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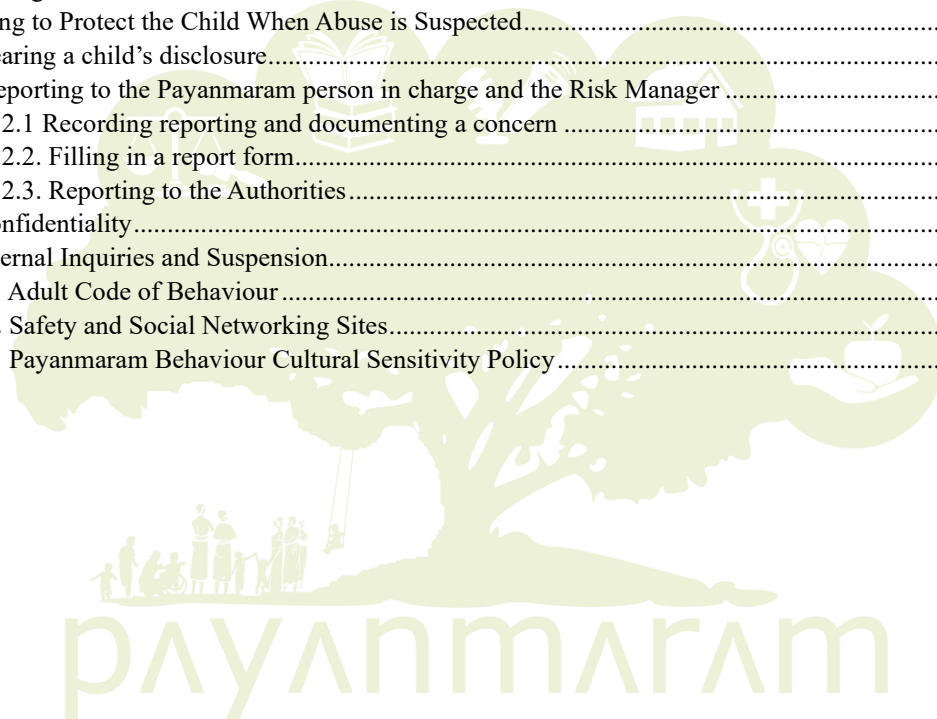
Payanmaram Child Protection Policy

A Child Safety Initiative



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PAYANMARAM TRUST

Introduction	1
Definitions	1
Part 1: Our Policy	2
1.1 Review	2
Part 2: Our Rules	3
2.1 Adult Code of Behaviour	3
2.2 General Behaviour within Payanmaram Programmes	3
2.3 Health and Safety within Payanmaram Programmes	3
2.4 Behaviour and Communication outside of Payanmaram Programmes	4
2.5 Photography	4
Part 3: Selection	4
3.1 Age Requirements	5
3.2 Application Requirements	5
3.3 Criminal Record Check	5
3.4 Interview	6
3.5 Membership Requirement	6
Part 4: Training	6
Part 5: Acting to Protect the Child When Abuse is Suspected	6
5.1 Hearing a child's disclosure	7
5.2. Reporting to the Payanmaram person in charge and the Risk Manager	7
5.2.1 Recording reporting and documenting a concern	8
5.2.2. Filling in a report form	8
5.2.3. Reporting to the Authorities	8
5.3 Confidentiality	9
5.4 Internal Inquiries and Suspension	9
Appendix 1 Adult Code of Behaviour	10
Appendix 2 Safety and Social Networking Sites	11
Appendix 3 Payanmaram Behaviour Cultural Sensitivity Policy	12



Introduction

As a children's organization, Payanmaram is committed to child rights. Our first work involved work with Out of School Children (OOSC) which motivated us to register Payanmaram Trust and stay in the service of children, students and families. **This present Child Protection Policy is largely taken from peace organization CISV's policy and code of conduct available online as we continuously improve and upgrade it to suit our setup.**

This Policy we adopt with the intent to give our children a safe environment and help be protected from harm. We have a duty of care and obligation to protect those children for whom we are given responsibility. We believe that the welfare of children is the highest priority and that it is the responsibility of everyone associated with Payanmaram to ensure that they are protected. This policy sets out to

- providing children with appropriate safety and protection while in the care of Payanmaram; and,
- allowing all volunteers and staff to make informed and confident responses to specific Child Protection issues.

Definitions

Child: anyone under the age of 18 (in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Adult: anyone aged 18+.

Participant: every person who attends a Payanmaram International programme, who is not a "person in a position of programme responsibility". Note that in some programmes, participants are adults.

Though not children, they have the same right to expect a safe environment and appropriate behaviour from other participants and persons in positions of programme responsibility.

Person in Charge: Any staff, Project In charge or Trustee or other person who has responsibility for all or aspects of delivering a Payanmaram's programme. Note that in some cases, such persons may be 'children' (e.g. Junior Counsellors aged 16/17), who are, therefore, both responsible for and covered by this Child Protection Policy.

Child Protection: refers to the actions taken in order to prevent or stop all behaviours considered dangerous for the physical and psychological health of children.

Child abuse: is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It often occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Where it may be felt that the child accepted or somehow invited the abuse, one must understand that children are not capable of giving consent and all laws protecting children have time and again reiterated this stance necessary for the protection of children.

Abusers can be adults (male or female) and other children, and are usually known to and trusted by the child and family. The abuser may be a family member, or they may be someone the child encounters in a residential setting or in the community, including during sports and leisure activities. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming that child or neglecting the needs of the child.

There are four main types of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Children can suffer from one or a combination of these forms of abuse.

Emotional – the emotional mistreatment of a child which may involve telling a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only to meet the needs of another person. These

may include imposing expectations or interactions that are inappropriate or beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limiting the child's ability to explore or learn or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction.

Physical – causing bodily or physical harm e.g. hitting, poisoning, burning, giving children alcohol or drugs.

Sexual – when adults use children to meet their own sexual urges; this may or may not include physical contact with the child (e.g. any sexual activity, intimate touching, sexually suggestive remarks).

Neglect – when adults fail to meet the child's basic needs to an extent that is likely to result in serious impact on the child's health or development (e.g. failing to provide adequate food, shelter, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment).

In addition, bullying is a form of child abuse although often, but not always, the person who is the bully is also a child.

Bullying means deliberate, hurtful behaviour towards another person that is usually repeated over a period of time. The outcome will always be painful and distressing for the victim. There are four main types of bullying:

- physical (e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, slapping or any use of violence);
- verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name-calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages);
- emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group); or,
- sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

Part 1: Our Policy

Payanmaram will not tolerate child abuse and is committed to:

- Taking into account, in all of our planning and activities, the interests and wellbeing of children;
- Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the children with whom we are working;
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from neglect and physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse;
- Responding to all suspicions and allegations of abuse swiftly and appropriately; and,
- Recruiting Payanmaram volunteers and staff to work with children with regard to their suitability for that responsibility and providing them with training in good practice and Child Protection procedures.

Payanmaram volunteers and staff, who wish to work with children, are responsible for following this Policy at all times. Where applicable, the incidents of abuse must be reported as required under POCSO Act.

1.1 Review

The policy will be reviewed every 2 years or whenever there is a major change in the organization or in relevant legislation. Compliance with procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed.

Part 2: Our Rules

Payanmaram promotes and expects behaviour that is sensitive, respectful, caring and that contributes to creating a healthy and safe environment for children and adults; an environment where children and adults feel able to come forward with concerns and receive support from those around them.

2.1 Adult Code of Behaviour

Payanmaram has adopted an Adult Code of Behaviour that every single adult involved in a Payanmaram programme and/or a position of responsibility within Payanmaram, should respect and put into practice at all times. All volunteers will be given a copy of this Code of Behaviour during training or volunteer orientation and must become familiar with its requirements, by reading and understanding the Code. The Code can be found at Appendix One of this policy.

2.2 General Behaviour within Payanmaram Programmes

The above Adult Code of Behaviour reflects the guidance and rules set out in the Payanmaram Behaviour and Cultural Sensitivity Policy (Appendix 3). All persons involved in Payanmaram programmes must be made aware of and comply with these rules, which include forbidding the following in programmes:

- Any sexual intimacy or the appearance of sexual intimacy;
- Use of narcotics;
- Underage drinking; and,
- Any form of abuse, corporal punishment or intolerance
- Any form of discriminatory, casteist or abusive verbal remarks

Violation of any of these rules will lead to consequences up to and including exclusion from the programme. Violation of some of these rules may lead to consequences up to and including informing the appropriate external authorities.

2.3 Health and Safety within Payanmaram Programmes

To ensure the physical protection of children, their health and safety must also be provided for.

Payanmaram programme policy includes specific requirements for:

- Regular Supervision of children by Adult incharge
- Upholding all local public health/ health and safety standards and laws;
- Accommodation of special needs, to the fullest extent possible.
- Regular upkeep of security cameras
- Regular maintenance of entry/exit registers.
- Forms with parent signatures for activities involving children to keep parents aware of the events and activities of payanmaram

2.4 Behaviour and Communication outside of Payanmaram Programmes

People in charge of programmes must understand that they are in a position of trust at all times in relation to the children for whom they are responsible. This means that all contact with children before or after a programme should reflect the same values and behaviour.

Abuse can take place not only in person but also through other forms of contact (e.g. phone, text messages, emails, social networking sites).

It is important to encourage safe online or distance communication and to understand that our responsibility to children extends to any contact we have with them, be it by phone, text, chat, social network sites etc.

It is particularly important to recognise that online communications present many positive, but also negative opportunities.

The Payanmaram Reading Circle or Children's Club Whatsapp groups allows Payanmaram members to communicate with their programme group, before and after the programme they attend. They can also communicate with other members of such groups. In order to enhance online safety, participants under the age of 16 are only able to contact other participants and adults within their own programme.

However, many Payanmaram members (youth and adult) may also have a personal account on other social networking sites. Whenever using social network profiles, programme staff/Incharge/Paid Volunteers/Volunteers and leaders should always bear in mind their responsibility as adults in a position of trust. Payanmaram expects them to keep the distance online with young people that they would keep in the 'offline' world. Payanmaram further expects that they would not maintain any online friendship on a social media site with a child they know to be under the minimum age required by such sites. Please refer to Appendix 2 - Safety and Social Networking Sites for rules and expectations on communication with children via social media.

2.5 Photography

Care should be given when uploading photographs taken in a camp; only images of children in suitable dress should be used to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. It is difficult to specify exactly what content is appropriate given the wide diversity of activities in a children's event. However, photographs of certain activities present a much greater risk of potential misuse. Images of these activities should focus on the overall activity, not on a particular child, and should avoid full face and close-up body shots. This means, for example, that photographs of children in a pool would be appropriate if shot poolside from waist or shoulder up. Please refer to Appendix 2 - Safety and Social Networking Sites for rules and expectations on use of photographs in social media.

Part 3: Selection

Payanmaram relies on our dedicated volunteers and paid staff. We recognise how important it is that we have safe and effective practices in place for recruiting people who will be working with children and to prepare them for their role.

Payanmaram International requires the following steps and precautions in selecting all persons with Payanmaram programme responsibility. The selection process is set out in detail and includes submission of State granted ID proof and details before onboarding volunteers.

Note. On occasion, people withdraw and replacements have to be found very quickly. In all cases, however, each of the steps below must be followed before a person can be selected for a position of programme responsibility. In order to be prepared for such an eventuality, some National Associations

recommend that organisations keep a list of possible leaders and hosts who have been through these steps and been trained recently as ‘backups’.

3.1 Age Requirements

As per internal norms.

3.2 Application Requirements

Applicants for a position of responsibility in Payanmaram programmes must complete an application form, giving information about their experience, interests and background. They must also sign to say that they do not have history of criminal activity, illness, child abuse, drug/alcohol abuse, prejudice etc. that would disqualify them from participation in Payanmaram programmes.

Applicants must provide two confidential references, which must be checked.

3.3 Criminal Record Check

Police checks are required for all staff/ leaders/ JCs (aged 18+) at all Payanmaram programmes and activities. Although procedures may vary and it may not be possible to obtain the same information in all countries, all Payanmaram Activities for Children must investigate and see what information can be obtained. Payanmaram has to work with the best information it can obtain according to national/state laws and procedures.

It is essential under all circumstances to find out whether an applicant has a criminal record of convictions or arrests, which would make them unsuitable to take on a role of trust with children in a Payanmaram Children’s programme.

The following are considered inappropriate for a position of leadership and trust in Payanmaram and cannot be chosen for positions of programme responsibility:

- Persons who have been charged with or convicted of serious criminal activity. Serious criminal activity includes, but is not limited to: murder; a serious sex offence; an offence committed by an adult involving intentionally wounding or causing grievous bodily harm; indecency offences; kidnapping; offences connected with child prostitution or child pornography.

There are also some conditions or tendencies, which could make someone unsuitable for a position of programme responsibility. Persons with a history of conviction or treatment for the following behaviours, except in cases of unusual circumstances, are considered inappropriate for a position of programme responsibility in Payanmaram:

- Alcohol/ drug abuse;
- Dishonesty;
- Emotional or behavioural disturbance;
- Prejudice or intolerance;
- Violence or lack of self-control;
- Unable to handle stress appropriately.

Having a criminal record, in itself, does not necessarily mean that the person cannot assume a role of programme responsibility. It depends on the contents of the record and whether it relates to ‘serious criminal activity’ or other behaviours or attitudes that would make the person unsuitable for a position of trust with children.

3.4 Interview

All applicants will be required to attend an interview with Payanmaram representatives.

- A check should be made that the application form and procedures have been completed in full.
- The requirements and responsibilities of the role should be clarified so that they understand what is expected of them and what they can expect.

3.5 Membership Requirement

Every adult in a position of trust and responsibility in Payanmaram programmes must be or become a member of Payanmaram. They should share our values and make every effort to put them into practice.

Part 4: Training

Safe recruitment/interning practices of volunteers and staff must be followed by essential training for the roles they are undertaking. Our programme leaders, staff and volunteers must all be trained to recognise the situations where abuse of children may occur in order to enable them to react appropriately if they have concerns.

Training after recruitment should help volunteers to:

- Understand the Adult Code of Behaviour;
- Consider their own practices against what is considered good practice;
- Understand and follow the Payanmaram procedures for reporting and recording concerns;
- Recognise their responsibilities;
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child;
- Work safely and effectively with children; and,
- Understand how Payanmaram's Child Protection Policy also protects them in their work with children.

Part 5: Acting to Protect the Child When Abuse is Suspected

Part of providing a high standard of care is reacting appropriately when something does happen, or is suspected to have happened, and there is a need to protect the endangered child.

In the case of suspected or actual child abuse, you must ensure that your first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child and that no child is ever left in an un-safe situation.

It is often very hard to admit that abuse is taking place within our organization, especially to children we know and particularly by people we trust. We cannot assume that because we work in a voluntary organization that all individuals are caring individuals, as this may lead us to fail to hear or recognise or deal with the possibility that abuse is happening.

If you have a child protection concern, it can be difficult to know what to do. You may be worried about raising your concern and may think it is best to keep it yourself, perhaps feeling that it's none of your business or only a suspicion. Payanmaram will always treat your concerns seriously and if you

have such concerns, we want to hear from you – we all have a responsibility to protect the children in our care.

It is important in all circumstances to share your concern with someone who can make sure that the matter is looked at and dealt with as soon as possible. You should always pass on your concern to the 'person in charge' or, where your concern is about them, to the Managing Trustee or further to the statutory authorities.

5.1 Hearing a child's disclosure

It is not the responsibility of the person first hearing or encountering a case of alleged or suspected abuse to decide whether or not abuse has taken place; it is their responsibility to immediately report the concern.

Payanmaram should create a positive atmosphere where children will feel free to come forward in cases of abuse. It may be that the abuse is taking place outside of the programme, in the child's home or community. Every child has the right to be listened to. It is our duty to listen to any concern they may have and to take them seriously, especially when talking about harm or abuse. It is helpful to ask 'open' questions that need more than 'yes' or 'no' responses but no attempt should be made to investigate.

It is important to tell a child who discloses abuse that such information must be shared and cannot be kept 'secret' or confidential. The child should be told that the information will be only be shared with those who need to know.

5.2. Reporting to the Payanmaram person in charge and the Risk Manager

When someone has a concern, they must immediately discuss the concern with the 'person in charge'. The 'person in charge' in a programme will generally be the Caretaker/Incharge in the Reading Room Project; in the Managing Trustee in other projects.

The 'person in charge' is responsible for letting the person who has reported the concern know how it will be dealt with. The person reporting the concern should ensure they receive this information.

The 'person in charge' will then contact the Managing Trustee immediately, or as soon as possible that day.

If the concern is about the person in charge, their parent must be informed and they should contact the Managing Trustee directly.

The Managing Trustee is responsible for responding within 48 hours and then, as soon as possible, investigating and/or seeking relevant professional advice, advising the programme staff and leaders and ensuring that the incident is documented and reported on an Incident Report Form.

If concerns arise during a activity such as Junior Branch activities, they should be reported directly to the Managing Trustee and in line with local laws. This should be documented and reported as below.

A Incharge/Volunteer should report regularly to the Managing Trustee or Program Manager and should consult directly with the Managing Trustee with regard to any serious incident. They must also keep the Board of Trustees informed of any incidents which relate to the Safety.

If the Incharge/Volunteer feels that additional advice would be helpful, they should contact the Managing Trustee for assistance. In the event of a serious incident, Managing Trustee should be informed within 12 hours.

5.2.1 Recording reporting and documenting a concern

Payanmaram Volunteers and staff should understand their responsibility to immediately report any concerns they have regarding the behaviour or welfare of a child or another volunteer to the person in charge (see above). In some countries there will be a legal requirement to report such concerns to the appropriate authorities (see 5.2.3); the Managing Trustee will be able to advise on this. After a concern has been reported it is important to record or document the concern. When documenting a concern, care should be taken not to record personal opinion, only facts. If an injury e.g. bruise, cut, has been observed, the location of this injury should be noted on a body chart. The body chart can be appended where relevant to Incident Report Forms (see below).

5.2.2. Filling in a report form

A Payanmaram Incident Report Form (PIRF) must be completed whenever an incident – requiring medical attention, involving criminal behaviour and/or violation of Payanmaram Guidelines – occurs at a Payanmaram programme or activity. In case of doubt, an IRF should still be completed. Anyone who feels there is a matter that should be reported can fill out an IRF.

The format of the Incident Report is as below.

The Program Incharge/Volunteer must ensure that an IRF is completed and submitted and that a copy of the report and all related documents is stored confidentially by the Managing Trustee.

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure or when the concern arises. The information given on an Incident Report Form should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child;
- The child's home contact details;
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else;
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information;
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay;
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries using the body chart to indicate the location of such bruises or injury. Also details of any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes;
- Details of witnesses to any incident/s;
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred;
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Details of the alleged abuser, if known.

5.2.3. Reporting to the Authorities

Where it is suspected that any form of criminal behaviour is taking place at a programme, the appropriate local authorities should be informed immediately and their advice followed. If it is suspected that some form of abuse or criminal behaviour is occurring in the child's home or home community, the Incharge/Volunteer should contact the Managing Trustee and they, in turn, should involve the appropriate authorities in that matter.

5.3 Confidentiality

Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and shared on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The person making the allegation;
- The Payanmaram 'person in charge' (Volunteer/Coordinator Coordinator);
- The Managing Trustee;
- Parents of the child; • Social services/ police/doctor/Legal Aid;

In cases referred to them, the social services/ police/ doctor will advise on who should approach the alleged abuser or, where the alleged abuser is under 18 years of age, their parents.

5.4 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

If the person accused of abuse is in the programme, the Managing Trustee will also need to consider how to deal with that person. Guidance must be sought from the appropriate local authorities.

- The Managing Trustee will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Following their inquiries, social services or police inquiries may decide not to pursue the matter. The Managing Trustee may choose to reinstate them considering the welfare of the child as the highest priority throughout the child's involvement within Payanmaram.



Appendix 1 Adult Code of Behaviour

Adult Code of Behaviour

As a person in a position of programme responsibility you are in a position of trust at all times in relation to the children for whom you are responsible.

Good Practice

DO treat everyone with dignity and respect

DO set an example you would wish others to follow

DO treat all children equally – show no favouritism

DO respect a child's right to personal privacy

DO avoid unnecessary physical contact with a child – your actions, no matter how well intentioned, might be misinterpreted by them or someone else

DO avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust; for example, a sexual relationship with a participant, even if they are over the age of consent

DO have separate sleeping accommodation for children and adults

DO plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others – avoid spending time alone with a child in private or out of sight/hearing of others.

DO allow children to talk about any concerns they may have

DO encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like

DO avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour from children, such as tantrums and crushes

DO keep our Programme In-charge informed of where you are and what you are doing

DO take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer them immediately to the Mangaing Trustee Indu Priya

DO NOT trivialise or belittle abuse or concerns

DO NOT form an intimate relationship with a child or any other relationship that would be an abuse of trust

DO NOT allow abusive activities between children such as initiation ceremonies or bullying

DO NOT engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact – physical, verbal, sexual

DO NOT make sexually suggestive remarks or threats to a child, even in fun

DO NOT use inappropriate language, whether speaking or writing – in person or by phone, email or through use of social media

DO NOT allow a child to use inappropriate language unchallenged

DO NOT let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported

Appendix 2 Safety and Social Networking Sites

In addition to the Adult Code of Behaviour, here are some guidelines on how to behave appropriately toward children online or in other forms of communications.

- Remember you are in a position of trust and are a role model at all times.
- Conduct yourself appropriately, as you would face-to-face.
- Do not engage in one-to-one communication with children or via text messages, instant messaging or chat facilities unless it relates specifically to your Payanmaram responsibilities. Kindly communicate through us. We will give you the safe channels of communication to do so.
- Before sharing your social media accounts with a child, consider the things you like to share with your peers – would they be suitable or appropriate to share with that child?
- When using a social network account, you should always think of how any digital communication might appear to someone else. Compared with a conversation in the real world, technology increases the potential for messages to be seen out of context, misinterpreted or forwarded to others.
- Do not provide personal details about children on your website or social networking group.
- **Always ensure you have parental permission to use any photographs of children and only use their first names on any caption. When sharing on social media, kindly tag us without fail. Photographs of children must be taken with caution to ensure clothes of children are in order. We insist that you shoot pictures only in the presence of the Reading Room In-charge. And as minimal as possible. It is not really necessary to make underprivileged children our trophies... our social media friends would believe us even without too many pictures. The purpose is to show IT authorities/donors that something does happen in the Reading Rooms/Programmes they donated to. Stories and group photos are a good as well as safe treat for all.**
- Only use appropriate photographs on your site – remember that everyone can view them.
- If you are concerned about the way a child is attempting to contact you, report it Immediately via email at payanmaram@gmail.com.
- If you need to email children or youth you come across as a part of our projects, always copy the message to payanmaram@gmail.com.
- WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU DO NOT USE YOUR PERSONAL SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNT TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN.

Please note that this is both for the safety of the child and well as yours. Such clear lines of communication will help you and us in case of any unexpected/false allegations. Working with children in need of care and protection is highly sensitive and we want to ensure that it is a safe environment for all children and volunteers alike.

Appendix 3 Payanmaram Behaviour Cultural Sensitivity Policy

When in Rome, do what Romans do!

It must be understood that we mostly work among low-income groups and illiterate groups. Hence, it must be noted that, culturally they are still mostly orthodox. This could mean that they expect limitations in our behaviour towards young women and children. This could also mean that they expect us to dress appropriately. Kindly bear with them on the same and blend with the crowd.

It is very interesting to remove the cultural divide by small compromises on our part. This helps understand their situation better, as well will avoid unnecessary complications.

