

THE GOWRIE (QLD) INC

CRITICAL INCIDENTS POLICY

CONSIDERATIONS:

QIAS	Principle 5.3 & 5.5
REGS	Child Care Act 2002, Part 4 Division 1 Section 76

POLICY STATEMENT:

To ensure staff respond quickly, decisively and effectively to any critical incident while acting in the best interests of the children in care.

RELEVANT FORMS/MATERIAL:

- ***Critical Incident Management Plan***
- ***Environmental Hazards Policy***
- ***Service Evacuation Procedure***

SOURCES:

- Legg, Chris (2001) *When things go Wrong: Managing Critical Incidents in Children's Services*. AECA Research in Practice Series
- Lady Gowrie Child Service, Sydney (2002) *Managing OHS in Children's Services*.
- New South Wales Department of School Education, Metropolitan North region, Student Welfare Coordination Program (1993). *Staff development package responding to critical incidents in schools*. Sydney

REVIEWED: April 2010

Date to Be Reviewed: April 2011

IMPLEMENTATION:

<p>BACKGROUND</p>	<p>CRITICAL INCIDENTS THAT MAY BE EXPERIENCED IN CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS INCLUDE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Death of a child, family member or staff member - Change of family circumstances: through separation, divorce, financial loss, unemployment or imprisonment of a family member - Accidents: motor vehicle, industrial or domestic - Natural disasters such as earthquakes, fires, floods, cyclone, severe storm - Violence: domestic, physical or sexual assault, murder, suicide or abduction - Critical, chronic, prolonged or terminal illness - Emergency situations such as fire, siege, needle stick injuries, or bomb threats - Unwanted media attention - Major vandalism - Harassment: verbal, physical or implied - Administering emergency first aid - Robbery: armed and unarmed - Threatening person in or near the premises
<p>WHAT YOU SHOULD DO</p> <p>M A N A G E M E N T</p> <p>P L A N</p>	<p>Ensure the safety of children, staff and others e.g. evacuate to a safe location, administer first aid, lock down (refer to procedures)</p> <p>Account for all the children by checking off attendance records Keep children's names and emergency contact numbers in an easily accessible place</p> <p>Contact emergency services if required</p> <p>Defuse the situation for children by giving appropriate and honest explanations about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What has happened</i> - <i>How it has happened (if known)</i> - <i>What will happen next</i> - <i>Explain what other helpers are doing</i> - <i>Discuss when things will get back to normal</i> <p>Contact the President and CGB</p> <p>Provide immediate and accurate verbal information to parents of any children involved in the incident. Information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What has happened</i> - <i>What staff want them to do</i> - <i>How the service will manage during the incident</i> - <i>When routines will be back to normal</i> <p>An interpreter service may be required for parents who speak language/s other than English (Ph 131450)</p>

	<p>LOCK DOWN PROCEDURE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bring all of the children inside - keep all of the children away from windows - provide quiet experiences for children <p>Natural Disasters</p> <p>If information is available to the community providing warning before a natural disaster the President / Executive Committee will in consultation with the Director decide if the service will close and the procedure for informing families of the closure and the estimated duration of the closure.</p> <p>The President / Director will inform the Office of ECEC and CGB of the Service closure.</p> <p>The President or Director will attain current contact details of all families and contact them when appropriate informing them of when the service will reopen.</p> <p>The service will develop a management plan outlining procedures for caring for children at the service after hours should the natural disaster prevent families being able to access the service. A supply of emergency water and food will be kept at the service and checked quarterly.</p>
<p>SENIOR STAFF/ COMMITTEE MEMBERS/ CGB</p>	<p>The Director / Committee Members and/or the CGB will identify individuals who will be available to assist staff by for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - going immediately to the affected kindergarten to provide physical assistance and support - assisting staff with any further decision-making or undertake to help with any relevant tasks such as making further phone calls <p>The President will discuss with the Director the need for follow-up procedures</p> <p>Within 24 hours (if possible) the President/ Director or Executive Committee will arrange a debriefing session for all staff and children involved in the incident</p> <p>Professional counseling will be arranged if required.</p>
<p>RECOVERY</p>	<p>USE “CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN”</p> <p>Children</p> <p>Staff will help children recover by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observing their reactions and behaviour - Providing opportunities for children to express their feelings - Arranging a ceremony (if appropriate) - Continuing familiar routines. <p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director and or President / Executive Committee will call all staff together within 24 hours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any extra staff required in the service where possible will be familiar to the children - Staff will be provided with professional counseling should they require it - Staff will be provided with compassionate leave as needed - Staff will be provided with on-going support as identified to the Director and President - The management of each incident will be evaluated. <p>Parents</p> <p>President and or Director will produce a short newsletter to give parents accurate information regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factual information about the incident • Steps taken by all staff • Reactions of the children • What the children have been told • Any further actions or arrangement <p>President / Director will arrange a special parent meeting if required.</p>
MEDIA	<p>All enquiries regarding critical incidents will be referred to the President / Executive Committee. This is not to censor staff but rather to protect staff at a time when they may be vulnerable.</p>
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	<p>ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCIES THAT CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT</p> <p>Relationships Australia Counseling and debriefing services Phone: 1300 364 277</p> <p>SIDS Queensland Child death support line relating to the death of child/ren under 6 years of age Freecall: 1800 628 648</p> <p>Please see attached brochure for your area for further reference</p>

