

## **Safeguarding Committee Overview**

The Partnered Parishes of Sacred Heart Diamond Creek, St. Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North and St. Mary's Greensborough, hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as fundamental to our Parish life. Our commitment to their safety and that of all people is drawn from, and inherent to, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the dignity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel. In living out this commitment, we adhere to Government and Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne requirements around providing for the safety of our children and young people.

Under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, parish leadership is required to establish a Safeguarding Committee which provides advice to, and works with, the leadership of the parish, to ensure policies, processes and practices are in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Whilst highly important, the Safeguarding Committee is an advisory committee only. This means that committee members are not themselves subject to the legal obligations under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 or the Child Safety Standards made under it by virtue of them being a member of the Committee – the legal obligation remains with the Parish Priest.

An Establishment Committee was formed in 2020. This Committee has developed policies, practices and procedures, based on the requirements and guidelines of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. These lay the foundation and resources for the ongoing work of the Safeguarding Committee. Current members of the Establishment Committee; Fr Steven Rigo, Jacinta Bright, Sr Margaret Sapsford will continue as members of the Safeguarding Committee.

### **Role of the Safeguarding Committee**

- Promote child safety within the community and foster an understanding of its importance.
- Work collaboratively with parish leadership to promote the safety of children and young people.
- Implement, maintain and/or review child safety processes and procedures.
- Engage in and/or review risk management processes.
- Involve children and young people (and their families) in decision-making and planning to promote child safety.
- Ensure that reporting processes for concerns and/or allegations are well communicated across the parish, and act as a first point of contact in relation to child safety concerns, reports or allegations.
- Participate in and/or deliver child safety information and training.
- Monitor ongoing compliance with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework which encompasses the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

### **Procedures**

- The Committee will have representation from each of the three parishes.
- The Committee will meet a minimum of four times per year.
- The Committee will report progress quarterly to the relevant governance body within the parishes.
- Documentation (e.g. meeting minutes, correspondence, risk assessments, communication) in relation to the Safeguarding Committee is to be kept by each parish and stored securely.
- The Parish Priest, working with the Safeguarding Committee, will summarise its compliance with the requirements of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework on an annual basis (self-assessment/audit process) and present it to the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM).