

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure

Purpose

This policy is designed to ensure that ELC responds effectively to critical incidents when and if they occur.

Scope

This policy applies to all students who are enrolled in an ELICOS course at ELC.

Background

ELC has a duty of care to its students and to document the process for managing critical incidents. The Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) requires the college to notify DEST and DIAC 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. The PEO is responsible for the implementation of this procedure and to ensure that staff and students are aware of its application and that staff implement its requirements.

Policy

Definition

A critical incident (CI) in the school / international student context can be defined as “a tragic or traumatic event or situation affecting a student or staff member which has the potential to cause unusually strong emotional reactions in the school community.”

Identifying a CI

Examples of a Critical Incident include but are not limited to:

- Death (including death of a direct family member)
 - Accidental
 - Suicide
 - Result of injury or terminal illness
 - Murder
- Serious illness or injury or risk of these
- Natural disaster
- Any powerful event which overwhelms a person's usual ability to cope
- Issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse
- Missing student(s)

Refer to the examples of a critical incident above but also consider:

- that a non life-threatening event can still qualify as a critical incident if it is significantly harmful or poses a threat of harm to students/staff
- if others think it is a critical incident. It is important not to overreact to situations that may be sad or unfortunate but are not necessarily a critical incident.

Dealing with a CI

In response to a critical incident the school aims to:

- Provide support
- Address immediate practical tasks and assist family, friends and loved ones
- Focus on the student population
- Establish levels of order and control as appropriate
- Recognise our own limitations and boundaries

Crisis Response Team:

The team is comprised of:

- Critical response coordinator: Student services or academic manager.
- Student services: Assisting with calling and gathering information
- Accommodation Manager: Assisting when accommodation is involved
- Director of Studies: Assisting when incident affects the academic team
- Reception staff: Assisting with transferring calls to appropriate staff

Steps in dealing with a CI

On receipt of news or information regarding a critical incident the critical response coordinator must:

- Create for themselves a clear understanding of the known facts
- If an emergency exists contact the relevant emergency services by phoning 000
- If translators are required contact Translating and Interpreting Service by phoning 131 450
- If counselling services are required contact Life Line on 131 114
- Plan an immediate response
- Plan ongoing strategies
- Allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks

Based on an evaluation of the critical incident the critical response coordinator must, where appropriate, make implement the following actions

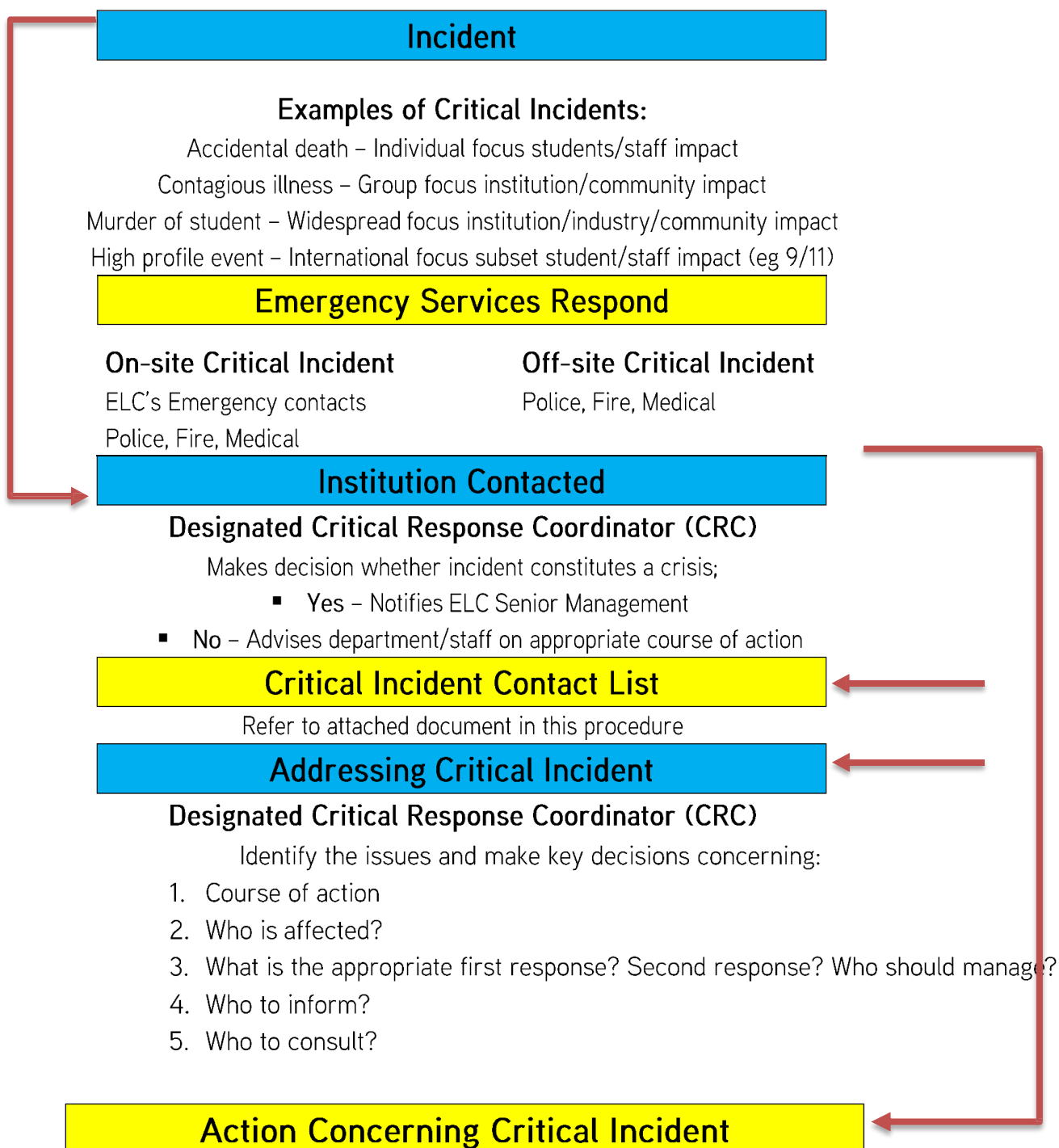
- Contact next of kin/significant others
- Inform staff and students
- Prepare guidelines for staff about what information to give students
- Prepare a written bulletin to staff and students if the matter is complex
- Brief staff and delegate a staff member to deal with telephone/counter inquiries
- Manage media/publicity
- Identify students and staff members most closely involved with the incident and ensure they are offered support and counselling
- Arrange a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with Counsellor/s
- Arrange access to emergency funds if necessary

- Record the incident and the following key details to report include:
 - The time of the incident
 - The location and nature of the incident
 - The names and roles of persons directly involved in the critical incident
 - The action taken by the College including any opportunities for improvement
 - The organisations and people contacted by the school

How can a student report a CI?

Students are advised of how to report to a critical incident during their student orientation and on the 'emergencies' tile of the student app where numbers for emergency services and the school are provided.

Critical incident response plan



Crisis Response Team = the group of Designated Responsible Persons

1. Student Services Manager and Coordinator
2. Academic: DOS and ADOS if incident affects teachers/student community/ student's studies
3. Marketing and communications: if incident should be reported to agent/family/Media
4. Reception desk to direct calls to appropriate staff

Debriefing

To be held upon completion of the initial response by the Crisis Response Team. Should be convened by the CR Coordinator, and include all relevant participants for each incident.

Guidance on communication, planning and documentation

The following advice is provided for the crisis response team:

Creating a clear understanding of the known facts

Before next of kin is contacted, the coordinating team will ensure that it establishes the facts so that it has accurate and up to date information about what happened and about the current situation. This may involve seeking out a number of different sources such as hospital, friends of the student and police.

Notifying the family should happen as quickly as possible but only once the facts and current situation have been established. It is not helpful to panic a family overseas whilst we are still gathering information.

Planning a response

The coordinating team will discuss immediate tasks that need to be performed and allocate responsibilities within the team. The coordinating team will discuss the tasks that will need to be performed over the first few weeks following the incident.

Allocating individual roles and responsibilities

One person from the coordinating team to be appointed as the main point of contact for others: hospital, relatives, friends and other parties. That person will make it known that they will be available 24 hours a day.

Making contact with next of kin

- The coordinating team will establish whose responsibility it will be to notify the next of kin of the CI.
- Next of Kin should be clearly informed of which staff will be available to them for support.
- In case of families who are not fluent in English, other staff members who can translate or translation services must be arranged. A friend or relative of the student's family may be in a position to assist with the language barriers.
- NOTE: Privacy Laws for students over 18 may make it necessary to obtain student permission before notifying other family members. As a general rule, if the student is conscious and not in danger of hurting himself, permission is necessary before contacting the next of kin.

Consulate

The coordinating team will discuss with the consulate respective roles and responsibilities in terms of contacting the student's family, arranging a service, arranging travel, temporary accommodation for relatives and repatriation of body if death is the result of the CI.

Accommodation provider

The coordinating team will ensure that support is available to housemates, accommodation provider staff, homestay families.

Insurance provider

- If the student is in hospital, the CRC should contact the Insurance provider and ask them to contact the hospital to discuss coverage and ongoing covering issues

- If ELC asks, Allianz may appoint and case manager to deal with the CI when necessary

Hospital

- The coordinating team will contact the hospital about health cover for the student and other relevant matter
- Depending on the case the coordinating team might need to assist the hospital managing visitors and other concerned or distressed students at the hospital

Other students

Depending on the incident, this can be the biggest area to manage. The coordinating team must ensure that the other students are aware of supporting mechanisms within ELC and outside (e.g hospitals, counsellors, etc. This will reassure the students that the CI is being appropriately dealt with. It is sometimes important to consider that academic support might be needed if the CI affects student's progress.

Welfare staff

Welfare and counselling staff must be on standby to provide support to students and staff affected by the incident. Many hospitals offer free counselling, depending on the severity of the incident - ask the hospital.

Teaching and academic staff

Teaching and academic staff should be advised if necessary, e.g: if student will be absent for a significant length of time, if the student is on a pathway and won't meet the required progress, etc. Additionally, in some cases the academic team will need to advise the teacher who may hear from other students about the CI. It is important that the teacher is also advised about the steps the school is taking to assist in order to control distress within the students in the class.

The media

In case of high profile CI, the media will contact the school to gather information. A strategy will need to be developed to deal with media enquiries. Advise the media that the nominated person to speak with them is the only person authorized to give official information. Cooperate with the Consulate on the strategy. As for respect to student's privacy and ensure to ask them not to come to the school.

Department of Home Affairs

The coordinating team will contact the DHF to advise them of the incident if there are implications on the student's visa.

Student body (e.g. English Australia)

In case of a high profile CI, the student bodies can assist with the communication to other students, community and media. Contact them to inform of the incident and seek support.

Spiritual and Religious support

In some cases the students will benefit from religious support. The Religious community may assist with support and counselling and it is appropriate to contact them, depending on the student's cultural/religious background. It is required to get the student's authorization to do this due to Privacy Laws.

Sponsors (such as SACM)

Communicate with the Sponsor and follow any procedures if they have any for CI. They will probably wish to manage the communication with the family and student.

Record keeping

This is a requirement for compliance.

- The coordinating team should ensure that records are kept throughout the response period and kept in a file (in the file share - "Welfare" folder) created for this purpose.
- The student's profile in the student database (STARS) should include: next of kin, emergency contact details, and medical insurance provider.
- Folder should include a photo of the student
- Detailed records are particularly important in cases where the police and media are involved.
- The records will include detailed documentation about each step taken in the response process copies of emails and letter, records of significant interactions that occur, and contact details for significant people in the process.
- A note should be placed on the student's profile in Stars if the student is deceased.

Ensuring all staff have enough information

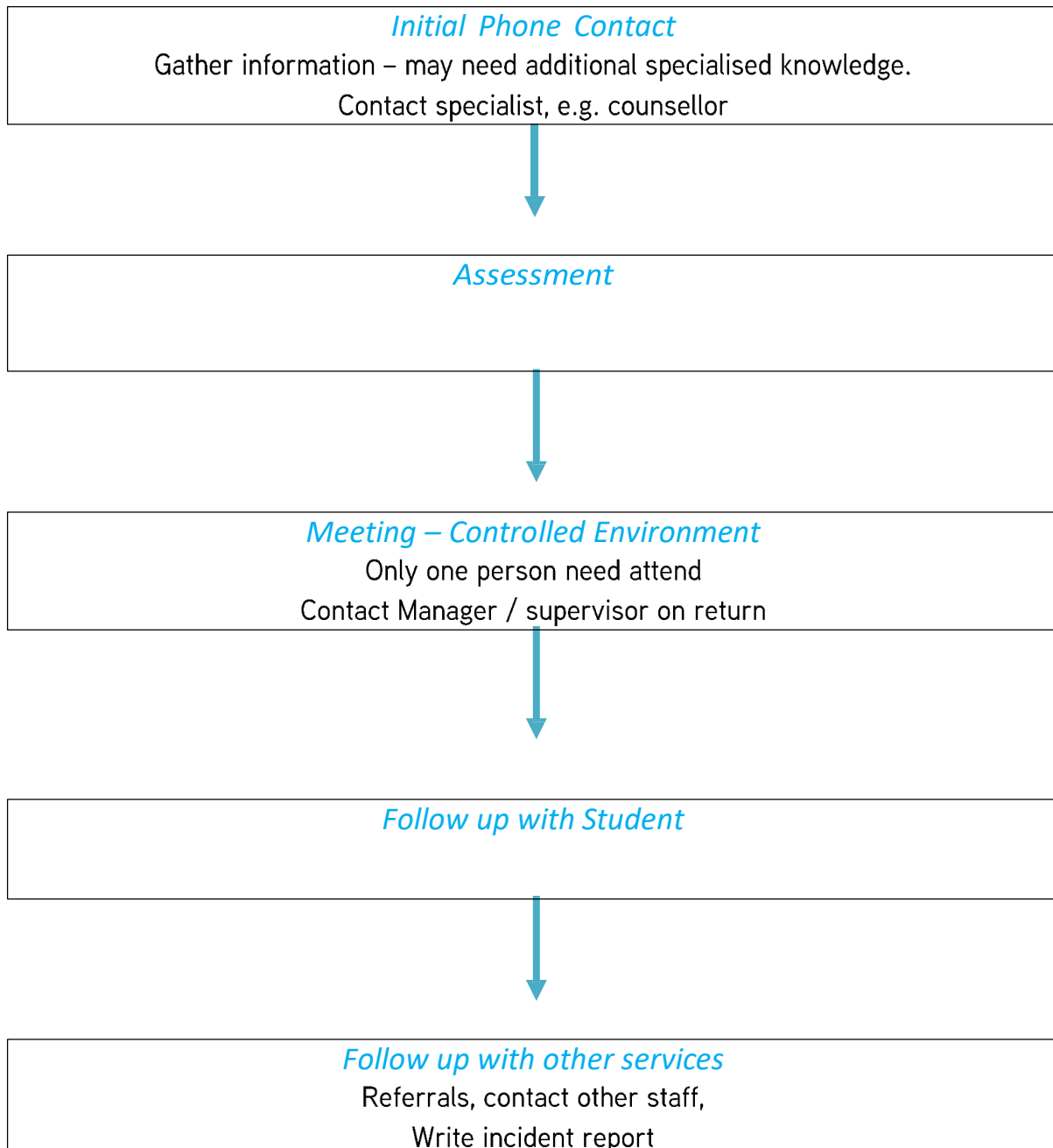
- The coordinating team will ensure that all staff have enough information to carry on with their roles during the response to the CI.
- The team should achieve a balance between providing accurate information and respecting privacy and confidentiality
- If a death is suspected or confirmed suicide, all staff must know exactly what information will be provide to students and staff who enquire about the circumstances of the death. It must provide accurate information while still respecting confidentiality. In such cases, the coordinating team should prepare a written statement for other staff to ensure that accurate and consistent information is provided to everyone.

Off-Site visits

Emergencies may arise that require staff to meet students off site. Staff should avoid off site visits and adopt alternative solutions wherever possible. E.g. If concerned about a student's wellbeing, staff should explore if it is possible for the matter to be resolved over the phone/email /appointment at the school. Definition of off- site:

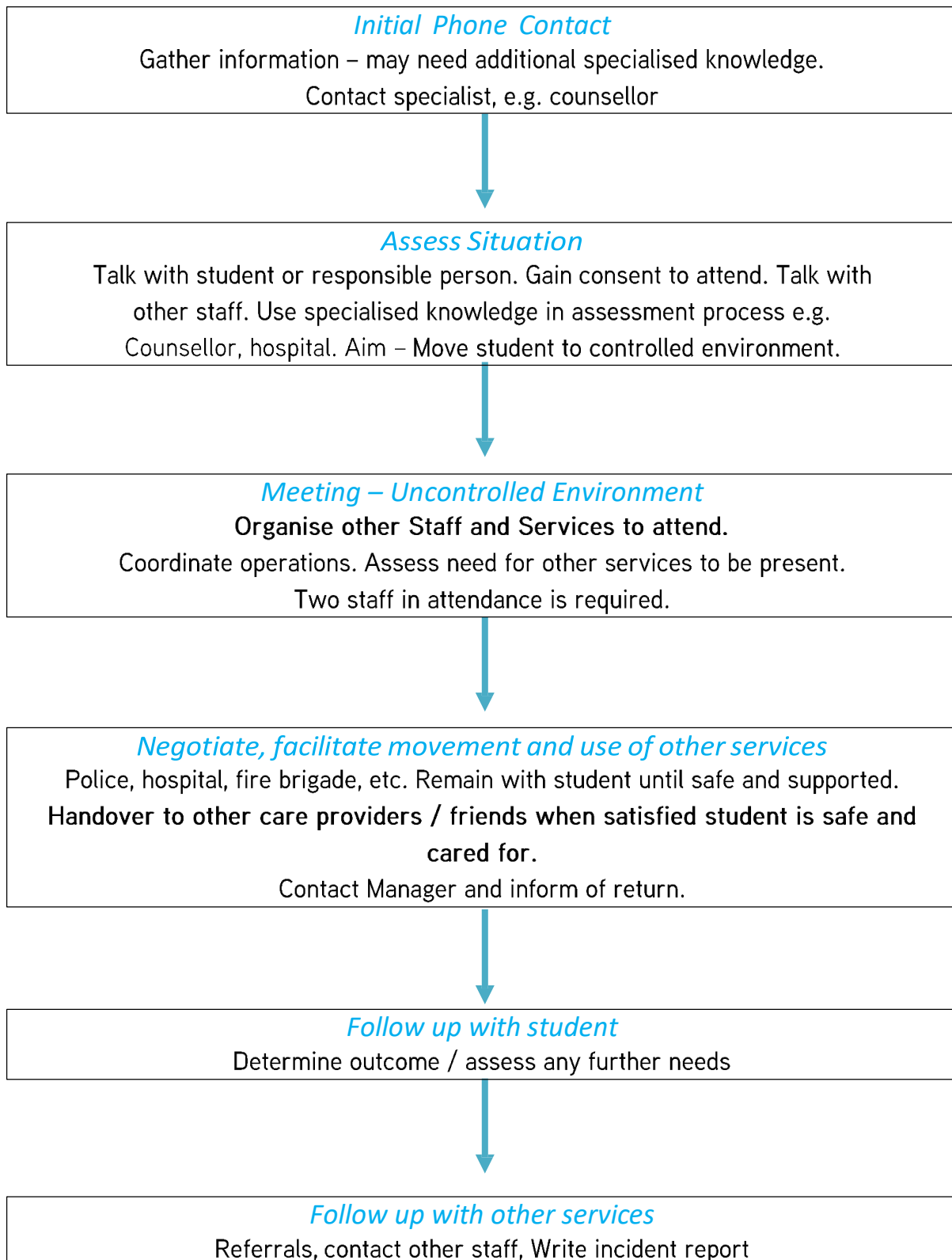
Meeting in a controlled environment

Controlled environment: Relatively safe environment. Usually public places such as a hospital, police station, government agencies, coffee shops, shops, public buildings. Usually a controlled environment implies that an organization is responsible for safety and the public liability in that space.



Meeting in an uncontrolled environment

Uncontrolled environment: Not a public place and where the police or other authorities are not already present. Examples are: private homes, homestays, flats and student residences. An uncontrolled environment can be considered controlled if the police or other agency are present at the time of the visit e.g: when ELC representative arrives at the house the police is already there.



Appendix 1:

Critical Incident Report Form	
Student name:	
Date of Incident:	
Time of Incident: <input type="checkbox"/> am <input type="checkbox"/> pm	
Place of Incident (room #, floor, off-campus location):	
Reported by:	
Type of Incident Major disruption to School's routine – include likely duration of disruption	
<input type="checkbox"/> Disaster – e.g. natural, (fire/flood) physical, (gas leak, burst water main)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Serious medical / injury / health emergency (inc. death)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Intruders - ex students, pedophiles/stalker, breaker	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of Weapons – describe weapons and method of use (or carried)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal abuse	
<input type="checkbox"/> Threat of physical violence	
<input type="checkbox"/> Actual physical violence	
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of Drugs	
<input type="checkbox"/> Problematic Sexual Behaviour	
<input type="checkbox"/> Missing Student	
Description of the Incident. If insufficient space, please attach additional sheet.	

Immediate actions taken:

- Affected student(s) were contacted and counseled
- Emergency meeting called and action plan prepared
- All staff and students notified

If applicable:

- Police/Ambulance/Fire were informed
- Family members/embassy were informed
- Suspension of course
- Contacted Designated Authority

Other (please write below):

Management follow up

Action outcome:

Staff Signed:

Date:

Note: This form must be filed in student record