

1. SHARING THE SAFEGUARDING JOURNEY

With our biggest turn out yet of 215 people attending the recent meetings, representing 114 parishes, there was a lot of great practice shared in relation to Standard 2 – Children are safe, informed and participate and Standard 3 – Partnering with families, carers and communities of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Some of these ideas, events, activities included:

- Parishes in Broadmeadows, Mernda/Whittlesea, Newport shared how they have continued to provide their sacramental program online.
- Hoppers Crossing Parish discussed how it was using online platforms to facilitate groups during COVID-19.
- Using an online platform for livestreaming Mass, the Ivanhoe Parish involve children by inviting them to write and read online Prayers of the Faithful.
- Pre-COVID-19, after Mass at the Melton Parish, everyone (including children) were greeted by the Parish Priest with high fives all round.
- In the Springvale Parish, the new website is up and running, with a section devoted to Safeguarding.
- The Syndal Parish has been displaying child friendly posters in the parish.
- Ringwood North Parish is planning to display and promote photos of their Safeguarding Committee members at the parish.
- Ringwood and Ashburton Parishes have parent representatives on their Safeguarding Committees.
- The Doncaster Parish took a different approach with feedback previously collected by parents asking their children about child safety in the parish and any suggested improvements.
- In the Westernport Parish a Junior Stewardship Committee is operational.
- The Keysborough Parish shared how a Youth Parish Pastoral Council for 15-25 year olds had been established.
- Involving children in programs was a common pre-COVID-19 occurrence at the Oak Park Parish, where the children from the Children's Liturgy Group were involved in reading at Mass and selecting songs to present at morning tea.
- At the Albion Parish, the children were asked for their ideas on how to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Meanwhile at the Malvern Parish, the Parish Priest consults with the primary school teachers and Children's Liturgy leaders as a means of obtaining feedback and hearing children's opinions.

As COVID-19 restrictions are eased and provide more opportunity for engagement, it is an opportune time to reflect upon engagement with our families, children and young people to shape programs, groups and activities into the future.

2. SAFEGUARDING LENS



A question that keeps arising in our conversations with parishes is: What is the difference between the 'Assessment Tool' and an 'Audit' process?

Let us clarify the difference for you

Assessment Tool

The Parish Child Safety Assessment Tool is designed to assist parishes to self-assess their compliance with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework. **This is an annual requirement for parishes and is due for submission to the PSU on 30 November via psu@cam.org.au.**

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne's Safeguarding Children and Young People Framework is based upon:

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

The PSU recognises the considerable effort involved in implementing child safety policies and processes within parishes. In addition, with COVID-19 restrictions, parishes have varied greatly in their ability to meet and dedicate time to implementing safeguarding measures.

In a recent Safeguarding Update - November 2020 - we have responded to FAQs in relation to the Assessment Tool.

Audit

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) is a statutory body that regulates organisations working with children and young people. The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne has been in conversation with the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) throughout 2020, as it has been indicated that an 'audit' will be imminent in relation to checking on our progress pertaining to the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

With the COVID-19 situation we have faced this year, there has been **no further update or indication received from the CCYP when this 'audit' will occur** or the number of parishes that will be involved in this process.

The CCYP have indicated the 'audit' will include:

- Conversations to assess awareness of safeguarding requirements and practices.
- An assessment of the safeguarding culture within the parish.
- Checking of documented policies and procedures.
- Checking of personnel files for safeguarding documentation.
- Checking records of complaints and report of abuse and/or misconduct.

So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when we will reap the harvest.

- GALATIANS 6:9



3. Q & A

- Indicator 9.1.1 of the Assessment Tool refers to a Safeguarding Implementation Plan? What is this and are parishes required to create this document?

As described by CPSL in their [implementation guides](#), a Child Safeguarding Implementation Plan comprises key elements which are addressed in the Assessment Tool. When parishes use the Assessment Tool and have other supporting documentation such as risk assessments, meeting minutes, reviews etc, this would address the key elements listed. Parishes do not need to create a separate implementation plan, but are welcome to if they feel this will assist in tracking the completion and progress of action items identified.

- Does the Code of Conduct need to be sighted by volunteers before signing the Code of Conduct Declaration?

Prior to signing the Code of Conduct Declaration, all volunteers must be provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct document to ensure that they have had an opportunity to read and agree to abide by safeguarding expectations in relation to children and young people.

- The Code of Conduct Declaration states that 'failure to submit this declaration is a serious matter and may incur disciplinary action.' What does this mean for a volunteer?

If a volunteer elects not to sign the Code of Conduct Declaration, in the first instance, we would ask the volunteer to discuss this matter with their Parish Priest to provide an opportunity to discuss the importance of the Declaration. If a volunteer decides that they will not sign the Declaration, subject to the requirements of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy they will not be permitted to volunteer in the parish.

- Why is the Code of Conduct required to be signed annually by clergy, staff and all volunteers?

An annual review and signing of the Code of Conduct and annual training ensures that safeguarding remains at the forefront of our minds and supports the culture of safeguarding across the parish.

4. PSU RESOURCES



- NEW! Children's Week Activity Extended!**

To celebrate Children's Week this year, we are inviting all children and young people (from the ages of 4 years to 17) to participate in an activity where they are encouraged to reflect upon their participation in their parish. Entries close 18 December 2020.

Click [here](#) to join.



- NEW! Rights and Responsibilities Poster**

A child friendly poster which recognises a few rights of children and encourages children's awareness of this.

Click [here](#) to download.



- NEW! Guide to Creating a Code of Conduct for Children and Young People**

A step by step guide for parishes who are considering creating a Code of Conduct with the children and young people in their parish.

Click [here](#) to read.

- NEW! Template - Consent to participate in online programs**

Now available on our new [website](#).



- NEW! Safeguarding Risk Management Fundamentals e-Learning Video**



- Empowering Children and Young People e-Learning Video**

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