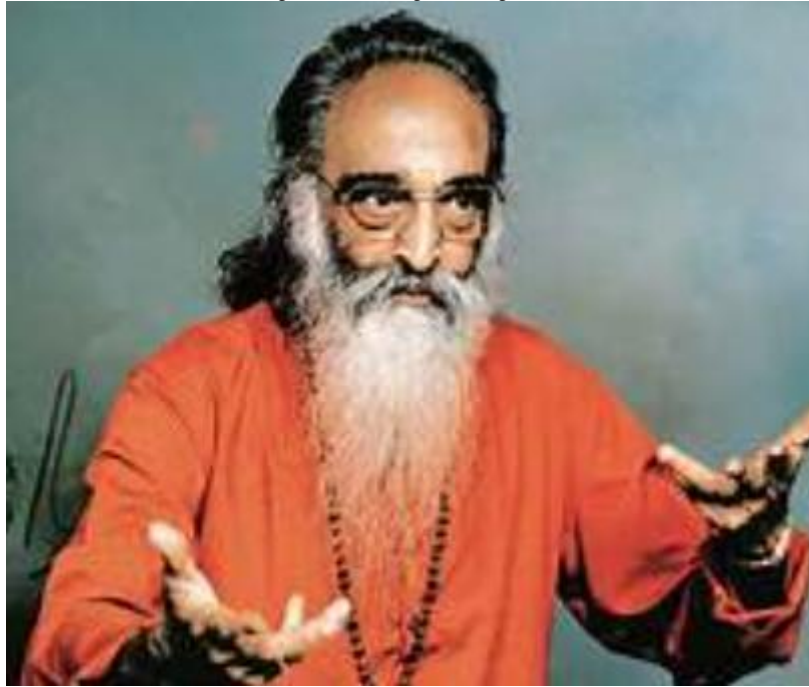


CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Chinmaya Vidyalaya Attukal



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – CHILD RIGHTS AND YOU (CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL)

POLICY STATEMENT: CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL believes that every child has a right to a happy, healthy and creative childhood. We believe in enabling people to pledge their unique strengths and commitments to secure, protect and honor the rights of children.

As a child rights organisation, CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL – Child Rights and You, is committed to the principle that all children, regardless of all dimensions and layers of discrimination, are entitled to their rights as defined by the United Nations Convention of Child Rights (UNCRC) Charter and the Constitution of India, including an equal right to protection from all kinds of abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect.

CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's Child Protection Policy stands for its commitment and responsibilities towards safeguarding children and to protect them from all kinds of harm and abuse, keeping the ***best interest of the child*** in perspective. It also makes clear that any form of harm and abuse of children is unacceptable and non- negotiable to CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL, and any violation of the policy, whether intentional or unintentional, will invite appropriate disciplinary action and judicial procedures as per this policy, other related policies of the organisation and law of the land.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1. To promulgate and reinforce the organizations commitment for safeguarding children
2. To ensure that the safety, care, protection and welfare of the child are imperative to practice and adopt in whatever we do.
3. To provide a protection mechanism to all children covered through the development initiatives of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL
4. To establish a standard code of conduct and standard procedures for all staff members and associates of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL to ensure that no harm or abuse is caused to any child.
5. To provide a mechanism to ensure all staff members of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL and associates are informed, empowered and self equipped to ensure safety and protection of children.

KEY TERMS

1. **Child Protection:** Child protection is the protection of children from any violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. Within the ambit of this policy, it would mean the measures, activities and safeguards that CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL would be taking to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm.
2. **Staff Member of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL:** Staff member of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL would include all employees on the pay-roll, part time or contractual duty or deputation of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL whether within CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL office premises or on field duty / project visit or elsewhere.
3. **Associate of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL:** This would include all consultants working with CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL, all volunteers, interns, tele-callers, agency staff, contractors, vendors and donors visiting CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL offices or work areas. This would also include all staff of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL project partners and all volunteers and interns who would work with children and /or have access to and are party to CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's program and child data.
4. **CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL Visitors:** This would include representatives of local governments, journalists, print and online media, agencies and contractors, donors and visitors who would come into direct contact with CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL-supported children and / or have access to CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's child sensitive data. This would also include celebrities invited to CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL events and program spaces or visiting project offices and areas and coming into direct contact with children.
5. **Board of Trustees:** This would mean the members of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's Board of Trustees.
6. **Designate Authority (DA):** DA will be the technical focal point/s for this policy.
7. **Child Protection Task Force (CPTF):** A committee formed by the management to implement the policy and provide support in the awareness and monitoring process of the policy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Non-discrimination, valuing and listening to children and treating all children with respect and dignity.
2. Best interests of the child are of prime importance and should guide all decisions made by CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL; commitment to protecting children with and for whom we work.
3. Meaningful participation of children to encourage them to share their views. CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL seeks to create an environment where children feel free to express themselves and participate in the classroom and other educational environments and opportunities as well as in decisions that affect

their lives.

4. Zero tolerance towards child abuse.

APPLICABILITY OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to:

- 1) All staff members of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL, whether within CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL office premises or on field duty / project visit or elsewhere
- 2) All associates of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL within CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL office premises or on field duty or at project partner offices and /or elsewhere
- 3) All visitors to CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL offices
- 4) Board members

CODE OF CONDUCT

CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL staff, associates and visitors **MUST**:

- 1) Respect the privacy and dignity of every child.
- 2) Make proactive efforts for ensuring safety of children by identifying and managing risks periodically in all spaces accessed by children.
- 3) Be conscious of and sensitive towards making appropriate arrangements for the special needs of children, particularly physically and mentally challenged children.
- 4) Be sensitive towards children's age, sex, ethnicity, background, sexuality, religion, etc.
- 5) Create / enable an environment where children are respected and encouraged to discuss their concerns of abuse and rights.
- 6) Handle all sensitive child data and information with adequate care, caution and confidentiality; to be shared in public only after written permission of a CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL authority.
- 7) Always seek informed consent from children and their parents or guardians regarding the medium of communication and the purpose, before taking formal interviews, photographs of / with children or recording videos of their activities and engagement.
- 8) Respect the decision of children to say 'No' to an image being taken or a video being recorded.
- 9) Ensure that all images / videos taken of children are respectful of their dignity – all children must be clothed adequately for images and videos with their private body parts covered appropriately.
- 10) Ensure that all communication with children should take place within the boundaries of profession and are in sync with organizational policy.

CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL staff, associates and visitors **MUST NOT**:

- 1) Abuse any child and put the child at the risk of harm.
- 2) Engage in any behaviour to intimidate, bully, humiliate, shame, threaten, coerce or belittle any child.
- 3) Physically abuse or hit any child or use any form of corporal punishment against any child.
- 4) Engage in any behaviour in a manner that is viewed as offensive, sexually provocative, overt or otherwise.
- 5) Hug, kiss or caress children.
- 6) Shower or bathe with children or assist with any personal care activity that children may be able to conduct themselves.
- 7) Engage in any form of substance abuse (alcohol/smoking/drugs/tobacco, etc) in the presence of the children.
- 8) Disclose the identity and /or personal information of children.
- 9) Display or distribute images of children without informed consent from children and their parents and appropriate authority of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL.
- 10) Stigmatize or discriminate against a child, or show differential treatment to some children to the exclusion of others. Taking views of specific children, like during any research study, must be pre- approved.
- 11) Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- 12) Take images /videos 'in secret' or in situations that may be viewed as being secretive.
- 13) Pass on gifts to children other than as part of specific programs designed and approved by CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL appropriate authority.
- 14) Have social contact with children or their parents through any medium, online or offline, until unless it is approved by CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL management.
- 15) Use or access profiles of children on social networking sites, particularly pictures and photographs of children, unless approved by CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL appropriate authority.
- 16) Watch pornography in front of children and /or show pornographic images and videos to children.
- 17) Share their own personal contact details and mobile numbers with children without prior permission of appropriate authority of the organization.
- 18) Refrain from asking children to undertake personal jobs or errands or asking children to do tasks that should be done by adults.
- 19) Take children to their home/ residence or any other private space for the day or night and /or share a room with a child alone. Any emergency accommodation like medical attention must be approved by CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL appropriate authority.
- 20) Patronize any service that employs children.

Key Responsibilities Under The Policy

As an organisation with child rights at the core of whatever we think, plan and do, we are committed to applying high standards of behaviour towards children. CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives will meet its commitment to protect children from any harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation through fulfilment of their responsibilities and the following measures, but not limited to:

1. Awareness

- Directors / functional heads / program heads will ensure that CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives are aware of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's commitment to the prevention of child abuse and exploitation.
- All CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives will read, sign, and abide by CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct of the policy.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL management will also ensure the development of standard operating procedures to ensure the proper implementation of the policy.
- HR function will ensure that all CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives have access to a copy of this Child Protection Policy and Standard Operating Procedures.
- HR function will conduct orientation of all new staff during the induction program.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL Representatives will be aware that breach of this policy or the Child Protection Code of Conduct constitutes an act of misconduct and is grounds for disciplinary action and / or termination of employment or engagement.

2. Prevention

- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's staff recruitment process will continue to be supported by recruitment and selection measures that are designed to minimize the risk of recruiting persons who may pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL will partner with organizations / associates that agree to comply with child protection standards at least as high as CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's standards in its operations and activities.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives will use best efforts to ensure that children are not put at risk of abuse or exploitation.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL will ensure informed consent from children (parents or guardian in case of young children), parents or care givers / guardian before taking images (photo/videos etc.) and present children in a dignified and respectful manner rather vulnerable, sexually suggestive, submissive or impacting their privacy negatively. They'll also respect the children's decision to say 'No' to an image being taken.

- Case studies, stories and images of children should be based on the child's best interest. CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL will limit the identifying information accompanying images of children and adhere to country laws related to the same.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives will obey the country laws, with attaining high standards towards laws relating to children in professional as well as personal lives in order to maintain the reputation of the organization as child safe organization.
- Staff will also empower themselves by understanding the Child Protection Policy, related standard operating procedures and country protection mechanisms.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL management will provide suitable guidelines and procedures to meet the principles mentioned in this policy.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL management will ensure that local procedures are in place and concerns are documented and responded as per such procedures.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL management will ensure that procedures are developed considering the local laws, obeying the statutory compliances of reporting and responding to child protection concerns.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL management will also appoint / depute a Designate Authority (DA) who will be the technical focal point for this Policy and will work closely with the HR-Director and in close coordination with CPTF (Child Protection Task Force) to implement the policy and support the monitoring process.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL management will also ensure the constitution and empowerment of CPTF to create awareness in the organisation. The CPTF will support the management to institutionalise the policy at different levels. CPTF can also help technically to report the incident to the DA/DA's.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL staff and associates must update knowledge and information about child safeguarding and child rights
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL staff and associates must follow the laws of the country and carry the intent of the policy outside work also.

3. Reporting

- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL staff and associates will ensure that they are fully aware of CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL's standard reporting requirements in the event of suspicion or allegations of child abuse or exploitation, for any internal and external incident of abuse.
- Reporting any abuse is mandatory and CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives should report as soon as possible and within 24 hours of learning of or witnessing the alleged abuse or exploitation, by anyone coming in the scope of the policy or by anyone while implementing / supporting any activity with children (directly or indirectly) primarily to the DA/DAs and Human Resources Director, Chief Executive Officer, or any other body / channel informed as per standard operating procedure.
- As part of reporting, the suspicion and allegation be fully documented in line with CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL standard operating procedures on reporting and

as per prescribed templates, including the time, place and any witnesses to the alleged abuse or exploitation.

- Confidentiality is crucial to a fair and effective reporting procedure hence the allegations, updates and follow ups will be shared on 'need to know basis' only. CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives will not disclose any allegation / suspicion of abuse or personal information of children / families, to the general public unless the disclosures are in accordance with CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL policy and procedures or approved by the relevant authority.
- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL representatives will cooperate in the investigation process.

4. Responding

- CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL will ensure that action is taken to support and protect children coming in contact with CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL where concerns arise regarding child abuse or exploitation.
- The first response to address the complaint should come as soon as possible and within 48 hours of reporting of the incident.
- When child abuse or exploitation is reported, an appropriate investigation process will be followed and conducted as approved by DA/DAs, HR focal point and CEO – who may construct a team and may consult with legal operations and / or the authorities if appropriate, and steer the investigation process accordingly.
- Adherence to the Child Protection Policy is mandatory and any breach of this policy or procedures will be investigated under this policy either by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country in which they work and / or by CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL in accordance with disciplinary procedures. This may result in disciplinary sanctions and / or dismissal of engagement with CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL.
- Internal investigation will undertake a confidential, thorough, impartial and prompt process. CHINMAYA VIDYALAYA ATTUKAL will not tolerate any form of coercion, intimidation, reprisal or retaliation against anyone who reports any form of abuse or exploitation, provides any information or other assistance in an investigation.
