THE GEELONG COLLEGE

sic itur ad astra

The safety of the people is the supreme law. — salus populi suprema lex

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Critical Incident Response Plan

As at April 2024 – Review April 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

This plan defines the requirements for the management of a critical incident and the appropriate response preparation involved with ensuring that the College effectively handles the emotional and physical effects of an incident to personnel. The Geelong College recognises the duty of care owed to its students and staff.

A critical incident is defined as a traumatic event, or the threat of such, either within or beyond the school during the normal operation of the school and its extended activities within and beyond its boundaries, including overseas.

Examples of a critical incident include, but are not limited to:

- Fatality;
- Debilitating injury or illness, including;
    - Students or staff lost, injured or missing on an excursion
    - Attempted suicide or serious self-harm
    - Physical assault
- Student or staff witnessing a serious accident or incident of violence;
- Social issues eg drug use, sexual assault;
- Emergency Situation (ie Natural disasters/involvement Emergency Services)?
- Severe Property Damage

A Critical Incident Team, as appointed, is responsible for ensuring that this plan is kept up to date and is communicated to all employees. The team will prepare a de-brief report following any incident for which this plan is enacted.

Note: Situational management may be chosen over Critical incident.

2. PROCEDURE

Response Preparation

1. Gain Initial Information:

- **a.** Who is involved?
- **b.** How many people does the incident effect?
- **c.** Are there any injuries?
- **d.** Are Emergency Services attending?

1.1 What information needs to be communicated immediately, to whom and by what means?

2. Principal/Deputy will decide if critical or situational incident using the initial information

- **a.** The **CIT** team then:
  The Critical Incident Team (**CIT**) will gather immediately and prepare for the response.
  - **i.** Decides on external assistance, appointing the School's Crisis Communication Strategists (if required) and coopts in other staff members as required
  - **ii.** Activates all team member's roles
  - **iii.** References requirements for management of the short- and long-term impacts from critical incidents in the Emergency Management Plan
  - **iv.** Develops the communication strategy

The **Principal/Deputy** May choose to identify an incident as a Situational Management Incident (**SMI**) due to the initial information.

- **b.** The **SMI** team then:
  The Situational Management Team (**SMI**) will be formed
  - **i.** The team will gather and prepare for the response
  - **ii.** Activates all team member's roles
  - **iii.** Develops the communication strategy

3. Incident Management

At the time of responding to a Critical Incident/Situational Incident and managing the process as required.

Heads of School manages the:

- **i.** Contact with the injured/ill party and their family & other parties involved in the incident
- **ii.** set up of the crisis communication center
- **iii.** logistical support for reception staff
- **iv.** Initial Parent communication SMS rather than email (using Operoo Emergency SMS Template)

Director of Business Operations establishes arrangements for**:**

- **i.** ensuring the disaster recovery plan is enacted if required.
- **ii.** assessing the business resumption timeline
- **iii.** ongoing financial and legal impacts and any insurance related matters

Communications Coordinator establishes arrangements for:

- **i.** media strategy/releases and management of such.
- **ii.** communication of the status of the incident to those directly and indirectly affected
- **iii.** ongoing provision of updated information (eg direct access phone line, and/or regular bulletins).

Director of Human Resources' responsibilities are to:

- **i.** manages the emotional effects of the incident
- **ii.** assesses requirements for immediate staff welfare and support.
- **iii.** ensures staff are provided with information on coping with a crisis/accessing ongoing support.

Property Manager manages:

- **i.** the contact with all required services ie internal and external emergency services

ii. all security services if required

iii. in conjunction with the Risk and Compliance Manager enacts evacuation procedures with the Business Operations Staff when necessary

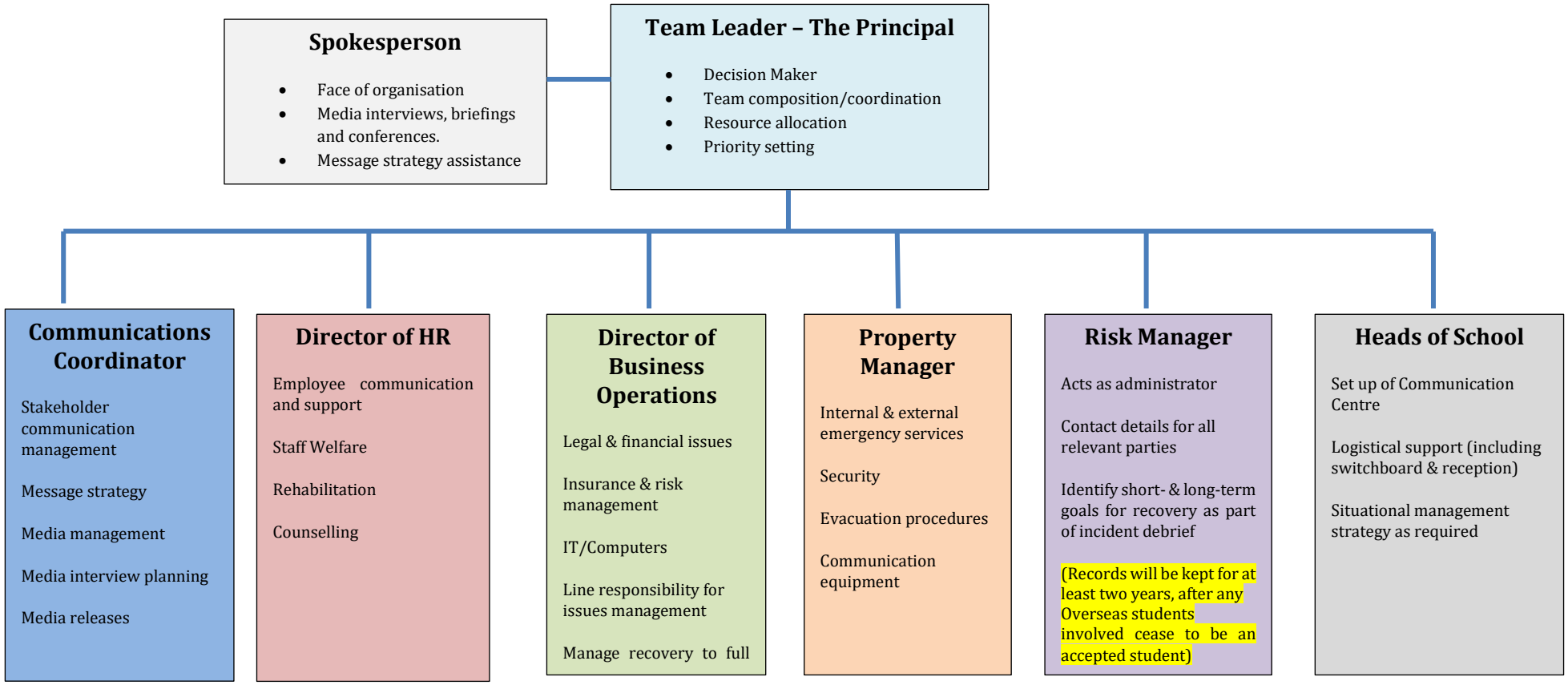
Risk and Compliance Manager establishes arrangements for:

i. obtaining all contact details for students, families and other relevant staff members.

ii. administering all facets of the CIT, including a full debrief and report after each incident. (Records will be kept for at least two years, after any Overseas students involved cease to be an accepted student)

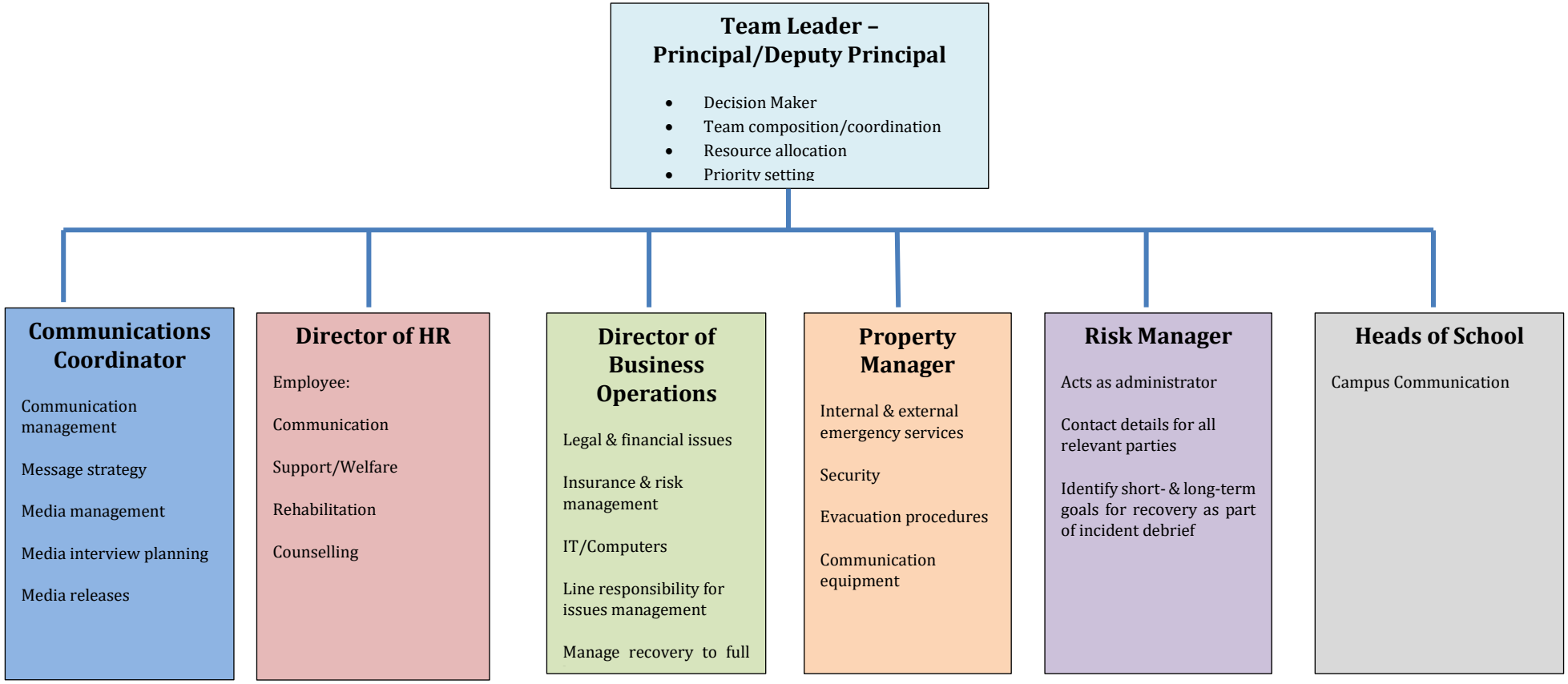
Appendix A

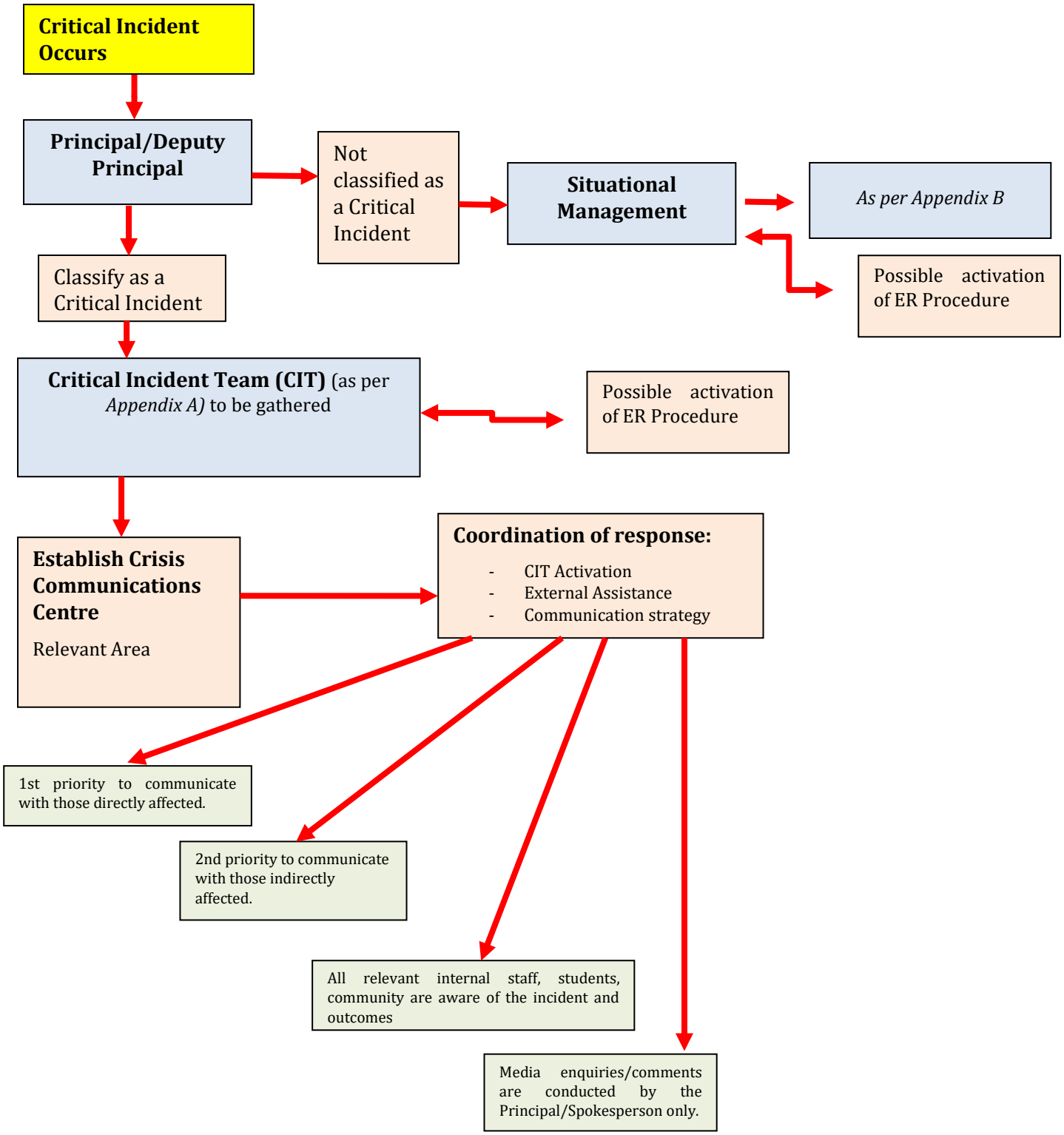
Critical Incident Team (CIT)



Appendix B

Situational Incident Team (SIT)




Critical Incident Occurs
Principal/Deputy Principal
Not classified as a Critical Incident
Situational Management
As per Appendix B
Possible activation of ER Procedure
Classify as a Critical Incident
Critical Incident Team (CIT) (as per Appendix A) to be gathered
Possible activation of ER Procedure
Establish Crisis Communications Centre
Relevant Area
Coordination of response:
- CIT Activation
- External Assistance
- Communication strategy
1st priority to communicate with those directly affected.
2nd priority to communicate with those indirectly affected.
All relevant internal staff, students, community are aware of the incident and outcomes
Media enquiries/comments are conducted by the Principal/Spokesperson only.

CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM (CIT)

- Principal/Deputy Principal (Peter Miller/Simon Young)
- Heads of School (Nat Coull, Leanne Russell, Sondra Wolfenden)
- Deputy Heads (Matt Taylor, Kirsten Van-Cleef, Georgie Rolls, Rory McElligott, Julie Bickett)
- Communications Coordinator (Mike Howell)
- Director of Human Resources (Mardi Deller-Pugh)
- Director of Business Operations (Shannyn Leach)
- Risk and Compliance Manager (Louise Snell)
- Property Manager (Greg Tomkins)
- Others co-opted as required.

ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM

The **Risk and Compliance Manager** will act as the administrator of the CIT and assesses and manages the:

- Risk management, analysis and planning for situations which may require emergency actions;
- Liaisons with all relevant emergency services, e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, hospital, poisons information centre, community health services;
- 24-hour access to contact details for all students and their families (in the case of international students this includes their agent, homestay families, carers, consular staff, embassies and interpreting services, if necessary);
- 24-hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident, e.g. school counsellor, legal services, school security;
- Development of a critical incident plan for all foreseen incidents;
- Dissemination of the planned procedures and organises future practice drills;
- Ensures an annual review and test of all procedures. All reviews and reports from debrief meetings are to be documented;
- Review of the plan at the end of the validity period, after an emergency, after an exercise or should circumstances change that effect the procedures;
- Staff professional development, including training of the CIT and mock trials of critical incidents;
- Record of events for any emergency situations;
- The budget allocation for any emergencies.
- Records will be kept for at least two years, after any Overseas students involved cease to be an accepted student

Important Contact List

Geelong College	Contact
Principal – Peter Miller *Personal Assistant* ○ Jenny Ryan	03 5226 3107 0401 648 379 03 5226 3107
Deputy Principal – Simon Young	Ext 122 0409 448 002
Head of Senior School – Nat Coull	Ext 120 0400 933 504
Head of Middle School - Leanne Russell	Ext 460 0419 375 759
Head of Junior School - Sondra Wolfenden	Ext 430 0409 549 806
Director of Communications – Mike Howell	Ext 191 0410 290 544
Director of HR - Mardi Deller-Pugh	Ext 772 0414 234 532
Director of Business Operations - Shannyn Leach	Ext 102 0404 042 557
Risk and Compliance Manager - Louise Snell	Ext 105 0407 512 720
Property Manager - Greg Tomkins	Ext 115 0408 508 203
Medical Centre – Carolyn Maas Senior School	Ext 164 0412 740 326
Health Centre – Claire Seward Middle School	Ext 426 0417 038 255
School Counsellor - Kate Sculley Chaplain – - Steve Wright - Leanne Earl	Ext 186/427 0424 164 331 Ext 778 0438 072 832 Ext 406 0438 677 145
Deputy Heads of Senior School - Matt Taylor - Kirsten Van-Cleef	Ext 175 0409 542 544 Ext 114 0408 556 771
Deputy Head of Middle School - Georgina Rolls	Ext 456 0408 149 527
Deputy Head of Junior School - Rory McElligott Director of Early Learning - Julie Bickett	Ext 431 0439 791 893 Ext 437 0428 311 838
Caretaker – On Call Phone	0428 406 166
Marketing Manager – Nicole Roache	Ext 106

	0411 733 914
Director of Information Technology – Mark Nurnaitis	Ext 152 N/A
Project Manager – Brad Carr	Ext 776 0439 108 917
External	**Contact**
Crisis Communications Strategists – Anton Staindl (Strathouse)	0417 306 846
Loss Assessor (insurance) – UCA Robert Howarth	03 9116 1400
Employment Law specialists - Jim Rutherford (Harwood Andrews)	0409 258 512
Employee Assistance Program	CMG Psychological 03)52299055 Ms Sushsmitam 03) 52223936
Dept. of Sustainability & Environment (DSE)	136 186 http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/
Police • Geelong Police Station	03) 5225 3100 110 Mercer Street Geelong
Security Company • Pro Alarms	03) 5223 1101 18 Pakington Street Geelong West
SES	132 500 http://www.ses.vic.gov.au/
Ambulance Victoria	Head Office - 03 9840 3500 http://www.ambulance.vic.gov.au/
Geelong City Urban Fire Brigade	Emergency 000 03) 5221 2755 http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/

3. CO-ORDINATING AND COMMUNICATING THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE

PRIORITIES IN ANY CRITICAL INCIDENT IN PROGRESS

Priority 1 – PROTECT LIFE

The first priority is to ensure that all people who may be in danger, whether physically or in other ways are alerted, and that action is taken to ensure their safety and well-being.

Priority 2 – PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE HAZARD

The second priority aims to control the extent of the hazard. In the case of a physical hazard, this means taking steps to contain the hazard within a specific area and to prevent its extension to other areas. Actions should be taken to avoid the escalation of an incident which may threaten the physical and emotional well-being of members of the school.

Priority 3 – SAVE ASSETS IN THE AFFECTED AREA

The third priority is to prevent school and personal assets from being damaged in the event of a critical incident. This includes the brand and reputation of the school in the community.

Priority 4 – ELIMINATE THE HAZARD

Where possible, steps are taken to eliminate the hazard, in cooperation with appropriate expert assistance such as the Fire Brigade, Police and Counselling services.

REPORTING AN INCIDENT

Within the school

- Students - report immediately to a school staff member.
- Staff members - report immediately to the Head of School or Business Manager.
- The CIT - decide upon necessary action and implement the Critical Incident Response appropriate to the situation.

On a trip, camp or excursion

The supervising teacher manages the incident according to the details of the risk management plan for the activity. The teacher-in-charge is responsible and should be familiar with any arrangements in place at a campsite or residential facility and that all staff and students involved are aware of evacuation and assembly plans.

If necessary, emergency services (and Worksafe, if appropriate) are directly contacted. Medical and other information which may be required should be checked and made available on request to emergency service personnel.

Where necessary the parents of any Australian or permanent resident student requiring medical attention should be contacted directly at an appropriate time.

The use of mobile phones by students or bystanders should be monitored.

As soon as it is practical to do so, the supervising teacher should contact the respective Head of School and report all details of the incident (and in time fill out an incident report).

If the trip, camp or excursion is during school vacations, clear plans and lines of communication must have been set out in the risk management planning for the event.

The Principal, Deputy Principal or Head of School may attend the incident if it is of sufficient gravity.

For out-of-hours activities, staff should ensure that contact details for all students' families are carried. The teacher in charge is responsible to provide a list of students attending to the Administration office as early as possible and *at least 3 full days* before the excursion. A Synergetic report will be produced listing students' contacts. Similarly, emergency contacts for staff attending should be obtained and carried at all times.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

How the School responds to a critical incident and how it communicates its response is vitally important to its reputation management.

As a responsibility of the CIT, the Communications Coordinator will be the person most immediately available from the following:

- Director of Community Relations
- Marketing & Communications Manager
- Media and Publications Co-Ordinator
- Nominee as appointed by the communications Coordinator.

Identify the incident and potential audience

The CIT will identify the type of incident and potential audience. The type of incident and potential audience will determine the type of message and the medium of communication (e.g. telephone, SMS, email, etc). Examples of incidents are highlighted on page 3.

Potential audiences:

1. Families, staff and students directly affected
2. Families, staff and students indirectly affected (e.g. House, year group, excursion, sports team, etc.)
3. School community (parents, guardians, staff and students)
4. Public/media

The Spokesperson/Principal (Or Nominee)

The Spokesperson for the School will be the Principal. In the Principal's absence, the Spokesperson will be a person nominated by the Principal (e.g. Deputy Principal).

Create the Message

The Communications Coordinator will be responsible for drafting customised messages based on the type of incident and potential audience in consultation with the CIT. The three key guidelines in creating and communicating the message/s are:

- Respond quickly = Communicating immediately with those directly affected (Audience #1) is the primary objective, followed by keeping the School community informed (Audience #2-3)
- Stick to the Facts = Provide only relevant and accurate information.
- Display confidence and empathy = Speak confidently and calmly, conveying confidence and empathy.

All messages will be authorised by the CIT.

Communicating the Message

The method of communication will be determined by the type of incident in consultation with the Spokesperson. It is recognised that each incident will be unique. Broad guidelines regarding methods of communication for certain incidents could include:

Fatality/Debilitating injury/illness:

- Families, staff and students directly affected = person-to-person via telephone
- Families, staff and student indirectly affected = SMS and/or email, directing recipients to dedicated telephone hotline (Crisis Communication Centre) and/or more detailed information on the Community Portal
- School community (parents, guardians, staff and students) = email
- Public/media = media statement and/or media liaison (Crisis Communication Centre)

Emergency Situation/Severe Property Damage

- Families, staff and students directly affected = SMS, directing recipients to dedicated telephone hotline (Crisis Communication Centre) and/or more detailed information on the Community Portal
- Families, staff and student indirectly affected (e.g. House, year group, excursion, sports team, etc.) = SMS and/or email
- School community (parents, guardians, staff and students) = SMS and/or email
- Public/media = media statement and/or media liaison

The Communications Coordinator will be responsible for the distribution of all communications as authorised by the Spokesperson.

Developing the Timeline

The CIT will be responsible for developing a Critical Incident Timeline, so information is released in a timely manner. This may require issuing holding statements and/or brief amounts of information to respond quickly, ensuring all stakeholders (particularly staff, parents, students, etc) are kept informed of any developments. Two key elements of a Critical Incident Timeline will include:

- Crisis Communication Centre
- Geelong College Portals and website

A **Crisis Communication Centre** will be established in the Drawing Room or Principal's Office, creating an information hub for both internal stakeholders and media. This will include establishing a telephone hotline to handle all enquiries (this may be offsite).

The relevant **Geelong College Portals and website** will provide a secure web-based environment to provide more detailed and up-to-date information to the School community.

Crisis Communication Consultants

The CIT will utilise the School's Crisis Communication Consultants (Strathouse) as a resource where applicable, both for advice and/or if the situation is beyond the scope of the School's own internal resources.