



## Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy PP029

### Introduction

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

The effective and efficient management of emergency incidents at the College is critical to the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff, volunteers and visitors. Incidents and emergencies may arise during College hours, on College camps and excursions, in online College environments, during travel to and from College, and outside of College hours.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- outline the strategies and actions that the College intends to take in response to critical incidents and/or emergencies,
- create clarity around the emergency and critical incident assessment and triage processes,
- provide a safe environment for all, irrespective of the variety of emergencies that may occur.

### Scope

This policy applies to all the College Board, staff, students, volunteers, contractors, visitors and all College events or activities. It provides the basis for emergency and critical incident planning and management at the College. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Emergency Management Plan.FT019

### Definitions

<b>Accident and Incident Register</b>	A document that records all accidents and incidents at the College. It includes the investigation results, an assigned severity rating, and identifies the new processes or strategies put in place to prevent or reduce the impact of a future recurrence.
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<b>All Clear</b>	Entry or re-entry is forbidden until authorised by this signal
<b>Assembly Area</b>	External location away from the facility where the evacuees assemble after an evacuation.
<b>Chief Warden</b>	A person appointed as leader within the College to maintain responsibility for all emergency procedures. The Executive Principal is the designated the Chief Warden but may be replaced by the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader if not available.
<b>Warden</b>	A person who has been designated special responsibility in critical incident and emergency management. The Warden at College is the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader.
<b>Critical Incidents</b>	<p>Critical incidents are any extraordinary and unexpected circumstances that may cause a traumatic reaction. They may be sudden, overwhelming, threatening or protracted. Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illness (epidemic or pandemic), death or serious injury;</li> <li>• threatening behaviour with a weapon or firearm;</li> <li>• criminal events including assaults (physical, sexual or psychological), aggression, theft, and robbery or the threat of harm (including domestic violence, stalking, bullying and cyberbullying);</li> <li>• natural disasters (such as earthquake, flood, bushfire, grass fire, cyclones, severe weather events);</li> <li>• hospitalisation;</li> <li>• suicide attempts;</li> <li>• witnessing an event (such as a serious road accident or violent event);</li> <li>• emergency evacuation (due to fire, explosion, bomb threat, hostage situation, chemical hazard or spill, gas or water leak);</li> <li>• public health alert (such as pandemics and communicable diseases);</li> <li>• drug or alcohol abuse and other social issues.</li> </ul> <p>Critical incidents may cause an immediate or delayed traumatic reaction such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear for own safety or that of loved ones;</li> <li>• feelings of grief and loss;</li> <li>• feeling sad, teary and fearful;</li> <li>• feeling helpless or powerless;</li> <li>• sleeping difficulties;</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fixation on the event;</li> <li>• withdrawal from other people;</li> <li>• concentration difficulties;</li> <li>• triggering of previous trauma;</li> <li>• missing staff or students.</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Services</b>	External authorities like Fire Brigade, Police and Ambulance services, called by dialling 000.
<b>Evacuation Alarm</b>	An alarm signal which indicates to personnel to evacuate the premises
<b>First Aid Officer</b>	<p>A College staff member who has received first aid training, appears in the College First Aid Register, and is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess students and others at College for possible first aid treatment in the event of an accident, injury, incident, emergency or illness;</li> <li>• provide first aid treatment to the limits of their training and experience; and</li> <li>• call for appropriate advanced medical assistance from a medical practitioner or ambulance as required.</li> </ul>
<b>Mobile Impaired Person</b>	A person with a physical, mental or sensory impairment, either temporary or permanent, who requires assistance during an emergency
<b>Notifiable Incidents</b>	<p>are incidents that must be notified to WorkSafe and include:</p> <p><b>1. Death:</b> Any death of a person arising out of or in connection with work at the workplace must be notified immediately.</p> <p><b>2. Serious Injury or Illness:</b> Notify if a person requires:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Immediate in-patient hospital treatment, or</li> <li>b) Immediate medical treatment for any of the following serious injuries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amputation (any part of the body)</li> <li>• Serious head injury</li> <li>• Serious eye injury</li> <li>• Severe burns</li> <li>• Separation of skin from underlying tissue (e.g., de-gloving, scalping)</li> <li>• Electric shock</li> <li>• Spinal injury</li> <li>• Loss of bodily function (e.g., loss of movement, sight, hearing)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious lacerations (deep cuts needing stitching or medical care)</li> <li>(c) Medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance (e.g., chemicals, toxic fumes).</li> </ul> <p><b>3. Dangerous Incidents (Even If No Injury Occurs)</b></p> <p>These are sometimes called “near misses” — events that expose a person to serious risk even if no one is actually hurt. Examples you must notify include:</p> <p>Examples of dangerous occurrences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncontrolled escape, spill or leakage of a substance (including dangerous goods).</li> <li>• Implosion, explosion or fire.</li> <li>• Electric shock incident.</li> <li>• Fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing.</li> <li>• Collapse, overturning, failure, malfunction or damage of plant/machinery covered by the OHS Regulations (e.g., cranes, forklifts, earth-moving machinery).</li> <li>• Collapse or partial collapse of a building or structure.</li> <li>• Collapse or failure of excavation or shoring support.</li> <li>• Inrush of water, mud or gas in a mine, underground excavation or tunnel.</li> <li>• Interruption of main ventilation in a tunnel or mine</li> </ul>
<b>Parents</b>	Refers to parents, guardians, step-parents and/or carers as listed in the College Enrolment Form.
<b>Risk assessment matrix</b>	A table that assigns a risk rating to identified risks based on the likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact or consequences for College operations should it occur.
<b>Incident Management Team (IMT)</b>	The IMT is identified in this Policy and in the EMP as being responsible for the response to an emergency or critical incident/situation. The Incident Management Team is led by the Executive Principal as the Incident Commander/Chief Warden and the person in charge of the emergency and related decision-making.

### Responsibility

1. The College Board will be responsible for:

- authorising this policy; and
- considering the impact of critical incidents and emergencies, as reported by the Executive Principal, on the College, its staff, students, volunteers and other stakeholders.

2. The Executive Principal will be responsible for:



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- reviewing and updating this policy and the Emergency Management Plan at least annually, and after a critical incident or emergency;
  - updating College risk assessment matrices as required;
  - organising emergency drills, at least once a term;
  - reporting to WorkSafe of any critical incident and/or emergencies that require reporting to the agency
  - informing the College Board of any critical incident and/or emergencies that have occurred;
  - initiating emergency procedures according to this policy, as Chief Warden;
  - ensuring that staff respond to a critical incident and/or emergency according to the procedures, including follow-up actions;
  - ensuring that the College OH&S policies are consistent with the intentions of this policy;
  - assessing the College's vulnerabilities, in the light of the critical incident and/or emergency; and
  - implementing any administrative measures necessary to reduce the impact of those vulnerabilities.
3. The Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader will be responsible for:
- ensuring that all the College staff and volunteers are aware of, and receive training in the Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy and Procedure (this policy) and Emergency Management Plan, and participate in drills;
  - investigating the circumstances of the critical incident or emergency, and contributing to the Executive Principal's reviews and assessments; and
  - keeping communication lines open with staff, especially during the emergency, to ensure the flow of information.
4. Teachers have a duty of care towards students and must take steps to protect students from harm from themselves and others and must report abuse. Teachers must supervise all students under their care at College.
5. The duty First Aid Officer is responsible for providing emergency first aid, assessing the need for more expert medical attention, and ensuring that an ambulance has been called. However, it is expected that any staff member with first aid training will assist when needed.
6. College staff will be responsible for:
- being aware of, and adhering to the Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy and Procedure (this policy) and the Emergency Management Plan, and participating in drills;
  - assisting students, volunteers and others to take reasonable precautions to prevent a critical incident and/or emergency from occurring;
  - taking reasonable care to protect their health and safety in the workplace, and that of others;
  - keeping up to date with the latest information available in the public domain about critical incidents and emergencies; and
  - participating in training programs and professional learning activities on critical incident and emergency management procedures.



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### Implementation

The College values the health and safety of our staff, visitors and students and will take all reasonable precautions that will minimise the risk of injury or harm to all concerned. The College will ensure that:

- risk assessments are developed and regularly updated for College activities, including camps and excursions;
- relevant staff (the Compliance and Operations Manager) make routine inspection checks of College premises, identify hazards and develop risk controls (in consultation with the Executive Principal) to prevent or reduce harm to staff, students and others (refer the College's **OHS Policy and Maintenance Schedule**);
- College facilities and equipment are maintained and repaired as needed, and prepared in anticipation of bushfires or grassfires;
- Essential safety measures and emergency equipment are maintained and accessible;
- staff and students practice evacuation and other procedures once a term and are aware of what to do in an emergency;
- staff are provided with training in emergency procedures; and
- staff are aware of the location of the nearest emergency and safety equipment.

We acknowledge that critical incidents and emergencies may arise, despite careful planning and the establishment of policies, procedures and systems that prevent or minimise injury and harm to staff and students.

The College will make every effort to respond in a responsible, timely and efficient manner to a critical incident or emergency event so that:

- immediate assistance is provided, and an ambulance is called when required;
- evacuation is called by the Chief Warden on advice from emergency services;
- student safety is re-established as soon as possible;
- the event is reported to police and to WorkSafe (where required);
- parents and the wider community (if applicable) are informed;
- the incident is recorded in an Incident Report Form;
- the incident is added to the Accident and Incident Register;
- the incident or emergency is thoroughly investigated to identify potential precautions or improve the response;
- staff, students and stakeholders are debriefed, and support services are engaged (where required); and
- infectious disease transmission is prevented and / or controlled.

### Governance

The College has an integrated and co-ordinated organisational response to an emergency or critical incident. This occurs at all levels of the College, with oversight from the Executive Principal for related decision-making (as required).

An emergency or incident will be managed at the lowest level of effective control; the response will escalate to the Incident Management Team where the demands of the event are greater than that level's capacity to effectively manage it.



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- The Incident Management Team will comprise of the Executive Principal (Chair/Chief Warden), Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader (Warden), Compliance and Operations Manager, and a representative from the teaching and non-teaching staff.
- They will be responsible for providing strategic, tactical and operational directions (as appropriate) on any emergency or critical incident events, while the Executive Principal will report to the Board.

The Incident Management Team will meet during an emergency or critical incident event to establish a common understanding of the situation and the response and communication strategy. Frequent meetings will occur during the initial response and with a reduced frequency as the situation stabilises. They will also be responsible for the emergency and critical incident management planning process, including identifying key stakeholders (Victorian Police, ISV, Victorian Department for Education, VRQA etc), required to be informed and kept apprised of significant events and their response and status.

### College procedures

The College has developed a range of procedures to assist the Chief Warden, Warden and other College staff to respond to critical incidents and emergencies. ***These procedures can be found in the Emergency Management Plan***

### Chief Warden

The Executive Principal is the designated Chief Warden during a critical incident or emergency. If unavailable, the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader will assume this role. The duties of the Chief Warden are to:

- coordinate and manage the critical incident or emergency, and assess student and staff safety during the emergency;
- ensure that emergency services have been called (if required);
- call an evacuation if advised to do so by emergency services, or if required for safety reasons;
- ensure that staff are following the required emergency response;  
provide information to emergency services on arrival; and
- notify the Board when able to do so.

After the emergency is over, and staff and students are safe, the Executive Principal will ensure that reporting processes are followed, including:

- an Incident Report in line with the College's ***Accident and Incident Reporting Policy***;
- mandatory reporting processes (please refer to the College's ***Mandatory Reporting Policy***);
- any other College processes related to anaphylaxis management and severe allergic reactions (please refer to the College's ***Anaphylaxis Management Policy***);
- hazard identification, College inspections and damage assessments (please refer to the College's ***OHS Policy and procedures***); and



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- evaluation of current risk controls and updates to risk assessment matrices.

### Warden

The Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader is the designated Warden during critical incidents and emergencies. If unavailable, the Compliance and Operations Manager will assume this role. The Warden's duties include:

- staying in contact with the Chief Warden and acting on instructions given;
- relaying the Chief Warden's instructions to staff, students and others, and directing staff as required;
- organising and managing a calm and safe evacuation if required, and ensuring that everyone has evacuated;
- ensuring that staff follow critical incident or emergency procedures, and that students remain under active teacher supervision wherever possible;
- moving staff and students to a safer location within College premises if required;
- ensuring that first aid and welfare support is available during the incident; and
- maintaining calm and orderliness.

### Teachers

Teachers retain their duty of care at all times and must remain with their students during critical incidents or emergencies to ensure their safety. With the assistance of the Student Support Team, the teacher will:

- provide first aid where required;
- ensure that all their students are located together (as far as possible) and under teacher supervision;
- locate any missing students;
- inform the Warden of the situation and student/other needs;
- follow instructions from the Warden, including evacuation orders;  
assist mobility impaired staff, students or others;
- complete a roll call or head count each time the class is moved to a new location; and
- maintain calm as much as possible.

### First Aid Officer on duty

When notified of an incident or emergency, the duty First Aid Officer will collect the First Aid Kit, assess patient for first aid treatment, provide basic first aid, and ensure that an ambulance is called if expert medical treatment is required. The First Aid Officer's duties are described in more detail in the College's **First Aid Policy**. All staff trained in first aid are expected to render assistance where required.



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### Onsite evacuation assembly area

***The primary onsite evacuation assembly area is identified as the carpark near Swan Plumbing, as indicated on the evacuation plan in the Emergency Management Plan.***

Evacuation will be enacted on the instructions of the Chief Warden. No-one is to re-enter the premises until the All Clear has been given.

When an emergency develops offsite (such as on camps or excursions), the Teacher-in-Charge will be responsible for determining a safe offsite assembly area.

### Shelter-in-place

The College has identified the Multi-purpose Room (refer to the Emergency Management Plan) as the location for shelter-in-place. All staff, students and others will be instructed by the Warden to move calmly to this location when instructed to do so by the Chief Warden.

### Bushfire Management

The College been identified as a school that is **not** on the Bushfire At-Risk Register and is not in a bushfire prone area. However, as part of the College's Emergency Management Policy, some precautionary strategies will be implemented on a routine basis to ensure the safety of the College premises and its population.

The College will adhere to the VRQA Guidelines on Bushfire Preparedness at all times as set out in this policy, including when planning camps and excursions (please refer to the College's ***Camps and Excursions Policy***).

The College will ensure that:

- a schedule is implemented for monitoring and removal of materials that may be easily ignited including branches overhanging buildings, debris and rubbish around and under buildings including gutters and dry grass and vegetation;
- safe storage of the limited flammable materials kept onsite;
- building exits are continuously kept clear of obstructions;
- assembly points are designated and allow appropriate access to emergency equipment; and
- there is access to facilities and grounds for emergency vehicles.

The College will make routine inspections and maintenance checks to ensure its premises are fire safe.

### Continual Improvement (Debriefing and lessons management)

Formal incident debriefs are required for all events. Formal debriefs may be conducted for any other events where a debrief may hold value for continual improvement. A written debrief report will be produced for each formal debrief, outlining the series of events, the timeline, what aspects of the response were positive or effective, and what aspects require improvement. Initial actions



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to address actions from the debrief will be documented and assigned; these often include updating or amending an EMP or undertaking further training or exercising in a specific area. Incident debriefs are part of the College's lesson management procedure and are distinct from incident investigations for other purposes (such as OHS investigations).

### Emergency Management Plan review

The Executive Principal will ensure that Emergency Management Policy and the Emergency Management Plan are reviewed annually, and immediately after any critical incident or emergency. Incidents and Emergencies will be recorded in the Accident and Incident Register.

The Executive Principal will also review risk controls and update risk assessment matrices after any critical incident or emergency.

### Communication

1. This policy will be communicated to the College community through the College website.
2. College staff will be informed of their critical incident and emergency management responsibilities through:
  - attending the College induction program for new staff;
  - receiving (or accessing) a copy of this policy and the Emergency Management Plan at the first staff meeting at start of the College year;
  - the College Teacher Handbook (for teachers);
  - participating in evacuation and fire drills at least four times a year; and
  - training programs and professional learning activities on critical incident and emergency management procedures.
3. The wider College community will receive pertinent updates through the College newsletter.

<b>Related Forms</b>
Emergency Management Plan FT019
<b>Related Policies</b>



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- Accident and Incident Reporting
- Anaphylaxis Management
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention
- Camps and Excursions
- Duty of Care
- Supervision Policy and External Provider Procedure
- First Aid
- Child Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy

### Relevant Legislation

- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)



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<b>Document Number:</b>	PP029	<b>Developed by:</b>	Compliance
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Executive Principal	<b>Approver Name &amp; Role:</b>	PRC Board
<b>Evidence of Approval:</b>	16/03/2026	<b>Version No:</b>	V2026.2
<b>Review Due To:</b>	Internal Review	<b>Date Approved:</b>	
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	16/03/2027		
<b>Department:</b> Compliance and Governance		<b>School Standards:</b> STD-Care,Safety and Welfare of Students	
		<b>RTO Standards:</b> Guideline 6 – Child Safe Standards	

### Revision Record:

Date	Version	Revision description
14/02/2022	V2022.01	Initial Policy
16/03/2026	V2026.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re written the introduction</li> <li>• Introduction of new sections Governance and Continual Improvement</li> <li>• Added Version history and relevant standards</li> <li>• Updated the governance section</li> <li>• Added Continual Improvement (Debriefing and lessons management)</li> <li>• Added Incident Management Team (IMT) definition</li> <li>• Updated the definition of Notifiable Incidents</li> </ul>