

St Mary's Parish Ascot Vale – Statement of Commitment

St Mary's Parish Ascot Vale holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children as a fundamental responsibility of the Church. This commitment is drawn from, and inherent to, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the dignity of each human person belonging to the heart of the Gospel. A culture of safety within the Church ensures that children can actively and fully participate in the life of the Church and realise their potential in a faith community.

This commitment extends to clergy, employees and volunteers within the Parish of Ascot Vale, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children and young people from child abuse.

We are committed to upholding the safety and dignity of each child and young person and ensuring that they are able to grow and develop in a caring and supportive environment in the Church.

The Catholic Church has a mission-driven moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing environments where children are respected, where their voices are heard, and where they are safe and feel safe. We acknowledge that preventing child abuse requires proactive approaches across policies, procedures and practices consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

We are committed to creating a child-safe culture across the Archdiocese that safeguards children and young people from all forms of abuse.

Our parish sets clear behavioural expectations with an overarching commitment to the protection of children and young people from all forms of abuse. All child safety concerns and allegations will be treated very seriously, and reported in line with our obligations stated in the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

We are committed to zero tolerance of all forms child abuse and unjust discrimination, and will always act to safeguard children and young people. Primary in this safeguarding is to report suspected abuse promptly to appropriate authorities.

We are resolutely committed to ensuring that all those involved in the Catholic Church – clergy, employees, volunteers – are aware of the inherent vulnerability of all children and young people and acknowledge their own responsibility to promote the dignity of children and young people and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe environment. Every person involved in the Church has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is a top priority in actions and decisions.

We are committed to ensuring that all persons who have, or may be expected to have, contact with children and young people acknowledge their responsibility to safeguard children and young people from abuse and unjust discrimination, which offend both against justice and love.

We acknowledge and welcome diversity in our Church community. We recognise that cultural safety and inclusion serve as protective factors in relation to child safety, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. We seek to be inclusive of those with any disability. We are sensitive to how all these factors may impact child safety.

Declaration

Fr Justin Ford

Parish Priest

1 November 2020

The Parish of Ascot Vale is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.