



**St James
The Apostle**

INFORMATION SHEET: SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES.

St James the Apostle Parish, Hoppers Crossing North

Safeguarding Committee 2020-2023

The leadership of St James the Apostle Parish, Hoppers Crossing North (St James), is responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and relevant procedures and practices to promote the safety of children and young people consistent with the:

- Child Safe Standards (Victoria)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

THE ROLE OF THE SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

St James' Safeguarding Committee works with the leadership of the parish to ensure policies, processes and practices are in place to protect children and young people. The committee is required to meet four or more times per year and report progress to the Parish Pastoral Council within the parish on a quarterly basis.

The committee will ensure that the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is embedded across the parish, agency or entity and compliance requirements are met by:

- Promoting child safety within their community and fostering an understanding of the importance of child safety.
- Working collaboratively with the leadership of the parish to promote the safety of children and young people.
- Implementing, maintaining and/or reviewing child safety processes and procedures to support the wellbeing and safety of children and young people with input from relevant stakeholders e.g. priests, parish administration, Parish Pastoral Council, parents, children young people, program leaders, pastoral associates.
- Engaging in and/or reviewing risk management processes to promote the safe participation of children and young people in programs, activities and events.
- Involving children and young people (and their families) in decision-making and planning to promote child safety.
- Ensuring 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 and comply with reporting protocols for child abuse reports and allegations
- Participating in and/or delivering child safety information and training.
- Monitor ongoing compliance with the St James' Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework which encompasses the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Documentation (e.g. meeting minutes, correspondence, risk assessments, communication) in relation to the Safeguarding Committee is to be kept by St James and stored securely. These records will form part of the evidence base for the parish to safeguard children and young people.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the committee includes St James' leadership representatives (e.g. parish priest, , parish secretary, member of the Parish Pastoral Council) and other relevant stakeholders including:

- program coordinators, who may be employees or volunteers involved in child and youth related work and ministry
- volunteers with child safety expertise
- parent representatives.

Members of the committee are in effect 'Safeguarding Officers' for St James. Safeguarding Officers are an important asset within a parish, agency or entity and can act as points of contact for advice, support and direction in relation to child safety matters.

CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE (CAM) PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT (PSU):

St James' Safeguarding Committee works closely with the PSU from CAM. Across CAM, the Professional Standards Unit (PSU) is responsible for:

- Assisting St James to implement the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.
- Providing support, advice and training to the parish to strengthen its efforts in relation to child safety.
- Assisting the Parish to comply with the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and relevant standards.
- Managing concerns, allegations and reports of child abuse and breaches of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy in accordance with moral, legal and ethical obligations to safeguard children and young people and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Guiding improvements in relation to our approach to child safety across the Archdiocese (e.g. Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Code of Conduct, compliance, risk management, training) to meet legislative requirements at the state and federal level, and best practice expectations proposed by Catholic Professional Standards Limited.
- Undertaking annual child safety audits