Hinduism Education Services

RISK ASSESSMENT / SAFEGUARDING POLICY

During our Hinduism workshops conducted at schools, the following are the potential risk factors, along with requirements of the presenter so that the risk is eliminated:

1. Divas (small candles) are lit at the beginning of sessions, as children enter the presentation room. When children volunteer to come to the front of the room to take part in demonstrations of the activities, there is a risk that their clothes can catch on fire if they come in contact with the divas. **To prevent this, divas must be extinguished before any child is called to the front. In addition, lit divas are never to be left unattended, even in an empty room. Lighters are to be kept out of sight and out of reach of students of any age.**

2. As we are teaching about Hinduism, some parents may be concerned that their child may be indoctrinated or engaged in acts of worship belonging to a religion other than their own. We are careful to train our presenters in the appropriate ways of presenting our religion in an educational setting, and these include the following:
   a. **Children are never engaged in acts of worship, but only in cultural activities. If any acts of worship take place, they are performed by the presenter as a demonstration only.**
      i. **With regard to yoga and/or meditation, most practitioners do not attach any religious significance to these activities, although some Hindus may, and some parents are sensitive to this. Therefore, we do not teach yoga or meditation, but only a breathing exercise called** *pranayama,* **that is used as an aid to yoga/meditation, and is a relaxation technique. The presenter must introduce this activity by stating explicitly that students will be trying out the breathing exercise that is done before meditation.**
   b. **When speaking about philosophical concepts or religious beliefs, the presenter must preface his/her statements with "Hindus say …" in order to make explicitly clear to students that we are sharing our ideas and not expecting students to adopt them.**