



Procedure

School alerts

Implementation Date: 15/02/2018
Version: 1.0

Audience

All state schools

Purpose

This procedure provides steps for state schools and regional offices to notify senior executives about critical incidents affecting Queensland state schools via a school alert.

Overview

A critical incident is an event that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of one or more individuals in the school community and impacts on or directly disrupts the operation, educational program, environment and/or reputation of the school. The department is notified of a critical incident via a school alert.

School alerts ensure relevant Department of Education (DoE) senior executives are promptly informed of critical incidents that may seriously affect the health and safety of school staff, students and/or the school community and/or draw adverse media attention.

A school alert does not replace or diminish other reporting or notification requirements, including those to external/regulatory agencies. A full report and/or investigation of a critical incident may be required to meet other obligations, including but not limited to [student protection](#), [workplace health and safety](#), [health and safety incident investigation](#) and [infrastructure incident management](#) (DoE employees only) reporting.

Instances of staff misconduct or code of conduct breaches are not covered by this procedure and should be reported to the [Ethical Standards Unit](#) (DoE employees only) (ethicalstandards@det.qld.gov.au).

Responsibilities

Principals

- Ensure the immediate safety and wellbeing of staff, students, parents, contractors, volunteers and other visitors.
- Notify senior executives of critical incidents through school alerts and provide updates to close off the issue or if the impact of the critical incident escalates.
- Nominate a delegate to undertake critical incident notifications if required.

- Ensure recovery processes are enacted following a critical incident in order to facilitate a return to the normal school routine as soon as possible and ensure persons involved are supported.
- For those schools accredited under the Education Queensland International student program, ensure an officer is available outside of school hours if a response is required involving an international student.

Regional Directors

- Ensure that schools and regional offices have procedures and delegated staff in place to notify senior executives of critical incidents as soon as possible.
- Take responsibility to support schools to manage incidents where required.
- Assess, approve and progress school alerts.
- Confirm any other required reporting has occurred.
- Provide appropriate departmental support to the principal and school as required.

State Schools Division

- Notify nominated DoE senior executives of all school alerts and updates.
- Record and report school alert data to DoE senior executives.
- Regularly review state-wide incident reporting and refer recommendations for policy or procedure reviews to the relevant area of DoE.

Assistant Directors-General

- Follow up any school alerts relevant to their portfolio as required.
- Respond to any emerging themes or state-wide issues notified in school alerts, relevant to their portfolio.

Process

Principal or their delegate

1. Ensure the safety and wellbeing of all persons involved including action to prevent further injuries or incidents.
2. Assess individual incidents to determine if they meet the [threshold](#) for a school alert. Additional assessment may be based on:
 - whether the situation can be managed by the school/region using usual processes (non-critical incident) or
 - whether there is potential for a minor situation to escalate to a critical incident due to additional factors.

Note: Mandatory reporting is required for all incidents categorised as bomb or armed threats, abduction or attempted abduction or where a lockdown or evacuation has been enacted.

3. Advise the regional office of a critical incident as soon as possible but always on the same day the incident occurs via phone, email or the [School alert notification template](#).
4. Provide school alert updates to the regional office to close off the issue or when the impacts of the critical incident continue. For example, ongoing media interest occurs requiring school and/or regional management, or if there are further updates on student or staff health after an injury or illness.

Regional Director or their delegate

5. Review and approve a school alert when received to ensure it captures all information required and has been de-identified to protect privacy. If a school alert has been received by phone or email, complete the school alert notification template.
6. Ensure a clear regional process is followed. Refer to the [School Alert – school and regional processes](#) as an exemplar.
7. Report incidents to Community Engagement and Partnerships media mailbox (media.ccm@det.qld.gov.au).
8. Progress school alerts to the school alert mailbox (school.alert@det.qld.gov.au) on the same working day it is received from the school.
9. Provide updates on the initial school alert to the school alert mailbox if the impacts of the critical incident escalate.

State Schools Division

10. Notify nominated senior executives of school alerts the same working day the school alert is received.
11. Ensure all school alerts are recorded in the school alert register for reporting purposes.
12. Review school alerts related to areas of responsibility and action assistance or support if required.

Flowchart

The [flowchart](#) outlines the process for school alerts.

Definitions

Non-critical Incident	An incident affecting an individual in a negligible way or isolated area(s) of a school and does not pose any additional threat or risk to staff, students, parents, contractors, volunteers, visitors, property, or affect the school's operations and/or reputation. The incident, which is managed using normal school operating procedures, can be contained and is unlikely to escalate in severity, impact or media attention.
Critical incident	A critical incident that requires a school alert is an event that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of one or more individuals in the school community and impacts on the operation, educational program, environment and/or reputation of the school.
School alert notification	Process to inform regional and central office (State Schools Division) that a critical incident has occurred at a state school. Reporting is done via the template with appropriate approvals.
Delegate	A member of school or regional staff that the principal or regional director requests to assist with the school alert process at the time of a critical incident, including escalation as appropriate.

Legislation

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#) Chapter 12
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017](#) Part 2, Division 1, section 4

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Related policies

- Nil

Related procedures

- [Health and safety incident recording, notification and management](#)
- [Hostile people on school premises, wilful disturbance and trespass](#)
- [Safe, supportive and disciplined school environment](#)
- [School security](#)
- [Student protection](#)
- [Disaster and emergency management](#)
- [Supporting students' mental health and wellbeing](#)
- [Management of contagious conditions](#)

Supporting information/websites

- [School alert thresholds](#)
- [School alert notification template](#)
- [School alert flowchart](#)
- [School alert – school and regional processes](#)
- [Preparation disaster and emergency response - schools](#)
- [Natural disaster resources](#)
- [Disaster and emergency management](#)

Contact

For further information, please contact your [closest regional office](#).

Review date

15/02/2020

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

N/A

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