer annex?
 - Stage Two into the loft area
 - StageThree into the loft area.
 - Library into the loft area
 - 3-4W and 5-6H along northern internal wall under desks.

Staff should ensure students remain calm and quiet.
7. Staff should check outside their immediate classroom or work station for nearby students and direct any students in their immediate vicinity into their classroom or building. Staff should not leave their classroom or work station to get students. The door should then be closed and locked.
8. Staff record the names of students who are in the room. Any missing or extra students must be noted. If possible this information is passed on to the Principal or Administration manager. Teachers retain a copy.
9. Staff must maintain room security and should not open doors for anyone under any circumstances. Students and staff must stay where they are until official notification is provide by the Principal or an identified police officer that the lockdown is over.
10. Where the lockdown lasts an extended period of time or extends beyond normal school hours, the Principal, administration manager or a designated staff member should notify parents via local media and with the assistance of local police.
11. In conjunction with local police the Principal should arrange for parents to pick students up from school via the school bus zone.

Provision of counselling

The degree of support within the period following a serious incident influences the long term impact of incidents. The OH&S Committee need to be aware that:

- Serious incidents may have different effects on different individuals: and
- There is a range of strategies for providing support to those who have experienced the trauma of a serious incident.

After a serious school incident, offering counselling is essential. Counselling personnel can be either internal or external providers. In the case of students, school counsellors will be used in the first instance.

EAP Providers are contracted to provide counselling for staff immediately following a serious incident. Counselling may be provided on an individual or group basis, dependent upon need. The Principal should contact the EAP provider to arrange on-site counselling. Staff will also be encouraged to contact the provider separately if they need individual assistance.

The Principal and OH&S Committee will:

- Ensure that the information about the serious incident provided to students and staff is understood, that an opportunity is available to ask questions, and that information is provided by a trained counsellor about the emotional reactions likely to be experienced by those affected by the incident.
- Ensure that individuals, or groups of individuals are able to speak with a counsellor immediately, if they wish; and

- Ensure that individuals who need further counselling are identified and arrangements made for its future provision.

In addition, staff may wish to contact their regional staff support officer, Teachers Federation Welfare Officer or Public Service Association industrial officer to discuss issues of concern.

Contact Numbers:

POSITION	OFFICER	PHONE	PHONE	LOCATION
School Counsellor	Andrew Wright	Wk: 6496 1541	Hm: 6495 6515	Eden Marine HS
DGO	Penny Shaeffe	Wk: 4473 5257	Mob:0428788903	Bodalla PS
Staff Support Officer	Simon Barton	WK: 4475 325		Bateman's Bay
EAP	Davidson & Trahaire	1300 360 364 www.davcorp.com.au		

Working with the media

The Principal will co-ordinate all media contact following a serious incident if available. An executive member of staff or the SAM will do so when the Principal is un-available.

Before making any comment to the media, staff should contact the Regional Media Liaison Officer on **02-4224 9095** or the DET Media Unit on **02-9561 8501** for advice and assistance.

When talking to the media the following guidelines are to be followed:

- When contacted by the media take details of the enquiry, name and contact number of the journalist and advise that someone will get back to them shortly.
- Jot down key points that will help clarify the situation, e.g.
 - The facts – who, what, when, where and how;
 - Any exemplary behaviour by students and staff;
 - How the workplace is dealing with the incident – counselling, support services, contact with parents, police or authorities, how staff and students are feeling and any alterations to school schedules; and
 - That all students are safe, where parents should pick up their children, and whether the school will be closed.
- Contact the School Education Area Director (SED) and media liaison officer before making your response to the media;
- Inform them of the journalists who have made enquiries. The media liaison officer can contact journalists who have already contacted the school or arrived on site or to the scene of the incident to ascertain what information they already have and whom else they have interviewed;
- Seek advice from the SED or media liaison officer about other relevant developments or broader issues that need to be considered when preparing the response and what is the most effective way of dealing with newspaper, TV or radio;

- Contact the media liaison officer who will advise the school about the appropriate spokesperson i.e. Principal, SED, Regional Director, DET Representative or Minister;
- Avoid responding with “no comment”. It may be necessary to explain that you are unable to answer questions at this time because:
 - Of the sensitive nature of the issue;
 - You do not have the information available; or
 - It may be necessary to check with emergency services before making a statement.

The media can be essential in communicating vital information to the public such as telephone hotline numbers.
- Ensure the SED and media liaison officer are kept informed of all developments including:
 - Further media enquiries;
 - Any police involvement or threatened legal action;
 - Other persons making statements to the media; or
 - Concerns being raised by parents or other community members.
- Devise an after hours communication plan with the media liaison officer to ensure that all relevant parties are kept advised of any late developments so that further media enquires can be dealt with accurately and efficiently; and
- Avoid making comments which imply blame or fault for any part of the serious incident.

Recovery time line

Immediately

- Assess the situation; and
- Ensure the safety and welfare of staff and students and arrange first aid and emergency services if needed.
- Notify the SED or regional Office in the event of an urgent serious incident.
- If required notify WorkCover.
- Where appropriate ensure that the incident site and equipment are not further disturbed.

During the first 24 hours

- Organise a meeting with all relevant people to up-date them on the incident situation and for discussion of personal issues and concerns;
- Arrange counselling as needed;
- Work with the media;
- Keep staff, students and parents informed; and
- Complete a serious incident notification to the SED/Region.

Within 24-72 hours

- If required notify WorkCover/GIO within mandated timeframes;
- Provide opportunities for staff and students to talk about the incident with counsellors;
- Provide support to staff;
- Ensure all relevant people are kept informed;

- Restore the normal functioning of the school and delivery of teaching and learning; and
- Keep parents and community informed.

Within the first month

- Arrange a memorial service if appropriate;
- Where appropriate encourage parents to participate in meetings to discuss student well being;
- Identify on-going behavioural change that may require counsellor intervention;
- Continue to ascertain the progress hospitalised/injured staff or students;
- Provide, where appropriate, class activities to help students reach understanding and acceptance of the event; and
- Be aware that the physical and mental health of helpers may be affected and provide them with appropriate support.

In the longer term

- Identify on-going behavioural change that may require counsellor intervention;
- Provide support if needed;
- Consider including grief and/or loss as part of the PE/H/PD program;
- Plan for and be sensitive to the disturbing influences of anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings.

Evaluation of the Serious Incidents Management Plan

The OH&S Committee should evaluate the Serious Incident Management Plan (SIMP) as part of its regular meetings and after each serious incident or evacuation trial.

An assessment should be made of the:

- Effectiveness of the initial response, first aid provision and welfare support;
- Effectiveness of the communication with relevant staff and emergency services;
- Effectiveness of co-operation with emergency services;
- Effectiveness of putting the SIMP into action;
- Understanding of the roles assigned to staff identified in the SIMP;
- Response of staff and students to evacuation procedures;
- Effectiveness of managing staff, student, parent and community concerns;
- Effectiveness of managing media enquiries;
- Need for revision of the SIMP and revision of associated procedures;
- Need for implementation of incident prevention procedures; and
- Effectiveness of evacuation training and practices, and need for further training and development.