Critical Incident Policy

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Review Date: 1 November 2026
Approved By: Board of Directors
Policy Owner: Chief Executive Officer
Policy Area: VET/HE
Audience: Public

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy provides a framework to support the timely and effective management of critical incidents affecting students and staff at Stanley College. This Policy aims to provide a clear communication process when managing critical incidents.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

2.1.1 all domestic and international students enrolled at Stanley College in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) courses;

2.1.2 all Stanley College Staff.

3. Key Definitions

ASQA	The national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector. ASQA is responsible for monitoring and assessing RTOs to ensure compliance with the Standards for RTOs, the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, and relevant provisions under the NVR Act and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act).
Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)	The Audit and Risk Committee oversees the audit and risk management functions of Stanley College and provides advice to the Board of Directors. It assists the Board in the effective discharge of its responsibilities in the areas of statutory reporting, external and internal audit, risk management, fraud and internal control, and compliance and ethics.
Critical Incident	Any traumatic event or threat of an event within or outside Australia, which causes physical or psychological harm, including extreme stress, fear or injury but not necessarily causing death.
CAAW	The Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter is issued via PRISMS and signed by Stanley College when we accept responsibility for approving the accommodation and welfare arrangements of an international students studying with Stanley College who are under the age of 18.
DoHA	The Department of Home Affairs
EAP	Employee Assistance Program

Emergency	An incident that becomes more serious and requires coordination to address the wider implications. An emergency usually involves intervention by Emergency Services.
Executive Management Team	The Executive Management Team (EMT) comprises senior leaders responsible for strategic direction, operational oversight, and academic leadership across Stanley College. Membership may include roles such as the Chief Executive Officer, Vice Presidents, Deans, and other key departmental heads. The full list of EMT members is detailed in the Stanley College Glossary of Terms.
HE	Higher Education.
International Student	A student studying in Australia on a student visa issued by DoHA.
National Code 2018	The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, established pursuant to Part 4 of the ESOS Act.
PRISMS	The Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) is the Australian Government online system used by education providers to manage and report data related to international students.
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency.
VET	Vocational Education and Training.

4. Policy Principles

Critical Incident Definition

4.1 A *critical incident* is defined as:

4.1.1 Any traumatic event or threat of an event within or outside Australia, which causes physical or psychological harm, including extreme stress, fear or injury but not necessarily causing death.

Incident Levels and Management

4.2 Incidents are categorized into three (3) broad levels based on severity and required response. A detailed table outlines incident types, responsible managers and notification protocols.

Description of Levels

4.3 The critical incident levels coded in Table 1 demonstrate the following responses:

4.3.1 Level 1: An issue that is localised to impact a small number of staff and/or students. These level 1 events can be managed by the Critical Incident Manager, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer or Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement

4.3.2 Level 2: An event that requires management of key stakeholders, with possible potential injury to staff or students

4.3.3 Level 3: A large incident that impacts the Stanley College community widely. Emergency services may be involved and implementing the Critical Incident Response Committee is integral.

Table 1: Critical Incidents and Management Levels

Level	Critical Incident Type	Critical Incident Manager	Who to notify at Stanley College
1	Missing Student Death, serious injury or illness of a student (or any threat of these)	Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement	Chief Executive Officer Dean VET Dean HE Manager, Student Services Team Student Counsellor
1	Physical abuse, assault, domestic violence, sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a student (on or off campus) Mental health episodes requiring involuntary hospitalisations Student arrested or detained Under 18 student requiring hospitalisation (where Stanley College has a signed Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) in-place). Serious mental health episodes e.g. attempted suicide, or self-harm, or imminent risk of suicide or self-harm	Manager, Student Services Team	Chief Executive Officer Vice President Wellbeing and Engagement Dean VET Dean HE Student Counsellor
1	Missing Staff Death, serious injury or illness of a staff member Physical abuse, assault, domestic violence, sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a staff member (on or off campus) Mental health episodes requiring involuntary hospitalisations Staff member is arrested or detained Serious mental health episodes e.g. attempted suicide, or self-harm, or imminent risk of suicide or self-harm	Manager, People and Culture	Chief Executive Officer Vice President Wellbeing and Engagement
2	Verbal or psychological abuse of students on-campus	Manager, Student Services Team	Chief Executive Officer Vice President Wellbeing and Engagement Dean VET Dean HE Student Counsellor
2	Cyber-attacks and/or data loss	ICT General Manager,	Chair/Board of Directors Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team In an event of large impact to students: Dean VET Dean HE
2	Failure of essential services/utilities Sabotage of building Theft, fraud or malice	Facilities Manager	Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team

Level	Critical Incident Type	Critical Incident Manager	Who to notify at Stanley College
2	Reputation damage to Stanley College through negative publicity, stakeholder complaints, or community perceptions that adversely affect trust and confidence in the organisation	Quality and Compliance Manager	Chair/Board of Directors Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team
3	Natural disasters in Australia or home country of international students, e.g. fire, flood, earthquake	Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement	Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team
3	Critical terrorism-related events in Australia or the country of origin of international students, that may directly or indirectly impact student safety, welfare, or ability to continue their studies	Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement	Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team
3	Drug or alcohol abuse by staff or students (on-campus)	Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement	Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team
3	Bomb threats on or off campus, that pose risks to students or staff	Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement	Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team
3	Serious accidents, explosions or fire on or off campus, that pose risks to students or staff	Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement	Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team
3	Pandemic outbreaks	Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement	Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team
3	Acts of external actors including but not limited to protests and encampments, that pose risks to students or staff	Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement	Chief Executive Officer Executive Management Team

4.4 Where individuals or groups are not specified in the notification table, common sense and judgment should be applied to determine if they ought to be notified based on the nature of the incident. This approach ensures that serious events—such as cyber-attacks or major accidents—are escalated appropriately, even if they are not explicitly referenced in the table above.

Policy Commitments

4.5 Stanley College is committed to ensuring that Critical Incidents are managed compassionately and effectively in a timely manner, and that appropriate resources are available to respond to Critical Incidents. In this context the following principles apply:

- 4.5.1 any person can report a Critical Incident
- 4.5.2 all staff and students will be advised during orientation and induction sessions of the details of the Critical Incident Policy and Procedure, including contact details for relevant emergency services including Police, Fire and Ambulance and a Stanley College emergency contact
- 4.5.3 the Critical Incident Response Manager is as detailed in Table 1, unless otherwise appointed by the Chief Executive Officer
- 4.5.4 any Critical Incident involving staff is reported immediately the Manager, People and Culture and Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement or nominated delegate to oversee and manage

4.5.5 any Critical Incident involving a student is reported immediately to the Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement

4.5.6 Stanley College will ensure there are adequate processes, systems and support to manage critical incidents effectively and that College staff are suitably trained

4.5.7 timely medical treatment, counselling, interpreter services or other support will be arranged as needed and follow-up and ongoing interventions will be provided where necessary

4.5.8 where a critical incident concerns an international student under 18, the College will take additional steps to ensure the students' care and welfare, including allocation of dedicated staff to support the student and alternative accommodation if necessary

4.5.9 affected students' parents, guardians or next of kin, and affected staff members emergency contact or next of kin, will be contacted where appropriate

4.5.10 to ensure Stanley College is able to contact students or their emergency contact in case of a critical incident, Stanley College will require students to:

a) update their contact details (within seven days of arrival in Australia or whenever there is a change)

b) supply emergency contact details

c) validate current contact details, including details of emergency contact at least every three months.

4.5.11 the College will liaise with police, health services and other service providers if require

4.5.12 the College Chief Executive Officer will be notified of all Critical Incidents in a timely manner by Critical Incident Response Manager

4.5.13 Any critical incident where there is a major or material impact on the College, the College Chief Executive Officer will inform the Chair/Board of Directors (BoD)

4.5.14 the incident and impacted staff and students may be managed in conjunction with other college policies and procedures at the discretion of the Critical Incident Response Manager or delegated officer

4.5.15 the Critical Incident Report (written record of each Critical Incident, including remedial actions taken) will be kept for at least two (2) years after the student ceases to be an accepted student (under the ESOS Act)

4.5.16 Stanley College will respond to incidents as they happen and also take preventive measures, such as education programs and campaigns, to reduce future incidents.

Responses to Critical Incidents

4.6 Stanley College will tailor its response and management of critical incidents as detailed in the Critical Incident Procedure and Critical Incident Response Plan (CIRP), and within the framework of this policy and other policies that may apply including:

4.6.1 Under 18 Student Policy

4.6.2 Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy

4.6.3 Student Support Policy

4.6.4 Work Health and Safety Policy

4.7 Where a critical incident poses immediate risk to life, contact emergency services immediately on 000.

4.8 Staff and students have access to a Stanley College emergency after hour contact, published in the Student Handbook and Employee Handbook and are available via the Stanley College website (studentservices@stanleycollege.edu.au), Telephone:(+61) 400 274 033 (Outside Australia) or 0400 274 033 (Within Australia). WhatsApp service is also available for this number.

4.9 Stanley College holds a duty of care towards all students, irrespective of their age, as well as all staff members. In certain circumstances such as hospitalisation, or if the student is believed to be a missing student, the College will contact the students' nominated emergency contact person. In the event the College is unable to reach the nominated emergency contact, the College will endeavour to contact parents, or next of kin.

4.10 The Critical Incident Response Manager is responsible for the Critical Incident Response Plan (CIRP), and ensuring that the Chief Executive Officer, and Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement are informed about each incident.

4.11 The Stanley College Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), will include the following members:

- 4.11.1 Chief Executive Officer
- 4.11.2 Vice President, Business Development
- 4.11.3 Vice President, Wellbeing and Engagement
- 4.11.4 Dean VET
- 4.11.5 Dean HE
- 4.11.6 Manager, People and Culture
- 4.11.7 Manager, Student Services Team
- 4.11.8 Student Counsellor
- 4.11.9 ICT General Manager
- 4.11.10 Chief Financial Officer
- 4.11.11 Quality & Compliance Manager

Financial Approvals

4.12 The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for approving expenses in relation to the management of Critical Incidents.

Privacy and Confidentiality

4.13 Critical Incidents will often involve highly sensitive information concerning students, staff or others, including personal and confidential information. The College will protect the confidentiality of students, staff and others affected by the critical Incidents wherever practical in line with the College Privacy Policy and applicable privacy law.

4.14 The College may disclose personal or confidential information relating to a Critical Incident to other Stanley College staff members and other stakeholders, on a 'need to know' basis for the College to manage the incident appropriately.

4.15 In the event of an emergency, the College may also disclose personal or confidential information about the incident outside the College, such as to doctors, nurses, counsellors, to ensure appropriate support. The College may also report the incident to the police and government agencies such the Department of Home Affairs, ASQA or TEQSA, where this is appropriate or required.

Recording and Reporting of Critical Incidents

4.16 The College will report the incident, or consequences of the incident to government agencies such as DoHA, ASQA, TEQSA, if required. Including but not limited to:

- 4.16.1 report to TEQSA (as material changes) incidents that indicate material breaches in safety or preventative controls, including recurring incidents of sexual assault or sexual harassment

4.16.2 notify DoHA as soon as practical after the incident, and in the case of a student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance, the incident will need to be reported via PRISMS.

4.17 If required, incidents will also be reported to safety regulators.

4.18 In the event of a cyber-attack, Stanley College is responsible for promptly reporting the incident to the relevant authorities, meeting all data breach notification requirements, and informing ASQA if operations or compliance are impacted.

4.19 The College will report incidents, or consequences of incidents, to its insurers as soon as practicable where they may give rise to a claim or affect coverage.

4.20 Information about Critical Incidents will be reported quarterly to the Audit and Risk Committee, Academic Board and VET Council (in relation to their respective areas), and Board of Directors, including an evaluation of how incidents have been managed, recommendations for improvements and training needs.

4.21 The Critical Incident Report (written record of each Critical Incident, including remedial actions taken) including any associated evidence, will be maintained, securely and confidentially for at least two (2) years after the student ceases to be an accepted student (under the ESOS Act).

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 **Critical Incident Controller (Chief Executive Officer):** Oversees the overall response and appoints the Response Manager. The Chief Executive Officer must sign the All 'closed' Critical Incident Report Forms.

5.2 **Critical Incident Response Manager:** Leads the response plan and coordinates the support services

5.3 **Critical Incident Response Team:** Formed as needed to support the Response Manager in managing complex incidents.

5.4 **Quality and Compliance Manager:** Responsible for issuing a Critical Incident Report Number, and for collating and saving the Critical Incident Reports

6. Reference Documents

Supporting documents, procedures, work guidelines and forms	Critical Incident Procedure Critical Incident Register Critical Incident Report Critical Incident Response Plan (CIRP) Under 18s Student Policy Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy Student Support Policy Work Health and Safety Policy

7. Version History

Version	Date	Changes Summary
Old 1.0		Old Name - Critical Incident Policy (VET & ELICOS) Approved on - 13 March 2020 Reviewed on - 13 March 2022 Historical dates of amendments - 10 April 2025 Approved to change the template to the new Stanley College Policy and Procedure Template - December 2025
Old 2.0		Critical Incident Policy (VET & ELICOS) and Procedure was updated with the new template
3.0	September 2025	Old Name - Critical Incident Management Policy (HE) Approved on - 9 May 2018 Reviewed on - 14 October 2025 Historical dates of amendments - 14 October 2024 Authorised Officer - President Approved by - Stanley College Audit and Risk Committee Approved to use one policy and procedure across both VET and HE and change the template to the new Stanley College Policy and Procedure Template and use - September 2025
4.0	14/07/26	Update to existing content – Major Change (a) The Policy and Procedure Template was revised (approved by, owner, numbering, version control table added) (b) Operations Manager title changed to Facilities Manager in Table 1 (c) Student Engagement Manager changed to Manager, Student Services Team throughout (d) Replace the President with the Chief Executive Officer in all areas
4.1	11/08/26	Updating the term “President’ with the term ‘Chief Executive Officer’ Removing the term ELICOS

8. Compliance Monitoring Summary

Overview	Frequency
Quarterly reporting to the Audit and Risk Committee, Academic Board and VET Council (in relation to their respective areas) and Board of Directors including evaluation of how incidents have been managed, recommendations for improvements and training needs, and statistical data concerning open and closed cases.	Quarterly

9. Link to Standards

Standards for RTOs 2025

Quality Area	Outcome Standard	Focus Area	Standard	Performance Indicator
VET Student Support	VET Students are treated fairly and properly informed, supported and protected	Wellbeing	Standard 2.6	(b)

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

Domain	Section	Standards
2. Learning Environment	2.3 Wellbeing and Safety	5
6. Governance and Accountability	6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability	1 (j)
7. Representation, Information and Information Management	7.3 Information Management	3 (c)

National Code of Practice 2018

Standard (Number)	Standard (Descriptor)	Standards (Individual)
Standard 5	Younger Overseas Students	5.3.4
Standard 6	Overseas Student Support Services	6.8, 6.9.2