



St Dominic's

The Catholic Parish of Camberwell East

Safeguarding Committee

ST DOMINIC'S PARISH SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

This document sets out the aspects of parish life that might give rise to safeguarding risks and outlines the approach that is being taken to manage those risks. It has been developed by the St Dominic's Safeguarding Committee after consideration of the [Child Safety Risk Management Information Sheet](#) from the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and is to be reviewed annually.

The version includes minor updates on the document that was approved by the Committee on 5 June 2024.

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POTENTIAL RISK SETTINGS

The following settings within the Parish might give rise to risks for children and adults at risk:

1. Young Adults' Group

The young adults' group for 18 to 30-year-olds meets in person, and engages in gatherings of various sorts and a range of activities. There is a small coordination team, and a WhatsApp group.

2. Children's Liturgy of the Word

During some Sunday Masses, young children leave the church for a special focus on the readings of the day. They are led by volunteer coordinators and accompanied by some parents.

3. Altar Servers

Some young people and some adults have trained as altar servers and assist at Sunday Masses. Training has been the responsibility of a member of the Priory. Altar Servers have their own room in the sacristy where their vestments are stored. Br Joseph Vechoorettu is the coordinator.

4. School Masses at Parish

From time-to-time members of the St Dominic's School community join one of the regular Sunday Masses for a 'school Mass'. Teachers usually arrange readers etc for these Masses.

5. School Events at Church

St Dominic's Church is occasionally used for school liturgical gatherings, by St Dominic's School, Siena College, Strathcona College, and St Mary's School for the Deaf. These events are organised by the school concerned and might involve one of the clergy from the Priory.

6. Sacramental Program

The Parish Sacramental program as it affects children and young people has a number of dimensions:

- i. Baptism for Infants: Parish volunteers provide an instructional dialogue for families of babies and young children who are seeking baptism. The family is presented to the Parish at one of the Sunday Masses. The baptism takes place in the church at a special ceremony.
- ii. Baptism for Older Children and Initiation for Adults: Older children seeking baptism participate with their parents in a programme conducted by the Pastoral Associate, which culminates in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC). Adults seeking sacramental initiation likewise participate in a programme conducted by the Pastoral Associate, which culminates in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). In both cases, the program involves a series of dialogue sessions and liturgical engagements.
- iii. First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation: The Pastoral Associate leads group sessions to prepare children from St Dominic's School and other schools for these sacraments. The sacraments are celebrated in the church, either at special ceremonies or as part of a regular Sunday Mass.
- iv. Weddings: St Dominic's Church is the venue for a regular stream of weddings, for couples from within the Parish and from further afield. Celebrants are from the Priory or the Archdiocese, or from elsewhere with the Vicar General's approval.

7. Visiting Clergy

Clergy from other Parishes and other Dioceses visit St Dominic's for a range of liturgical engagements, including weddings and funerals. All visiting clergy operate within the Archdiocesan safeguarding framework.

8. Home Visits

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion bring the sacrament to parishioners in their own home at their request. DominiCare has a number of volunteers who similarly visit parishioners in their own home at their request. The Legion of Mary has a number of volunteers who knock doors.

9. Community Concerts

In the past few years there has been an annual Christmas concert in December which has involved guest musicians and attracted a wider circle of local community members. Risk Assessments have been produced ad hoc by the organiser.

10. Ecumenical Events

St Dominic's is a member of the Canterbury Council of Churches, which organises a number of outdoor/offsite events such as Stations of the Cross (Highfield Park), Mental Health Liturgy (at a member church), World Day of Prayer (at a member church). St Dominic's parishioners are invited and participate in these events held elsewhere.

MANAGING THE RISKS

The Committee has agreed that risks in these areas are to be analysed and managed using the methodology proposed by the Archdiocese, in line with their reference standard.¹ This involves:

- Identification and evaluation of risks, and of risk control processes, and
- Assessment of the potential consequences and their likelihood, and
- Development of a risk treatment action plan.

The process for developing a risk assessment and management plan for these and other settings or events is as follows:

- Event or activity coordinator to draft, then
- Safeguarding Committee to sign off, then finally
- Event or activity coordinator to ensure that those responsible for actions are aware of the risk assessment.
- Plan to be reviewed each year by the coordinator, and then the safeguarding committee.

RISK ASSESSMENTS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS

Risk assessments have been completed or are in advance draft form for the following activities:

- Young Adults Group
- Children's Liturgy of the Word
- Altar Servers
- Sacramental Programs
- School Masses at Parish
- School events in the church
- Visiting Clergy
- Disability access to sanctuary

¹ [AS/NZS ISO 31000: 2009 Risk management – principles and guidelines.](#)

These documents are reviewed

NEXT STEPS

Ideas and feedback related to this policy are always welcome, and can be made at any time to the Parish office or to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, safety@stdominics.org.au. They are also sought as part of a survey of children and parents conducted each Safeguarding Sunday – the next is on Sunday 13 September 2026.

This overarching plan and the specific risk assessments are scheduled to be reviewed by the Parish Safeguarding Committee in 2027.

VERSION CONTROL	
First version adopted by Parish Safeguarding Committee	5 June 2024
Adopted after minor updates	15 April 2026
Next review	Second meeting 2027

APPENDIX 1: RELATION TO CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

Standard 1 of the Parish Child Safety Standards as adopted by the Archdiocese of Melbourne is as follows:

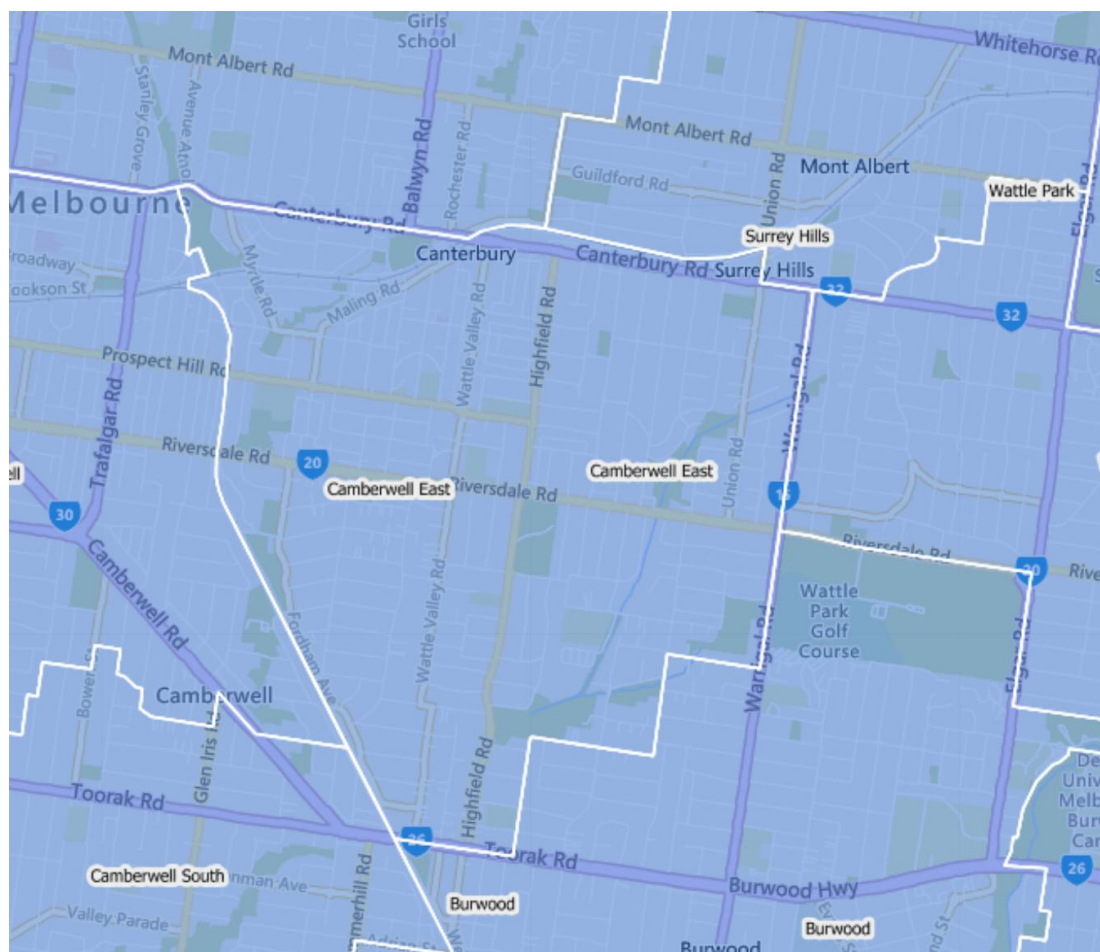
The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity’s leadership, governance and culture.

The parish self-assessment expands on this, in relation to a parish risk management plan and processes, as follows:

Self-Assessment Tool Indicator	Evidence
<p>4.7 Risk-management plans address the range of settings, programs, activities, events and physical and online environments in which ministry and/or services occur. (VCSS 2.5, 9.3; NCSS 1.5, 8.3)</p>	<p>The Parish has a Risk Management Plan and a number of Risk Assessments identifying areas of risk in parish life. These cover all activities involving children and are reviewed annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Young Adults Group -Children’s Liturgy of the Word -Altar Servers -Sacramental Programs -School Masses at Parish -School events in the church -Visiting Clergy

APPENDIX 2: OUR CONTEXT: ST DOMINIC'S PARISH

St Dominic's Parish of Camberwell East is a medium-sized Parish in the middle-class eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

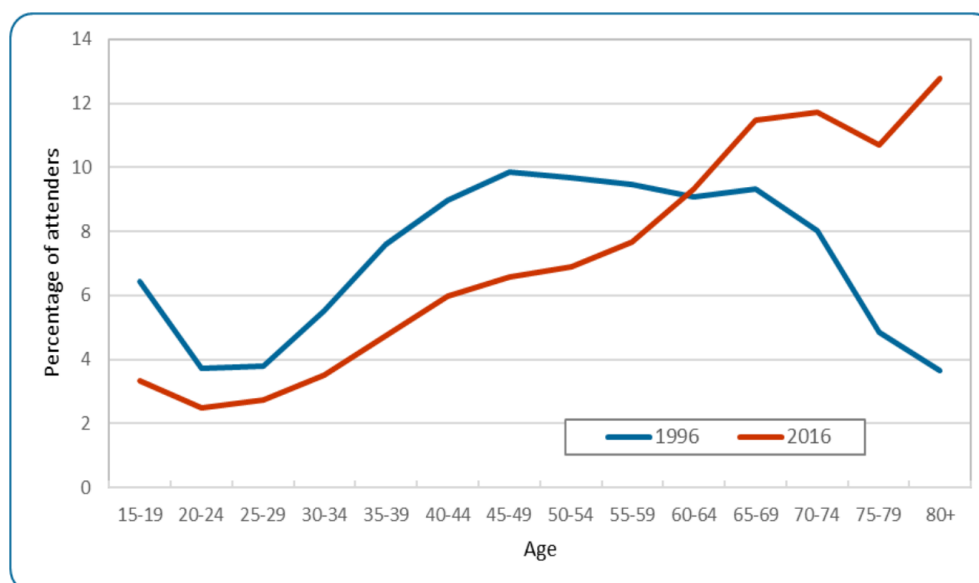


Its people are served by the Parish Priest and other clergy from the Dominican Order, who live in the Priory which is located next to the Church.

In the 2021 Australian census, 3,194 people in the area of the Parish identified as Catholic, equal to 20.3% of the local population. In that same year, 8.2% of Catholics across the country attended weekly Mass, which would equate to 262 in St Dominic's Parish. Mass count records indicate that attendance pre-COVID was higher than this, but COVID has led to a significant reduction, at least on a temporary basis. In 2024, the average weekly Mass count was 543.

While census data show large numbers of younger Catholics, national Mass attendance data indicates much higher Mass attendance rates for older age groups, as the following chart indicates. Observation would indicate that St Dominic's follows this pattern.

Figure 1: Age profile of Mass attenders, 1996 and 2016



Source of data: Catholic Church Life Survey 1996 and National Church Life Survey 2016.

St Dominic's Primary School is part of the Parish, and Siena College is located across the road from the Church. Nazareth Care (also known as Nazareth House) is one of a number of aged care residences in the area of the Parish. Other aged care facilities include Camberwell Gardens, Lynden, Menarock, and The Mews.

In addition to the Dominican Priory, religious from a number of congregations live and minister in the Parish. These include Dominican Sisters, the Sister Disciples of the Divine Master, and the Sisters of Nazareth.

The Parish has a rich liturgical and spiritual heritage. There are five Sunday Masses at St Dominic's Church and one Sunday Mass at Nazareth House, two weekday Masses daily at St Dominic's and one Mass daily at Nazareth House. Around half a dozen Dominican clergy regularly preside at Mass in the Parish, and there are often visiting clergy assisting, who are registered according to Archdiocesan and legislative requirements.

There are many liturgical ministries, including reader, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, collector, musician, welcomer; and several lay devotional groups. Dominican student brothers assist in some of these ministries. All parish volunteers are covered by our parish safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct, and receive a ministry induction and safeguarding training.

Other service and community ministries include the Justice and Peace group, Asylum Seekers Support group, a young adults' group, the parish conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society, an active tennis club, etc. The Parish Finance Committee and Parish Pastoral Council advise and assist the Parish Priest in his pastoral role. The Safeguarding Committee works to keep the Parish a welcoming and safe place for all, especially for children and young people.

The Parish Office, staffed by the Parish Secretary, Parish Manager, and Pastoral Associate, assist in all aspects of parish life. A parish centre, adjoining the Church and the Priory, houses staff offices and provides various meeting spaces. A website (www.stdominics.org.au), a Parish facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/StDoms816>), and a weekly *Dominican* newsletter, available on the website and at Mass, are part of the parish communications infrastructure.