IMPORTANT NOTES FOR VOLUNTEERS OF ST MARY'S PARISH, WILLIAMSTOWN

Church personnel in parish, agency and/or entity roles represent the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) and hold a position of trust in our communities, irrespective of whether their role involves direct, indirect or no contact with children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

In line with CAM's Safeguarding Framework, Church personnel, whether appointed in a paid or voluntary capacity, are required to obtain the following:
1. Current and valid Working With Children (WWC) clearance.
2. Read, sign and understand the Safeguarding Children and Young People (SCYP) Code of Conduct upon commencement, coupled with a Volunteer Overview and Activity Statement which forms the Volunteer Position Description. Volunteers are required to re-sign the SCYP Code of Conduct every three years.
3. Complete the online Safeguarding Essentials training module every three years.
4. Some volunteer roles designated with an * also require a National Police Check.

GROUPS AND MINISTRIES OVERVIEW

MASS & LITURGY

Altar Servers (Year 3 and up) – play a vital role in assisting the presiding priest in celebrating Mass either on Saturday 6:00 pm Vigil, Sunday 8:30 am or 10:30 am Mass. They may serve as candle-bearer, cross-bearer, icon-bearer, thurifer or altar assistant. This important Ministry is an ideal way for youth to develop their faith. Training is provided re decorum, attire, and conduct both inside and outside the church. As no roster is currently in place, altar servers generally serve at the Mass they usually attend.

Laundering of Church linen – this routine role requires the weekly collection from the Church for washing and ironing small white towels used to dry the priest's hands during Mass. Additionally, purificators (small white cloths used to wipe other soils from the rim of the chalice during Mass) are also laundered after each use, as well as Corporals: larger, white cloths, placed on the altar prior to Consecration of the bread and wine.

Special Minister (at Mass) – must be initiated into the life of the Church (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and regularly attend Mass. They are appointed by the parish priest after a process of discernment. The role is normally rostered once every four to six weeks for the Mass they usually attend, to assist the presiding priest in the reverent distribution of Holy Communion by coming forward at the designated time and standing beside or behind the altar.

Lector/Reader – is normally rostered once every four to six weeks for the Mass they usually attend. They share the Word of God with the people gathered by proclaiming the First and/or Second Readings, the Psalm and Gospel Acclamation (if not sung), and the Prayers of the Faithful in a manner that is not rushed, clear and understood by all those participating in the liturgy. The quality of the lector/reader's proclamation helps the faithful receive and respond to the Word.

Liturgy Team – members meet and work with the parish priest and pastoral associate to regularly plan feast days, Easter ceremonies, Christmas and other major events in our calendar year.

Music Liturgy (instrument …) – musicians and instrumentalists, e.g. pianists, organists, guitarists, flautists, violinists, cantors, choir leaders and members, ensembles and accompanists, are responsible for assisting and encouraging the congregation to participate in the Mass or other liturgical celebrations, responding through music and song. They lead and animate the people singing at Mass.

Musicians are assisted by **multimedia support**, i.e. laptop computer operators who support the musicians by presenting specially prepared PowerPoint slides that accompany each Mass. These presentations add to congregation involvement and are particularly beneficial to people unfamiliar with the structure and flow of Mass. It's not too difficult and multimedia training will be provided.

These roles are normally rostered once every four to six weeks for the Mass they usually attend, and the musicians and laptop operators can be related, a couple or friends.

Mass Sacristan Assistant (set up before/put away after Mass) – the primary purpose is to diligently care for the material things of the liturgy – the Eucharistic vessels; the baptismal font; the holy oils; the altar cloths; the liturgical books using the *Ordo*; the vestments; the sound system and audio visuals that are necessary for the celebration of Mass.

Arrive in a timely manner prior to the commencement of the Mass, allowing enough time for preparation and set up. The role also monitors supplies of bread, wine, oils and candles and advises the parish priest or parish secretary if they need to be replenished.

This role is performed once per week for the Mass they usually attend.

Welcoming Team at Mass – is rostered once every four to five weeks for the Mass they usually attend. As the first 'face' of our parish community, the role is to make parishioners, visitors and guests feel welcomed as they enter St Mary's church, and to distribute any information, e.g. parish bulletins to people; provide directions to toilet facilities in the Parish Centre when requested; and assisting anyone with special needs, e.g. opening the side door to enable external ramp entry into church for anyone using a mobility walker, rollator or wheelchair etc.

SACRAMENTS

Baptism Preparation Team – helps the parish priest and / or the pastoral associate prepare families whose children are being baptised, to ensure the smooth coordination of baptismal preparation and ceremony scheduling. Activities include providing families with essential information about the sacrament of baptism, its significance, and the requirements of the baptismal ceremony that occur most Sundays at a 12:30 pm ceremony. The Baptism preparation evenings take place on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm for approximately 40 minutes.

Wedding Helper (assist set up & put away) – renowned for its beauty, St Mary's Church offers an inspiring setting for couples beginning married life and hosts an average of 25 weddings each year. Depending upon whether it is a ceremony or Mass, activities are listed and undertaken one hour prior to the ceremony, including preparing the altar, placing decorative corsages on the middle row pews, positioning flower arrangements on/near the altar, turning on heating and audio, sorting out booklets, and directing participants to parish amenities. Helpers are allocated to a roster.

Sacramental Program Leader – works with the pastoral associate during one-hour classes to guide and support parish children who do not attend St Mary's Primary School in preparing for and celebrating the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Emphasis is placed on fostering faith formation and community engagement in alignment with Catholic teachings. Classes are held over a 3 week period prior to each Sacrament.

OUTREACH/COMMUNITY

Eucharist Minister visits to home * – volunteers must be initiated into the life of the Church (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and regularly attend Mass. Formation and training of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is provided by the parish priest to ensure sufficient pastoral, spiritual, and practical preparation is acquired to fulfil this role distributing Holy Communion to those who are sick, frail/aged and housebound. Eucharist Ministers are notified when home visits are required.

Eucharist/pastoral visits to aged care * – volunteers must be initiated into the life of the Church (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and regularly attend Mass. Formation and training for this role is provided by the parish priest to ensure sufficient pastoral, spiritual, and practical preparation is acquired to undertake one-to-one visits to parishioners in aged care facilities, including Holy Communion and providing a range of spiritual support options. Visits are usually conducted weekly but as needed.

Mary Care (Pastoral Care) – was formed in 2023 and continues to be a vital pastoral ministry offering compassionate support to parishioners who are socially isolated, grieving, unwell, or otherwise vulnerable. Guided by the spirit of St Mary MacKillop - "Never see a need without doing something about it" - volunteers work to ensure that no parishioner feels alone in their time of need. Focus is on pastoral support and outreach, community connection and hospitality, volunteer engagement, special events and liturgical support. Mary Care leaders assign tasks/responsibilities.

St Vincent de Paul Society * – 'Vinnies' members need to be passionate about helping clients who are marginalised or disadvantaged within our community. Working as a group - known as the Williamstown Conference - meetings are held monthly to discuss referrals from head office in Box Hill. On average 20 calls for assistance are received per month, which equates to 2-3 visitations per week.

Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support * – operates as 'Way of the West' (WoW) whose focus is to broaden outreach to those in need beyond the borders of our parish, with a focus on alleviating the plight of asylum seekers and refugees. As the WoW group is project based, meetings are clustered around the arrival of a refugee and are held monthly for 1.5 hours in the parish centre.

The group has members drawn from St Mary's parish and from other parishes (including other denominations) in the wider area. The work can be challenging, but it is also very rewarding. It is also action-oriented, which is very satisfying to those who like to get things done. We get to collaborate with a diverse range of passionate people, not all from our parish community or even who share our Catholic faith, but a strong camaraderie develops because we are all connected and working towards a shared goal.

Green Team – looks at ways that highlight the interconnectedness between nature, society and the environment, following the principles of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si' and the concepts of EcoSpirituality. We do this by providing information, help and events that parishioners can be involved in. Focus of activity across the parish has been on promoting sustainability, encouraging environmental awareness and participation in ecological practices. The team meets on the first Monday of each month for about one hour at St Joseph's by the Sea, 16 Esplanade, Williamstown.

Transport assistance to Mass * – involves occasional use of your own vehicle to drive parishioners to Mass when they are unable to travel there independently. Mary Care leaders coordinate volunteers informally, responding as needs arise. A formal roster system is not currently in place.

Social Event Committee – organises events and coordinates volunteers for activities that help parishioners connect, celebrate, and enjoy fellowship. Its work supports St Mary's in being a warm and welcoming place for everyone. Working closely with the parish priest and parish office, which provide oversight, the committee aligns to the social and group events recorded in the parish calendar. Key events and gatherings include Mothers' and Fathers' Day recognition after Mass, New Parishioner Luncheon, Parish BBQ, and Opera In the Church.

FINANCE/FUNDRAISING

Collectors * – gather the sacrificial giving (money) of the faithful. At appropriate times during Mass, each collector moves from the front to the back of the Church collecting offerings, and then hand collections to a designated person. There is no roster; volunteers typically collect at the Mass they regularly attend.

Counters * – tally and record the faithful's sacrificial monetary giving according to established procedures. Every two months, volunteers meet in the presbytery office on Sunday morning and are assigned to teams according to the parish counter roster.

Finance Committee * – assists the parish priest to administer parish assets and finances, maintain property, plan capital works, fund parish services, and ensure financial transparency, accountability and long-term health, as required by Canon 537. The parish priest appoints members with professional, commercial or business experience. The committee meets every two months for about 1.5 hours in the presbytery meeting room.

BUILDING/MAINTENANCE

Working Bees – volunteers participate in scheduled working bees, as announced in the parish newsletter, commencing at 9:00 am on Saturday morning for about 2 hours. Typical tasks include gardening, rubbish clean-up of church gardens and grounds, and minor maintenance of parish buildings to keep them attractive, safe, and well maintained. Volunteers should provide their own personal protective equipment and bring their own tools if possible.

Working Bee Supervisor – consults parish priest and guides arriving volunteers on required tasks.

Working Bee Assistant Supervisor – if required due to heavy workload, assists working bee supervisor to guide volunteers on required tasks.

Lawn Mower Church Roster – maintain church lawns using the church lawn mower.

Trimming Hedges (3 monthly) – maintain church garden hedges using own hedge clippers.

General Maintenance Person – experienced 'home handyman' types are always wanted.

Tradesperson – engaged when the task requires specialist knowledge or expertise. Labour is provided on a voluntary basis. Payment covers purchased materials only.

ADMINISTRATION

Safeguarding Committee * – provides advice to, and works with, the leadership of the parish to ensure policies, processes and practices are in place to protect children and young people. The Safeguarding Committee is an advisory committee only meaning that committee members are not themselves subject to the legal obligations under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 or the Victorian Child Safe Standards, by virtue of them being a member of the Committee – the legal obligation remains with the leadership of the parish, i.e. the parish priest. The Committee meets four or more times per year and report progress to the Parish Council on a quarterly basis. The committee's role is to assist leadership so that the Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Children and Young People Policy is embedded across the parish, and compliance requirements are met. Volunteers are ideally sought from people with child safety expertise (e.g. lawyers, human resource professionals, teachers or school principals, early childhood education workers, police officers, social workers, youth workers) and/or a strong commitment to safeguard children and young people.

Parish Council * – as a consultative body, the parish council provides wise and constructive counsel to the parish priest in promoting and supporting the evangelising, worshipping and pastoral caring mission of the parish. Members are appointed by the parish priest after discernment and serve for a period of 3 - 4 years. The PPC meets monthly for about 1.5 hours in the presbytery meeting room.