



Child Safety Policy and Procedures -PP009

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.

The College provides a safe and supportive environment where all students can safely participate in the educational experiences offered by the College.

Purpose

The Child Safety Policy and Procedure demonstrates our commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly College, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 - Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in Schools and n boarding premises which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

The Policy informs the College community of our obligations to act safely and appropriately towards students and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to College Board members.
- applies in all physical and online environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use and those provided through third-party providers such as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).
- should be read together with other College child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes.

Definitions:

Child	means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.
Child abuse	includes: a) any act committed against a child involving:



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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a sexual offence or 2. an offence under section 49M of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming) <p>b) the infliction, on a child, of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. physical violence or 2. serious emotional or psychological harm serious neglect of a child <p>c) the serious neglect of a child.</p>
Child abuse (emotional)	Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated, or frightened by threats. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health.
Child abuse (physical)	Physical child abuse is any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. It can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking or burning and assault with implements and female genital mutilation.
Child abuse (sexual)	Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can include a wide range of sexual activity. Sexual offences are governed by the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
Child Safety	Child safety includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.
Child-connected work	<p>Child connected work means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present b) for the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorised by the provider of school boarding premises in a school boarding environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present. c) Note: Working with Children clearance is required by law only for people who engage in child-related work. Schools and school boarding premises may also choose to require suitability checks (including Working with Children clearance) for visitors and volunteers engaging in child-connected work.
Child-related work	The Worker Screening Act 2020 defines 'child-related work' as work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child, irrespective



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	<p>of whether that contact is supervised or not, and in any of the child-related occupational fields listed in the Act.</p> <p>The definition of direct contact includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact. 'Child-related work' may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary).</p> <p>There are exemptions from the Act including people under 18 years of age, parent volunteers whose child ordinarily participates in the activity, sworn police officers, teachers currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, and visiting workers who do not ordinarily reside and perform child-related work in Victoria, among others.</p>
Governing body (College Board)	<p>Governing body is defined in the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 to mean:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in relation to a government school, the school council constituted in relation to that school b) in relation to a non-Government school, the person or body responsible for the governance, conduct or management of the school
School/college environment	<p>School/college environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A campus of the school b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services) c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. camps 2. approved homestay accommodation 3. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or (iv) sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.
School governing authority In this document referred to as the College Board	<p>School governing authority means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor • the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the Education and Training Reform Act (ETR Act)



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.
School staff (College staff)	<p>School staff means:</p> <p>in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employed under Part 2.4 of the ETR Act in the Government teaching service employed under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work in a non-Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.
Student	Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the school.
Volunteer	Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school.

For more definition details please refer to: [Child Safe Standards - definitions | vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-definitions)

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Plenty River College is a child safe organisation which welcomes young people who may have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education and their families. We are committed to providing environments where students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our settings and environments. We promote positive relationships between students and staff and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in the College environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly in line with the College's policies and procedures.



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We are committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal students, those from migrant and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQA+), students in out of home care settings and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at the College, and any instances identified are addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in the College has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety. We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Roles and Responsibilities

a. College Board

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, College Board members will:

- Champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader College community;
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at College Board meetings. Child safety will be discussed at every Board meeting to ensure that a culture of child safety is embedded, and College Board members are informed and understand the issues;
- Undertake annual training on child safety. The College Board will refer to the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on the [Victoria Government Child Safe Standards website](#) as appropriate;
- Approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to College Board employees and members;
- When appointing College Board members, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe.
- Provide training and information on child safety to staff, College Board members and volunteers, as appropriate;
- Analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and any systemic failures;
- Review, evaluate and endorse Child Safe policies, procedures and practices on an annual basis or after an incident;
- Report results of reviews for staff, volunteers, students, parents and the College community;
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement.

b. Executive Principal

The Executive Principal is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Executive Principal (or nominee) will:



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- Ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed;
- Model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing;
- Enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered;
- Reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students;
- Promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the College community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and College Board meetings;
- Facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers or contractors (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of, and responding to abuse;
- Create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities;
- Report instances of child abuse to the relevant authorities in accordance with the College's reporting obligations including mandatory reporting, reportable conduct, failure to disclose and failure to protect;
- Adhere to the College policies including this policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- Create an appropriate Child Safe Risk Register (endorsed by the College Board);
- Recruit staff, provide appropriate induction and training as well as ensure that all College practices are child safe;
- Maintain and manage records retention and disposal;
- Induct and/or supervise visitors, volunteers and contractors to the College.

c. College staff, volunteers and contractors

All staff, volunteers and contractors will:

- Understand and comply with all policies and practices designed to protect students and to report harm including mandatory reporting;
- Participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the College, and always follow the College child safety and wellbeing policies;
- Identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with this policy and Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy ensuring compliance with the Four Critical Actions for Schools outlined in Appendix 1-4
- Ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives;
- Implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students;
- Contribute to the development and review of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and act in accordance with the Code of Conduct at all times.

d. External providers

All external providers engaged by PRC to provide a course of study as part of the senior secondary curriculum must comply with Ministerial Order 1359 and the duty of care obligation and reporting requirements. The delivery of courses may take place on college premises or offsite.



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e. Specific staff child safety responsibilities

The Executive Principal has nominated the Team Leader - Student Wellbeing as child safety champion to support the College Board and Executive Principal to implement the child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#). In summary these are to:

- promote child safety and wellbeing,
- provide support and guidance,
- provide induction and training program including ensuring annual mandatory reporting training is completed,
- monitor, review and report any child safety concerns or incidents.

Team Leader - Student Wellbeing is the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

The child safety champion is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safe Policy and Procedures PP009.

Anyone in the College community should approach the Executive Principal or Team Leader - Student Wellbeing if they have any concerns about the College's compliance with the Child Safe Policy.

The child safety champion is responsible for informing the College community about this policy and making it publicly available.

Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Child Safety Risk Register R005.

The Executive Principal has established a Leadership Team comprising of the Executive Principal, the Assistant Principal/Curriculum Leader, Compliance and Operations Manager and Team Leader-Student Wellbeing. The Leadership Team meets regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing and also monitor the Child Safety Risk Register R005.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the College.

The College expects all employees, volunteers and contractors to proactively ensure the safety and wellbeing of students at all times, to identify concerns about child safety and wellbeing and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of any student at the College. All staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements.



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Managing Risks to Child Safety

The College identifies, assesses and manages risks to child safety and wellbeing on the College premises and online. These risks are managed in accordance with this policy (Child safety policy and procedures) and Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for excursions and services the College contracts through third party providers.

The College Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. The leadership team monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register as required or at least annually and have these endorsed by the College Board.

PRC has:

- developed and implemented risk management strategies that
 - focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the College,
 - consider the College environment, the programs it delivers and the needs of students,
- recorded the risks and the actions the College takes to reduce or remove them (risk controls and risk treatments),
- each year monitors and reviews child safety and wellbeing risk and assesses the effectiveness of risk controls.

Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment (Standard 1)

The College is committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our planning, policies and activities.

The College uses the following strategies to promote Aboriginal cultural safety:

- equip staff, students, volunteers and the College community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students;
- adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated;
- address any instances of racism within the College environment with appropriate consequences;
- begin events and meetings with an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item
- where possible invite a local traditional elder to provide a traditional Welcome to Country at Graduation and Presentation Nights
- actively support participation and inclusion in the College by Aboriginal students and their families;
- ensure College policies, procedures, systems and processes create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal students and their families.



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- build school wide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes through our curriculum, excursions and incursions.

Child Safety and Wellbeing is Embedded in Leadership, Governance and Culture (Standard 2)

The College protects its students from abuse and creates an environment where students feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. The College is committed to establishing a culture where child abuse and harm is not tolerated, and to implementing effective systems and processes to reduce and manage risks. We ensure that students, families and staff know what to do if they observe, or are subjected to, abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

The Executive Principal is responsible for working with the College Board and staff to build and maintain a culture of transparency, inclusiveness and awareness.

The Team Leader - Student Wellbeing's key responsibilities as the child safety champion include:

- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to the College Board, staff, students and parents;
- Liaising with the Executive Principal and other College leaders to ensure a collaborative, transparent and unified approach to child safety;
- Leading the development of the College's child safe culture including being a child safe champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

The College Board has an overall responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students in the College. The College's policies, events, activities and management practices consider the Child Safe standards.

The College Board receives training on the Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct. Training includes guidance on:

- Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse,
- Child safety risks in the College learning environment,
- Child safety policies, procedures, codes and practices of the College.

The College Board is responsible for raising awareness across the College and must:

- Ensure the College child safety policies are known and used appropriately,
- Ensure College actions are reviewed as to the effectiveness of the strategies put into place and to revise accordingly,
- Ensure the College's child safety policy is reviewed annually,
- Ensure regular briefing sessions are conducted for College staff members to ensure a high degree of awareness of the Child Safe Standards and the Child Safety Policy,
- Ensure the Child Safety Policy is available publicly,
- Ensure the College child safety records and related matters are kept (refer to the Accuracy and Integrity of Student Records Policy),
- Encourage amongst staff a culture of listening to students and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any way to protect them.



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Student Empowerment (Standard 3)

To support child safety, the College works to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the College to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our Student Code of Conduct, our values and our student care and wellbeing policies.

Students are informed of their rights through the enrolment process, curriculum delivery, the Student & Parent/Guardian Handbook, College policies, newsletters and information on the College website, to give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at College Reception and on the website.

When the College is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we listen to the complaints' account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents, carers or guardians, as appropriate) informed about progress

The College seeks to empower students by:

- informing students about their rights, including their rights to safety, information and participation;
- recognising the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help students feel safe and be less isolated;
- developing a culture that encourages student participation and input via student voice and respond to what students say;
- giving students opportunities to participate, and respond to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement;
- offering students access to sexual abuse prevention programs and related information in an age-appropriate way (as appropriate).

Family Engagement (Standard 4)

Our families and the College community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping students to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, we are committed to providing families and our school community with accessible information about our child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

The College creates opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

The College does this by:



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- Making available our child safety policies and procedures for students and parents on our website and in our Student & Parent/Guardian Handbook.
- Seeking input via parent surveys, our school website and the school newsletter.
- Providing new enrolments with enrolment packs that include information about child safety, the College complaints processes and how to raise concerns.
- Holding open days or hosting community events/graduation ceremony to welcome families and the broader community.
- Providing regular opportunities for parents, guardians or carers to engage with staff to discuss their child's experiences at college.
- Incorporating child safety questions in parent, carer, guardian surveys to measure awareness and confidence in the College's child safety approach and to support ongoing improvement.
- Displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters across the school main entrances and classrooms.
- Ensuring students, College staff, and members of the College community know who to contact if they have a concern about child safety.
- Translating child safety information into multiple languages where necessary to reflect the College community or providing an interpreter for conversations related to child safety depending on the needs of the family.
- Reporting the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff, community and families and students to show transparency and accountability.
- Communicating with and appropriately involving families at all stages of the process if a concern or complaint is raised.
- Regular newsletters or email/text communications to inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.

Diversity and Equity (Standard 5)

As a child safe organisation, PRC celebrates the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promotes respectful environments that are free from discrimination. We recognise that every student has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal young people
- young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- young people with disabilities
- young people unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

The College Child Safety Equity and Diversity Policy, Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy, Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy, Duty of Care Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct provide more information about the measures in place to support all students including diversity and equity.



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Other strategies and actions we employ to support diversity and equity include:

- Induction and training for staff and volunteers to ensure they understand the diverse circumstances of students and how to support and respond to vulnerable students
- A complaints process that is culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

Suitable Staff and Volunteers (Standard 6)

The College applies a robust child safe recruitment, induction, training and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers are suitable to work with young people.

College recruitment processes are designed to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to engage highly skilled people. Selection criteria and advertisements clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. We encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and from people with a disability.

a) Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, the College considers the applicants':

- motivation to work with children (professional or personal)
- relevant and verifiable child-related work experience
- understanding of professional boundaries
- communication skills.

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children Clearance card or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Refer to the College Staff Recruitment and Personnel Procedure for further detail.

b) Staff induction

All newly appointed staff is expected to participate in a child safety induction program. The program includes a focus on the:

- Child Safety Policy and Procedure (this document)
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Complaints and Concerns Policy
- Child Safety Equity & Diversity Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) training



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- any other child safety and wellbeing information that College leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

c) Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work are supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards students is safe and appropriate.

Staff are monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This is done by regular performance reviews.

Inappropriate behaviour towards students is managed swiftly and in accordance with our policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing are paramount.

The following strategies are used for the ongoing supervision and management of staff:

- Conduct a risk assessment to determine the level of ongoing supervision and management necessary, considering the physical layout of the College any identified physical risks.
- Leadership Team regularly walk-around classrooms and the College grounds.
- Staff contracts set out standards for child safety performance and state how performance is assessed.
- Child safety and wellbeing goals are included in staff professional development plans.
- Child safety and wellbeing are a regular agenda item for staff meetings at all levels and focus on elements of the child safety framework, such as:
 - identifying grooming and other behaviour that could cause harm to a student
 - understanding what types of behaviour should be reported to school leaders
 - how to respond to an incident, disclosure or suspicions of child abuse
 - identifying risks in the school's physical and online environment and who to report them to.
- Conduct formal and informal observations of staff working with students.
- Provide feedback to staff on how to support student's safety and wellbeing through regular check-ins or as appropriate.
- Ensure the Executive Principal manages a staff member whose behaviour raises child safety concerns. This includes keeping records of conversations and following up and monitoring staff behaviour after immediate concerns have been addressed.
- Take early action to provide feedback to staff and correct any concerning or unsafe conduct to prevent harm before it occurs.
- Ensure systems are in place for recording information on staff conduct and any concerns raised.

d) Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteer Policy and Procedures Including Child Safety which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.



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Volunteers receive an induction regarding child safety and wellbeing appropriate to the nature their role. Induction includes information about the Child Safety Code of Conduct and where relevant to the role, the procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse. Volunteers engaged in child-connected work will be made aware of their responsibilities to students, information sharing and reporting obligations and record keeping requirements.

Complaints and Reporting Processes (Standard 7)

Plenty River College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, carers or guardians, and the College community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints, concerns and responding. This is documented in our Complaints and Grievances Policy and Child Safety Complaints and Concerns Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including College Board members) must follow our Child Safety Policy and Procedures and Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy

Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, College staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the College.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant staff have been informed, we ensure we follow:

- the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending.
- The four Critical Actions: **respond to child abuse in the family**
- The four Critical Actions: **respond to child abuse in the community**

Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness (Standard 8)

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and well-being induction, the College ensures staff participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training, delivered at least annually, includes guidance on:

- our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices including this policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct,
- completing the e-learning module Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting annually,
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students,
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm,



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- how to build culturally safe environments for students,
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations,
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety is tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

Other strategies and actions the College takes include:

- Providing training and information to volunteers engaged in child-connected work that is appropriate to their role that equips them with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe.
- Supporting staff and volunteers to implement the Child Safety Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct where these policies apply to their role and responsibilities

To ensure our College Board is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the College Board is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- Child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- The suite of child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices.

Physical and Online Environments (Standard 9)

The College recognises that identifying and managing risks is an important part of keeping students safe. This includes considering the growing risks posed by online domains which schools also need to actively manage.

The College ensures this standard is met by:

- Supervising students in the physical environment of the College, including toilet areas, during the school day, breaks and before and after school.
- Identifying and mitigating child safety risks at the College site including buildings, grounds, classrooms, corridors, pickup/drop off areas and areas that are out of sight.
- Using CCTV to monitor activity across the building.
- Implementing an approval process for excursions or offsite activities to ensure supervision ratios are appropriate according to activity and cohort attending.
- Wherever practical, visit each RTO provider which the College may use as part of the processes of selecting a suitable provider, to discuss child safety matters and to perform a risk assessment.
- Ensuring external providers, engaged by the College, understand and act in accordance with this policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Providing visitors, volunteers and contractors with a copy of this policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring all visitors, volunteers and contractors attending the College register at Reception, display an appropriate visitor/volunteer badge and provide a Working with Children Clearance card.



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- Requiring parents, carers and guardians, students and staff adhere to relevant codes of conduct which outline safe methods for online communication between staff and students.
- Implementing the Digital Technologies & Social Media Policy and Student Chromebook Agreement and informing students and their families about appropriate use of technology.
- Promoting safe and responsible use of online platforms.
- Ensuring security settings for internet and social media use are in place.
- Only using images of students for marketing and/or social media that have been approved by parents, carers or guardians for that purpose.
- Maintaining and reviewing the Child Safe Risk Register related to the physical and online environment.
- Ensuring teaching staff adhere to the VIT Code of Conduct principles, particularly those in relation to personal relationships with students or their families

Review of Child Safety Practices (Standard 10)

Plenty River College has established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

The College:

- Reviews and evaluates child safety policies and strategies annually or after any significant child safety incident,
- Analyses complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systematic failures to inform continuous improvement,
- Shares review findings with the College community.

The College implements this standard by:

- Monitoring and managing child safety risks using the Child Safe Risk Register.
- Determining the causes of any child safety incidents and monitoring for repeat issues or systemic failures.
- Developing a work plan to review and update policies and procedures.
- Including students, families, staff and volunteers in surveys or focus groups to review the accessibility, level of awareness and effectiveness of child-safe policies and procedures.
- Making review findings and recommendations easy to access and understand.
- Including findings from child safety reviews in child safety training for staff and volunteers.
- Communicating review outcomes to students in age-appropriate ways.
- Informing the school community of any child safety policy changes where relevant or applicable

Implementation of Child Safety Practices (Standard 11)

Plenty River College clearly documents and communicates its approach to child safety to ensure all adults involved with students are aware of their role and responsibilities in relation to child safety.

The College:

- Publishes all child safety policies on our website.



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- Integrates child safety into staff and volunteer induction and training processes.
- Provides training for staff, including the College Board, on these policies and procedures.
- Displays PROTECT Child Safety posters in various locations around the College.
- Nominates and supports a staff member as the child safety champion to promote, monitor and report on the implementation of the College's child safety strategies.
- Manages child safety risks relating to child abuse using the Child Safety Risk Register.
- Regularly communicates child safety matters to the College community via the website and/or College Newsletter.
- Seeks feedback from staff, students, families and community members in the creation of policies.
- Trains staff, volunteers and the College Board on College policies and their responsibilities

Privacy, Information Sharing and Records Management

The College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how we collect, use and disclose information, refer to the College Privacy Policy.

The College acknowledges that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing. We manage our records in accordance with Accuracy and Integrity of Student Records Policy and the Public Records Act 1973 (Vic).

1. Communication

The College communicates its child safety strategies through:

- the College website, ensuring key child safety policies are accessible online, including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure;
- the Staff Handbook.
- the Student and Parent/Guardian Handbook
- induction programs and professional development or training programs for new staff and College Board members;
- direct provision of this policy to new staff, volunteers (if applicable), College Board members, parents, carers and guardians, and students;
- displaying PROTECT around the College;
- providing relevant updates in the College Newsletter;
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and College Board meetings.

2. Related Policies

This Child Safety Policy is to be read in conjunction with related policies, procedures, and codes. These include:

- Accuracy and Integrity of Student Records Policy PP010
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy,



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- Duty of Care Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy
- Child Safety Risk Register
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Digital Technologies & Social Media Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Child Safety Recruitment Policy
- Maintaining Staff Register Policy
- Student Behaviour Management Policy
- Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy
- Volunteer Policy and procedures
- Visitor Policy and Procedure

3. Resources

- Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools
- <https://www.vic.gov.au/protect-resources-schools> Resources for schools – Practical resources to help schools when identifying and responding to child abuse including posters, reference sheets, template and guidance
- Four Critical Actions for Schools: To identify and respond to child abuse
- Recording your actions: Independent Schools
 - Identify and respond to child abuse by an adult engaged in an independent school, including grooming
 - Identify and respond to child abuse in the family
 - Identify and respond to student-to student abuse
 - Identify and respond to child abuse in the community



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Document Number:	PP009	Developed by:	Compliance
Policy Owner:	Executive Principal	Approver Name & Role:	PRC Board
Evidence of Approval:	Board Meeting	Version No:	V2024.02
Review Due To:	Continuous improvement	Date Approved:	09/09/2024
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Department: Compliance and Governance		School Standards: STD-Care,Safety and Welfare of Students	
		RTO Standards: Guideline 6 – Child Safe Standards	


Revision Record:

Date	Version	Revision description
08/8/2023	V2023.01	Initial Policy
09/09/2024	V2024.2	New template with Version Control. Updated the details of the nominated child safety champion. Updated details of the relevant policies and Procedures. Improved the process related to seeking feedback from the wider community. Added reference to relevant Standards
	V2024.2.1	Minor – Edits: Replaced the Four Critical action with Current Four Critical actions tailored to independent schools Victoria Updated the Appendix with relevant information



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Appendix 1: 4- Critical Actions



4 CRITICAL ACTIONS

● Identify | ▲ Report | ● Support | ■ Refer

Identify and respond to student-to-student abuse

Provide the right support at the right time

At all times, you must:

- **Respond to an emergency** – Call 000. Preserve evidence. Keep students safe.
- **Adapt to changing circumstances** – Be flexible. Repeat/take different actions.
- **Document your actions.**

Identify child abuse

All staff

You can identify abuse by:

- witnessing an incident
- receiving a disclosure
- observing:
 - physical or behavioural signs
 - something concerning online or on a device.

If you form a reasonable belief that a student has been, or is at risk of being abused (including harmful sexual behaviour), inform school leadership.

Information Sharing staff/Child Link users

- Request information from Information Sharing Entities or check Child Link.

School leadership/nominated staff

- **Report**
- **Support** and **Refer**

You may need to take actions in support and refer at the same time.

Harmful sexual behaviour

Contact local sexual assault services for support and advice.

Report abuse to authorities

If you believe a crime against a child has been committed, report to:

- Victoria Police.

For harmful online content, report to:

- **esafety.gov.au/report**

You can contact Independent Schools Victoria for support and advice on child safety related matters, including in you are unsure and need advice on reporting.

Engage parents/carers

- If Victoria Police are involved, seek their clearance on what can be shared before you contact parents/carers.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible (same day preferred).

Harmful sexual behaviour

- If Victoria Police are not involved, you can contact your local sexual assault service for advice to engage parents/carers.

Support students through your school

- Support impacted student/s.
- Engage students and parents/carers to find the best support.
- Tailor to diverse needs.
- Use information sharing.
- Continue as long as necessary.

Refer to community services

- Engage student/s and parents/carers to find and connect with suitable services.
- Use information sharing.

Harmful sexual behaviour

- Contact your local sexual assault service for support for students and parent/s/carers.
- If a student is using harmful sexual behaviour and their parents/carers are not willing or able to help the student connect to a service, call Child Protection.



Key contacts

Child Protection
8:45am to 5pm, Mon-Fri

North **1300 598 521**
South **1300 555 526**
East **1300 360 452**
West **1300 360 462**
After hours **13 12 78**

Independent Schools Victoria
→ **03 9825 7200**
→ **enquiries@isvic.edu.au**

Victoria Police
→ **000** (emergencies)
→ **131 444** or local police station (non-emergencies)

eSafety Commissioner
→ **esafety.gov.au/report**

Local sexual assault service

📍
📞



vic.gov.au/identify-student-to-student-abuse-schools






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Appendix 2: 4 Critical Actions Staff Poster

PROTECT

4 CRITICAL ACTIONS

Identify | Support | Refer | Report

Staff must use the 4 Critical Actions to identify and respond to child abuse.

 vic.gov.au/protect



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Appendix 3: Identify and respond to student-to-student abuse



Everyone should feel safe

If you don't feel safe at school or anywhere else – tell an adult you trust.

They will help you

vic.gov.au/protect 🔍

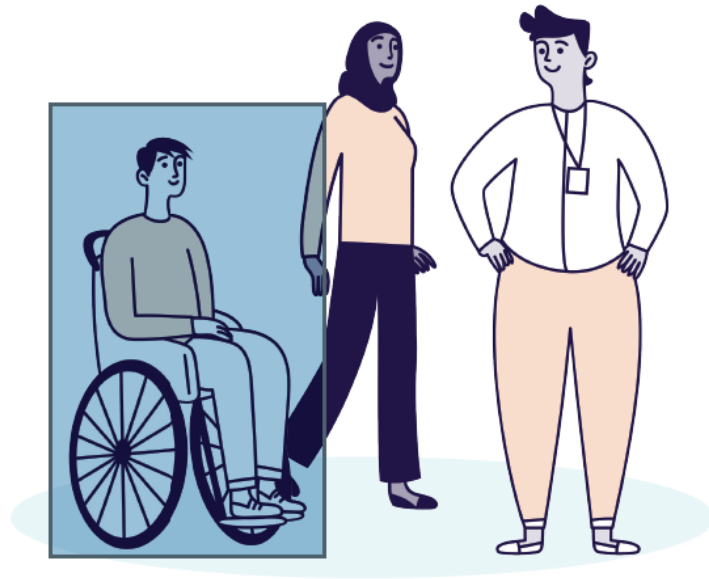
PROTECT

Student Poster-for older students or higher reading level



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Appendix 4: Identify and respond to student-to-student abuse Older Student



Everyone has the right to be safe and protected from abuse

If someone is making you feel unsafe or afraid at school, home or anywhere else – tell an adult you trust at your school.

They will help you.

vic.gov.au/protect 



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