

The Partnered Catholic Parishes of:

Sacred Heart Diamond Creek, St. Mary's Greensborough & St. Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North



13 September 2020

Dear Parishioner

Today has been designated as Child Protection Day. Therefore, it is most fitting that I write today to inform you about what we as Partnered Parishes have been working towards in relation to this very important matter.

As a community of people invested in the Christian principles of love, care and respect of others, along with our moral, ethical and legal obligations, the Partnered Parishes of Sacred Heart Diamond Creek, St. Mary's Greensborough and St. Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North, are currently working towards developing policies and practices to provide for the safety of our young people.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, as well as the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry, have very much highlighted the importance for us to have a proactive approach to protecting our young. In responding to this need, an Establishment Committee for the Safeguarding of Children and Young People, with representatives from each of the Partnered Parishes, along with Parish Leadership, was recently formed. This committee has been invested with the responsibility to undertake work in accordance with Government and Archdiocese of Melbourne requirements around developing a culture, policies and practices to provide for the safety of children and young people.

Members of the Establishment Committee are Jacinta Bright and Sr. Margaret Sapsford, Parish Pastoral Associates, Leon Kempen (St Mary's), Chris Aicher (St. Thomas the Apostle), Wendy and Ray McEvoy (Sacred Heart), Parish representatives and Denise Chang Faux, Parish Employee. I have also invited Helen Anderson to be the convener of this Committee and I am also an active member. Once policies have been developed by the Establishment Committee, a Committee for the Safeguarding of Children and Young People with representatives from each of the three Parishes, will be formed to implement, monitor and review policies and practices.

Our Parish commitment to protecting children and young people extends to clergy, employees and volunteers. As Parish Priest I recognize and very much appreciate and value the committed work and contributions of all who give their time and energy to building our three communities. The policies and practices that are being developed and implemented are in no means meant to diminish my appreciation of, or confidence in all who work and volunteer in our Parishes, but are vital in promoting a culture that actively provides for the safety of children and young people. I feel confident that all in our communities will applaud this aspiration.

The first document that the Establishment Committee has worked on is a Parish Commitment Statement. Its purpose is to inform and guide us as people dedicated to keeping our children and young people safe. As we all have a responsibility to our young people, I attach for you this document and trust that you will feel that this Statement is a commitment that you too, are able to own as a Parishioner.

As further information becomes available and policies and resources are developed, they will be disseminated to assist and inform all in our Parishes. I, together with Frs Tao and Lenin and any of the Leadership Team, of the three parishes are happy to receive any feedback that may help and inform the work that is currently being undertaken by the Establishment Committee for the Safeguarding of Children and Young People.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steven Rigo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'S'.

Fr. Steven Rigo
Parish Priest.