CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. PURPOSE

This document specifies George Brown College's (GBC) Critical Incident Policy and sets out guidance to staff in the management of a critical incident affecting staff, students and/or visitors.

2. POLICY

The College is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for staff and students. This policy underpins our approach to respond to critical incidents that may occur and impact on the people both studying and working at the College. We are particularly mindful of our responsibility to support our students from overseas that do not have access to a normal support network.

Definitions

A critical incident is a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia) which causes extreme stress, fear or injury. This may include but is not limited to:

- Serious injury, illness or death of a student, staff or visitor;
- A student or member of staff lost or injured on an excursion;
- A missing student;
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression;
- Physical assault;
- Student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence;
- Natural disaster e.g., earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm or extremes of temperature
- Fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard;
- Social issues e.g., drug use, sexual assault, and domestic abuse;
- Pandemics or epidemics.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

The General Manager (GM) is responsible for the implementation of this procedure and to ensure that staff and students are aware of its application and that staff implement its requirements.

4. REQUIREMENTS

The National Code states

6.8 The registered provider must have and implement a documented policy and process for managing critical incidents that could affect the overseas student's ability to undertake or complete a course, such as but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm. The registered provider must maintain a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken by the registered provider for at least two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

6.9 The registered provider must:

6.9.2 provide information to overseas students about how to seek assistance for and report an incident that significantly impacts on their wellbeing, including critical incidents

Applicable Standards 2025 and Instruments

This policy and procedure is additionally subject to the *Standards for RTOs 2025*

Standard 2.6 – Wellbeing

Outcome Standard

(1) The wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort are identified and strategies are put in place to support these needs.

(2) An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:

(a) it identifies, by reference to the training product content, the wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort and appropriate wellbeing support services; and

(b) it advises the VET student cohort of the availability of wellbeing support services, and any organisation students can contact, or additional action students can take to support their wellbeing.

Full procedural and implementation details relating to these national VET requirements are provided in the *Standards for RTOs 2025 Policy and Procedure Manual*.

5. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all students, staff, contractors, and visitors of the College, including both domestic and international students, and covers any situation defined as a critical incident that could affect the health, safety, wellbeing, or academic progress of a student or staff member.

6. Procedure

Critical Incident Response Team

The PEO will convene a Critical Response Team to assist in the prevention and management of critical incidents. The PEO is the critical incident response team leader and will include the following members:

- General Manager
- One member staff where applicable;

The Critical Incident Response team responsibilities include:

1. Risk assessment of hazards/situations which may require emergency action;
2. Analysis of requirements to address these hazards/situations;
3. Establishment of communication with all relevant emergency services, e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, hospital, poisons information centre, and/or community health services;
4. Ensuring 24-hour access to contact details for all students and their families, agents, homestay families, carer's, consular staff, embassies and interpreting services if necessary;
5. Ensuring 24-hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident, e.g. student contact officer, legal services, security, homestay coordinator, etc.;
6. Respond to the critical incident or emergence by establishing the critical incident action plan;
7. Dissemination of critical incident action plan to College staff;
8. Organisation of practice drills;

9. Regular review of the critical incident action plan;
10. Assisting with implementation of the critical incident action plan;
11. Arranging appropriate staff professional development related to critical incident management; and
12. Propose budget allocation for prevention and management of critical incidents and emergency.

CRITICAL INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

Response to critical incident or emergency

Immediate Action (within 24 hours of the incident) is to identify the nature of the critical incident;

The College staff member who is initially notified of the incident should gather as much information as possible regarding the nature of the critical incident, e.g.:

- Where did the injury occur - on campus or off?
- How severe is the nature of the injury?
- Where is the student now?
- Is the student in hospital?
- Has an ambulance been called?
- Is an interpreter required?
- The information should be documented for further reference.
- Notification of the critical incident committee/team leader: the person who is initially notified of the incident should notify the critical incident team leader immediately.

Assignment of duties to College staff:

1. The Student Services Team Leader will act as the critical incident team leader who will identify the staff member responsible for any immediate action.
2. Management of the incident will then be assigned to the staff member.
3. The staff member must maintain close contact with the critical incident team leader and any other staff members as required throughout the management of the critical incident.
4. The staff member will implement the appropriate management plan or action strategy.

If an injured Student is on campus:

1. Ensure appropriate intervention to minimise additional injury;
2. Provide first aid where necessary;
3. Ascertain seriousness of any injuries;
4. Call ambulance if required;
5. If ambulance is required, accompany student to hospital;
6. Ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff;
7. If ambulance is not required, accompany student to relevant medical service, e.g., doctor.

If an injured student is off-campus:

1. If situation appears serious, call an ambulance and either meet the ambulance at the student's location or at the hospital;
2. Otherwise, go to location of student;

3. Provide first aid where necessary (this should be done by a qualified first aider);
4. Ascertain seriousness of injury;
5. Call ambulance if required.

If ambulance is required, accompany student to hospital and ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff; If ambulance is not required, accompany student to relevant medical service e.g. doctor.

If the student has already been taken to hospital:

- Go to hospital;
- Ascertain seriousness of injury from hospital staff.

Dissemination of information to parents and family members

- When there are a number of people to contact, the College should attempt to simultaneously contact all parties.
- Contact the parents/legal guardian of the student;
- Contact the carer of the student, e.g., they may be living with a relative;
- Contact the homestay family of the student.

Completion of a critical incident report (see Appendix A)

1. Inform critical incident team leader of any relevant factual information to be conveyed to the media liaison (if applicable).
2. Assess the need for support and counselling for those involved.
3. If the student is seriously injured or requires hospitalisation, the College should enlist aid of overseas consular staff to assist the family if they are travelling to Australia, with interpreting services to aid in communication with the relevant medical services and with counselling services if required.
4. The College should assess whether other staff and students have been affected by the incident and provide support and counselling as required.
5. The College should also contact the Department of Home Affairs and inform them of the incident.

Additional Action (48 – 72 hours after the incident) include:

- Assess the need for support and counselling for those involved (ongoing)
- Provide staff and students with factual information as appropriate.

Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be appropriate for the General Manager to address the College staff and inform them of the facts of the incident and the condition of the student(s) or staff member(s) involved.

RESTORE NORMAL COLLEGE OPERATIONS.

Follow-Up Action – Monitoring, Support, Evaluation

- Identification of any other people who may be affected by critical incident and access of support services for affected community members.
- The effects of traumatic incidents can be delayed in some people. The College needs to be aware of any emerging need for support and/or counselling.

- Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties.

If the student is in hospital for some time, the College will maintain contact with the student and their family:

- To provide support and assistance for the student and family; and
- To discuss with the family any required changes to the enrolment of the student e.g., suspension or cancellation of enrolment.
- Provision of accurate information to staff and students where appropriate.
- Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be appropriate for the GM to again address the College staff and inform them of the facts of the incident and the condition of the student(s) or staff member(s) involved.

Evaluation Of Critical Incident Management

The critical incident committee must evaluate any critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and make improvements to College processes if required.

The critical incident committee must evaluate any possible longer-term effects on College staff and student well-being, e.g., inquests, legal proceedings.

Resources

The nature of critical incidents is such that resources cannot always be provided in anticipation of events. The critical incident committee uses its discretion to provide adequate resources – both physical and personnel – to meet the needs of specific situations. Staff will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

Fair Work Ombudsman;
Family and Domestic Violence Leave
'Employer Guide to Family and Domestic Violence'

DHA provides guidance for a CRICOS provider when there are critical incidents relating to workplace abuse or violence There are a number of resources that may assist
DHA; Workplace worker rights and visa protections (updated 13 July 2022)
DHA; Domestic and family violence and your visa (updated 13 July 2022)

Managing The Media

The PEO should normally handle all initial media calls and manage access of the media to the scene, and to staff, students and relatives,
The PEO will determine what the official College response will be.
All facts should be checked before speaking to the media.

If accurate information is unavailable, or the issue is of a sensitive nature, College staff must state that that question cannot be answered at this time.

The College must avoid implying blame or fault for any part of the incident as this can have significant legal implications.

The PEO may delegate media liaison to another member of staff.

Evaluation And Review Of Management Plan

After every critical incident, a meeting of the critical incident committee will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required. If appropriate this process will incorporate feedback from all staff, students and local community representatives.

Procedure Summary Table – Critical Incident Management

Step	Action	Responsible Person	Supporting Documents / Systems
1	Establish Critical Incident Response Team led by PEO; define responsibilities and contacts.	PEO	Critical Incident Policy, Contact Directory
2	Respond to incident within 24 hours; gather key information on nature and severity.	Staff Notified of Incident	Incident Notification Log
3	Notify the Critical Incident Response Team Leader (PEO).	Initial Staff Contact	Internal Communication Log
4	Assign responsibilities to appropriate staff for managing the incident.	Team Leader	Action Assignment Record
5	If student is injured on-campus, follow first aid and medical response protocol.	Assigned Staff	First Aid Kit, Emergency Procedure Guide
6	If student is injured off-campus or already hospitalised, locate and support them.	Assigned Staff	Hospital Contact, Student File
7	Notify parents, guardians, carers, homestay families, and agents as required.	Admin / Student Services	Contact Log, Emergency Contact List
8	Complete Critical Incident Report and assess need for counselling or external support.	Assigned Staff	Critical Incident Report, Counselling Referral
9	Contact Department of Home Affairs if required.	Student Services Officer	DHA Communication Record
10	Within 48–72 hours, assess ongoing support and update staff and students if appropriate.	General Manager	Briefing Notes, Counselling Records
11	Support affected individuals; maintain communication with injured student/family.	Student Support Officer	Support Log, Family Liaison Notes
12	If needed, amend enrolment (e.g., deferment or suspension) and maintain records.	Student Services Team Leader	Enrolment Amendment Form
13	Restore normal College operations and provide factual updates as appropriate.	General Manager	Staff Bulletin, Meeting Minutes
14	Evaluate incident management process; identify systemic improvements.	Critical Incident Committee	Evaluation Report, Meeting Records

15	Monitor for delayed effects on staff or students; provide additional support as needed.	General Manager / Student Support	Ongoing Support Log

Section 2: Evaluation, Resources, Media

Step	Action	Responsible Person	Supporting Documents / Systems
16	Evaluate critical incident report and response effectiveness; identify improvements.	Critical Incident Committee	Incident Report, Evaluation Checklist
17	Assess potential long-term effects on wellbeing of staff and students (e.g. legal proceedings).	Critical Incident Committee	Follow-up Notes, Counselling Records
18	Use discretion to allocate resources (personnel and materials) needed to manage incident effectively.	Critical Incident Committee	Resource Allocation Log
19	Reimburse staff for approved out-of-pocket expenses incurred during incident management.	Finance Officer / PEO	Reimbursement Claim Form
20	Refer to external resources to support incident response (e.g., Fair Work Ombudsman, DHA guidelines).	Critical Incident Committee	External Guidelines and Factsheets
21	CEO manages media response and liaises with press during sensitive situations.	PEO	Media Log, Public Statement Drafts
22	Verify all facts before releasing statements; avoid attributing blame or responsibility.	PEO / Delegate	Media Briefing Notes
23	Conduct post-incident review meeting to evaluate response plan and revise if needed.	Critical Incident Committee	Review Meeting Minutes, Feedback Summary
24	Incorporate feedback from staff, students, and community stakeholders in review process.	Critical Incident Committee	Feedback Forms, Meeting Outcomes

7. Policy Implementation

This policy will be made available to all staff members and stakeholders through the internal communication channels, the website and in the Student Handbook.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

This Policy and Procedure will undergo an annual review, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains relevant and effective in guiding the operations and strategies or as needed to reflect any changes in the regulatory environment or operational practices.

Feedback will be collated and analysed and discussed at the monthly management meetings, for noting or action with any necessary changes documented in a Continuous Improvement Form and in the Continuous Improvement Register.

Document Control

Version number:	V1	Approved by:	PEO
Approval date:	30/06/2025	Review date:	1/07/2026
Standards: NC 6.1, 6.2			

Version Control

Version #	Changes	Approval By	Approval Date
1.0	Original Version	Preeti Singh	30/06/2025

Associated Documents
Continuous Improvement Form
Continuous Improvement Register
Student Support Policy and Procedure

APPENDIX A
Critical Incident Report
(To be completed after all critical incidents)

Date:

Staff name:

Position:

Brief summary of incident: include where, when, who, and why as appropriate.
Further information/ documentation may be attached.
Immediate action taken:

Further action required:
Persons or staff notified and time & date
Signature:
Date: