



CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Policy Number	2.7		
Responsible Officer	Master		
Superseded Documents	Critical Incident Policy (2003)		
Associated Documents	Harassment Policy		
Review Date			
Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date
1.3	The Board for public release	14 February 2018	14 February 2018

1 PURPOSE

The Board of New College is to ensure that the Master and staff have procedures in place for dealing with critical incidents and to ensure that adequate risk assessment is carried out to minimize the likelihood and impact of such events.

2 BACKGROUND

In the life of a residential college events can occur that have the potential to cause residents or staff to experience unusually strong reactions that can interfere with their ability to function.

3 SCOPE

The policy is designed to cover events that occur within the college communities or in activities associated with the day-to-day lives of residents and staff.

4 DEFINITIONS

'Residential Community'	Residential members of New College or New College Village, staff and alumni
'College'	This can refer to New College and New College Village as separate and related entities
Trauma-informed	Originally defined by SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014 as follows. Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being

5 POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 Definition

A critical incident can be defined as

any situation faced by any members of the College community, causing them to experience unusually strong reactions which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function either at the time the situation arises or later.¹

Not all 'critical' incidents will require a full-scale response. Key criteria for determining the level of response include: the level of destabilization of College routines, the extent of the emotional impact on residents, and the breadth of the impact on the College community. It is also recognised that a series of small-scale incidents may have the cumulative effect of a large-scale incident. Small sub-groups within the college may be deeply traumatized and this may require intervention to reduce the impact on individuals and the wider community.

A critical incident may be triggered a considerable time after an event actually occurred. For example, a situation may only become critical when college members are made aware of it.

A critical incident may be triggered by an unfounded allegation.

5.2 Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the College is prepared, as far as it can be, for the unexpected and traumatic. The College community can be affected by traumatic incidents within the college, outside the college, in session time, in vacation time, at social events or at sporting events. Detailed plans cannot be made in advance for every incident that may occur. However, some principles and procedures can be articulated to create the framework in which the many detailed decisions can confidently be made leading to a specific plan that would be needed in the event of such an incident.

The policy seeks to ensure that the Master and staff monitor the activities of the College and conduct risk assessment as necessary. The purpose is to reduce the possibility that critical incidents occur and ensure the preparedness of all staff to respond should they occur.

5.3 Types of incidents that may produce trauma

Many incidents can cause trauma, stress and a variety of significant emotional, psychological, physical and cognitive responses. These might include:

- the death or critical injury of a resident, member of staff, or prominent community member;
- the destruction of the whole or part of the building (e.g. by fire);
- a break-in accompanied by major vandalism;
- a group of residents lost or injured on an outing;
- college members witnessing serious injury or death;
- a health issue that impacts a number of residents;
- unusual and unfavourable media attention;
- allegations of a serious nature (e.g. sexual assault) involving a member of the college community;
- a natural or other major disaster in the community;
- the diagnosis of a possible terminal illness of a member of the college community.

¹ Note that the focus of New College policy is trauma-informed (as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

5.4 Procedures to be used in the event of a critical incident

The Master will establish and monitor procedures for a college response to any incident identified as a 'critical incident'. Such procedures as a minimum should ensure:

- rapid response from staff and the College community;
- effective communication with the families of residents, Chair of the Board, senior University staff and relevant responsible authorities (e.g. police and ambulance);
- effective management of publicity concerning any critical incidents;
- identification and use of outside resource groups as appropriate (e.g. counselling and crisis management teams);
- provision of pastoral support and follow-up programs;
- ongoing monitoring of the impact of the critical incident on staff and residents.

6 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The College has obligations as part of its duty of care towards residents of the college. These are set within a broad framework of university policies, government legislation and common law that covers individual rights to enjoy safety, non-discrimination, fair treatment and protection from harm and harassment.

7 IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Master is responsible to ensure that:

- Procedures are developed that assist staff to respond effectively when critical incidents occur, and
- Training is provided for full-time staff, student leaders and residential staff.

8 REVIEW & HISTORY

The policy and related procedures will be revised every five years or as key legislation, or University policies, require its revision.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Version	Authorised by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
[1.2]	The Board	17 th February 2016	17 th February 2016	All
[1.3]	The Board for public release	14 February 2018	14 February 2018	Sections 4, 5.1