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**Policy Approver:** Vice-President Administration & Finance And Chief Operating Officer

**Policy Steward:** Executive Director And Academic Registrar, Student And Scholarly Services

**Supporting Process:** [Student Management and Support Processes](#)

# Responding to Student Traumatic Event Policy (MPF1357)

## 1. Objective

1.1. The objectives of this policy are to:

- (a) provide a framework for ensuring appropriate responses to support and ensure the safety of students impacted by a traumatic event that has occurred; and
- (b) allocate responsibility for the management and coordination of such responses in the event of a traumatic event where students are impacted.

## 2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to

- (a) traumatic events that have occurred during a University related activity on or off campus, including off-shore, involving individual or groups of enrolled local or international students;
- (b) traumatic events that have occurred on-shore involving individual or groups of enrolled international students;
- (c) University staff including those with designated responsibilities for implementing responses to support and protect students impacted by a traumatic event.

2.2. This policy does not apply to traumatic events that have occurred off-shore involving individual or groups of enrolled local or international students where the students are not involved in a University related activity.

2.3. This policy does not apply to the management of routine student wellbeing concerns and non-traumatic events through regular operations such as counselling, and health and safety services.

2.4. This policy works alongside the Risk Management Policy ([MPF1194](#)), Child Safety Policy ([MPF1337](#)), Student Travel and Transport Policy ([MPF1209](#)), Property Policy ([MPF1115](#)), Health and Safety Policy ([MPF1205](#)) and Student Conduct Policy ([MPF1324](#)), Student Fitness to Study Policy ([MPF1349](#)).

## 3. Authority

3.1. This policy is made under the [University of Melbourne Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#) and the Vice-Chancellor Regulation and supports compliance with the:

- (a) *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- (b) [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#) (section 2.3.5)
- (c) *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (Cth)
- (d) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- (e) *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- (f) *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2006* (Vic)
- (g) Victorian Child Safety Standards.

## 4. Policy

4.1. The University is committed to minimising risk of injury or illness to people associated with the University's operations. It proactively manages risk and adopts a range of activities to minimise the intensity of traumatic events and their adverse impacts on students.

4.2. The University is committed to providing students undertaking approved University related activity off-campus with information about who to contact in emergency, including student traumatic events incidents, and the information must aim to be age and culturally appropriate.

4.3. When the University becomes aware of a traumatic event involving individual or groups of enrolled local or international students, the University will:

- (a) aim to respond effectively and appropriately to the event/s with sensitivity and consideration of the age, culture, background of the student/s and, where possible, in consultation with their legal guardians, families, staff and key stakeholders;
- (b) report the event/s to relevant University staff members and, where appropriate, to relevant international and Australian government authorities and agencies;
- (c) manage the incident confidentially and in a manner that protects the student's privacy;
- (d) ensure that where the student is under 18 at the time of the incident, the student's parent or legal guardian is contacted;
- (e) engage with international safety and security monitoring services as needed; and
- (f) properly document the incident.

*Note: The University may disclose personal information to a party outside the University (e.g. emergency services) where the University believes on reasonable grounds, that the disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the individual concerned or another person/people or the disclosure is permitted by law or made in compliance with the Privacy Policy (MPF1104).*

## 5. Procedural principles

5.1 A traumatic event involving individual or groups of enrolled local or international students must be reported, at the earliest opportunity, to [University Security](#) .

5.2. University Security must coordinate immediate action and, at the earliest opportunity, inform the Academic Registrar of any student traumatic event reported to it.

5.3. The Academic Registrar, or delegate, will coordinate all immediate and post event responses including where practicable and not limited to:

- (a) establishing contact with the student, to assess their wellbeing and safety requirements
- (b) informing relevant stakeholders within the University of students who are impacted by a traumatic event;
- (c) seek advice from relevant departments within the University, including faculties;
- (d) offering practical and wellbeing support to students' next of kin or other impacted individuals, which may include directing them to a visa advisor, airport reception, temporary accommodation or interpreter services;
- (e) liaising with stakeholders outside the University, where appropriate and permitted by privacy regulations, including emergency services and relevant government agencies, sponsors or scholarship providers, home institutions for study abroad and exchange students, funeral services/directors and health insurance providers.

5.4. The Academic Registrar, in consultation with the Executive Director of Legal & Risk / Director Health & Safety, is responsible for assessing actions that may reasonably be taken by the University to prevent similar future events and identify opportunities to improve responses to future traumatic events.

5.5. The Academic Registrar must document and provide relevant University staff access to information in relation to the management of student traumatic events involving individual or groups of enrolled local or international students, including but not limited to:

- (a) Health and Safety – initiation of a critical incident response;
- (b) Under 18 students and disruption to welfare;
- (c) Response to the death of a student;
- (d) Preventing sexual exploitation abuse and harassment in the delivery of DFAT business;
- (e) Child Safety Reporting Processes.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

<b><i>Role/Decision/Action</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>	<b><i>Conditions and limitations</i></b>
Coordination of responses when a traumatic event occurs	Academic Register	
Review of actions taken in response to a traumatic event or	Academic Register, Executive Director of Legal and Risk or Director of Health and Safety	

## 7. Definitions

A **traumatic event** , or the threat of such (within or outside Australia, including online), may cause extreme stress, fear or injury for those directly involved or witnesses. Such an event may include, but is not limited to:

- death, serious injury or any threat of these
- death of a student
- unexplained or unusual student absence

- attempted suicide
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- assault, including sexual assault, family/intimate partner violence
- drug or alcohol use leading to injury or death
- perpetrator of, involvement in or witnessing a criminal offence
- student arrested or detained by a law enforcing agency
- geopolitical conflict and unrest
- natural disaster
- major health concern including acute mental health incident

## POLICY APPROVER

Vice-President Administration & Finance and Chief Operating Officer

## POLICY STEWARD

Executive Director and Academic Registrar, Student and Scholarly Services

## REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by 30 June 2024.

## VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	Policy Officer	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Vice-President Administration & Finance and Chief Operating Officer	30 June 2021	30 June 2021	New policy.