

# **Cantate Youth Choir**

## **Critical Incidents Policy**

### **Definition**

Critical incidents are abrupt, powerful events that fall outside the range of ordinary human experiences. These can be either man-made or Acts of God.

### **When to use this Policy**

The critical incident policy is to be invoked in circumstances where mainline policies such as Health & Safety and accident procedures are not sufficient to manage the situation. It is also to be used in conjunction with the critical incident policy's of the venue where the Choir is rehearsing or performing.

### **Purpose and Scope**

Emergencies and critical incidents can affect people physically and psychologically, and affect program continuity of Cantate Youth Choir ("the Choir"). The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Choir prepares for and effectively responds to emergency situations and critical incidents through the appropriate use of resources. The prevention and effective management of emergency situations and critical incidents can assist to minimise the negative impact of an unexpected event. This policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers, Trustees, and audience members/visitors.

### **Principles**

Emergency management planning is being prepared for events or incidents that stretch our ability to cope beyond normal day-to-day capacity. The Choir is committed to the protection of students, staff, volunteers, Trustees and audience members/visitors during emergencies. The Choir swiftly and effectively responds to emergency situations, with the foremost goals of preserving life, protecting the Choir's property, and restoring operations as quickly as possible. Critical incidents can be a threatening experience and appropriate supports are required to minimise long term effects arising from exposure to the trauma.

### **Outcomes**

The negative impacts of emergency situations and critical incidents are minimised through effective management.

## **Functions and Delegations**

The overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Trustees. The Trustees delegate ongoing deployment of the policy to the volunteers and staff. Everyone is responsible for maintaining their own safety and assisting in the maintaining of the safety of the students, staff, volunteers, Trustees, and audience members/visitors.

This policy will be reviewed annually or and/or following the event of a disaster or emergency situation.

## **Policy Detail**

The Choir identifies, prevents and manages disaster and emergency situations within its sphere of responsibility and influence, until the arrival of appropriate emergency services.

A range of emergency situations may occur on the premises being used with the potential to impact on the safety of students, staff, volunteers, Trustees, and audience members/visitors., including:

- fire
- gas or water leak
- vehicle and other accidents chemical, radiation or biological spill
- storm
- earthquake
- bomb threat
- civil disorder or illegal occupancy
- hostage or terrorist situation
- death
- robbery
- physical (including serious sexual) assaults

## **Risk Assessment**

The Choir uses risk assessments to identify and control barriers to effective emergency management. Students, staff, volunteers, Trustees, and audience members/visitors are expected to behave in a way which minimises the risk of emergencies occurring.

## **Preparedness**

The Emergency Situation Checklist supports the Choir to prepare for potential disaster and emergency situations, and is reviewed on an annual basis and/or following the deployment of this policy.

All students, staff, volunteers, Trustees, and audience members/visitors familiarise themselves with emergency evacuation procedures, including their responsibilities and the emergency evacuation assembly point.

## **Response**

When a disaster or emergency situation arises, the primary aim of the response is to ensure the safety of all people on the premises, preserve life and protect property.

A cascade system will come into immediate effect to ensure that parents and carers are alerted to the incident: -

1. Emergency Services
2. Chairman of the Trustees
3. Choir Managers

The Chairman of the Trustees will inform the rest of the Trustees and will co-ordinate the cascade of phone calls to parents/carers to ensure as many are reached as possible.

In the event that the Choir is evacuated to a place of safety the Choir Managers will allocate a number of students to a named adult to oversee their welfare (as far as practical) until the students can be released to their parents/carers.

The Chairman will deal with all aspects of press involvement and all enquiries **MUST** be directed to that person alone. The Chairman will also organise a de-briefing of the incident within 7 days of the end of the incident.

The Trustees will conduct a review of actions arising from the incident to ensure:

- Relevant people have been informed of all outcomes from the incident
- A recommendation as to the response to the critical incident is documented
- Further follow up required is documented and responsibilities allocated to appropriate Trustees

# Emergency Situation Checklist

## Evacuation

In the event of an alert to evacuate - either verbal, automatic alarm or manual alarm – and the threat is not immediate, all students, staff, volunteers, Trustees, and audience members/visitors:

- Proceed along designated routes to the designated assembly area(s)
- Ensure assistance is provided to people with disabilities and/or special needs
- Choir Manager to direct people to assembly point and check attendance at assembly area against the attendance registers
- Choir Manager to designate named adults to named adult to oversee the students' welfare (as far as practical) until the students can be released to their parents/carers
- Remain at the assembly area until advised by the emergency personnel that it is safe to return to premises or leave the site

Additional guidelines for threat of fire - In the event of a fire threat and if it is safe to do so, close all doors and windows and turn off power supply before leaving the premises.

## Fire

In the event of a fire:

- Trigger the fire alarm
- Contact fire emergency services
- Evacuate people from the immediate area of the fire behind a rated fire door or outside the building to the designated evacuation point

## Bomb Threat

In the event of a bomb threat via phone call:

- Remain calm
- Record as much information as possible from the caller using questions and observations including:
  - *What type of bomb is it?*
  - *How will it go off?*

- *What does it look like?*
  - *When it set to go off?*
  - *Where is it?*
  - *When was it put there?*
  - *Who put it there?*
  - *Why was it put there?*
  - *Will it explode or will something be released?*
  - *If a substance is released, what is it? How much is there? How will it be released?*
  - *Observations about the caller: gender, age, accent?*
  - *Any background noise?*
  - *Note the time of the call*
- Contact police who can assist in determining if evacuation is required
  - If instructed, evacuate all students, staff, volunteers, Trustees, and audience members/visitors as for the above evacuation procedures

## **Flood**

In the event of a flood:

- Do not enter the flood waters
- Eliminate potential electrical hazards
- Place high value equipment from impending floodwaters if it is safe to do so
- Stay in a safe location while it continues to offer protection
- Evacuate students, staff, volunteers, Trustees, and audience members/visitors as per the venue's evacuation procedures
- Contact and liaise with emergency services if required
- Notify the Chairman of the Trustees

## **Act of Terrorism**

In the event of an act of terrorism:

- Try to escape before any situation develops
- Try to remain calm

- Insist others leave with you
- Leave personal belongings behind
- Phone the police as soon as it is safe to do so
- Do not attempt to overpower the terrorists or negotiate with them

Version 1.0

Reviewed by Kevin Hinken & Siobhan Nundram June 2017

Reviewed by Committee – July 2017

Next review – July 2018