



## Attendance Policy -PP015

Plenty River College (the College) is an independent, specialist senior secondary school and a Registered Training Organisation (RTO Code: 22732), delivering the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and VCE Vocational Major (VM) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) Certificates. 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

### Rationale

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, schooling is compulsory for students aged between 6 and 17 years unless an exemption from enrolment or attendance has been granted.

Daily attendance at the College is important for all students to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. College participation maximises life opportunities for our students by providing them with education and support networks. Attendance helps our students develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure that all enrolled students of compulsory school age attend the College every day it is open for instruction;
- ensure students, staff and parents have a shared understanding of the importance of student attendance;
- explain to the College community the key practices and procedures the College has in place to:
  - support, monitor and maintain student attendance; and
  - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

### Scope

This policy applies to the Executive Principal, Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader, teaching staff, the Student Support Team, administration staff, parents/guardians and students at the College.



## Attendance Policy -PP015

### Definitions

<b>Approved reasons for student absence</b>	A reason for student absence that has been approved by the College.
<b>Attendance rate</b>	Students must maintain an attendance rate at the College of 80% of scheduled classes
<b>Attendance Improvement Plan</b>	An Attendance Improvement Plan will be implemented for a student where their attendance is of concern. This plan will be developed with the student, so they have ownership over the plan, together with student's parent.
<b>College community</b>	All members of the college staff – both teaching and non-teaching, all students enrolled at the College and all parents.
<b>Parent/s</b>	Includes parents, guardians, step-parents and/or carers as listed in the College Enrolment Form.
<b>Student</b>	Child or young person named on the College's Enrolment Form.
<b>Student Health Support Plan</b>	Plan developed for students at the College who have an identified health support need. This plan is developed in consultation with the student's parents.
<b>Student Support Group</b>	A Student Support Group, normally made up of the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader, relevant teachers and education support staff. If appropriate, the Student Support Group can seek family involvement and support from specialist consultants.
<b>Student Support Care Team</b>	The Student Support Team comprises youth welfare workers and education support workers. Other specialists such as the College psychologist or external case managers may also be included or consulted.
<b>Student Absence Learning Plan/Return to School Plan</b>	Students who are taking known extended absences or students who have been away for extended absences from the College must have a Student Absence Learning Plan/Return to School Plan to support their education.
<b>Unapproved reasons for student absence</b>	A reason for student absence that has not been approved by the College.

### Responsibility

1. The College Board is responsible for authorising this policy.
2. The Executive Principal is responsible for:



## Attendance Policy -PP015

- Articulating to the College community that the College has high expectations about student attendance;
  - Creating a safe, supportive learning environment where all students experience success through active participation and engagement in purposeful learning through attendance at the College;
  - Whole-College modelling of punctuality including staff and students;
  - Ensuring that consistent, rigorous procedures to monitor and record student absences are in place;
  - Ensuring that data-driven attendance improvement strategies are implemented; and
  - Linking with local community groups and agencies to maximise prevention and early intervention strategies such as:
    - Clear written and verbal statements are made regularly to parents and students about the College's attendance expectations;
    - Student attendance appears as a regular item on the College meeting agendas;
    - Delegation of responsibilities to all staff, with a key member of staff leading attendance improvement initiatives; and
    - Understanding the causal factors of absence and the need for targeted interventions and communicating this to the College community.
3. The Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader is responsible for:
- Monitoring of student attendance data and the immediate follow up of individual student absences;
  - Organising attendance focused meetings with parents and students;
  - Forming Student Support Groups to enable a coordinated response to individual student attendance issues;
  - Individual student attendance goal setting through the development of an Attendance Improvement Plan (**see Appendix 1 for more details**);
  - Formal procedures for supporting the learning of a student absent for an extended period by developing a Student Absence Learning Plan/Return to School Plan (**see Appendix 2 for more details**); and
  - Referring individual students and parents to community agencies for additional support.
4. Teachers are responsible for:
- Promoting student attendance through clear statements and expectations in their classrooms;
  - Ensuring that student attendance is recorded for each session throughout the day in their classes; and



## Attendance Policy -PP015

- Individual student attendance goal setting through the development of an Attendance Improvement Plan
  - Monitoring the attendance improvement plan every **five weeks** with a goal of increasing face to face attendance
  - Ensure that where attendance plan is in place, it is reviewed and signed by the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader
  - Pursing and recording an explanation for every absence on the attendance roll in SIMON.
5. The Student Support Team are responsible for:
- Telephoning/texting parents of any absent student each day; and
  - Communicating the reasons for student absences to the classroom teacher, to be recorded on the class roll.
  - Collaborating with the classroom teacher to ensure the implementation of attendance plan
  - Ensure the absences are documented in SIMON and shared with classroom teacher and Assistant Principal
6. Administration staff are responsible for:
- When the administration team receives information regarding a student's absence—either from a parent or the Teacher—they must promptly record the details in SIMON to ensure accurate attendance.
7. A College Parent is responsible for:
- Ensuring that the student attends College at all times when the College is open for instruction;
  - Promoting and supporting the student to achieve full attendance and participation in the College;
  - Notifying the College of the student's absence as soon as possible;
  - Notifying the College in advance of any prolonged student absence;
  - Supporting the student's learning during a continued or prolonged absence; and
  - Ensuring that their contact details are up-to-date.
8. A College Student is responsible for:
- Attending the College at all times when the College is open for instruction;
  - Arriving on time to the College, and attending every class where possible;
  - Providing a written explanation or verbal explanation from their parents when they have been absent from the College;
  - Remaining on College premises during the normal scheduled time unless they have permission to leave from both the College and their parents; and



## **Attendance Policy -PP015**

- Working cooperatively with the College to develop personal attendance improvement goals and strategies when their attendance has been inconsistent.

### **Implementation**

Students are expected to attend the College from 9.00am to 3.00pm every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from College attendance for the student;
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in the College, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in the College for particular activities.

The College will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable, and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Students are expected to attend the College every day, arriving on time and prepared to learn. Students are encouraged to approach a teacher or a wellbeing team member to seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Parents are expected to ensure that students attend the College on time every day unless otherwise advised by the College, to communicate openly with the College, and to provide valid explanations for any absence.

Parents are expected to communicate with the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader about any issues affecting their child's attendance, and work in partnership with the College to address any concerns.

Parents are expected to provide a reasonable explanation for a student's absence from the College and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of College hours.

### **Supporting and promoting attendance**

Our College promotes student attendance by:

- providing programs that encourage positive decision making and assist students in managing conflict;
- involving students in planning and decision-making related to their learning and self-development;
- assigning a wellbeing team member to each class who will work with students and parents to support their attendance and wellbeing services or referrals to welfare and support agencies;
- Providing welfare services like daily breakfast, lunch and food packs for struggling families and;



## Attendance Policy -PP015

- developing activities that encourage attendance, such as a range of sports and other activities

### Recording attendance

The College will record attendance in every class to:

- meet legislative requirements;
- discharge the College's duty of care for all students; and
- meet the regulatory and statutory authority requirements.

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher in SIMON for each session throughout the day.

If students are attending a College approved outside activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Administrative staff record any provided or apparent reasons for student absences received via administration phone. Where no reason has been supplied by a parent or guardian, administrative staff will send a text message to determine the cause of the absence.

### Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, either a parent (for students under the age of 18 years) or the student (aged over 18 years) must provide an explanation on each occasion to the College.

Parents should notify the College of absences by:

- contacting Teacher or administration if it is an unplanned absence, or
- informing the classroom teacher if it is a planned absence.

If a student is absent on a particular day and the College has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, the College will notify parents by text or telephone. The College will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details), the College will attempt to contact any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the College, where possible, on the day of the unexplained absence. In exceptional circumstances, if there is no response after 5-10 school days after a student's continuous unapproved absence, the police will be notified as part of the College's duty of care obligations and child safety requirements for the police to undertake a welfare check after numerous unsuccessful attempts by the College. In addition, the College may also contact The Orange Door for child safety support and guidance if the College believes that the student may be at risk of abuse or harm.

The College will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for



## Attendance Policy -PP015

the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* and the College's Attendance Policy.

Students at the College are required to maintain an attendance rate of **80%**.

Reasons for absences fall into two groups – **approved** or **unapproved** reasons.

Students therefore cannot miss more than **20%** of each unit for unapproved reasons.

Examples of approved and unapproved reasons for absence:

Examples of approved reasons for absence and evidence required	Examples of unapproved reasons for absence
Illness – <i>medical certificate</i>	Driving lessons
Bereavement or attendance at a funeral– <i>notice from paper (if possible) and note from home</i>	Personal issues (without further explanation)
Job interview – <i>letter from employer</i>	Family commitments
Medical/dental appointments (which cannot be arranged out of class time) – <i>medical certificate</i>	Assessment Task preparation for other VET units
Attendance at training and/or work placement for School Based Apprenticeship or VET program outside of Plenty River College	Part time work commitments with the exception of School Based Apprenticeship work placement and training
Court appointments and counselling – <i>letter from the court or certificate of attendance from counsellor</i>	Sleeping in or missing the bus Car or bike breakdown
License testing (one attempt only) - <i>receipt</i>	Supporting upset friends Timetable mix-ups
School refusal, if a plan is in place with parent to address causes and support student's return to the College – <i>Attendance Improvement Plan</i>	Centrelink appointments
Cultural observance if the parent notified the College in advance – <i>note from parent</i>	
Family holidays, where the parent notified the College in advance – <i>note from parent</i>	



## Attendance Policy -PP015

If the College considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their student's absence, the absence will be marked as an **approved** absence.

If the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as an **unapproved absence**.

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an **unapproved absence** and recorded on the student's file.

### Attendance Monitoring:

In order to monitor attendance, our College will:

- check and record the daily attendance of all students;
- monitor attendance through the session and identify absences from each class;
- identify the person(s) with responsibility for monitoring daily attendance;
- follow up unexplained absences on the day of a student's absence;
- notify parents of unsatisfactory attendance;
- maintain current contact details for parents; and
- accurately record attendance on student files.

### Managing Early Departure of Students

To ensure that any early departure of a student from the College is managed safely, authorised appropriately, and accurately recorded in accordance with attendance obligations and Child Safe Standards. The following steps must be adhered to.

#### 1. Early Departure Initiated by the College

Where the College determines that a student must leave prior to the end of the school day:

1. The classroom teacher must notify the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader as soon as practicable.
2. The Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader will determine whether early departure is appropriate.
3. The Administration Team will contact the parent/guardian to:
  - Inform them of the reason for the early departure; and
  - Arrange collection of the student (if under 18 years).
4. The student must remain supervised by College staff until collected by a parent/guardian or authorised nominee.
5. The College will not release a student into the care of any person who is not authorised by the parent/guardian. Identification may be required where the authorised person is not known to staff.



## Attendance Policy -PP015

6. If a parent/guardian is unable to collect the student, the Administration Team must obtain written authorisation (via email or text message) confirming consent for the student to leave independently (if the student is under 18 years of age).
7. The Administration Team must record the early departure in SIMON, including the time of departure, reason, and authorisation details.

### 2. Early Departure Requested by Parent/Guardian

Where a parent/guardian requests early departure in writing:

1. The classroom teacher must notify the relevant team via the PRC Work WhatsApp group, including:
  - Student's full name
  - Reason for early departure
  - Time of departure
2. The student must remain supervised until collected by the parent/guardian, unless written consent has been provided for the student to leave independently (if under 18 years of age).
3. The College will not release a student into the care of any person who is not authorised by the parent/guardian. Identification may be required where the authorised person is not known to staff.
4. The Administration Team must update the student's attendance record in SIMON, including relevant notes and authorisation details.

### Managing Non-Attendance and Supporting Student Engagement

The College monitors student attendance on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with compulsory education requirements and to support student engagement and wellbeing.

Where a student's attendance falls below 80% in any unit of study (i.e. absence exceeds 20%), the College will initiate a structured response.

### Early Intervention and Support

The College will work collaboratively with the student, parents/guardians, and relevant professionals (where appropriate) to identify barriers to attendance and implement strategies to improve engagement. This may include:

- Establishing a Student Support Group (SSG);
- Developing and implementing an Attendance Improvement Plan;
- Developing or updating a Student Health Support Plan (where relevant);
- Implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan and/or Return to School Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period;



## **Attendance Policy -PP015**

- Referral to external support services, where appropriate.

The Student Support Care Team is responsible for coordinating these interventions and monitoring progress.

### **Ongoing Monitoring and Escalation**

Attendance Improvement Plans will include clear attendance targets, review dates, and agreed responsibilities. Attendance will be regularly monitored.

Where attendance does not improve despite intervention, the College may implement additional measures in accordance with its Attendance Policy and relevant legislative requirements. This may include further case management, engagement with external agencies, or notification to relevant authorities where required.

### **Communication**

1. This policy will be communicated to the College community either through the College website, newsletter or via request.
2. College teachers and the Student Support Team will be informed of their obligations in relation to student attendance by:
  - attending the College induction program for new staff;
  - receiving a copy of this policy at the first staff meeting at start of the College year;
  - retaining 'student attendance' as an item on staff meeting agendas to facilitate improvement; and
  - receiving a copy of the College's Teacher Handbook



## Attendance Policy -PP015

<b>Related Forms</b>
Attendance Improvement Plan FT033 Student Absence Learning/Return to Learning Plan FT034
<b>Related Policies:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Camps and Excursions</li><li>• Child Safe</li><li>• Child Safe Code of Conduct</li><li>• Duty of Care</li><li>• Supervision Policy and External Provider Procedure</li><li>• Student Behaviour Management</li><li>• Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion</li></ul>
<b>Related Legislation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</li><li>• Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)</li><li>• Ministerial Order 1359: Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools</li></ul>



## Attendance Policy -PP015

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<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Executive Principal	<b>Approver Name &amp; Role:</b>	PRC Board
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<b>Department:</b> Compliance and Governance	School Standards: STD-Care,Safety and Welfare of Students		
	RTO Standards: Guideline 6 – Child Safe Standards		



## Attendance Policy -PP015

### Revision Record:

Date	Version	Revision description
04/01/2021	V2021.01	Initial Policy
20/10/2025	V2025.02	<p>Minor updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction section has been re worded to include the RTO details and the Certificates offered by School. Updated the Title of the Assistant Principal. Communication channel has been clarified.</li> <li>Replaced the Appendix and updated it as related form and logs. Updated Related policies by Supervision policy. Added clearer instruction about the actions needed to be followed if a student is continuously absent without any communication for 5 to 10 School days.</li> <li>Removed reference to Corona Virus. Added the reference of correct Ministerial Order. Strengthen the policy by including specific time frame to review the attendance plan and improved the responsibility section of Assistant Principal, Teacher and Admin as per the current process Added version control and policy is now available in the new template</li> </ul>
27/02/2026	V2026.03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added clear instructions about Managing Early Departure of Students</li> <li>Added clear instructions to Managing Non-Attendance and Supporting Student Engagement</li> <li>Added instruction to Ongoing Monitoring and Escalation</li> </ul>