



## Child Safety Recruitment Policy PP024

### Background

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. The College 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.

Plenty River College (the College) is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children and young people through rigorous child-safe recruitment practices.

This Recruitment Policy and Procedure has been developed in accordance with Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises (Ministerial Order 1359) – Standard 6, which requires all Victorian schools to implement proactive strategies to prevent child abuse and promote child safety across all areas of College life.

When complying with this procedure, it must be noted that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained herein will not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a student is at risk of child abuse or neglect.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the College recruits board members, College executive team, teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors who are suitable to work with children and young people and are committed to upholding the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in our care.

This policy explains our recruitment, screening and induction processes to ensure we only employ people who are suitable to work with children. It demonstrates our commitment to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful College environment where every student is protected and valued.



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### Scope

This policy applies to recruitment of all engaged in child-connected or child related work including:

- Members of the governing authority (Plenty River College Board members)
- Members of the Executive Team – Executive Principal, Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader, Finance Manager, Compliance & Operations Manager, Wellbeing Team Leader
- All teaching and non-teaching staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors engaged in child-connected work

### Definitions

<b>Child-connected work</b>	As defined under Ministerial Order 1359 <i>child connected work</i> means work authorised by the College governing authority that is performed by an adult (18 years and over) in a school environment (e.g. excursions, camps, sports events) while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
<b>Child-related work</b>	Under the <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i> a person is engaged in <i>child-related work</i> if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the work is of a kind set out in Schedule 1 of the Act (which includes work in education services, religious organisations, coaching, counselling, etc.)</li> <li>• the work usually involves direct contact with children (which may be physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic communication), and</li> <li>• the contact is not occasional direct contact that is incidental to the work.</li> </ul>

### Policy

The College is committed to recruiting personnel who are safe and suitable and will uphold and comply with the Child Safe Standards in practice. The College will achieve this by ensuring:

- Each job advertised for College staff who will be engaged in child connected or child-related work have a clear statement that sets out:
  - (i) the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing



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- (ii) the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing; and
  - (iii) explicitly outlines the College's commitment to the child safe standards.
- All child-connected or child-related positions (including volunteers and contractors) for the College must be informed about the College's child safety practices and Child Safety Policy (including the Child Safety Code of Conduct).
  - To sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance if the person is required to have a clearance in accordance with the Worker Screening Act 2020, or any equivalent background check (such as VIT registration); and
    - (iv) where the person will be engaged in child-related work or child-connected work, collect and record:
      - proof of the person's identity
      - information about any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications
      - the person's history of work involving children; and
      - references that address the person's suitability for the job and for working with children.
  - The College need not comply with the requirements outlined above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in steps (i) to (iv) above about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.
  - That appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
    - the induction of new staff, volunteers and contractors about the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct including privacy and child safety reporting requirements and training
    - monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected or child-related work, and
    - procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse.
  - When engaging a contractor or external service provider to perform work or deliver services to the College, particularly in child-connected or child-related areas, the Executive Principal will ensure that all relevant documentation — including service agreements, procurement statements, and related policies — explicitly outlines our commitment to Ministerial Order No. 1359.

These documents must:

- (ii) Clearly state the expectation that all personnel engaged in child-connected work must uphold child safety requirements and behave in accordance with the College's Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct



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- (iii) Specify obligations regarding Working with Children clearances (or equivalent suitability checks), and
- (iv) Include provisions for responding to child safety concerns or breaches of conduct.

This requirement ensures that child safety remains a central consideration in all procurement and contractual arrangements involving external parties.

### Implementation

Rigorous recruitment practices create a safer workplace, reduce the opportunity for harm to occur, deter people who are unsuitable to work or volunteer with children, and recruit staff who uphold College values.

When recruiting or engaging new personnel for child-related or child connected work at the College, the Executive Principal or their delegate must consider the following:

1. Person's motivation to work with children and young people
2. Their history of working with children and young people
3. Verify their WWCC clearance or VIT registration
4. For non-teaching staff, verify they have a National Police Record check.
5. Gather proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
6. Their understanding of professional boundaries and of child safety and the need to protect, empower children and young people and each adult's responsibility towards preventing child abuse and creating a child safe environment
7. Confirm their suitability to engage in child-related and/or child-connected work through minimum of two (2) Professional Referee checks

The College's recruitment procedures are at **Appendix 1**.

### Communication

The College will communicate this policy to the College community via the College website.



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### Appendices

Appendix 1: Recruitment Procedure

### Related Policies

- Child Safety - Statement of commitment to child safety
- Child Safety
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy
- Child Safety Risk Register
- Child Safety Visitors
- Child Safety Volunteers
- Child Safety Concerns and Complaints Policy
- Complaints and Grievances
- Duty of Care Policy
- Maintaining Staff Registers
- Privacy & Privacy Collection Statement
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention
- Student Behaviour Management

### Related Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
- Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises



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### Appendix 1: Recruitment procedure

The following procedures apply to all personnel engaged or employed for child-related or child-connected work at the College.

#### Step 1: Transparency and natural justice in the recruitment process

Questions	Tick
Has the College reviewed its position description to reflect the child safe standards including the College's commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of all students?	
Has the applicant been provided with a statement that sets out the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• child safety (including any experience they have working with children with diverse needs and/or backgrounds), and</li> <li>• essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety?</li> </ul>	
Has the applicant been informed about the College's child safety practices including the Child Safety Code of Conduct?	
Has the applicant been informed of their role in ensuring a child safe environment and their experience working with children?	
Has the applicant been informed that appropriate rigorous reference and background checking will be undertaken including a Working with Children Clearance, police record and identity check?	
Do employment contracts, service agreements, procurement statements explicitly outline the College's commitment to the Child Safe Standards – Ministerial Order 1359; Code of Conduct and other relevant child safety policies and procedures that the person is required to adhere?	

#### Step 2: Verifying the person's identity, suitability, qualifications

Questions	Tick
Have at least two forms of personal identification been checked, e.g. driver's license, international passport, birth certificate?	
Does the applicant have an original academic transcript or qualification/s that confirms their claims about their qualifications and/or registration/s?	



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<p>If the applicant is registered by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), have you verified the registration and ensured that it is current? (Noting that a teacher registered with VIT does not need a Working with Children Clearance.)</p>	
<p>Has a copy of the applicant's current Working with Children Clearance been sighted and recorded?</p>	
<p>Have you checked the current status of the Working with Children Clearance using online portal provided by Department of Justice?</p>	
<p>Are there any unexplained gaps in the applicant's employment/professional history? If so, are there satisfactory explanations such as travel, study leave, family leave?</p>	
<p>Has the applicant nominated at least two referees including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the current or most recent employer, and</li> <li>• direct supervisor/line manager?</li> </ul>	
<p>Is there any personal relationship between the applicant and his or her previous supervisor/manager? (This may affect the objectivity of the reference.)</p>	
<p>Have referee checks been conducted to ensure that the work history and previous employment details the applicant has provided are accurate?</p>	
<p>Has the referee(s) directly supervised the applicant and observed their work with children?</p>	
<p>Would the referee(s) employ the person again?</p>	
<p>Did a referee(s) have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?</p>	
<p>Did a referee(s) have any concerns about the applicant's adherence to the Code of Conduct regarding child safety?</p>	
<p>Have you asked the referee(s) about a time when they observed the applicant managing the behaviour of a child?</p>	
<p>If the reference is in writing, have you contacted the referee directly to confirm authenticity?</p>	
<p>Does the applicant have experience working with children outside their employment (e.g. volunteering, private tutoring or coaching, non-commercial child-minding etc.)?</p>	



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Have you included a question as part of the recruitment/interview process on whether the applicant has any criminal convictions, cautions, other legal or pending cases, including formal disciplinary action, which may affect their suitability to work with children?	
Has the applicant obtained a National Police Record check (which includes identity check) for non-teaching staff?	
If necessary, have you considered requesting for penal clearances from countries outside of Australia that the person has lived in (particularly relevant if the person is new to Australia and therefore may not have any criminal history here).	
Have you included a question as part of the recruitment/interview process to confirm that the person has read the College's commitment to child safety, their understanding of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and reporting obligations?	

### Step 3: Induction and ongoing suitability to engage in child-related or child-connected work

Requirements	Tick
Induction – completed child safety induction, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safety Policy</li> <li>• Child Safety Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Child Safety Reporting Obligations</li> <li>• Privacy Policy</li> <li>• Child Safety Training (i.e. mandatory reporting, recognising signs of harm, etc)</li> <li>• Participated in specific training on cultural safety</li> <li>• Briefing on students with special needs/disabilities/vulnerabilities – Anaphylaxis/Allergy</li> </ul>	
Acknowledgement of Child Safety Code of Conduct/requirements.	
Observations and supervisions in place during probation or early engagement period (as applicable).	
No concerns raised during early engagement or probation period regarding person's conduct that would render them unsuitable to engaged in child-related or child-connected work.	
Any concerns or complaints received about the person have been appropriately documented, investigated and reported.	



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Revision Record:

Date	Version	Revision description
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