



Critical Incidents & Emergency Policy

Introduction

The YFU International Basic Standards policy instructs all YFU national organisations to prepare emergency plans that will meet the needs of YFU students in case of emergency situations. Since planning for all eventualities is impossible, decision-making, communication, and information will be the most central issues in the Critical Incidents & Emergencies Policy.

Responsibilities Under This Policy

The National Director of YFU Student Exchange is responsible for planning and responding to emergency situations in Australia or New Zealand or where such an emergency affects YFU Student Exchange students in overseas countries.

The National Director is also responsible for making statements to the media.

The National Director will evaluate each emergency and determine whether there is a need for the emergency team of (Program Manager and/ or Local Coordinator) to be assembled at the national office or whether it is enough to contact others by phone or other means.

Requirements Under This Policy

The following are always required to be in place under this policy:

- An emergency mobile phone that operates 24 hours a day is carried by an employee from the National Office who has access to the student database and YFU International Directory of contacts.
- An updated list of home addresses with phone numbers of all host families currently hosting inbound students in Australia or New Zealand in a spreadsheet or database.
- This is an updated list of home addresses and phone numbers of all natural parents of outbound Australian or New Zealand students currently overseas.
- Authority to endorse expenses or issue payment guarantees needed to solve an emergency. The YFU Student Exchange Board of Management gives such authority to the National Director under this policy.
- The staff member operating the emergency phone is responsible for initially implementing any emergency procedures until such time as that responsibility is taken over by National Director.

1. Student Emergencies in Australia or New Zealand, such as serious illness, accidents, hospitalisation, death or impending death of a student or a member of the student's host or natural family or police arrest.

When a student emergency is reported to the YFU 24-hour emergency phone, the National Office staff member taking the call will:

- Carefully document all the information reported in writing, including information provided in telephone conversations.
- Notify the National Director immediately so that any decisions required can be made immediately.
- Contact the YFU organisation in the student's home country using the YFU emergency phone number or the national office phone number of that organisation.
- Request that the YFU National Office in the student's home country inform the natural parents as soon as possible and provide a full written report to the YFU National Office in the student's home country by email.
- If contact with the YFU National Office in the student's home country cannot be made, inform the Natural Parents directly by phone or email.
- Inform the Chair of the YFU Student Exchange Board, who will inform other Board members.
- Ensure that a volunteer is appointed to assist the Host Family and affected student.
- Maintain constant contact with the Host Family, YFU Local Coordinator and the student and liaise as necessary with doctors, hospital staff, police and other local authorities depending on the nature of the emergency.
- Contact the student's insurance company directly through the YFU National Office in the student's home country, advise on the nature of the emergency, and seek approval for required expenditures if necessary.
- Arrange with the YFU organisation for the Student's return to the student's home if the country requires it after consulting with the student's Natural Family.
- In consultation with the student's insurance company, arrange with the YFU organisation in the Student's home country for the student's Natural Parents to travel to Australia or New Zealand if required for the repatriation of the Student or in case of a student's death, the Student's body to their home country.

2. Emergencies involving YFU Australia or YFU New Zealand students in overseas countries.

When a YFU organisation in a partner country informs the YFU Student Exchange National Office staff of an emergency involving a student from Australia or New Zealand, National Office staff will:

- Ensure that all information is carefully documented, including notes from telephone conversations.
- Inform the natural parents immediately and advise them to keep in contact with the National Office using the YFU Student Exchange emergency phone numbers.
- Inform the Chair of the YFU Student Exchange Board, who will inform the other members of the Board.
- If a student dies overseas, inform the Australian or New Zealand Embassy responsible for the Student's host country as soon as possible, as well as the Department of Foreign Affairs in Australia or New Zealand.
- Contact the YFU Student Exchange insurance company, inform them of the nature of the emergency, and negotiate approvals for required expenditures.
- If needed, authorise YFU Student Exchange to pay expenses in consultation with the National Director or the Chair of the Board.
- Maintain constant contact with the Natural Parents and the YFU organisation in the host country to ensure the Student's support, and liaise as necessary with other local authorities in the Host Country.
- Arrange with the YFU organisation in the student's host country and the Natural Parents for the Student's return to Australia or New Zealand if required.
- In consultation with the Student, the YFU Student Exchange insurance company and the YFU organisation in the Student's Host Country for the Student's Natural Parents to travel to the Student's Host Country and arrange, if required, for the repatriation of the Student or, in case of the Student's death, the student's body to Australia or New Zealand.

3. A YFU Student Missing in Australia or New Zealand

When a Student is reported to the YFU Student Exchange National Office as missing, National office staff will:

- Document information about the situation, including notes from telephone conversations.
- Inform the police in the relevant state, territory or area if this has not already been done. (Note: The police will normally not act on a missing persons' report until that person has been missing 24 hours)
- All international students hosted by YFU Student Exchange will have a laminated ID card containing their name, date of birth, host family contact details and YFU emergency number - ensure that the police have these details.
- Inform the YFU organisation in the Student's Home Country through the emergency or office number for that YFU organisation and request that the YFU National Office in the student's Home Country inform the student's Natural Parents as soon as possible. If contact cannot be made with the YFU organisation in the student's home country within a reasonable time, then contact natural parents directly by phone or email.
- Inform the YFU Student Exchange Board Chair as soon as possible of the incident.
- Inform all National Office staff of the situation as soon as possible in order to manage possible media attention.

4. YFU Student Exchange Student Missing Overseas

When a YFU Student Exchange student goes missing in an overseas country, the YFU Host Organisation will contact the YFU Student Exchange National Office either on the office or at the emergency phone number to notify them of the emergency.

Staff of the National Office must take the following actions in such situations:

- Document in writing all information including notes of telephone conversations.
- Inform the Natural Parents of the situation immediately and ensure that they can always contact the National Office at the emergency number.
- Contact High Commission or Embassy in the host country via the Department of Foreign Affairs in Australia or New Zealand or directly through their websites.

- In consultation with Natural Parents and the YFU organisation in the Host Country, map all possibilities of contact with the missing Student. If the Student is missing during travel, the mapping should include airlines and airports in transit countries.
- All Australian or New Zealand Students hosted by a YFU Organisation overseas will have a laminated ID card containing their name, date of birth, host family contact details, and the YFU emergency number of their Host Country.

5. Natural Disasters or Acts of Terror Overseas

The following procedures should be implemented as soon as YFU Student Exchange's National Office staff become aware of a critical incident in a country where a student from YFU Student Exchange is hosted.

- Contact the YFU organisation in the affected country as soon as possible and seek a report from the YFU staff in the country's national office about whether any of the YFU Student Exchange students have been affected by the emergency.
- If the YFU office in the affected country is unaware of the situation, they should be asked to contact each YFU Student Exchange student being hosted in that country to find out about their status.
- Be aware that the affected country's telephone and other electronic communication could be overloaded or not functioning.
- If Australian or New Zealand students are affected, immediately inform the student's natural parents in Australia or New Zealand by phone. Remind the natural parents of the YFU Student Exchange emergency phone number and encourage them to call it whenever needed.
- If no YFU Australia or YFU New Zealand student is affected, natural parents of YFU students in the affected country should be informed by email that no student from Australia or New Zealand was affected by the natural disaster or terror activity.
- If the family of current inbound students in Australia or New Zealand from the affected country could be affected, contact the YFU organisation in the affected country and seek information on behalf of the students. Such information should be passed on to the students and his/her host family as soon as possible. If a student's family is affected, necessary counselling support and all arrangements to return to their home country will be implemented at the direction of the National Director.

6. Evacuation of YFU Student Exchange Students from Overseas Countries

This policy is because YFU Student Exchange does not send students on exchange to countries where the Australian or New Zealand Departments of Foreign Affairs have issued travel advice against their citizens travelling to that country.

The following procedures related to potential evacuation situations are to be implemented by National Office staff.

Before outbound students begin their exchange program, the YFU Student Exchange National Office Program managers will ensure that students send their host families' names and contact details in the overseas country to the relevant Australian or New Zealand consulate or embassy.

At orientation for inbound students to Australia or New Zealand, staff and volunteers will provide contact details of their embassy or consulate in Australia or New Zealand to assist them in registering with their embassy or consulate in that country.

If a situation emerges while Australian or New Zealand students are on exchange in a country which results in a Travel Advice warning from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Australia or New Zealand, the situation will be evaluated by the National Director and National Office staff in consultation with the YFU organisation in the affected country, the natural parents in Australia or New Zealand and officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Australia or New Zealand.

Some of the aspects to be considered in determining evacuation of students include:

- What means of transport are available to evacuate the student to another part of the affected country, a third country or back to Australia or New Zealand?
- Is it safer for the student to stay where he or she is with his/her host family?
- Is it safer to evacuate the student to either another part of the affected country or to a nearby third country?
- What are the conditions in the area where the student is located, e.g. sanitary, housing, and communication conditions?
- How long is it likely before conditions return to some normality? For example, are schools operating, and when will they be operating? Is local transport available?
- What are the circumstances of the host family? Are they financially and physically able to continue hosting the student during the emergency and in the immediate future?

In all circumstances, decisions to evacuate Australian/New Zealand YFU Students will be made in consultation with the YFU organisation in the affected country, the students, their Natural Parents, and, if possible, the Australian/New Zealand Student in the affected country.

NOTE: The final decision to evacuate a student will be the responsibility of the YFU Student Exchange National Director.

7. Evacuation Scenarios and Recommended Actions

In the scenarios listed below, the recommended actions will be implemented by the YFU Student Exchange National Office staff:

Scenario	Actions
<p>If the YFU organisation in the host country recommends the evacuation of students:</p>	<p>Then evacuation is affected immediately after consulting natural parents in Australia or New Zealand Return tickets should be used as far as possible. Extra expenses are to be met by YFU in consultation with the insurance company of YFU Student Exchange.</p>
<p>If YFU in the host country feels that evacuation is not necessary, but the Department of Foreign Affairs in Australia or New Zealand has issued travel advice to evacuate:</p>	<p>Then evacuation is affected in co-operation with the Department of Foreign Affairs in Australia or New Zealand after consultation with natural parents and the YFU organisation in the affected country.</p>
<p>If YFU in the host country feels evacuation is not necessary but the Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia or New Zealand has issued travel advice against entry into the country:</p>	<p>Then, evacuation is discussed with the natural parents in Australia or New Zealand, the student in the host country, and the YFU organisation in that country. Return tickets can normally be used.</p>
<p>If there is no travel advice issued but there is a tense situation in the host country:</p>	<p>Then, students' evacuation should be discussed with the YFU organisation in the host country, the natural parents and Australian or New Zealand, the student in the host country, and a decision made. The YFU organisation in the host country should be advised of the decision. Return tickets can normally be used.</p>

8. National Disasters/Acts of Terrorism and Evacuation of Students in Australia or New Zealand

The following procedures should be implemented as soon as the National Office staff of YFU Student Exchange become aware of a natural disaster or act of terrorism in Australia or New Zealand.

- In consultation with the YFU Local Coordinators and emergency services in the affected area, ascertain if any YFU student in Australia or New Zealand is affected by the natural disaster or act of terror.
- If any student is affected, collect and document all available information so that, depending on the nature and extent of the natural disaster or act of terror, decisions can be made to support the student and their host family.
- Inform the National Director immediately of the situation.
- Notify by email or phone the YFU organisation in the affected student's home country so that the natural parents can be advised.
- Liaise with the YFU Local Coordinator to work with the local emergency agencies to support the student and the host family.
- If required, arrange with the local YFU Local Coordinator to evacuate the affected YFU student as soon as possible to a YFU family in another part of Australia or New Zealand.
- Notify the YFU organisation in the student's home country of the situation and any change of contact details for the student.
- Contact the student's insurance company in consultation with the YFU organisation in the student's home country, inform them of the nature of the emergency and negotiate medical and travel expenditure.
- If possible, maintain constant contact with the student, host family, and Local Coordinator to support the student and, if required, the host family itself.
- If required, arrange with the YFU organisation in the student's home country, host family, and natural parents for the student to return to their home country when possible.
- Counselling for Students in the event of a Critical Incident or Emergency
- After a critical incident, there is a need to support students in Australia or New Zealand or Australian and New Zealand students on return to Australia/ New Zealand. National Office staff and Local Coordinators, in consultation with the natural parents, local YFU volunteers, and the student's school in Australia or New Zealand, arrange for professional counselling to support students.

9. Procedures to be followed if the National Office is not operative

These procedures are to be implemented if, as a result of a national disaster, long-term power outage or other local or national emergency, the YFU Student Exchange National Office is closed:

- National Office staff will work from home using either work laptop computers, their own computers, and/or mobile phones if conditions are normal in their homes.
- All team members must regularly back up all necessary files on the server.

- All staff should be familiar with how to access from their homes the online database of contact details for students, volunteers, host and natural parents. This database, the email and internet banking are hosted externally and will not be affected by local power outages at the National Office.
- Advise Local Coordinators and Board Chair by phone or email that the 24-hour emergency mobile phone should be used to contact the National Office.
- Advise the Webmaster to post a message on the website indicating that the National Office is closed and provide details for contacting National Office staff.
- If possible, depending on the nature of the emergency, National Office staff should ensure that power is turned off in the National Office and that the building is locked and secure.
- Advise the YFU International Secretariat by email of the nature of the emergency affecting the National Office and provide alternative contact details for National Office staff so that the YFU organisation in partner countries can be advised.

10. Communication

In the case of natural disasters, serious accidents, or deaths, it is sensible to inform all YFU Australian or New Zealand volunteers, host families, and other students as soon as possible. This will ensure that accurate information is given to manage any media interest in the critical incidents.

11. Key Phone Numbers

YFU Australia/ New Zealand Emergency	+61 428 964 848 (Australia) +64 274 559 807 (New Zealand)
Free Call Number Australia New Zealand	1800 654 947 0800 833 624
Department of Foreign Affairs -Australia	+61 2 6261 1111
Department of Foreign Affairs -New Zealand	+64 4 4398 000
Police/fire/ambulance Emergency Number Australia	000
Police Emergency Number New Zealand	111

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board, Staff and Management.

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