

# Aishworya Children's Home



*Volunteer*

*Handbook*

*2010*

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## 1) Who we are

Aishworya is a privately run orphanage for children in Baluwatar, Kathmandu, established in 2005. It is run by Nirmala Ghimire (Aamaa), the founder and director of the orphanage. Helping her to run the orphanage are her daughter Pramila Ghimire, the assistant director, and her son Pramod, who is a permanent member of live-in staff.

We are keen to ensure that our volunteers have the best experience possible. We hope that this booklet will help to support your volunteering needs, but please don't hesitate to ask us if there is anything you are unsure about. For more information about the orphanage background, please read our Annual Review or check our website at [www.aishworya.org](http://www.aishworya.org)

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## 2) Daily Routine

During the term time the children attend school 6 days a week, from Sunday to Friday. Saturday is their day off and Friday is usually a half-day. A typical day at Aishworya goes like this:

- ❖ 5am-6am: Wake up
- ❖ 6am-8am: Cleaning and cooking, chores, exercise and praying
- ❖ 8am-9am: Eating Dhal Bhaat (rice and lentils – the main morning meal)
- ❖ 9am-9.30am: Getting ready for school
- ❖ 9.30am: Walk to the school
- ❖ 1pm-1.30pm: Children come home for tiffin (a light lunch-time snack) and return to school again
- ❖ 3pm-4pm: Children return from school
- ❖ 4pm-5pm: Homework, playtime and chores
- ❖ 5pm: Praying
- ❖ 5.30pm-6.30pm: Dinner time (Dhaal Bhaat)
- ❖ 7pm-8pm: Bedtime

#### - **Food**

At Aishworya we eat two main meals of Dhal Bhaat a day, once in the morning around 9am and once in the evening at about 6pm. There is usually a small snack (tiffin) at lunchtime, but if you are still hungry you may also wish to buy yourself lunch nearby or keep some snacks in your room.

#### - **Laundry**

There are several options regarding your laundry. You can either choose to wash your clothes by hand at the orphanage, as the staff and children do, or if you prefer you can take it to Thamel to be laundered (this costs approx. 50 rupees per kilo at most laundry shops).

#### - **Bathroom**

The toilet inside the orphanage can be somewhat temperamental. It does flush but needs to be manually filled (ask a staff member to show you how). Also please do not put any toilet paper or sanitary products into the toilet as it will block. Please use a plastic bag to dispose of any paper etc.



### **3) Volunteer Roles**

The staff at Aishworya are aware that as a volunteer you are offering your services without pay, and that different volunteers can offer different skills. Therefore the staff will not normally allocate any specific jobs for volunteers to do. However, if you are keen to be actively involved in the orphanage daily life there are a number of different ways to get involved.

During the mornings before school volunteers are welcome to help with the daily chores, such as cleaning or washing (both the clothes and the children), or help in the kitchen (and learn to cook traditional Nepali food!). You can also help by playing with the children and spending time with them. You can always ask the staff

or children at any time if you would like to help them with something.

Similarly in the afternoons and evenings, volunteers can help the children with their homework, and play with the kids, as well as helping with the chores. The children love learning and playing interactive games with volunteers, and reading storybooks together, so don't be afraid to play educational games as well!

Any volunteers with specific skills such as writing, photography or IT skills could also assist staff with the bi-monthly newsletters and updating the orphanage website if they wish.

#### - **Volunteer 'work' timings**

On school days, volunteers are free to go out and explore the city between 10am and 3pm, while the children are at school, although occasionally volunteers might be asked to stay at the home during the day. Volunteers are also free to take one day off each week. However we ask that volunteers be at the orphanage on Saturdays, as this is the children's day off school and the time when we need the most help to entertain them.

If you are planning to be out for the whole day please return to the house by 8pm at the latest, as the house and gate is locked up at this time and everyone goes to bed. If for some reason you will be back after 8pm, please inform a staff member in advance so that they are aware of it. Similarly if you are planning to be away overnight or for several days please let us know.

#### - **Trips and Excursions**

We encourage volunteers to take the children on excursions such as to the swimming pool, park, or cinema. If you wish to organize any of these trips we will happily help you to plan them, but please bear in mind any costs will be borne by the volunteer.

Please inform the orphanage staff in advance of these trips, as sometimes not all of the children will be able to go. It may be best to arrange two or three trips with smaller groups of children instead of all at once (the logistics of transporting 40 children to the pool or the park takes a lot of planning and supervision!).



## **4) Rules and Behaviour**

While we do not have a great many rules and regulations at Aishworya, we must always place the children's safety and security first. Therefore we ask all of our volunteers to sign a code of conduct agreeing to adhere to our rules and regulations. It is important to us that volunteers understand the reasons behind these rules, and agree to follow them, so we ask volunteers to follow our guidelines carefully and always ask a member of staff if you are unsure. If our staff find you to be in breach of these rules, you may be asked to leave the orphanage immediately.

### **- Drinking Alcohol**

As mentioned in the code of conduct, we do not allow any alcohol onto our premises (or any illegal substances or drugs of any kind). We also will not allow volunteers to return to the home in an inebriated or drunken state.

However, we do understand that for many foreigners, drinking alcohol is an acceptable social pastime and therefore we appreciate that you may wish to go out with your friends for a few drinks from time to time. In the past some of our volunteers have found that the best solution is to stay for one night a week at a cheap hotel in Thamel (the tourist district). Hotel rooms can be as little as 150/200 rupees per night, and this allows the volunteers to go out late and drink without disturbing the children or breaking any rules (it can also coincide with your day off if you wish). Of course it is a personal choice for each volunteer whether or not you wish to do this, and while Aishworya does not encourage the drinking of alcohol, we understand the cultural differences and wish to find a suitable solution that fits everyone.

The only things we do ask is that you do not return to the home in a drunken state, or very late at night, and that if you wish to spend the night away from the orphanage, please inform a staff member in advance so that we know you are alright and do not worry where you are!

## - **Giving Gifts**

Volunteers are free to buy gifts for the children during their time with us, but should feel under no obligation to do so. Sometimes the children may ask you to buy chocolates or gifts for them but please do not feel that you have to do this. Also, while it is always great to buy the children toys, books or sweets, sometimes other gifts may be more appropriate, such as fruit, milk, eggs or socks for school.

Feel free to ask our staff for suggestions if you wish to buy something for the children, and please never give any children money directly to buy things with. This has led to some very serious problems in the past.

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## **5) Out and About**

Our orphanage is situated in between Baluwatar and Maharajgunj. There are plenty of small shops, restaurants and internet cafes within walking distance (2-3 minutes walk). You can walk to Thamel, Kathmandu's tourist district, from the orphanage (approx 20 mins), or if you prefer you can take a taxi or tempo (auto-rickshaw bus) from the main road in Maharajgunj. There is also a large supermarket at Bhat Bhateni (approx 20 mins walk).

Several useful locations have been marked on the map for you already.

## - **Food and Drink**

In case you should ever get tired of our wonderful dhal bhaat.....here is a list of restaurants and bars in Thamel that are very popular with tourists and volunteers:

- Fire and Ice – Italian pizzeria
- New Orleans – burgers, thai food and more (often with very good live music)
- Northfield Café – Mexican themed outdoor restaurant
- The Roadhouse Café – pizzas and pasta
- OR2K – Israeli restaurant serving only vegetarian food (they have fantastic salads,

- hummous and falafel), with a very chilled out atmosphere
- The Bakery Café – simple and relatively cheap food (for Thamel), and run entirely by staff who are deaf and might otherwise not be able to find good work. Definitely worth a visit!
- Helen’s – a German bakery with a great rooftop view of Thamel and excellent breakfasts
- Buddha Bar – choice of table or floor cushion seating, nice cocktails and very chilled-out atmosphere – sometimes with live music
- Full Moon – similar to Buddha bar, good cocktails, floor seating, and sometimes with live music.
- Maya Cocktail Bar – a bit more lively with some bar games available (darts, chess, carom etc).
- The Terrace – live music (mostly rock), outdoor rooftop bar with a more lively atmosphere and shisha pipes.

There are of course hundreds of other great places to eat and drink – these are just a few, and as you settle in and explore you are bound to find new and great places – do tell us all about them if you think they are worth mentioning in our handbook!



## **6) Important Contacts & Information**

Here are some key contact phone numbers in case of problems or emergencies:

- Aishworya House Phone: 4426543
- Nirmala Mobile/Cell phone: 9841932846
- Pramila Mobile/Cell phone: 9803490203
- Tej Dangi (Pramila’s husband & Community Police Officer): 9851005341
- Police: 100
- RCDP (Volunteering house):

### **- Hospital/Illness**

In the event of any form of illness, please inform a staff member as soon as possible. Many volunteers get ill in their first few days or weeks in Nepal, due to a change in diet or drinking bad water. The

most common affliction is traveller's diarrhoea, which usually passes on its own after a couple of days. It is important to stay hydrated if you are suffering from diarrhoea. Another common illness is Giardia, which is a parasite in your intestine. Giardia is very easy to catch in Nepal through drinking bad water, but is also easily treatable. The symptoms include: diarrhoea and extreme gas, and treatment can be bought at any pharmacy.

We recommend that you see a doctor if the symptoms persist or get worse, and there are several nearby. The government hospital in Maharajgunj is the closest and the cheapest. However, if you prefer you can also visit a private clinic for treatment (both are marked on the map). If you have a Lonely Planet guidebook, there is also some very useful medical advice in the back. Please do not hesitate to ask our staff for advice on hospitals, pharmacies and medical treatment, and Pramila, our assistant director will be happy to accompany you to a hospital or clinic if necessary to help with translation etc.

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## **7) Staying in touch**

Many of our volunteers have enjoyed keeping in touch and hearing our news after they have left Aishworya. Some return to visit again, and a number have maintained a permanent link by sponsoring a child (see the sponsorship information below for more info). If you would like to stay in touch with us, please write your email address in our volunteer guestbook to receive our bi-monthly newsletters. You can also check our website for updates at [www.aishworya.org](http://www.aishworya.org) or email us directly at [ach.nepal@gmail.com](mailto:ach.nepal@gmail.com)

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## **8) Sponsorship: What will my money do?**

Below is a cost breakdown of what different levels of sponsorship will provide for the children at Aishworya.

| <b>Cost in GBP (£)</b> | <b>What your money will buy:</b>  |
|------------------------|---|
| £5 a month             | will cover the costs for one child to go to school, including all fees, uniforms, stationery, exams and excursions. |
| £12 a month            | will buy one sack of rice and two packets of lentils, which will feed three children for a month.                   |
| <b>£25 a month</b>     | <b>will fully support one child at Aishworya, including rent, food, school and medical costs.</b>                   |
| £50 a month            | will buy fresh fruit, three times a week for all 32 children.   |
| £75 a month            | will buy all the vegetables needed for all 40 children and the staff.   |
| £100 a month           | will pay for the education of all 32 children.  |

If you would like to make regular donations to sponsor a child or simply help with our basic living expenses, please contact us at [ach.nepal@gmail.com](mailto:ach.nepal@gmail.com). If you would like to receive our bi-monthly newsletters or regular updates from the children, please provide us with your email address.

Any regular sponsors of Aishworya will also receive a personal letter from the child they have sponsored every 6 months. If you would like to review the profiles of the children please visit our website at [www.aishworya.org](http://www.aishworya.org)

Thank you.