



Structured Workplace Learning Policy

Introduction

Plenty River College (the College) is an independent, specialist senior secondary school, delivering the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and VCE Vocational Major (VM). It provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people aged 15-20 years who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education.

Plenty River College is a school of opportunities in which all students are empowered to achieve their personal best. Our mission is to assist students to develop life and work skills and achieve in their learning by:

- re-engaging them in education;
- fostering their social and emotional development; and
- providing a supportive and safe environment for them.

Purpose

This policy sets out the requirements for conducting structured workplace learning in PRC.

Scope

This policy applies to Teachers, Pathways Coordinator, Administration Staff, Principal, students, parents/guardians.

Summary

Structured workplace learning provides students with the opportunity to integrate on-the-job experience with secondary study.

Structured workplace learning is delivered as part of either the:

- Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)
- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
- VCE Industry and Enterprise
- VCAL units.

PRC must ensure it implements this policy and follow the guidance on the Structured Workplace Learning Guidelines, when planning for and conducting structured workplace learning arrangements, to ensure compliance with legislation and this policy.

Definitions

Structured Workplace Learning	Structured Workplace Learning is on-the-job training during which a student is expected to master a set of skills or competencies related to a course accredited by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) or the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and undertaken as part of either the VCE or the VCAL.
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Child Safe Standards	Victoria’s compulsory minimum standards for organisations which provide services for children, including Victorian schools, to help ensure the safety of children. The standards are part of the Victorian Government’s response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry.
Duty of care	A non-delegable, moral and legal obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. Duty of care is both an organisational and an individual responsibility, meaning that it applies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the College as a legal entity; and • College Board members, staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors who have an individual responsibility to students.
Ministerial Order 55 — Structured Workplace Learning Arrangements	This provides the operational framework for the delivery of structured workplace learning in Victorian secondary schools.

Policy

Details

Structured workplace learning provides students with the opportunity to integrate on-the-job experience with secondary study. It is delivered as part of either the:

- VCE
- VCAL
- VCE Industry and Enterprise
- VCAL units.

It provides:

- enhanced skill development
- practical application of industry knowledge
- assessment of units of competency
- achievement of some learning outcomes for VCE studies or VCAL units
- enhanced employment opportunities.

Structured workplace learning arrangements

All structured workplace learning arrangements must comply with Ministerial Order 55 – Structured Workplace Learning Arrangements [Ministerial Order 55.pdf](#) and the following forms must be used:

- Structured workplace learning arrangement form
- Structured workplace learning guidelines for employers
- Child safe standards and workplace learning: A guide for schools
- Risk assessment form for work place learning

PRC uses the department of education guidance manual [SWL-guidelines-for-employers.docx](#) to ensure compliance with the Ministerial Order 55.

Structured workplace learning arrangement form

The Structured workplace learning arrangement form (PDF) must be completed and signed before the structured workplace learning commences. It must be signed by:

- the employer
- the student
- the parent/guardian of the student – if the student is under 18 years of age
- the principal or acting principal – this authority cannot be delegated to an assistant principal or other member of staff.

The principal must ensure a copy of the signed arrangement form is provided to each party. The principal should retain the original copy.

Variations or amendments to the arrangement form may only be made in writing and must be signed by the employer, student, parent/guardian (if the student is under 18 years of age) and the principal.

Structured Workplace Learning Statewide Portal

The department has established the Structured Workplace Learning Statewide Portal – a website which provides students and teachers with a single, easy to navigate, information and referral point for structured workplace learning opportunities offered by a diverse range of employers.

Searching on the portal can be done by:

- location
- industry
- VET certificate.

Occupational health and safety

Where a student is undertaking structured workplace learning as part of a VET program within VCE or VCAL – the principal must be satisfied that the student has completed safe@work module.

Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities should be read in conjunction with those described in Ministerial Order 55 – Structured Workplace Learning Arrangements. The Ministerial Order sets out in detail the responsibilities and duties which are broadly outlined here.

(i) Principal

The principal has a pivotal role in the organisation of structured workplace learning programs. Although the principal will rely on the Structured Workplace Learning Coordinator to organise the arrangements for the placement, it is nevertheless very important that the principal is aware that all relevant guidelines and procedures are followed.

The principal will ensure that Structured Workplace Learning Coordinators and other relevant staff are familiar with the conditions laid down in Part 5.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and Ministerial Order 55 – Structured Workplace Learning Arrangements. Failure to abide by these conditions may render the arrangement null and void, and leave the student vulnerable.

The Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form must be signed by the principal or acting principal. This authority cannot be delegated to an assistant principal/campus principal or other member of staff.

Note: It is important that the principal is aware of the needs and requirements of students with special needs (and in particular, of students with a disability) and that the structured workplace learning undertaken by these students is within their capabilities.

Before the placement

The principal must ensure that:

- the health, education and moral and material welfare of the student will not suffer under the arrangement
- the Board will comply with the Child Safe Standards for the duration of the proposed arrangement
- the student will not be subjected to any form of exploitation, harassment or unlawful discrimination during the course of the arrangement
- the proposed structured workplace learning will provide workplace learning suitable to the needs of the student, within the time frame specified and according to the student's capabilities
- the proposed placement will provide structured workplace learning suitable to the needs of the Accredited Course of Study for which the arrangement is proposed and within the time frame specified in that arrangement
- appropriate procedures are established and applied for making and recording assessments of the student's performance as required for the Accredited Course of Study
- both the employer and the nominated supervisor/s of the student in the workplace are aware of their obligations to the student under the arrangement, as outlined in the Employer Acknowledgment section of the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form
- the employer, student and parent/carer (where the student is under 18 years of age) have completed the relevant sections of the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form
- the distribution of structured workplace learning days during the school year under the proposed arrangement, or any other arrangements which have occurred or are likely to occur, does not disadvantage the student with regard to the rest of their educational program at school
- the student has the capability to undertake the structured workplace learning as specified within the arrangement and to do so without exposing themselves or others in the workplace to any unacceptable risk
- the student has completed the safe@work, prior to the commencement of the structured workplace learning.
- the student, or the parent where the student is under 18 years of age, have made appropriate arrangements to travel to and from the workplace
- where it is proposed that the student may be required to undertake vehicle travel with the employer and/or supervisor that the student and parent/carer (where the student is under 18 years of age) have given consent by completing the Structured Workplace Learning Travel and Accommodation Form

- where required, appropriate arrangements have been made for the student to stay at accommodation other than his or her normal place of residence
- the Structured Workplace Learning Coordinator has arranged with the student an appropriate time to contact the student at least once during the placement
- the student has the Structured Workplace Learning Coordinator's contact details to report any incidences of harassment, bullying or violence
- the employer has been provided with any necessary health information in relation to the student, including any information relating to any medical condition which may require treatment during the placement

After the placement

The principal should ensure that arrangements are in place to ensure that:

- a debriefing session is held for the student (the student could present a report and feedback may be provided on the student's performance in the workplace)
- assessment is undertaken and results communicated to the appropriate people in a timely manner
- a letter of thanks is sent to the employer

(ii) Teacher and/or Pathways Coordinator (Staff)

The Staff should:

- assist students to identify employers interested in structured workplace learning and arrange contact with those employers
- where possible, arrange a meeting or contact with employers to explain the procedures and processes related to structured workplace learning
- ensure students are undertaking or have completed the required occupational health and safety preparation
- where possible, prepare the students to be conscious of potential risks and give them strategies to deal with these risks, such as the need to report perceived hazards or concerns to their supervisor without delay
- ensure students are aware of equal opportunity and unlawful harassment and discrimination, and how to recognise abuse or other risks to their safety, and have the skills and confidence to raise concerns, make complaints or let someone know they feel unsafe
- ensure that supervisors have been allocated for each student and that there are adequate levels of supervision of the student to ensure their welfare and safety in a discrimination and harassment free working environment
- ensure the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form for each student is completed correctly and signed by all relevant parties, and that copies of the form have been given to the employer, the student and the parent/carer (where the student is under 18 years of age)
- ensure the employer and student have clear expectations about the skills and competencies which the student is expected to gain in the workplace, and that the student will be given the opportunity to acquire these skills and competencies

- ensure that the student and the employer/supervisor are aware of assessment procedures and the timing of assessment
- ensure the student is 'work ready' and understands workplace behaviour and etiquette, including ensuring that students understand that they should not use the internet or other electronic communications for accessing illegal, offensive or inappropriate material
- ensure that the student knows what to do in case of lateness to work, absence and/or an accident

During the placement

The Staff should:

- make contact with the student on a regular basis at least once per month during the placement
- provide support to the employer/supervisor if required
- organise for assessment of the student to take place where required and appropriate
- be available as the first point of contact in case anything goes wrong and ensure that all correct procedures are followed if anything does go wrong

Note: School staff must report any reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused. This includes abuse that has, or is suspected to have taken place within or outside of school grounds and hours.

After the placement

Staff should:

- follow up with the employer upon completion
- conduct a debriefing session which allows the student to evaluate and reflect on the placement
- ensure that letters of thanks are written to the employer by the student and the school.

(iii) Employer

The employer must acknowledge on the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form that they have read the Structured Workplace Learning Guidelines for Employers provided by the school.

The employer will:

- ensure the student is directly supervised throughout the placement
- ensure the student has access to their supervisor(s) and knows how to report any problems or concerns
- ensure that the student can readily contact the school if required during the placement
- consult the principal if it is deemed necessary to terminate the arrangement before the agreed time
- undertake to pay the student a minimum of \$5 per day
- provide feedback about the student's performance, i.e. complete a student evaluation and/or provide a student reference

- liaise immediately (or as soon as possible) with the school Structured Workplace Learning Coordinator regarding any issues arising in the workplace
- immediately contact the staff if the student is absent without notification
- immediately contact the principal or the staff if the student becomes ill or is injured in the course of the placement

Before the placement

The employer should ensure that:

- the staff and the student are aware of any special requirements (for example, starting and finishing times, special items of clothing, the need for confidentiality)
- a supervisor has been allocated to the student and that this person is aware of what is required of them during the placement
- the supervisor and other employees in the workplace understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in dealing with students,
- they familiarise themselves with Ministerial Order 55 — Structured Workplace Learning Arrangements as it relates to them

During the placement

The employer should ensure that:

- the student is inducted into the workplace on their first day of placement
- the student understands workplace policies regarding bullying, harassment and discrimination, and any other behavioural standards or codes of conduct that apply to the workplace
- the student is given an opportunity to complete any required school allocated work experience tasks during the placement — for example, completing a journal, meeting with staff to complete interviews
- the student understands the tasks they will undertake during the placement
- where required, the student is provided with appropriate clothing and protective equipment and instructed in its use
- opportunities are provided for the student to acquire or to enhance skills
- the student is given adequate support and directly supervised at all times while undertaking work related activities
- the student understands the workplace policy for dealing with concerns or complaints about behaviour at work
- if the student becomes ill or is injured, the correct procedures are followed
- the student can readily contact their school if required during the placement
- school staff can readily contact the student to check in with how their placement is progressing,
- if any problems arise, staff is contacted immediately so the problems can be addressed promptly

After the placement

The employer should ensure that:

- an employer evaluation is completed, discussed with the student and forwarded to the staff or given to the student
- the workplace learning experience is discussed with the student to find out if the student was satisfied with the placement
- appropriate reimbursement has been paid to the student

(iv) Student

Students must be aware that they are representing their school while on structured workplace learning and must continue to observe school policies and codes of conduct.

Students should also follow general workplace rules and understand protocols regarding the internet. In particular, students must not use the internet or other electronic communications for accessing illegal, offensive or inappropriate material. They should be aware that some work placements might use sensitive information that must remain private and confidential.

Before the placement

The student should:

- ensure they understand their obligations in relation to occupational health and safety in the workplace
- complete and sign the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form under the guidance of the staff
- call or meet with the employer/supervisor on site before commencing the placement to discuss:
 - starting and finishing times
 - arrangements for meal breaks
 - clothing requirements
 - tasks/activities to be performed
 - workplace assessment
 - any equipment or tools that the student may be required to bring, and
 - any special requirements the student may have
- remind the employer at least 2 weeks prior to commencement of the upcoming placement
- ensure they have the contact details of the staff

During the placement

The student should:

- behave like an employee and follow requirements of the workplace and instructions given their employer/supervisor
- be polite and courteous, wear clothing appropriate to the workplace and be punctual in attendance
- perform tasks which will enable their skills and competencies to be assessed where appropriate

- ensure that the skills and competencies being assessed are recorded, signed off, dated and the results communicated to the staff member
- show enthusiasm and initiative and be willing to learn
- inform the staff member and employer of expected absences from work, or necessarily late arrivals
- inform the staff member and employer if any unexpected absence or lateness occurs
- immediately report all accidents, 'near misses' and hazardous situations in the workplace to their supervisor and the staff member
- immediately seek advice from their supervisor when unfamiliar with workplace procedures in regard to occupational health and safety, or uncertain about how any task should be done
- report any concerns or issues to the staff
- reflect their school's expectations with regard to courtesy and politeness while on structured workplace learning
- keep contact numbers of their parent/carer, school and employer with them at all times during their placement so that they can inform these parties about any changes to working times or other issues which may arise

After the placement

The student should:

- discuss the placement with the employer
- evaluate and reflect on the placement, and discuss the suitability of the placement with the staff
- keep a copy of the employer evaluation for use in personal portfolio and future placements
- complete a letter of thanks to the employer

(v) Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardians have an important role in the successful delivery of structured workplace learning for their children. They play a vital role in discussing suitable structured workplace learning placements with their children and assisting them to understand roles and responsibilities in the world of work.

Before the placement

The Parent/Guardian should:

- discuss information about occupations and industries that their child could consider for a structured workplace learning placement
- assist their child to find a structured workplace learning placement
- sign the Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement Form
- make appropriate arrangements for their child to safely travel to and from structured workplace learning

- make appropriate arrangements if their child is required to stay at accommodation other than their normal place of residence and complete the Structured Workplace Learning Travel and Accommodation Form
- provide consent to any proposed vehicle travel that their child may undertake with the employer by completing the Structured Workplace Learning Travel and Accommodation Form
- provide any necessary health information relating to their child, including details of any medical condition which may require treatment during the placement

During the placement

The Parent/Guardian should:

- discuss the day's activities with their child and, if any problems are identified, encourage them to follow correct procedures to deal with the problem
- keep details of the workplace with them in case they need to contact their child

After the placement

The Parent/Guardian should:

- assist in the debriefing process on completion of structured workplace learning and encourage their child to reflect upon his/her experiences in the workplace
- encourage their child to continue their exploration of careers and occupations

Students with a disability

The process for preparing students with a disability for structured workplace learning should be the same as for other students, but with some important additional aspects.

When organising structured workplace learning, the Structured Workplace Learning Coordinator should:

- know exactly what the student can and cannot do, and communicate this to the employer
- be honest with the employer about the student's abilities and not promise anything the student cannot deliver
- suggest a trial before starting the placement if an employer is hesitant
- indicate some examples of strengths of a student which an employer may value, including:
 - a strong desire to work in the industry
 - a good history of punctuality and reliability
 - a capacity to learn well when shown how to do a particular task
 - ability to concentrate and work on repetitive tasks
 - the knowledge that parents/carers are supportive and encouraging of the placement
- prepare a letter to the employer clearly explaining what you are trying to achieve for the student and what the employer may expect from you

- visit the workplace to generate creative ways of dealing with any problems
- ask to speak to the supervisors and co-workers to prepare them. Encourage them to voice any concerns, and respond to these if raised. Talk about how the student will be prepared for the duties and about any modifications to work arrangements which may have to be made
- have emergency contact numbers and, if required, a medical management plan clearly set out for the student

Students undertaking a VET program with the College and intends to use the structured workplace learning as part of their VET work experience hours must also complete the Work Experience Logbook.

Related Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience policy • External Provider Policy • OHS Policy • Child Safe Policy • Complaints and Grievance Policy
Relevant Legislation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) • Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 • Ministerial Order 55 — Structured Workplace Learning Arrangements
Relevant Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured workplace learning arrangement form • Structured workplace learning travel and accommodation form • Structured workplace learning for employers • Child safe standards and workplace learning: A guide for schools • Fact sheet for employers: Child safe standards and workplace learning