



St Christopher's Parish

Safeguarding Information - Volunteers

Introduction to Safeguarding

Thank you for giving your time to volunteer within our parish. You play a vital role in assisting the programs and activities within our parish that grow our faith and sense of community. You also have an important part to play in ensuring that we are an inclusive and welcoming community which enables all people to grow and develop in their faith free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Safeguarding Standards

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse highlighted the need to implement a set of standards for all organizations in order to ensure children's and young people's safety. There are three frameworks that inform the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Framework. These are the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, the National Principles of Child Safe Organizations and the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

The Safeguarding or Child Safety Committee is an advisory body to assist the parish priest in implementing and working towards compliance with these standards.

Statement of Commitment

The parish has a published commitment to a shared mission of providing a safe environment so children and young people are safeguarded from harm. This is in the foyer of the church and on the website – Child Safety.



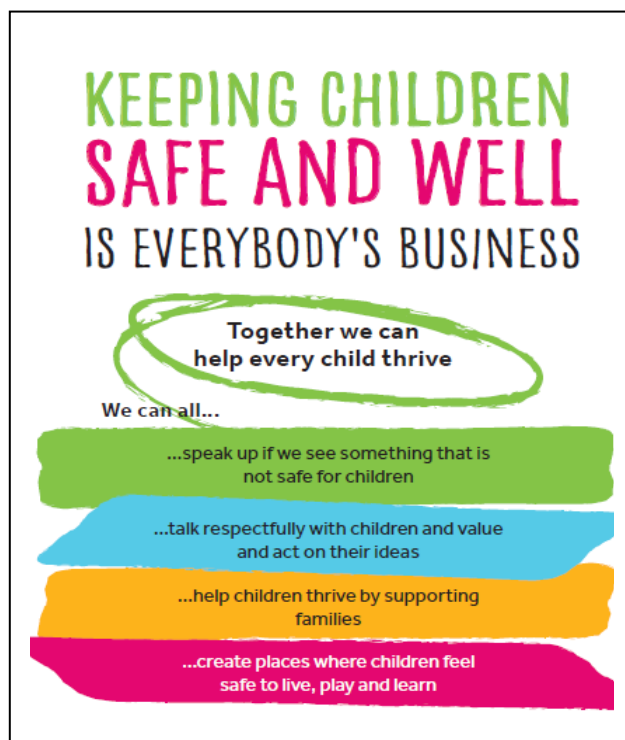


Safeguarding Culture

Within the parish, safeguarding is **EVERYBODY'S** responsibility. By working together, with everyone doing their part, the parish can be a safe and inclusive place for all children, young people and adults at risk, regardless of cultural background and circumstances.

Safe People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>WWCC, PC, recruitment processes</i>• <i>Induction & Training for volunteers</i>• <i>Code of Conduct Declarations</i>
Safe Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assessments of physical and online risks</i>• <i>Risk Assessments of programs and activities</i>• <i>Response to any incidents or reports of abuse</i>
Safe Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Provide information and resources to parents and families</i>• <i>Provide opportunities for feedback and improvement</i>

Empower children and young people by creating opportunities to involve them in decision making for programs, activities and events that affect them. This can be a significant protective factor in preventing abuse.



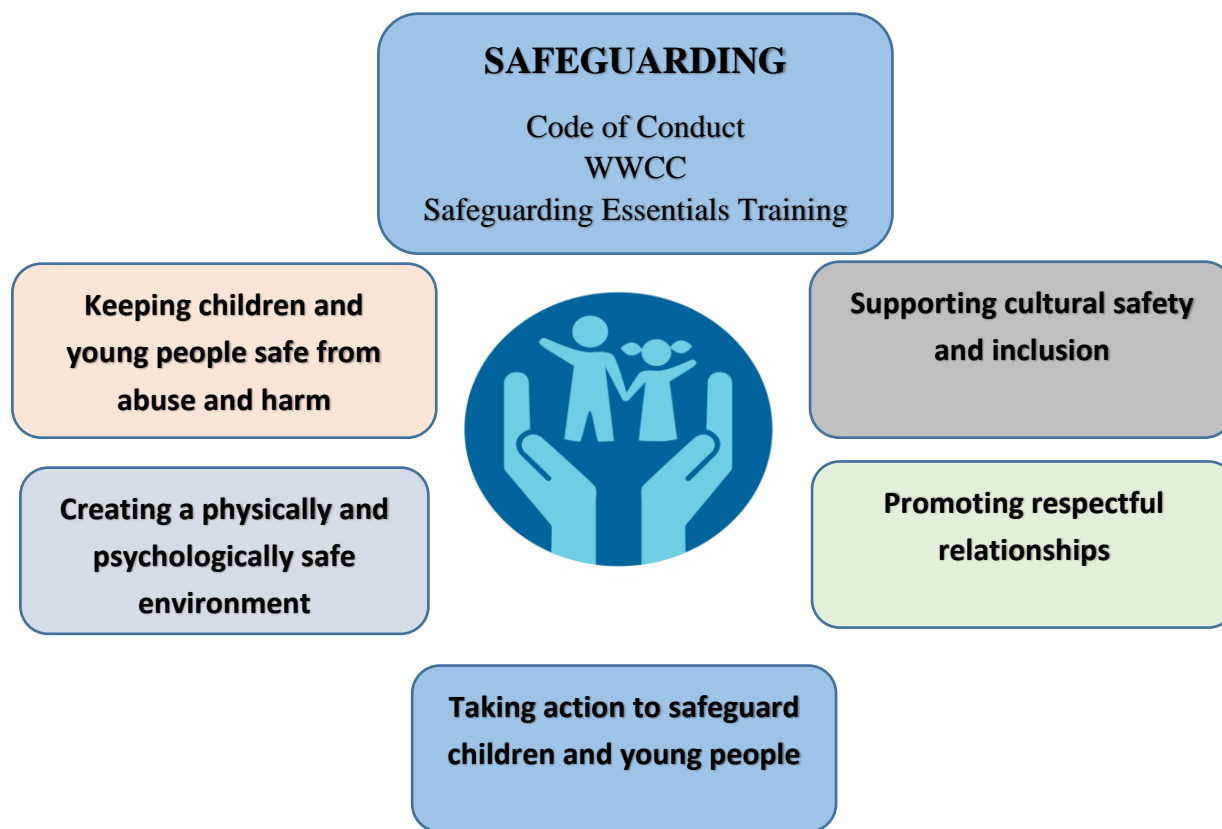
Parents must be engaged as critical partners in promoting the safety of children and young people.

Volunteers can also play their part in developing the parish culture of safety.



Safe People

All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to sign a [Code of Conduct Declaration](#), have a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and to do the [Safeguarding Essentials Training](#) to show that there is a personal understanding of and commitment to child safety. Even if you do not work with children or young people in your role within the parish, you can do your part to support a safe and welcoming environment for all.



Child Safety/Safeguarding Committee - *The Child Safety Committee needs your help*

If you serve in a ministry that directly involves children and young people, you are a vital means of communicating the parish's commitment to their safety. As you are dealing directly with them, you can also provide feedback to the committee if you know of any concerns or have suggestions for change.

If you serve in a ministry that does not directly deal with children, you can still help by ensuring that all families are welcomed into our multicultural community, that the environment is safe and that people behave with care and respect.

The Child Safety Committee welcomes any feedback or suggestions. They can be contacted on csc@syndalcatholic.org.au. Resources and information are available on the parish website/child safety. More information, training webinars etc are available through [Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne / Safeguarding](#). Induction Powerpoint - [CAM Safeguarding Induction](#)



Responding to and reporting abuse

Abuse is an act or failure to act that endangers a child or young person's health, well-being or development. In order to protect our children and young people, it is important that everyone knows how to recognize child abuse and the process for reporting any concerns.

"If a clergyman, employee or volunteer sees or hears something that constitutes abuse or forms a reasonable belief that abuse is occurring, they must, under the reportable conduct scheme, report the allegation." The attached poster outlines the processes for reporting any incident of concern.

There is also a parish specific process in the foyer and on the website. You can report any concerns to:

- Call Fr Ralph – 98028538
- Safeguarding Committee
csc@syndalcatholic.org.au

Any members of the Child Safety Committee can be contacted if you have any issues, concerns or suggestions that you would like to discuss in a safe and supportive environment.

Leave a contact phone number if you would like to be called back.

csc@syndalcatholic.org.au

[Reporting abuse or safety-related misconduct](#)

[Recognising the types and indicators of abuse](#) (CAM)

Further information is available on the parish and Archdiocese websites.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SAFETY-RELATED MISCONDUCT

STEP 1 WHO CAN REPORT?

Anyone:

- Child or young person and/or their parent or carer
- Adult
- Staff member/volunteer/parishioner
- Clergy or religious person
- Any other person e.g. witness to an incident

STEP 2 WHAT TO REPORT?

Abuse or safety-related misconduct:

- Current or historical disclosures of abuse or harm
- Current or historical allegations, suspicions or observations
- Breach of the Code of Conduct

IF YOU SEE OR HEAR SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

STEP 3 HOW?

- Verbal report in person or by telephone
- Written report via email or mail

STEP 4 WHO TO?

There are a number of different ways you may choose to make a report:

- If the child or adult is in immediate danger, reports can be made by any individual directly to statutory authorities:
 - Victoria Police
000 or your local police station www.police.vic.gov.au
 - Child Protection
North Division intake: 1300 664 977
South Division intake: 1300 655 795
East Division intake: 1300 360 391
West Division intake - metropolitan: 1300 664 977
West Division intake - rural and regional: 1800 075 599
After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78
- Report the matter to a person in a leadership position within your parish e.g. clergy, Safeguarding Committee, parish staff.
- Reports should also be made to:
 - Pathways Victoria—responds to allegations of abuse in the Catholic Church across the Victorian dioceses.
(03) 7064 3940
info@pathwaysvictoria.com
- You can also contact the Safeguarding Unit who will support and assist you.

REMEMBER! ALWAYS CALL 000 IF A CHILD OR ADULT IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER.

STEP 5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Safeguarding Unit, together with Pathways Victoria, will:

- initiate risk-management processes to ensure the safety of the person and others, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary processes
- report the matter to relevant statutory authorities and/or regulatory bodies, e.g. Child Protection, Victoria Police, CCYP, Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- offer support to the person(s) involved, e.g. counselling.

SAFEGUARDING UNIT Phone: 9926 5621 Email: safeguardingunit@cam.org.au

This flowchart is adapted from the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Victoria, Flowchart: Child Safety Reporting Process & from the National Office for Child Safety, Australian Government, Flowchart: Child Safety Reporting Process Within an Organisation.





It is important that you can recognize possible indicators or signs, disclosures, allegations and reports, and to take action to support a child or young person who is at risk of or experiencing harm.

Types of Abuse

Emotional/ Psychological Abuse	• e.g. Bullying, shaming, threatening language, intentional ignoring and isolating
Physical Abuse	• e.g. Physical punishment, pushing, hitting, shoving, slapping etc.
Grooming	• e.g. Predatory behaviour with the intention of engaging a child in sexual activity. May occur in person, or virtually via mobile phones or social media
Sexual Abuse	• e.g. When a person uses their power or authority to involve or expose a child to sexual activity. Can occur in person or online, and be perpetrated in a family, organisational or community context
Neglect	• e.g. Failure to provide a child or young person with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, education, shelter or supervision
Spiritual/Cultural Abuse	• e.g. Racial or cultural discrimination, the use of spiritual or religious beliefs and practices to control and dominate a person
Bullying	• e.g. A person or a group of people, repeatedly use words or actions to harass someone in person or online (cyber bullying)
Family Violence	• e.g. A pattern of abusive behaviour which may involve physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect within a family context.

The Archdiocese is committed to the safety, wellbeing and human dignity of children, young people and adults.



Recognizing and Reporting Adult Abuse

Your Safeguarding role extends beyond caring for the safety of children and young people to include adults at risk. As a volunteer, you may be in a ministry that works with older parishioners who could be vulnerable to neglect, physical emotional or psychological abuse or financial abuse.

Adult Abuse is any act which causes harm to an older person or vulnerable adult and is carried out by someone they know and trust, such as family and friends.

If, as a volunteer, you encounter any issues/concerns related to elder abuse or welfare issues, you should report these to Fr Ralph— 98028538, the Safeguarding Committee (csc@syndalcatholic.org.au) or the Safeguarding Unit. (safeguardingunit@cam.org.au) You should not try and resolve issues yourself. If a serious issue that is unsafe or life-threatening is encountered, you should call the police on 000.