

Emergency and Critical Management Policy

Policy Statement

The Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy assists in minimising the impact of disruptive events, regardless of their nature, scale, impact, and duration. These arrangements aid Loreto Ministries Limited, Loreto College Board and Loreto College Ballarat management and school to continue to function during a disruptive event and to return to normal operations as soon as possible should one occur.

Context

The Loreto Ministries Limited and Loreto College Board has legal and pastoral responsibilities for the duty of care to students, staff, and visitors and for taking reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions, that are reasonably foreseeable and that would be likely to result in harm or injury.

The Loreto Ministries Limited and Loreto College Board has a responsibility to ensure that Loreto College Ballarat provides a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors per Schedules 4 and 8 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.

These regulatory requirements are reflected in the Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration published by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The VRQA requires schools to have policies and plans in place to provide students with a safe environment where the risk of harm is minimised, and students feel safe.

Minimising the impact of disruptive events is essential to Loreto's pursuit of quality outcomes for children, students, and the school community.

During a disruptive event, Loreto applies these approaches to achieve critical objectives, which are:

- maintaining the safety and wellbeing of children, students, staff, and volunteers
- continuing direct service delivery, and critical business functions that support community recovery and safeguard Loreto College Ballarat areas of lowest risk appetite:
 - Safety of children and students
 - Workplace health and safety of its staff and the community
 - Security of confidential and personal information held by the school
 - Fraud and corruption
- protecting assets.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Loreto College Ballarat staff, committees or bodies who can make decisions or exercise authority on behalf of Loreto College.

Principals

Emergency planning and incident management is the discipline of preventing and dealing with risks. It involves preparing for emergencies before they occur, responding to emergencies, supporting, and rebuilding after an emergency and reviewing events after the fact to ensure that a continuous cycle of improvement is applied using knowledge gained from the event. Effective emergency management involves coordinated actions based on management principles and designated responsibilities that support:

- identifying likely emergencies
- applying preventative controls to reduce the likelihood of emergencies
- providing staff with the tools to respond effectively to emergencies, such as the Emergency Management Plan
- minimising the impact on students, staff, visitors and site activities
- minimising school business disruption and facilitating the return of the school to normal operations as quickly as possible.

Loreto Ministries Limited, Loreto College Board and Loreto College Ballarat must manage disruptive events in accordance with the Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy, relevant procedures, guides, and plans. Loreto Ministries Limited, Loreto College Board and Loreto College Ballarat applies a methodology of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The focus of Loreto's activity is as follows in each of the phases:

- **Prevention:** On developing and implementing strategies to reduce the likelihood of disruptive events and minimise the impact of a disruption.
- **Preparedness:** Building capacity for response and recovery through risk-based planning, resourcing, training, exercising, and testing.
- **Response:** Minimising adverse effects by activating and tailoring teams and plans to address the nature, scale, impact, and duration of the disruptive event. Loreto focuses on communication and coordination to ensure the effectiveness of the response.
- **Recovery:** On returning Loreto to usual operations through coordinating efforts to address the impact of disruption and applying lessons learned to inform future processes.

Emergency Management Plan (EMP)

Loreto College Ballarat must have a current EMP signed off by the Principal that is reviewed at least annually, by 1 October each year, and following an emergency or critical incident.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) under the Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration requires schools to have an EMP that addresses emergency and critical incidents.

The EMP must:

- be completed by Loreto College Ballarat using the School Emergency Management Plan Template
- be informed by a site-specific comprehensive risk assessment relating to:
 - circumstances that pose a critical risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of one or more students or staff
 - incidents affecting the school's ability to operate fully, and which require responses such as adjustments to the school program, lockdown, evacuation, sheltering in place or school closure
- describe actions to take before, during and after an emergency or critical incident to ensure the ongoing safety of staff, students, and visitors, and for restoring school operations/continuity of education.

Legislative Context

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
 Emergency Management Act 1986 (Vic)
 Emergency Management Act 2013 (Vic)
 Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
 VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards

Legislative Context

TERM	DEFINITION
Bushfire at Risk Register (BARR)	Inclusion on the Bushfire At-Risk Register is a trigger for the school, kindergarten, or childcare facility to close pre-emptively on days declared Code Red in their Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) district.
Catastrophic Fire Danger Rating	The highest fire danger rating in Victoria. It signifies the worst conditions for bushfires.
Critical Incident	An event or issue, real or perceived, which threatens the operations, employees, students, families, stakeholders, reputation, trust and/or the strategic or business goals of Loreto College Ballarat.
Disaster Recovery	Is the ability of an organisation to recover and/or reinstate infrastructure, systems, property or other resources which have been damaged or destroyed after the occurrence of an incident which caused the damage or destruction.
Emergency Services	The primary or lead organisation for responding to the emergency, includes police, Fire Rescue Victoria for metropolitan, country area fires and

	bushfires, and the State Emergency Service (SES) for storm and flood events
Emergency	<p>An abnormal event posing a threat to the safety of students, employees, the environment, facility or asset at a Loreto College Ballarat site, which can be brought under control using the resources and procedures in place for responding to such an event.</p> <p>An emergency would be rated as 'medium' or 'low' on the Incident Severity Rating Chart, and would normally be managed at the school level.</p>
Emergency Response Exercise or Drill	A site-specific exercise conducted to determine the effectiveness of the emergency response procedures, maintain awareness and skills, also referred to as a 'drill' throughout this policy.
Incident	An event or circumstance that could have led or did lead to unintended and / or unnecessary harm to Loreto College Ballarat staff, student or visitor and / or loss or damage to an office, school or facility.
School Environment	<p>Encompasses any of the following physical, online, or virtual places used during or outside school hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a campus of the school • online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by Loreto College Ballarat for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services) • other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events) (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Policy Owner:	Loreto College Ballarat
Derived from:	DOBCEL
Authority Approval:	Principal
Approval Date:	November 2025
Revision:	1
Publication:	College Website
Next Review:	November 2027