



# Emergency and Critical Incident Management Procedures

## Introduction

The MACS Emergency and Critical Incident Management Procedures (the Procedures) provides a single, integrated, best-practice approach to the planning and preparedness for, response to, and recovery from, critical incident and emergencies across MACS offices and schools. It outlines the key activities required at each level across the organisation, as well as the requirements to respond and recover from emergencies and critical incidents that do occur.

The procedures in this document are aligned with evidence-based best practice and are designed for interoperability with Government departments and response agencies as the situation requires. They are also designed to ensure compliance with the VRQA Minimum Standards.

## Purpose

This document outlines the emergency and critical incident planning, response, and recovery standards to be applied throughout MACS and all MACS schools.

## Scope

The Emergency and Critical Incident Management Procedures provide the basis for emergency and critical incident planning and management throughout MACS offices and schools, including specialist schools operated by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools (MACSS) and school boarding premises operated by MACS schools.

The following hazard events are in scope:

- Critical incidents as defined in the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy
- Emergencies as defined in the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy
- Minor, locally managed incidents at school or office level requiring the activation of the relevant Emergency Management Plan

These procedures do not apply to:

- IT-related critical incidents (these are managed under a separate response plan)
- MACSEYE services
- Complaints, complex cases, and incidents addressed under other policy frameworks; except for severe and ongoing events where a coordinated response from multiple teams across MACS is required.

## Procedures

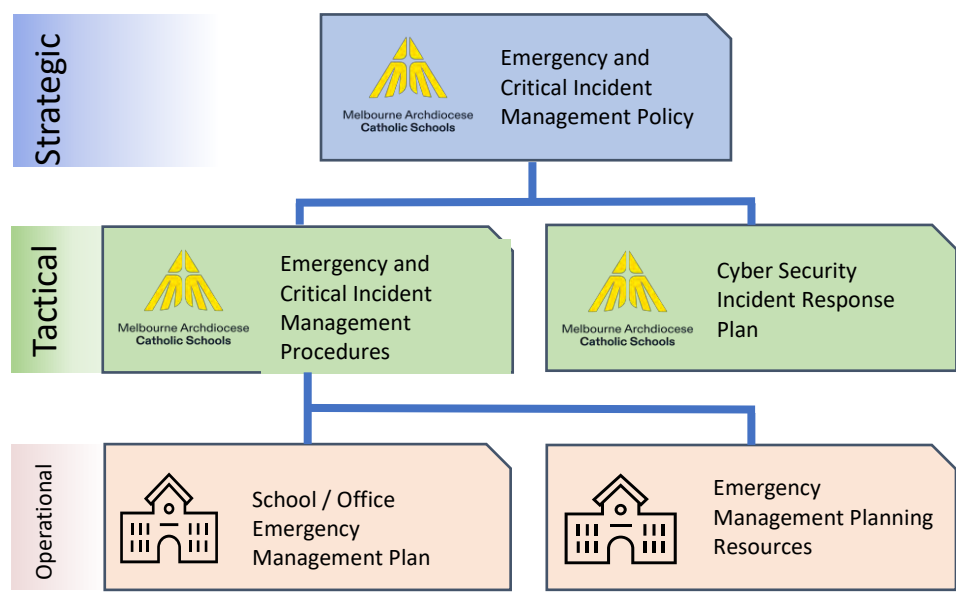
### Context

These procedures align with the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy. Detailed process and guideline documentation and Emergency Management Plans (EMPs) for MACS schools and offices are subordinate to this plan. Collectively, the suite of emergency and critical incident management documentation is referred to as the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Arrangements.

The Emergency and Critical Incident Management Arrangements are designed to align with the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA) Emergency Management Framework, and the Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration published by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

They have also been designed to align with Victoria’s Emergency Management Arrangements to ensure interoperability with response agencies and Government. Figure 1 illustrates the functional hierarchy of the MACS Emergency and Critical Incident Management Arrangements.

Figure 1: The MACS Emergency and Critical Incident Management Arrangements



Profile

Footprint of the Melbourne Archdiocese

The footprint of the Melbourne Archdiocese is illustrated in Figure 2. The Archdiocese is bounded by Anglesea to the southwest, Castlemaine to the northwest, Tolmie to the northeast, Woods Point to the east, and Hastings and Shoreham to the southeast.

Figure 2: The footprint of the Melbourne Archdiocese



## **MACS offices**

MACS consists of a central office and four regional offices, alongside the Catholic Leadership Centre. These are located at:

- Central office  
James Goold House  
228 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne  
Ph 03 9267 0228
- Northern Regional Office  
25 Norwood Crescent, Moonee Ponds  
Ph 03 8387 3200
- Eastern Regional Office  
39 Hewish Road, Croydon  
Ph 03 9427 6400
- Southern Regional Office  
602 South Road, Moorabbin East  
Ph 03 8301 7400
- Western Regional Office  
47 Synnot Street, Werribee  
Ph 03 8412 2400
- Catholic Leadership Centre  
576 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne  
Ph 03 9200 5200

## **MACS schools and regions**

MACS is the governing authority for 293 Catholic schools within the Melbourne Archdiocese, with a total of 114,523 students (2023 figures). There are 39 Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person (RI/MPJP) schools within the Archdiocese; these Catholic schools are not governed by MACS.

MACS schools are divided across four geographic regions, displayed graphically in

Figure 3:

- Northern region – 93 schools, 38,729 students
- Eastern region – 77 schools, 24,627 students
- Southern region – 64 schools, 21,967 students
- Western region – 62 schools, 29,200 students

Student figures should be treated as approximate due to frequent changes.

Figure 3: MACS regional map



## Hazard profile

The key hazards experienced by MACS offices and schools are listed below. This is not an exhaustive list and is presented in alphabetical order; schools are required to undertake site-specific risk assessments and list these and other assessed hazards in order of risk severity.

### **Acts of Extreme Violence / Active Armed Offender**

Incidents involving acts of extreme violence, or an Active Armed Offender (AAO) pose a risk for crowded areas, including schools. Common elements for these types of incidents include:

- often occur where the offender has access to many potential victims.
- evolve rapidly, and often resolve quickly.
- many offenders will continue to attempt to harm victims until confronted by police or some other type of intervention occurs.
- most will not be effectively resolved through negotiation or peaceful means.

Preparation efforts for these types of incidents include controlling access to the school, limiting the offender's access to people, having effective and robust lockdown procedures, and ensuring staff are empowered to act independently, as these incidents tend to evolve too rapidly for an effective control structure to function. The focus for staff is to get themselves and students to safety; followed by hiding out of sight; and lastly, calling police by dialling Triple Zero (000) when safe (Escape / Hide / Tell).

### **Bushfire**

Many schools across the Archdiocese are at risk of bushfire or grassfire (collectively referred to as "bushfire"). Depending on the conditions and situation, bushfire may impact a school or a school group outside the school grounds (e.g., on excursion) with little notice.

The Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) identifies the schools, kindergartens, and childcare facilities assessed to be most at risk of bushfire<sup>1</sup>. Facilities are categorised based on their assessed level of

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vic.gov.au/bushfire-risk-register-barr>



risk. Categories 0, 1, 2, and 3 are at elevated risk of bushfire (0 being the most severe risk). Category 4 indicates risk of grassfire. Importantly, schools not listed on the BARR may still be impacted by a bushfire.

Thirty-four MACS schools are listed on the BARR. Of these, 16 are Category 3 (bushfire risk) and the remaining 17 are Category 4 (grassfire risk). The BARR is reviewed annually, with schools added to or removed from the register depending on their risk profile, e.g., when housing now surrounds a school previously surrounded by grassland, changing the risk of grassfire.

Schools listed on the BARR have extra requirements in respect of their increased risk of fire, outlined in *Planning for emergencies* on page 9 below. Regardless of BARR listing, all schools must consider their individual risk of bushfire and plan accordingly.

### ***Child Safety critical incidents***

Child safety critical incidents are broad in nature and include child abuse and neglect, a missing or absconded child, and child abduction. Robust mitigation practices are necessary to reduce the risk of a child safety critical incident occurring. A significant response is indicated to protect the wellbeing of the child or children should a critical incident be identified.

### ***Cyber Security critical incidents***

The variety of individual IT systems across MACS and its schools, along with the size of the organisation, presents a large attack surface for hostile actors. Some of these threats include:

- Cloud vulnerabilities
- Vulnerabilities from unpatched, obsolete, or misconfigured services
- Vulnerabilities from compromised or insecure connected devices (e.g., Internet of Things – IoT – devices)
- Social engineering and “phishing”
- Malware attacks via email or infected websites
- Ransomware attack

Impacts from a cyber security incident may include theft of personal, health or sensitive information, or inability to access a service due to corruption or encryption.

### ***Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma***

An epidemic thunderstorm asthma (ETSA) event is thought to result from a unique combination of grass pollen and a certain type of thunderstorm<sup>2</sup>. Grains of grass pollen can burst open, resulting in many tiny particles being concentrated in the wind gusts that occur ahead of a thunderstorm. These particles can be breathed deeply into the lungs and can rapidly cause severe asthma attacks in many people at the same time. Risk factors for ETSA include people:

- with asthma
- with undiagnosed asthma (i.e., people who have asthma symptoms but have not yet been diagnosed with asthma)
- who have had asthma in the past
- with hay fever who may or may not have asthma.

ETSA is a risk during the Victorian grass pollen season, which runs from the start of October to the end of December each year.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/thunderstorm-asthma>

## **Flood**

Many areas across the Archdiocese are subject to mainstream (i.e., riverine) and stormwater (i.e., flash) flooding. Flooding places school buildings at risk through rising water, full or blocked drainage systems, rainfall that exceeds the capacity of gutter systems, and weaknesses in design or faults in buildings. Floodwaters may rise rapidly and impact roads, leading to a dynamic situation requiring vigilance and good decision making. The blocking of roads by floodwaters may prevent or impede students attending school, parents collecting students, school bus routes, and excursions.

It is **never** acceptable for MACS staff or students to be in a vehicle that is driven through floodwater (unless under the specific direction of emergency services).

Further information on assessing and planning for flood risk is outlined in *Mitigation and preparedness* on page 8 below.

## **Traffic accident**

Traffic accidents pose a significant risk to MACS staff and students, particularly during school drop off and pick up periods.

Additional risks of traffic accidents arise from school excursions, with large groups of children, staff, and volunteers travelling often long distances. Careful planning and adherence to excursion planning processes and risk assessments are critical to mitigate these risks.

## **Unwelcome person / “stranger danger”**

Instances of unwelcome person events are a major and increasing cause of incident reports across MACS. These incidents vary widely, and include:

- parents attempting to contravene custody arrangements or pursue an altercation with a staff member
- unwelcome individuals entering school grounds without suspected malicious intent (e.g., dementia patients, homeless persons, or drug / alcohol affected individuals)
- unwelcome individuals entering, attempting to enter, or loitering nearby school grounds or activities with suspected malicious intent (e.g., engaging with children walking to/from school, engaging with children through the school fences, taking photos/videos of students, attempted abduction)
- young people entering, attempting to enter, or loitering nearby school grounds seeking to engage with their friends or other students (e.g., former students following graduation or expulsion, students from other schools).

These events constitute serious child safety and workplace health and safety incidents. Diligent adherence to school security and sign-in/out procedures is critical to the prevention of an incident.

## **Overview of emergency and critical incident management**

Emergency and critical incident management in MACS is structured and principles-based to ensuring MACS fulfils its duty of care to keep its students, staff, and others on MACS sites safe from hazards and maintains compliance with all required standards, legislation, and regulatory requirements. Emergency and critical incident management planning in MACS aligns with the following principles, as established in the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy:

- all hazards approach.
- comprehensive approach
- flexible and scalable
- integrated and coordinated.

## **Emergency and critical incident management priorities**

In the absence of specific direction, policies, or guidelines, decision-makers should act in accordance with these priorities.

### **1. The preservation of life is paramount**

The preservation of life is the paramount priority of all emergency management activities. This includes students, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers, and all others on MACS sites (e.g., out of school hours care providers), as well as others where practicable.

## **2. Child safety and wellbeing**

The maintenance of child safety procedures, minimisation of exposure to potentially traumatic events, and the effective activation of psychological wellbeing services to minimise ongoing harm amongst students and staff are high priorities.

## **3. Protection of assets and infrastructure**

Where possible, MACS assets and infrastructure (such as data, buildings, and equipment) should be protected from the emergency. This may occur prior to the onset of the emergency (such as moving vulnerable assets to higher ground), or after the emergency has passed (such as extinguishing smouldering materials near a building following a bushfire, where safe and practical to do so). This promotes recovery following the emergency and minimises the economic impact.

## **4. Protection of cultural heritage and the environment**

Actions aligned with the protection of cultural heritage and environmental assets are priorities. This minimises the environmental and cultural impact from the emergency and promotes recovery of the social, environmental, and cultural heritage domains.

## **5. Recovery and restoration of operations**

Actions aligned with recovering from the emergency and restoring operations are the final priority. The restoration of school operations is also a significant factor in restoring a sense of normality within an emergency-impacted community and contributes to the broader social recovery following an emergency.

## **Safety and wellbeing**

The safety and wellbeing of all MACS staff, students, and others (e.g., volunteers, contractors, and others on MACS sites) are of the highest priority. Ensuring preservation of life and the safety and wellbeing of all is the paramount priority of all emergency and critical incident plans.

## **Safety in emergencies**

Safeguarding safety in emergencies requires action throughout all stages of the emergency and critical incident management process, including (but not limited to):

- **Prevention and mitigation:** Implementing risk controls to minimise the likelihood of an injury occurring; ensuring facilities are maintained in good condition and are up to standard.
- **Preparation:** Ensuring Emergency Management Plans are reviewed and exercised; ensuring response equipment including first aid kits and fire safety equipment are in-date, serviced, and functional; ensuring training is up to date.
- **Response:** Undertake actions in accordance with the emergency and critical incident management priorities; establish a management team and delegate tasks; escalate and request assistance when required; mobilise psychological wellbeing assistance early.
- **Recovery:** Ensure ongoing wellbeing assistance is available; aim for a return to normal routine as soon as possible; ensure staff and management teams prioritise wellbeing, as recovery is a lengthy process.

## **Psychological wellbeing during and after emergencies**

Emergencies and critical incidents can be traumatic events for those affected, witnessing or involved in managing the event, and others. It is critical to consider the psychological wellbeing requirements early in the response to any emergency or critical incident and implement measures to provide the required support.

Psychological wellbeing support should adopt a “needs-based” approach. This means that support should be available to those who require it, when they require it, where they are.

Liaison with those closest to the emergency or critical incident (e.g., the principal) to understand the needs of those involved in the event is essential. Psychological support should also be made



available, as required, to school leaders, regional staff, and members of management teams involved in the event.

An event may result in psychological trauma to some, but not others; additionally, a relatively minor event may result in an apparently disproportionate psychological impact, based on historical experience. Effective management is sensitive to these factors is critical to ensure the wellbeing of everyone involved in an event.

Psychological support should be maintained for as long as it is required; even following the conclusion of emergency and critical incident response activities.

## Mitigation and preparedness

### **Assessing and controlling risk**

A thorough risk assessment is critical to ensuring Emergency Management Plans address the specific local hazards and risks.

Specific information on assessing bushfire and flood risk is presented below, as an example of the types of risk a school or office may be expected to assess. Where reference is made to schools, these should be taken as referring to MACS schools and offices equally, as both require similar approaches to risk management.

### ***Assessing bushfire risk***

All offices and schools must assess their individual bushfire risk and prepare accordingly.

Schools not listed on the BARR may still be at risk of bushfire or urban grassfire, particularly in extreme weather conditions. The following resources are useful in understanding the bushfire risk faced by a school:

- VicPlan<sup>3</sup>: This tool can be used to generate a property report which will advise if a school is in a declared Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) – this means the area is subject to, or likely to be subject to, bushfires.
- As assessment of the school's Maintenance Plan.
- Look around: A walk through and tools such as Google Maps and Google Earth can provide a "bird's eye view" of the local environment. Factors that may indicate an increased bushfire risk include:
  - area of bushland abutting the school
  - unbroken tree canopy stretching from the school to a nearby area of bushland
  - broad areas of grassland abutting the school or terminating less than two streets away from the school
  - mature trees and bushes nearby or overhanging school buildings
  - gutters full of leaves or with sprouting grasses on school buildings
  - bushfires tend to be fastest and most severe when travelling uphill, or when driven by a northerly wind, which may influence other risk factors.
- Contact the MACS Emergency Management Coordinator or local Council Emergency Management Unit for support assessing bushfire risk.

### ***Assessing flood risk***

Flooding can occur because of riverine or flash flooding.

Flood risk is widespread and difficult to prevent. It is important that locations understand their vulnerability to both types of floods, and the risks posed. The following resources are useful in understanding the flood risks:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/vicplan/>

- VicPlan: This tool can be used to generate a property report which will advise if a location is in a flood zone. It can also generate flood maps of an area to better understand where floodwaters tend to accumulate.
- History: Areas that have flooded in the past are likely to flood again under similar circumstances. Whilst a variety of variables contribute to the likelihood and extent of flooding, an understanding of historical flooding is a useful tool to understand flood risk.
- SES Local Flood Guides<sup>4</sup>: The State Emergency Service (SES) produces local flood guides for each local government area. These guides identify the flood risk and show historical flood maps for each area. They are regularly updated and are freely available on the SES website.
- Contact the MACS Emergency Management Coordinator or local Council Emergency Management Unit for support in assessing their individual flood risk.

## **Planning for emergencies**

### ***Emergency planning rationale and requirements***

Legislation requires schools to have policies and procedures regarding the school's duty of care to students. This includes the duty of care to take reasonable measures to protect students from reasonably foreseeable risks of injury, and to have appropriate arrangements for supervision of students both on the site and off-site (including consideration of bushfire risk in the activity location).

Schools are required to have an emergency management plan (EMP), addressing emergency and critical incidents. The EMP must be updated as required and reviewed at least annually, and immediately after any significant incident. The EMP must be site-specific and include local threats, hazards, and corresponding response procedures. Specifically, the EMP must also consider:

- Circumstances that pose a critical risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of one or more students or staff
- Incidents requiring school closure, lockdown, or reduction of the number of students or staff attending
- Death or serious injury of a student or staff member at school or at another location authorised by the school

Schools should update their EMP throughout the year as activities such as school camps and excursions are planned and approved.

MACS requires each of its offices to maintain an EMP to the same standard, except for items solely relating to schools and the safety and management of students.

### ***Further requirements for schools listed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register***

The VRQA Guidelines on Bushfire Preparedness impose extra requirements on schools listed on the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR). These include:

- a requirement to close the school on days forecast as Catastrophic fire danger in the relevant fire weather district
- on non-Catastrophic fire danger days where a bushfire is in the vicinity or there is elevated fire danger (e.g., Extreme fire danger), maintain a heightened state of readiness and continuously monitor the situational bushfire risk
- be prepared to enact the EMP by:
  - Relocating students and staff to a nominated Shelter-in-Place location within the school
  - Evacuate students and staff to a safe off-site area
  - Respond appropriately to instructions from emergency services.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe/flood-guides>

### ***Planning for offsite activities***

The Excursions, Camps, and Travel Policy and associated procedures outline the risk and emergency management planning requirements associated with offsite activities. In complying with these provisions, ensure the following emergency hazards are considered:

#### **Catastrophic fire danger warning**

Schools are advised to cancel, reschedule, or, if safe to do so, recall offsite activities affected by a forecast Catastrophic fire danger warning for the relevant weather district or a weather district being travelled through; an active bushfire; or any other actual or forecast extreme weather event such as flooding or storms.

#### **Epidemic thunderstorm asthma risk**

On days of high epidemic thunderstorm asthma risk, the teacher in charge must ensure they can receive emergency warnings issued on the VicEmergency platform and can immediately locate students inside a structure or vehicle should a warning be issued, or a thunderstorm eventuate.

The teacher in charge should ensure they are able to receive warnings issued on VicEmergency for the area they are in, and any areas being traversed during the offsite activities. "Watch and Act" and "Emergency Warning" areas should not be entered or traversed unless under instruction by emergency services or are travelling via a known safe route to depart the warning area.

#### **International activities**

In the case of international activities, the following additional requirements apply:

- The activity must be registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- Schools and the teacher in charge must maintain awareness of, and comply with, any DFAT safety alerts issued for countries being travelled to or through.
- Schools must be prepared to recall students or cancel planned overseas travel to regions where DFAT issues advice against travel.

#### ***Internal and external evacuation points***

Schools are required to have nominated evacuation points and assembly areas that meet the following criteria:

1. A primary on-site assembly area of sufficient size to assemble the entire school, as far from school buildings as the site allows. A means of exiting the school grounds without travelling through or past the school buildings (e.g., a gate) is also required.
2. A secondary on-site assembly area of sufficient size to assemble the entire school. The secondary assembly area should be located as far from the primary assembly area as the site allows and is used if conditions make the primary assembly area dangerous or impractical.
3. A primary off-site assembly area at least 150m from the school. This area should be a safe location capable of accommodating the entire school and should be able to be walked to via a safe route of passage. Procedures should be developed to convey students safely to the assembly area, with consideration to road crossings and other areas of vehicle movement.
4. A secondary off-site assembly area at least 500m from the school.
5. A Shelter-in-Place location capable of housing the entire school inside a safe building. Where a school does not have a single building capable of housing the entire school, splitting the school across multiple areas is permissible, provided procedures exist for ensuring all students are accounted for. Shelter-in-Place locations must have access to toilets, drinking water, and multiple safe evacuation routes. Refer to "Facility preparedness" below for further information on Shelter-in-Place requirements for schools on the BARR.

Both on-site assembly areas and the Shelter-in-Place location must be marked on evacuation diagrams throughout the school. All assembly areas and the Shelter-in-Place must be marked on an area map in the Emergency Management Plan, showing exit routes from the school and preferred routes for safely moving to the off-site assembly areas. On-site assembly areas must have appropriate access to emergency equipment.

MACS offices are required to nominate a primary and secondary off-site assembly area meeting the requirements of items 1 and 3 above, which must be marked on evacuation diagrams throughout the building.

### ***Review of plans***

Emergency Management Plans are required to be reviewed and updated:

- annually, before September 1 each year
- following a drill or emergency where the EMP was used.

The review should be noted in the EMP to ensure a record of the review and any updates exists.

Each revision should be stored at the school, made available to the school community (see “Communicating plans” below), and sent to MACS Emergency Management.

### ***Communicating plans***

Emergency Management Plans must be communicated and made available to key stakeholders and those who may be involved in its implementation. These include:

- **Staff:** School staff who may be involved in the response to an emergency should be familiar with the plan and know where to access it on short notice.
- **Families:** It is important that families understand the broad context of the emergency planning arrangements in place for the school. This may involve making part of the plan available to parents or summarising the context in a newsletter article.
- **MACS:** Each school and office must ensure MACS Emergency Management holds an up-to-date copy of the EMP. This is to ensure Emergency Management can provide tactical and strategic support in an emergency or critical incident.
- **Local Government:** Some schools have historically supplied their EMP to their local Council, for storage in Council’s Emergency Management system. This may assist the Municipal Emergency Management Officer (MEMO) in providing support to the school in the event of an emergency. This is optional, as some Councils may not have the capacity to securely store the EMP.

Where EMPs are being shared outside the school, the following considerations are essential:

- Sensitive procedures (e.g., for discreet lockdown) should be redacted for plans shared outside MACS (e.g., to parents or Council).
- Personal information (e.g., after-hours staff contact information) should be redacted for plans shared outside EMP users (e.g., to parents).
- Personal information relating to individual students (e.g., students with special needs documented in the EMP) should be redacted for plans shared outside the school (e.g., to any party including MACS Office).

It is good practice to create multiple versions of the EMP; an internal unredacted version for school or office use, and a redacted version for public distribution.

## **Training and exercising**

### ***MACS Emergency and Critical Incident Management training and exercising***

MACS Emergency Management conducts periodic training and exercises on various topics related to emergency and critical incident management, and an annual pre-summer seasonal preparedness briefing. Contact MACS Emergency Management for information on which sessions are upcoming and how to access these. Where possible, recordings of the training sessions are made available to schools through Catholic Education Victoria Network (CEVN).

### ***School-based training***

Induction of new school staff, including volunteers, must include the emergency and critical incident management procedures. Including:

- where to find the EMP
- Information it contains

- how to implement emergency procedures and
- how the school's leadership structure will provide operational leadership in an emergency.

It is good practice to repeat EMP training at least annually. This may take a variety of formats, including a presentation, a series of articles in a staff newsletter, or a training session. Ensure thorough records are maintained of training and attendance.

### ***Drills and exercises***

Drills and exercises test plans and preparedness and provide experience in implementing responses to emergencies and critical incidents.

Schools and MACS offices are required to undertake, document, and report a drill or exercise at least once per term or quarter.

BARR schools must undertake an on-site Shelter-in-Place or off-site evacuation drill at least once per term during the October to April bushfire season (this requirement may be met by simply ensuring the Term 1 and 4 drills are an off-site evacuation and/or Shelter-in-Place drill).

Upon completion of each drill, notification to MACS is required. This can be completed using the Emergency Drill Report at <https://forms.office.com/r/DZ4u9f77ri>, scanning the QR code on this page, or completing an incident report and marking the category as "Exercise / Drill".



### **Facility preparedness**

Preparedness prior to the emergency that will determine the survival of the building, and the level of protection the building will offer to its occupants. Facilities that can withstand an emergency will also be able to resume operations sooner than those that are poorly prepared and suffer damage or loss.

Compliance with a school's Maintenance Plan and Essential Safety Measures is important to ensure facilities are best placed to withstand an emergency. As part of the natural hazard risk assessment, consideration of how natural hazards can impact on facilities and what maintenance is required to minimise risk is important to reduce vulnerability in an emergency.

#### ***Preparing facilities for fire***

All schools must regularly manage materials that may easily be ignited around buildings and facilities. To demonstrate evidence of effective fire risk management, a schedule is required for monitoring and removing material that may be easily ignited including:

- branches overhanging buildings
- debris and rubbish around and underneath buildings
- leaf litter and other debris in gutters
- dry grass and vegetation

All flammable materials such as barbeque gas bottles, petrol for yard equipment, paint etc must also be stored safely and away from combustible materials.

Emergency access and egress routes must be monitored and kept clear of obstructions. This includes ensuring:

- building exits are continuously kept clear of obstructions
- clear access to facilities and grounds for emergency vehicles.

#### ***Additional facility preparedness requirements for BARR schools***

All schools listed on the BARR must consult annually with relevant local agencies (Country Fire Authority, Fire Rescue Victoria, and local council), where possible and appropriate, regarding their bushfire preparedness and compliance with local bushfire regulations of buildings, facilities, and grounds.



Schools have had varying degrees of success engaging their local emergency services and councils to provide on-site feedback. MACS Emergency Management will visit each BARR school annually to provide expert advice on local emergency hazards, compliance with MACS and regulatory requirements relating to emergency preparedness, and ensure schools are prepared for the bushfire season.

Schools listed on the BARR are also required to ensure their designated on-site Shelter-in-Place meets the standards for their BARR and bushfire risk category.

Schools on the BARR must maintain notices of bushfire evacuation procedures and emergency contact numbers, and that these are located appropriately around the school. Any school should consider maintaining these notices where their risk assessment identifies a risk of bushfire. A template for this notice is at Appendix 1 .

### ***Preparing facilities for flood and storm***

Ensuring building maintenance is up to date is critical to ensuring facilities are safe from flash flooding and storms. This includes:

- gutters are checked and clear – blocked gutters can overflow inside buildings during heavy rain
- stormwater drains are checked and clear – blocked drains can result in water backing up into buildings (blocked drains will often become apparent with lighter rain – do not ignore the warning signs of a blocked drain)
- roofing and cladding materials are in good condition and attached securely
- large trees are checked by an arborist
- minor roof leaks are addressed promptly
- door and window seals are periodically checked and maintained
- loose items are secured.

## **Response**

The response phase commences at first indication of an emergency or critical incident and continues through full demobilisation and transition to recovery.

The response phase also encompasses monitoring activities, where a high likelihood of an emergency or critical incident occurring results in active preparation and monitoring for the emergence of an event (e.g., Extreme or Catastrophic fire danger, high epidemic thunderstorm asthma, severe weather warnings).

### **Approach to emergency and critical incident response**

MACS has adopted a structured five-step approach to responding to emergencies and critical incidents, as outlined in Figure 4.

*Figure 4: The MACS five-step emergency and critical incident response process*



## Event identification and assessment

### Warnings and alerts

Situational awareness is key to ensuring adequate notice of an impending or actual emergency or critical incident.

Emergency Services issue warnings and alerts according to the Australian Warning System, a national system that provides clear information and calls to action at each severity level. A clear understanding of this system ensures all MACS staff at schools and offices clearly understand the level of risk posed by an event, and the action required.

There are three warning levels:



#### **Advice (Yellow)**

An incident has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.



#### **Watch and Act (Orange)**

There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to remain safe.



#### **Emergency Warning (Red)**

An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

Further information on the action to take on receiving a warning is outlined in “Initial incident response” below. Information provided with the warning will provide the latest information about the emergency, and the actions Emergency Services recommend. This may include instructions to evacuate immediately, or shelter in place.

These warnings are available on the VicEmergency platform and can be accessed at <https://emergency.vic.gov.au>, by scanning the QR code on this page, or via free download on Google Play or the App Store.

Key staff members in MACS offices and schools (including regional general managers, regional learning consultants, principals, and deputy principals) are strongly encouraged to sign up to notifications on the VicEmergency platform. Watch zones can be configured, so any warning in a predefined area will trigger a notification to the user's phone, and/or an email.



The teacher in charge of an offsite activity must monitor VicEmergency for any warnings relating to planned activity areas, including areas being travelled through.

A nominated staff member at the school should also monitor the offsite activity area for any emergency warnings. The monitoring required shall reflect the risk inherent in the location and prevailing conditions; an offsite activity to a venue in a built-up area in winter has a different risk profile to a camp in remote bushland during a period of warm weather.

MACS Emergency Management will routinely monitor emergency incidents and warnings during high-risk periods (such as days where a high risk of fire or epidemic thunderstorm asthma have been forecast), and proactively notify schools of an emergency or warning with the potential to impact them.

### **The primary responsibility rests with schools to monitor warnings for their own area.**

Whilst the Vic Emergency platform is an important tool, schools and offices are to monitor conditions in their own locations for early signs of an emergency.

## Event assessment and triage

The below matrix (Table 1) is used to determine the severity of the hazard event and provide guidance as to the response required. Appendix 2 provides a detailed set of information and examples to guide the incident assessment process. Plans subordinate to this Policy will provide more detailed information to guide the assessment process specific to the type of hazard event encountered.

This Plan has been designed to cater for hazard events ranging from insignificant to unlimited severity, in accordance with the all-hazards approach to emergency and critical incident management. This ensures that emergency and critical incident management plans are used for a broad spectrum of hazard events, ensuring a consistent and scalable approach as well as familiarity with the response arrangements in the event of a major or severe event.

Table 1: Hazard event assessment

	Severity	Event impact (or potential impact)	Response required
EMERGENCY / CRITICAL INCIDENT	Severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidents with severe and catastrophic impacts for people, facilities, or the organisation.</li> <li>Fatal or life changing injuries, multiple significant injuries from a single event, serious and imminent threat of violence.</li> <li>Significant reputation damage with third parties. Critical service unavailable for protracted period, major security breach with sensitive data loss.</li> <li>Complete loss of office or school.</li> </ul>	<p>Managed locally with Regional and MACS office support.</p> <p>CI/EMT established.</p> <p>Notification to Board an Emergency Management</p> <p>Notification timeframe: Immediately after initial management actions</p>
	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidents with significant impacts for people, facilities, or the organisation.</li> <li>Single significant or multiple minor to moderate injuries from a single event.</li> <li>Significant impact to student welfare or learning. Moderate or potential reputational damage with third parties.</li> <li>Significant degradation or partial unavailability of a critical system, minor security breach with low-level data loss.</li> <li>Temporary loss of access to school or office.</li> </ul>	<p>Managed locally with Regional and MACS office support as required.</p> <p>CI/EMT established if required.</p> <p>Notification to ELT &amp; Emergency Management</p> <p>Notification timeframe: Immediately after initial management actions</p>
LOCAL INCIDENT	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidents with moderate or medium duration impacts for people, facilities, or the organisation.</li> <li>Minor to moderate injuries involving lost time or medical attention.</li> <li>Moderate impact to student welfare or learning.</li> <li>Moderate or pending reputational damage with third parties.</li> <li>Minor or short duration critical system outage or security breach without data loss.</li> </ul>	<p>Managed locally.</p> <p>Notification to Director level &amp; Emergency Management</p> <p>Report timeframe: 24 hours</p>
	Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incidents with minor or short-term impacts for people, facilities, or the organisation.</li> <li>Single, isolated minor injuries requiring basic first aid.</li> <li>Minimal impact to student welfare or learning.</li> <li>No reputational damage with third parties.</li> <li>Short-term service outage with minimal impact on school operations.</li> </ul>	<p>Managed locally, routine reporting</p>
	Insignificant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor incidents or near misses with no or very limited impact on people, facilities, or the organisation.</li> </ul>	<p>Managed locally, routine reporting</p>

## Initial response

The initial actions following the identification of an event are to implement initial response efforts aimed at:

- preserving life and minimising harm to people
- seeking assistance to manage the event
- minimising damage to assets and property.

The exact actions required to fulfil these priorities are difficult to plan, however general considerations include:

- **Take action to stay safe:** If a warning has been issued, take any practical steps outlined in the official warning. Remember to consider the context – for example, if Police recommend evacuating but the school has no practical means to do so, it may be safer to shelter-in-place and liaise with Police to determine an alternative course of action.
- **Preserve life:** Remove all staff and students from immediate danger; prevent further casualties. If it is safe to do so, provide aid to any casualties. Notify others who may be at immediate risk from the event (such as other site users, contractors, volunteers, the parish, adjacent schools or facilities).
- **Call for help:** Call 000 for emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance) where required. Police are responsible for managing evacuations, so in an emergency where the school has implemented its shelter-in-place procedures, the school should contact Police to inform them of the action taken by the school.
- **Maintain situational awareness:** During an emergency or critical incident, the situation may change rapidly. It is critical to monitor conditions and continually confirm that the chosen course of action to remain safe is still the best option. Often a change to the plan is necessary due to a change in circumstances.

## Escalation and internal notification

### *Initial event notifications*

Internal notification to ensure response teams is essential (e.g., Emergency Management, Facilities and Infrastructure, and IT) and to ensure the MACS Executive and Board are aware of unfolding incidents. Notification of an event to the Parish priest is also required (this task may be undertaken by the school or the CI/EMT as appropriate).

Appendix 2 provides guidance on the notification required according to severity of incident.

It is the responsibility of the senior Controller (School / Office Incident Controller or MACS Incident Controller, depending on the level of incident escalation) to ensure the appropriate internal notification has occurred.

A summary of the initial event notification process is provided at Appendix 3. Initial event notification occurs after the initial management actions have been completed unless real-time support or advice is required.

### ***Establishment of a Critical Incident / Emergency Management Team***

According to the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy, a Critical Incident / Emergency Management Team (CI/EMT) can be established by any of the following:

1. School CI/EMT: School principal, or senior staff member in the absence of the principal
2. Office / Facility CI/EMT: Director or senior staff member in attendance
3. MACS CI/EMT: Chief Risk Officer, Chief Information Security Officer, a Director, the Executive Director, or according to a trigger outlined in an approved emergency / critical incident management plan aligned to the Policy.

Additionally, a CI/EMT shall be authorised pursuant to (3) above, where an emergency or critical incident is triaged as “Severe”.

The structure and function of Critical Incident Team or Emergency Management Team are identical.

The following are required at the point of establishing a CI/EMT:

- **Incident Controller:** An Incident Controller must be appointed at the time a CI/EMT is established. This will default to the principal or senior staff member establishing a school CI/EMT, and the Emergency Management Coordinator or Chief Risk Officer for MACS CI/EMTs established pursuant to this Plan.
- **Event name:** The appointed Incident Controller determines descriptive name for the event. For events impacting only one school, this would usually take the form of [School name] [Suburb] [Incident type], e.g. “St Anthony’s Lara Grassfire”. For an event impacting a broader area, such as a large bushfire, the name would usually take the form of [Location] [Incident type], e.g. “Yarra Ranges Bushfire”.
- **Incident objective:** The appointed Incident Controller determines an initial incident objective (or set of objectives) to guide the initial response to the event. This is usually a simple statement, e.g. “To ensure all staff and students are kept safe from the grassfire.” This guides all subsequent efforts of the CI/EMT.

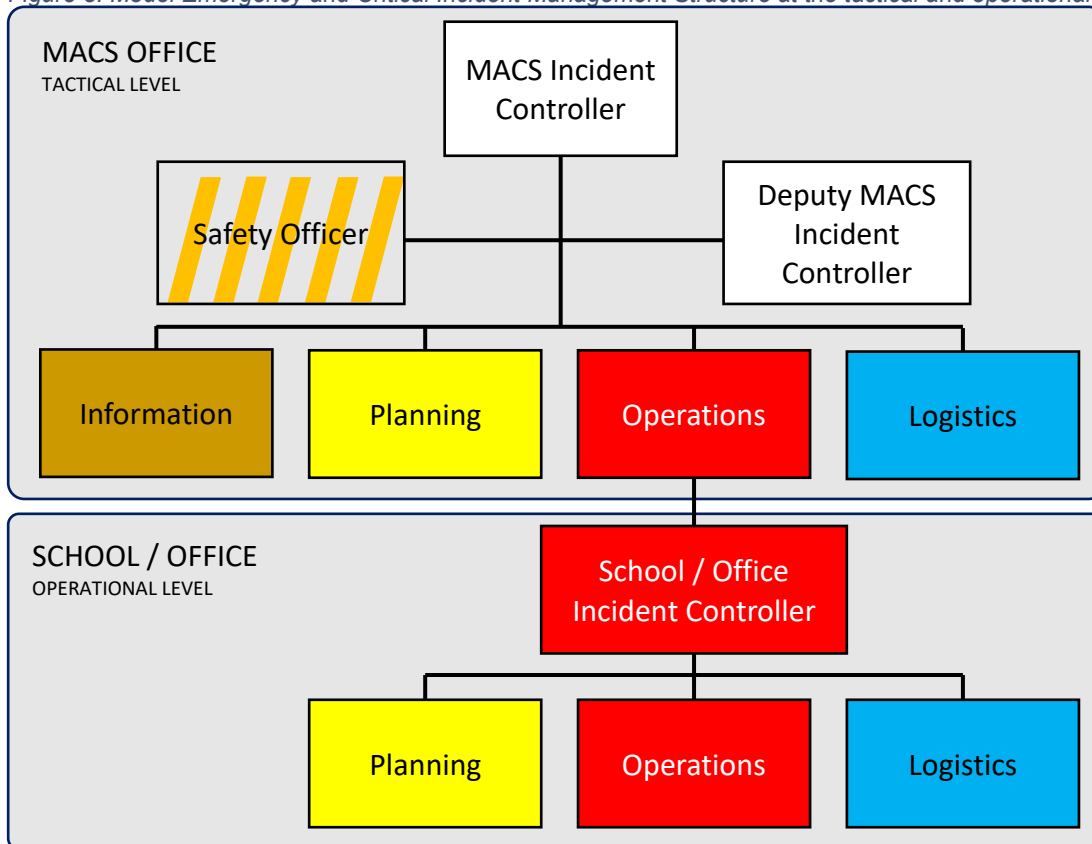
The formality of the initial CI/EMT will vary widely. A MACS Office CI/EMT established to support a school will have a documented event name and incident objective. The School Incident Controller may consider the event name and objective, but not document them until circumstances permit this.

## Managing the emergency or critical incident

### *The Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System*

MACS uses the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) to manage emergencies and critical incidents. A model functional management structure complying with the AIIMS principles is outlined below. This outlines a structure where all common functions have been delegated to an officer; in reality, multiple low-workload functions may rest with a single person. Where no delegations have been made, all functional areas rest with the relevant Controller.

Figure 5: Model Emergency and Critical Incident Management Structure at the tactical and operational levels



This model structure is intended to flex to accommodate the requirements of the incident. Simple incident management may only require the activation of the School / Office Incident Controller.



A larger incident may involve the support of a MACS Incident Controller at the tactical level (MACS Office). Where the needs of the incident exceed the capability of these roles, the respective Incident Controller may delegate roles (such as Operations, Logistics, and Planning) as required to provide effective management.

In larger or more complex incidents, multiple units may be activated across MACS due to the involvement of multiple regions or specialist functions (e.g., OHS, Health, Wellbeing, IT).

Such units are led by Unit Managers and report to their respective functional officer (e.g., the OHS Unit Manager may report to the Operations Officer, who in turn reports to the Incident Controller).

The requirements of the incident will determine the arrangements and are usually reserved for the largest or most complex incidents.

### ***Briefings and management team meetings***

Briefings and management team meetings are important response features. They provide an opportunity to bring all key stakeholders up to speed efficiently, minimise miscommunication and allow tasks to be distributed effectively. The following briefings and meetings are frequently used throughout the management of an event:

#### **CI/EMT meeting**

The CI/EMT meeting involves all in the CI/EMT.

These are pertinent to each level (e.g., school CI/EMT members would attend the school meeting, MACS Office CI/EMT members attend the MACS Office CI/EMT meeting); the exception is that the principal / School Incident Controller is a member of the MACS Office CI/EMT (where an emergency or critical incident affects their school).

CI/EMT meetings are held as often as the incident requires; often hourly, twice daily, daily, or less frequently as required. It is good practice to ensure minutes and/or logbook notes are maintained at these meetings to facilitate debriefing and inquiries later.

#### **Room briefings**

Where a CI/EMT is operating in the same location (e.g., out of a coordination centre established at the school, regional office, or James Goold House (JGH)), the Incident Controller may give periodic room briefings to share critical information “out of cycle” of the CI/EMT meetings.

#### **Emergency Management Team (EMT) meetings**

EMT meetings are held by the Emergency Services Incident Controller with the commanders of the various Emergency Services responding to the event. These are distinct from the MACS EMTs. The School Incident Controller may be invited to attend an EMT as a key member of the response effort.

A log must be maintained of the discussions and any actions arising from the EMT.

### ***Incident Action Planning***

Following the initial response actions, the Incident Controllers at each level must collaboratively devise an Incident Action Plan (IAP) to resolve the event.

The IAP should be approved within four hours of the establishment of the CI/EMT for the next operational period (usually 24 hours) and refreshed for each subsequent operational period.

IAPs include the incident objectives, strategies, tactics, and operational structures employed to manage the event, and provide guidance to all team members on the arrangements and leader’s intent for the management of the event.

An IAP template is available at Appendix 4.

## **Demobilisation and transition to recovery**

During the Incident Action Planning process, the Incident Controller must consider the level of escalation and resourcing for the incident and consider whether it remains appropriate for the coming operational period. Options available include:

- seeking further resources for an event growing in size or complexity
- demobilising resources for an event that is being brought under control
- changing resources to reflect the evolving requirements of an ongoing event.

Considerations also include having a full-time CI/EMT in a Coordination Centre or utilising staff from across JGH and MACS; varying meeting frequencies and the length of operational periods to reflect a prolonged incident exhibiting little change.

Demobilisation of CI/EMT members should occur in a planned manner, ensuring all tasks are assumed by another member of the team. All required documentation should be handed over in an organised manner.

Demobilisation often coincides with the transition to recovery. This is a gradual process where event response processes are wound back, transitioning in a controlled manner to the recovery process aimed at restoring operations to the school or office.

The Incident Controller should consider the person best placed to manage the recovery and plan a structured and comprehensive handover. The response to the event cannot be considered to have concluded until the transition to recovery is complete (unless no formal recovery is determined to be required).

## **Communicating in emergencies**

The timely flow of accurate and reliable information between all stakeholders is vital to an efficient and effective response.

Hazard and warning information must be rapidly made available to those who require it.

### ***Communicating hazards and warnings***

The VicEmergency platform is the fastest and most reliable tool for receiving hazard and warning information from Emergency Management Victoria and response agencies. Key staff at all schools must use the VicEmergency platform to be notified of hazards and warnings impacting their school, its bus routes, and any authorised activities.

Principals must ensure the school's emergency contact information on CEVN is kept up to date. MACS Emergency Management will use this information to communicate serious hazards and warnings as a supplement to VicEmergency's alerting, and for hazards not issued on VicEmergency (e.g., threats communicated via the Department of Education (DE)).

### ***Internal communications***

Meetings of the Response Team at all levels will be convened to establish a common understanding of the situation, the response strategy being employed, and the controller's intent during the response. The Controller will set the meeting frequency and agenda.

Situation Reports are used to provide information on the response to a broader audience across the organisation and to external stakeholders. The Situation Report must be approved by the Controller prior to distribution. A Situation Report template is available at Appendix 4.

Telecommunications infrastructure is often impacted during an emergency or cyber security incident. Response plans must consider redundancy of communication methods.

For critical communications, observing the PACE methodology is recommended: Identify and document a Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency method of communication to allow for service disruption.

### **Communication with school communities**

Schools must ensure they have multiple reliable methods of communicating with families (e.g., SMS and email), and that a redundancy has been considered in the event of a telecommunications outage or external evacuation. Additionally, messages addressing the most likely scenarios to require emergency communication with families will be prepared in advance to allow for rapid updating and dissemination in an emergency. These methods and messages will be documented in the school's Emergency Management Plan.

### **Communication with regulator**

VCEA is required to notify VRQA within seven days of:

- Any actual or potential significant breaches of the Minimum Standards, that may have arisen from complaints or concerns related to the care, safety, and welfare of students, including Ministerial Order No. 1359 – *Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises*, that may become public knowledge or attract media or parliamentary attention; and
- Any emergency school relocation (e.g., due to fire or flood) within seven days of becoming aware of the emergency that necessitates relocation.

To allow VCEA to meet its requirements to VRQA in this regard, MACS must notify VCEA as soon as possible after identification.

The MACS General Manager, Compliance is responsible for this and must be notified of any situation potentially meeting these criteria as soon as possible.

### **Media management**

The Executive Director or their authorised spokesperson are the only MACS staff authorised to speak to the media on behalf of MACS, or regarding emergency incidents involving more than one MACS school. Principals are authorised to speak to the media on behalf of their school only.

The MACS Communications team members will provide the Information function in MACS office Emergency / Critical Incident Management Team.

The requirements of the event will determine the nature of this function - full Crisis Communications Group (CCG) according to the MACS Communications Protocol, a single Communications Officer, or other structure as required.

## **Recovery**

The recovery process refers to the return to “normal” following an event. Depending on the scale and type of event, recovery assists in returning to a “new normal” as, in many instances, a return to the way things were is not possible or desirable.

### **Principles of recovery**

Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) proposes eight principles of recovery<sup>5</sup>. These are primarily intended for community-level emergencies; however, they warrant consideration during the recovery process for any emergency or critical incident, considering schools as their own community, as well as the role of the school in contributing to the recovery of the broader community. These principles are:

#### **Understand the context**

Successful recovery is built on effective communication between the MACS and the school, the broader school community, other school communities, emergency services, local and state government.

#### **Strengthen communities**

Successful recovery should leave communities stronger by reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-framework/principles>

### ***Ensure an inclusive approach***

Successful recovery recognises that communities are made of many groups and ensures that actions, both intentional and unintentional, do not exclude groups of people.

### ***Recognise complexity***

Successful recovery responds to the complex and dynamic nature of disasters and the community.

### ***Recognise and build capacity***

Successful recovery recognises, supports, and builds on individual, community, and organisational capacity and resilience.

### ***Use community-led approaches***

Successful recovery is community centred, responsive, and flexible, and it relies on community engagement to support them to move forward.

### ***Coordinate all activities***

Successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated, and adaptive approach between MACS, schools, and our stakeholders, based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.

## **Environments of recovery**

The State Emergency Management Plan organises recovery activities into four environments of recovery.<sup>6</sup> These environments are relevant to emergency and critical incident recovery activities at MACS, noting that not every environment will require recovery for every event. Organising recovery activities into these environments of recovery help to ensure comprehensive assessment and coordination of recovery activities, as well as ensuring alignment with state government relief efforts. The four environments of recovery are:

### ***Social***

The social recovery environment encompasses activities aimed at supporting the wellbeing of people, rebuilding community cohesion, and promoting resilience. Social recovery often includes psychological and social supports, activities to promote connectedness such as events and commemorations, and the provision of hardship supports.

### ***Economic***

The economic environment refers to the processes involved in returning business activities to a functional state. In the MACS context, this would refer to returning schools to full operation.

### ***Built***

The built environment encompasses activities aimed at repairing or rebuilding physical assets such as school buildings, restoring essential services such as water, electricity, and telecommunications, and restoring transportation links such as school bus routes.

### ***Natural***

The natural environment refers to processes involved in supporting the environment to return to a natural and healthy state. In the MACS context, this would refer to cleaning up natural assets such as tree branches and other natural debris, and supporting trees, plants, and landscaping assets to return to a functional state.

## **Recovery planning**

Every school and MACS office is required to have a current and effective Business Continuity Plan (BCP). This is the primary recovery planning tool.

It is recommended that BCPs are periodically tested to ensure the plan remains functional and relevant and builds familiarity across the office or school.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/responsibilities/state-emergency-management-plan-semp/roles-and-responsibilities/recovery>

BCPs are usually focused on restoring a functional/operational service to allow social, built, and natural recovery activities to take place.

A needs assessment and detailed recovery plan to outline and coordinate the recovery requirements and activities for each of the environments is necessary once the BCP has been established and initial actions to restore basic services have been undertaken.

Recovery is often a prolonged process. Recognising the school community's recovery in the broader context of the event and its impact on the wider community is critical. For community-level emergencies (such as a major bushfire or significant traffic accident), it will be critical to engage with council's Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) to coordinate activities and ensure any available supports are accessed.

## Lessons management

A structured approach to lessons management ensures the experience gained through training, exercising, and responding to events lead to improvements in MACS' emergency and critical incident management arrangements, and can be systematically applied across the organisation.

### Lessons management approach

The MACS approach to lessons management follows the **Observation – Insight – Learning** model, aligned with Emergency Management Victoria's EM-LEARN approach. The model is summarised below.

#### **Observation**

An *observation* describes something related to the response to the event that could be done differently, be improved upon, or is an innovative practice that could be implemented broadly to improve practice. Observations can be identified during the event, during a debrief, or during a review of an event. Observations do not seek to correct any shortcomings or issues – merely to identify and describe for further analysis.

#### **Insight**

Continual thematic analysis of observations seeks to identify trends, known as *insights*. These insights provide a higher-level understanding of the root causes and key themes driving observations. By thematically analysing multiple observations across a variety of contexts, the identification of insights seeks to remove confounding factors and highlight the key issue.

#### **Learning**

Once an insight has been identified, actions may be designed and implemented to systematically address the issue. This may include updating a plan or policy, amending training materials, or taking some other action to drive improvement. Monitoring and measuring the actions taken is critical; once it has been confirmed that the actions taken were effective in implementing the insight actions, the lesson may be considered learned, and future events will benefit.

### Debriefing

Debriefing is critical to check staff wellbeing, capture observations, and understand exactly what occurred during an incident response. Bringing all stakeholders together and talking through the event allows the variety of perspectives to be explored. This leads to a single, comprehensive understanding of the event and its management.

Debriefs must be conducted in a safe environment, where participants in the event response feel open and empowered to share what happened and what actions they took and observed. For this reason, debriefs are open only to participants in the event (except for the debrief facilitator).

Convening multiple debriefs for organisation-wide responses may be desirable. For example, a debrief for a school's CI/EMT; another for the MACS CI/EMT; and a final debrief for the Executive Leadership Team and/or the Board, depending on their respective levels of involvement.

The facilitator should seek to deeply explore the following:

- What happened? – develop a shared understanding of the event and how it evolved.



- What did we do well? – understand the things that worked well in the response, and capture these so they can be reinforced.
- What could we do better next time? – there are always areas for improvement; capture these as observations for reporting into the Lessons Management process.

Ensure participants are briefed that critical commentary should focus on systems, plans, and decisions, *not* people. Similarly, participants should understand that critical commentary directed at a decision or area they were responsible for does not reflect on them as an individual, rather the systems and plans underlying the response.

The School or MACS Incident Controller will determine if a debrief is required to be carried out, in consultation with other controllers active during the event, or when directed by the MACS Executive.

## Reporting

The debrief facilitator will complete a debrief report. This report will provide:

- a detailed series of events
- a narrative on what occurred
- response taken
- highlight identified observations
- any recommendations to arise from the review process

Any specific recommendations arising from a debrief should be accompanied by one or more observations highlighting the situation the recommendation aims to rectify. This ensures those tasked with implementing the recommendations can later understand what issue the recommendation aims to address.

## Related policies and documents

### Related MACS policies and documents

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy – Schools  
 Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy  
 Enterprise Risk Management Framework  
 Emergency Management Plan Template and Guide  
 Maintenance and Asset Management Policy – Schools  
 PROTECT- Identifying and Responding to Abuse – Reporting Obligations Policy  
 School Maintenance Plan

## Policy information table

Responsible director	Director, Risk Infrastructure and Assurance
Framework owner	Chief Risk Officer
Approving authority	MACS Board
Assigned board committee	Child Safety and Risk Management Committee
Approval date	13 March 2024
Risk rating	Extreme
Review by	March 2025
Publication details	CEVN, Gabriel

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned Framework	Enterprise Risk Management
Supporting documents	Refer to documents above
Superseded documents	Emergency Management Planning Procedures – Schools
New procedure	New

# Appendix 1 – Bushfire and Emergency Procedure Notice Templates

These templates are aimed at providing simple, easy-to-read information on emergency procedures (for all schools and offices) and bushfire procedures (for BARR schools). All schools and offices are required to display the Emergency Information notice in locations where key staff can access it (e.g., administration area, staff room, office kitchens). All schools on the BARR must also display the Bushfire Procedure notice in key locations around the school.

The bushfire template is available in Word format for you to edit. Find it on CEVN (Emergency Management > Resources), or email [emergencymanagement@macs.vic.edu.au](mailto:emergencymanagement@macs.vic.edu.au).

To use the template:

1. Complete all sections surrounded by square brackets. This includes the name of your school at the top of the page, the date of revision, and any relevant emergency contact information you require in a bushfire emergency.
2. Complete the school information in red underneath the Triple Zero. The Triple Zero call taker will ask for the school's name, the address (including "Victoria" at the end), and the name of the nearest intersecting street (or *cross street*). Having this information written down and readily available means you don't need to think about it during the emergency.
3. Add the school's logo and map to the marked sections at the bottom of the page. Remember to delete the placeholder squares.
4. Print as many copies of the document as you need, laminate them, and display them in key locations around your school. It is a good idea to display your Bushfire Procedures near your Evacuation Procedures.



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

[Insert school name here]

# Bushfire Procedures

[Insert date of revision here]

## IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL

# 000

**[School name]**

**Address:** [School address],  
Victoria

**Nearest cross street:** [Nearest  
cross street]

### Critical Contact Information

#### School

Office: [insert number here]

Principal: [insert number here]

DP / other: [insert number here]

DP / other: [insert number here]

Parish: [insert number here]

#### MACS

Regional General Manager: [insert  
number here]

Emergency Management:  
03 9267 0228 / 0436 958 801

[Insert other numbers here you may  
require in an emergency. This may  
include neighbouring schools or off-  
site evacuation facilities outlined in  
your EMP. Delete these instructions  
once complete.]

Insert school logo here

## Shelter-in-Place Procedure

**Designated Shelter-in-Place Location:** [insert SIP location here]

[Insert Shelter-in-Place Procedure according to your school's EMP here]

## Off-Site Evacuation Procedure

**Primary Off-Site Evacuation Location:** [insert location here]

**Secondary Off-Site Evacuation Location:** [insert location here]

[Insert Off-Site Evacuation Procedure according to your school's EMP here]

Insert site map from your EMP here showing off-site  
evacuation route and Shelter-in-Place location

# In an emergency



## Stop

Stop what you're doing.



## Make It Safe

Prevent the incident from getting worse.

Address immediate safety concerns, such as:

- Initiating first aid
- Containing the event
- Getting people to a safe space



## Escalate

If you require police, firefighters, or ambulance, call 000.

For other real-time support, call MACS Emergency Management on 0436 958 801 (24/7).

Call relevant staff and supervisors to help you control the situation.



## Manage

When in doubt, refer to your Emergency Management Plan (EMP).



## Follow Up

As soon as it is safe to do so, write down everything that happened.

Report the incident to your line manager, relevant stakeholders, and MACS Emergency Management.

Debrief and review your EMP with MACS Emergency Management.

## For emergency, call 000

### For information and support:

#### VicEmergency

For real-time information on emergencies and warnings in your area.

<https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond>



#### MACS Emergency Management

For emergency support, information, and advice for your school or office.

0436 958 801 (24/7)

[emergencymanagement@macs.vic.edu.au](mailto:emergencymanagement@macs.vic.edu.au)



#### Make Safe

For urgent building and infrastructure make-safe work.

1300 722 272 (24/7)



## Appendix 2 – Incident Assessment and Triage Matrix

Use this matrix as a guide to the level of escalation required for a specific incident. Where multiple criteria or examples are satisfied by a single incident, use the most severe applicable escalation level.

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Summary	Near miss, or minor incident managed through routine processes.	Low impact incidents with local management, no risk to health, safety, or wellbeing, no reputational risk, no outage.	Medium duration or impact incidents resulting in minor injuries to a single person, minor or short duration outage or security breach. Local management with regional / central support.	Significant impact incidents. Single significant or multiple minor injuries, threat or potential of a significant incident, critical IT service significantly degraded, minor cybersecurity breach with limited content exposure, partial or temporary loss of school or office. Central management.	Severe and catastrophic incidents. Fatal or life changing injuries, serious and imminent threat of violence, critical IT service unavailable, loss of school or office. Central management with external involvement.
Escalation	Notification to Principal level, routine reporting		Notification to Director level and Emergency Management  MACS escalation for support as required.	Notification to ELT and Emergency Management  RGM and MACS office support as required	Notification to Board and Emergency Management  RGM and MACS office support
Management	Local	Local	Local with regional / MACS office support	Local / Regional  MACS office support as required.  Establishment of CI/EMT if necessary to manage incident	Local / Regional  MACS office  CI/EMT establishment as required.

	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single, isolated injuries requiring no first aid (grazes / abrasions, bruises requiring icepack, insignificant lacerations requiring band-aid)</li> <li>Near miss with no ongoing risk / risk mitigated with local controls</li> <li>Identified hazard mitigated with local controls.</li> <li>Reports only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single, isolated minor injuries requiring basic first aid only (sprains, strains, minor lacerations [superficial, &lt;5cm], grazes / abrasions, mild asthma episode managed with own medications and plan)</li> <li>Minor psychological injury requiring peer support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor to moderate injuries involving lost time or medical attention (fractures to small bones, significant lacerations [deep, &gt;5cm], concussion / minor head trauma, moderate asthma attack with medical attention)</li> <li>Exposure to traumatic event</li> <li>Psychological injury requiring professional support.</li> <li>Missing student – short duration, low risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single significant injury or illness requiring emergency medical care and hospitalisation (fractures to long bone / head / chest, severe asthma attack, head trauma with loss of consciousness, snake bite)</li> <li>Attempted suicide</li> <li>Missing student – long duration, high risk</li> <li>Multiple minor to moderate injuries arising from a single event.</li> <li>Threat of or potential for significant incident (hostile offender, abduction)</li> <li>Psychological injury requiring ongoing clinical support.</li> <li>Child safety incident not involving abuse or sexual misconduct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fatality</li> <li>Critical illness or injury requiring resuscitation (cardiac / respiratory arrest, stroke, major trauma)</li> <li>Life changing injury (amputation, spinal injury, major head trauma)</li> <li>Significant threat to person</li> <li>Imminent and confirmed threat of significant incident (hostile offender, abduction)</li> <li>Instance or allegation of abuse or sexual misconduct involving a child.</li> <li>Traumatic event requiring extensive clinical support for multiple individuals</li> </ul>
Organisation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low impact to student welfare or learning</li> <li>Potential minor or unlikely reputational damage with third parties (boards, parents, Government)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate impact to student welfare or learning</li> <li>Low reputational damage with third parties (boards, parents, Government)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant impacts to student welfare or learning</li> <li>Moderate or potential reputational damage with third parties (boards, parents, Government)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant reputation damage with third parties (boards, parents, Government)</li> <li>Significant impact on community resulting in extreme community response</li> </ul>

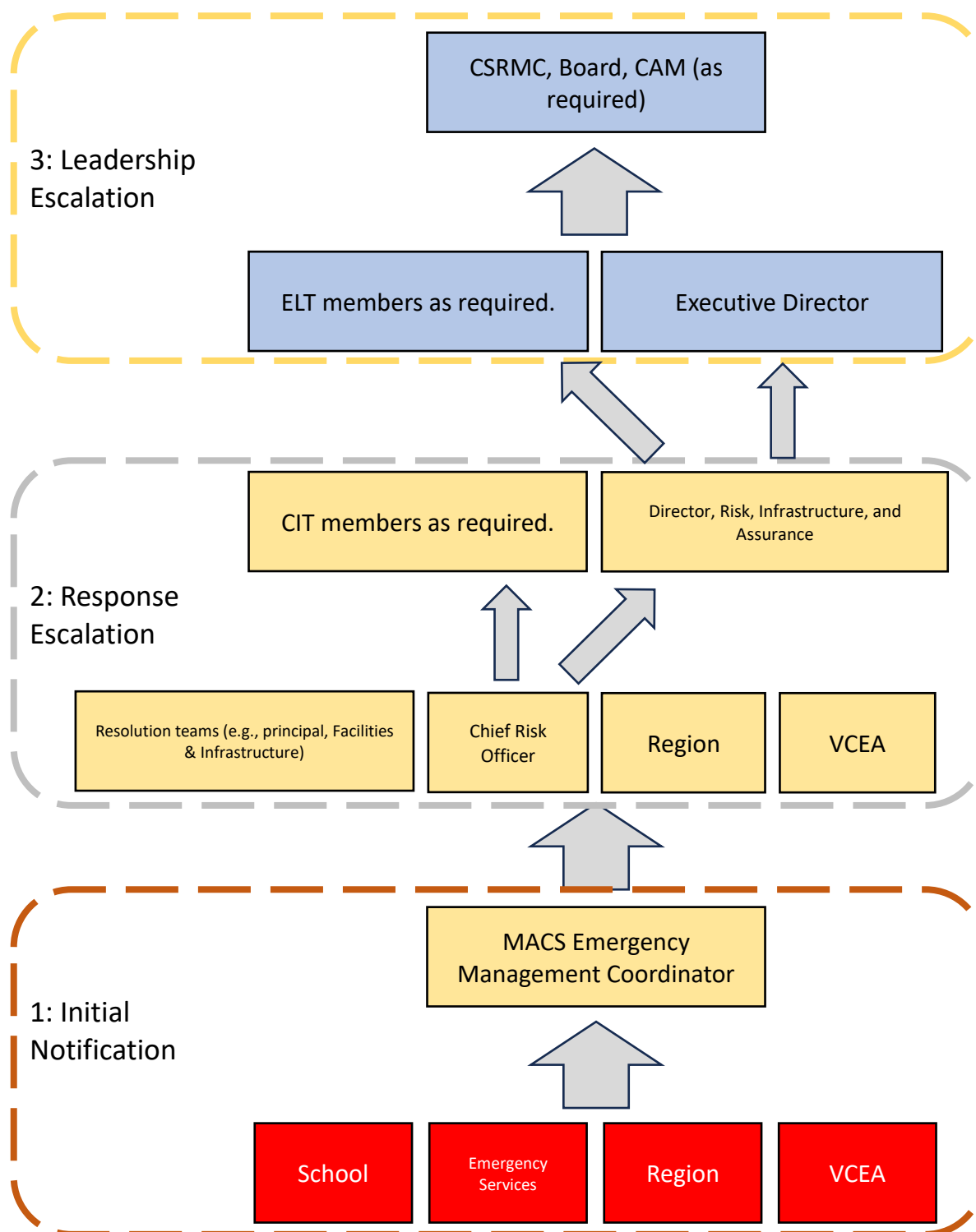
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service has minimal degradation, failure, or function loss.</li> <li>Incident causing minor inconvenience to a low number of people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service has minor degradation or failure of function.</li> <li>Incident causing additional workload to a low number of people with a workaround</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical service has moderate degradation, failure of function.</li> <li>Non-critical service is unavailable or unusable.</li> <li>Incident causing significant additional workload to a single user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical service is significantly degraded or partially unusable.</li> <li>Incident causing significant additional workload to a single school without a workaround</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical service is unavailable or unusable.</li> <li>Incident causing excessive additional workload to multiple schools without a workaround.</li> <li>Staff remuneration impacted – multiple staff, multiple sites</li> </ul>
Cyber Security		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerability exposing public information.</li> <li>Lost / misplaced assets or media.</li> <li>Single user / low impact malware infection (generic malware)</li> <li>Inappropriate website access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Misuse of system</li> <li>Suspected intrusion, compromise or penetration of service, system, network, device, or data.</li> <li>Denial of service attack.</li> <li>Misuse of system.</li> <li>Unauthorised distribution of employee data.</li> <li>Incidents impacting multiple schools.</li> <li>High volume phishing / malware. distribution via email.</li> <li>Large-scale malware infections, or targeted malware attack.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Security breach or vulnerability exposing non control systems.</li> <li>Compromise or breach of sensitive information</li> <li>Denial of Service attack</li> <li>Unauthorised distribution of employee data</li> <li>High volume phishing / malware distribution via email</li> <li>Large-scale malware infection / targeted malware attack</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severe security breach or vulnerability with potential for &gt;30min critical system outage, major performance degradation, or major impact to most/all business users</li> <li>Compromise of confidential information, or material volumes of sensitive information</li> <li>Denial of Service attack of a critical business system</li> <li>Cyber security attack impacting multiple schools</li> </ul>



	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential safety issue (e.g., materials recall)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor, routine infrastructure issues (e.g., building, plumbing, electrical)</li> <li>Damage to infrastructure not resulting in loss of access (e.g., broken window)</li> <li>Graffiti, minor vandalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch and Act warning.</li> <li>Moderate, short-term damage to a single building (e.g., vehicle into structure, tree down)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emergency Warning</li> <li>Partial loss of office or school</li> <li>Temporary inability to access office or school / offsite evacuation.</li> <li>Shelter-in-place / lockdown procedures activated for a threat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete loss of office or school</li> <li>Wildfire impact on inhabited school</li> <li>Structural collapse</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3 – Initial event notification flowchart

This flowchart summarises the initial event notification process, from the initial report into MACS Emergency Management, throughout the hierarchy of MACS. The assessed severity of the emergency or critical incident (as outlined in Appendix 2) guides the seniority of notification required. This process is flexible; if a key person is uncontactable, the notification process should escalate past them.



## Appendix 4 – Response management templates

This appendix holds the following templates intended to provide support to Critical Incident and Emergency Management Teams during the response to an event:

- Incident Action Plan (IAP) template
  - The IAP should be drafted no later than four hours after the establishment of the CI/EMT, and cover the following operational period (usually 24 hours, depending on the requirements of the incident).
- Situation Report (SitRep) template
  - The SitRep is disseminated at the end of each operational period and is the key means of informing stakeholders outside the CI/EMT of the progress of the incident.

These templates are held by MACS Emergency Management as separate Word files. Contact [emergencymanagement@macs.vic.edu.au](mailto:emergencymanagement@macs.vic.edu.au) to obtain a copy.

# Incident Action Plan

## Emergency & Critical Incident Management



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

<b>Incident:</b>	<b>[Incident name]</b>
<b>IAP number:</b>	1
<b>Date / time:</b>	[Date / time of IAP issue]
<b>For operational period:</b>	[Usually the 24hr period following the IAP issue]
<b>Approved by:</b>	[Incident Controller name]
<b>SITUATION</b>	[Describe the background of the situation, its impacts, and its forecasted development]
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	[The incident objective]
<b>MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES</b>	[The strategies to achieve the objective – dot points]
<b>MANAGEMENT TACTICS</b>	[The strategies to achieve the objective – dot points]
<b>INCIDENT STRUCTURE</b>	[List the activated functional roles, the staff performing them, and their contact phone numbers. Describe any unique communications arrangements. Consider reproducing the functional structure and hierarchy diagrammatically]
<b>COMMUNICATIONS PLAN</b>	[Describe briefing, meeting, and reporting arrangements]
<b>MAPPING</b>	[If relevant, add any area or site maps]
<b>ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS</b>	
<b>SAFETY</b>	[List any specific safety concerns or requirements and the mitigation measures being applied]

# Situation Report

## Emergency & Critical Incident Management



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools

<b>Incident:</b>	<b>[Incident name]</b>
<b>Situation report number:</b>	1
<b>Date / time:</b>	[Date / time of SitRep issue]
<b>For operational period:</b>	[Usually the 24hr period up to the SitRep issue]
<b>Approved by:</b>	[Incident Controller name]
<b>SITUATION</b>	[Describe the background of the situation, its impacts, and its forecasted development]
<b>MISSION</b>	[The incident objective]
<b>EXECUTION</b>	[The strategies and tactics to achieve the objective – dot points]
<b>ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS</b>	[Describe administration and logistics arrangements, including meeting times and locations, where files are being stored, and what resources are being used]
<b>COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS</b>	[List the activated functional roles, the staff performing them, and their contact phone numbers. Describe any unique communications arrangements]
<b>SAFETY</b>	[List any specific safety concerns or requirements and the mitigation measures being applied]