

## PRARAMBHA SAFE GAURDING POLICY

### Introduction

PRARAMBHA is a charitable Trust. Prarambha works with micro entrepreneurs, Devadasis and People with Disabilities. Apart from being a Secretariat for Janara Network, Prarambha work with Common Sense, which currently is working to protect and develop the Commons in Raichur and Koppal districts.

PRARAMBHA has and continues to work with children. Given the increased awareness about, and incidents of child abuse in the press and the larger community, PRARAMBHA has decided to bring child protection centre stage into its institutional processes.

### 1. Statement of intent

At PRARAMBHA, we believe that all children have human rights the same as adults. We know that children with disabilities and children living in challenging environments are much more vulnerable to abuse, particularly those children who have difficulty moving freely, or communicating clearly or expressing their needs in a way adults and staff can quickly interpret and understand.

PRARAMBHA's approach to the safety and well-being of children is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that all children have a right to be protected from "physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse" (Article 19).

PRARAMBHA believes that all forms of abuse and exploitation suffered by children are unacceptable and children must be safeguarded from anyone who might seek to gain access to them through our work.

Our guiding principle is that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Child protection is both an institutional and an individual responsibility.

### 2. Scope

This policy and the procedures that follow apply to all aspects of PRARAMBHA's work and everyone associated with us. This includes all trustees, staff, volunteers, partners, as well as visitors, trainees, carers, community members and anyone else that does any work on our behalf. Wherever the word staff is used in this document it includes all adults in a paid and unpaid capacity working or associated with PRARAMBHA.

### 3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure that everyone (staff, families, communities and stakeholders) is aware that the

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priority within PRARAMBHA is to prevent any form of abuse to children using our services.

- To ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of the principles and practice involved in the protection of children.
- To ensure that everyone is aware of what constitutes a child protection concern and what action to take if they suspect, observe or have reported to them possible evidence of abuse.

#### 4.4 Neglect and negligent treatment

Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

**Examples of neglect** – leaving child unsupervised, not feeding or dressing child, failing to protect from danger, not providing medical care

#### 4.5 Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to:

- The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful activity
- The exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices
- The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials

**Examples of sexual abuse** – exposing children to sexual activity (pornographic material), touching, fondling, sexual intercourse or other types of sexual activities.

#### 4.6 Exploitation

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to the use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

**Examples of exploitation** – selling children for prostitution or child labour. Using children as domestic servants or child labour, or for any monetary gain for adults

At PRARAMBHA we believe that abuse happens to both girls and boys and that it is perpetrated by both men and women. Child abuse happens across all classes, castes, professions and positions.

### 5. Prevention

Since this primarily covers PRARAMBHA staff, this section covers the entire gamut from recruitment to the different interactions and behaviour expected of staff.

- All existing staff, volunteers and board members will be informed of PRARAMBHA's child protection policy, and informed that a copy of this in English and Kannada will be available to them with the Administrator.
- All the above stakeholders will receive an orientation on the Safeguarding Policy.
- There will be follow-up meetings with staff any time any incidence is reported so that staff are sensitized to issues on an on-going basis. This will also allow the policy to be reviewed and for interactions to take place to internalize this policy.

### 5.1 Staff - new and existing

- All new staff who are recruited will also be informed of PRARAMBHA's child protection policy during their induction and probation.
- All applicants will be asked about their previous work experience of working with children. During the interview process applicant's attitudes towards children's rights will also be explored.
- All applicants will be asked for two community references on application. A community reference is someone who knows the applicant and is from the community. They may be local panchayat members, elders or even relatives. This will be cross-checked.
- All new staff will serve a probationary period for a period of 3 months. During this period, all new staff will undergo training as part of the staff induction. Presently, all staff undergo a two-day residential training. During this period their performance while they are with young clients will be observed and reported by their supervisors. During this period, feedback will also be taken from stakeholders.

#### All staff

- The annual performance appraisals will also hereafter review observations from staff and complaints relating to the CPP. In addition, issues relating to the CPP are red flagged to the Director any time these occur/are reported.

### 5.2 Training

- The training staff are responsible for ensuring that all staff, trainees and volunteers are informed on the organisation's Safeguarding Policy, and for any revisions of this.
- All new staff undergo an orientation on the Safeguarding Policy.
- In the area of CPP and Sexual harassment, the training will focus on sensitising staff to perceptions and prejudices that can come into play when gender, age, authority and caste

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- Hit or assault a child even as punishment for bad behaviour.
- Use language, which mocks or humiliates the child.
- Shout at or frighten the child.
- Photograph a child inappropriately. A child should not be photographed at all without the consent of his parent / guardian.
- Address a child at the beginning of their professional relationship without parental consent.
- Help the child in their personal care, i.e. toileting or undressing, when they can do it for themselves.
- Kiss, hug or touch the child in a culturally inappropriate way.
- Disrespect the modesty and privacy of the child.
- Emotionally manipulate or bribe the child.
- Show favoritism towards particular children or child
- Provide food, money or privileges to children in return for sexual favours

### 5.5 Communications about children

- Communications about children should use pictures that are decent and respectful.
- Children should be adequately clothed and poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive should never be used.
- Where fundraising accountability requires details of a service to be geo-located, this will be displayed at the level of the village only, and without any identifying details of the child/household. In the event that the habitat is too small, and identification of the child cannot be avoided, in all cases, the consent of the Parents will be taken before the name of the village/location is used in any communication material.

### 6. Confidentiality

PRARAMBHA believes that all information about its service users is confidential and staff are required to observe this. Information about child protection concerns will only be shared with people on a need to know basis. While the permission of the service user will normally be taken, the CPP recognises that in some cases, abuse might need to be reported even when the service user requests that this not be reported.

A child may tell us a 'secret' and ask us to promise not to tell anyone. In this situation staff have a responsibility to report the 'secret' if it involves suspected abusive behaviour.

factors come in. This will be demonstrated through role plays, and by asking staff to share personal experiences. Similarly, staff will be assisted to be sensitive to their clients' needs when they visit a centre or are on a field trip. At this time, they need to be sensitive to issues of access, toileting or the inability of a child to communicate a need in a new environment or with strangers. Sensitisation will also cover understanding medications and simple things like meals on time, especially during trainings and outdoor games/activities, to ensure that a child does not have an adverse reaction.

- All staff will now be required to complete annual child protection and safeguarding trainings. At this time, a session on all PRARAMBHA policies, including any revisions that may have taken place, will also be si.

### 5.3 PRARAMBHA expects all adults associated with its work to

- Create a child friendly environment that is accessible so that the child's physical and developmental needs are catered for.
- Ensure that the physical environment is stimulating and comfortable and conducive to meeting their needs
- Talk directly to children when communicating and not through an adult
- Listen to children and take their wishes and feelings seriously
- Be sensitive to children's fears about intimidation
- Protect the child from bullying, teasing or unwanted attention from older children.
- Prevent or stop children from touching an adult or another child in an inappropriate way.
- Make sure the child is not put in a situation where she or he may be unprotected and therefore vulnerable to abuse.
- Ensure that they do not misuse or abuse the power of their position to exploit children.
- Make sure that colleagues are aware when a staff/volunteer needs to work alone with a child

### 5.4 All staff, volunteers and anybody else associated with PRARAMBHA must never:

- Stay alone overnight with any child service user, whether in staff accommodation, project premises or elsewhere.
- Physically force a child to move or co-operate in anyway.

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All information related to alleged abuse will be treated in confidence and staff will not talk to other members of staff about it. Staff will be informed during their orientation as to who they report any such issues to. In some cases, this might be their immediate supervisor, or manager or it could, in some cases, be the director directly.

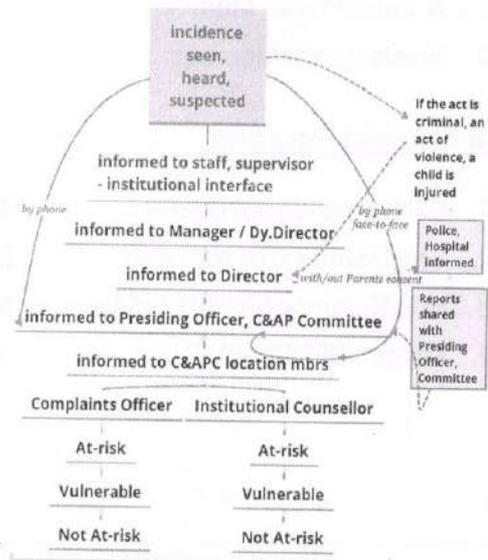
## 7. Complaints Process

7.1 When an Allegation is made against staff/ volunteers and adults associated with PRARAMBHA's work by a child, another child, a PRARAMBHA member or a community member or a family member, this matter covering all child protection / safeguarding concerns will be referred to PRARAMBHA's Internal Complaints Committee.

7.2 As part of their orientation, staff will be trained on how to handle a disclosure. Pl see the attached Guidelines for Reporting. Staff will also be trained to fill out a Cause for Concern form as soon as they become aware/are informed of an incident or concern. **Pl see format for the Cause for Concern Form attached as Annexure - 3.**

7.3 When a child protection / safeguarding concern Form is received, its severity and risk to the child will be reported to the director at the earliest. Depending on whether the act is criminal, an act of violence, the child is injured, the Director may direct staff to inform the child's parents, and with or without them inform the police or move the child to a hospital for medical aid. In all other cases, the matter will be reported to the Presiding officer C&AP Committee.

- the Presiding Officer will appoint a complaint's officer from other members of the committee who have no jurisdiction over the child or concerned staff.
- the complaint's officer will report back to her whether the child was at-risk, vulnerable, or not at-risk.
- The Presiding officer will refer the report to the Institutional Counselor with a request to meet the concerned child and staff.
- the Institutional Counselor will report back to her whether the child was at-risk, vulnerable, or not at-risk.
- In the event that both the reports agree, the Presiding officer will go by the majority view:
  - o Not at-risk: the Presiding Officer may treat the complaint as closed
  - o Vulnerable: the Presiding Officer may ask the



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institution to take steps to reduce future vulnerability of this and other children, and to take appropriate action against staff, including but not restricted to termination of service.

- At-risk: the Presiding Officer will recommend the Institution to report the case to the appropriate child and adult protection committee of the government, and to take appropriate action against staff, including but not restricted to termination of service.

In the event, the two reports are not unanimous; the Presiding officer will meet with the child and staff, and will file her own report. Based on her report, she will assess the child as being Not At-risk, Vulnerable or At-risk, and recommend action as above.

Please see Annexure - 1 for a copy of the full Process diagram.

The PRARAMBHAS head office at Kanakagiri is the central and main administrative office for the organisation. Therefore, the PRARAMBHAS Internal Complaints Committee will be constituted at Kanakagiri and will have jurisdiction over all PRARAMBHAS staff.

The PRARAMBHAS Internal Complaints Committee has been constituted of the following members:

1. Swarupa Dhanaraj, Presiding Officer
2. SS Ghanti, Member
3. M B Kukanoor, Member
4. Muddurangappa, Member
5. N Sarojamma, Member
6. Shailashree, Member

## Field Contact Persons

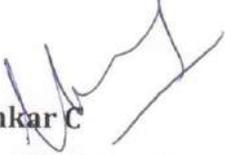
- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. SS Ghanti-9108760896    | Mail ID- <a href="mailto:ssghanti@gmail.com">ssghanti@gmail.com</a>                       |
| 2. Shailashree-9741607816  | Mail ID- <a href="mailto:shailashreehiremath@gmail.com">shailashreehiremath@gmail.com</a> |
| 3. M B Kukanoor-9448374545 | Mail ID- <a href="mailto:kukanoor.samuha@gmail.com">kukanoor.samuha@gmail.com</a>         |
| 4. Malathi-8971314957      | Mail ID- <a href="mailto:malathi.gowda3@gmail.com">malathi.gowda3@gmail.com</a>           |

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BY ORDER



Shankar C

Executive Trustee

VER- 2: 21-05- 2024

Reviewed by: Divya Sarma

Next Review: 05- 2026

Please also refer to the PRARAMBHA Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy for a composite understanding of this subject, and how field and institutional staff should manage these concerns.

