**Principle**

Little Buds understands that play is something that a child best enjoys. A child’s play has a purpose and can be a step towards the learning and understanding of valuable skills.  It can help the child fit into the world physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially, and grow to be a healthy and competent individual.

Little Buds will endeavour to provide children with a stimulating environment, where playing and learning go hand in hand.  A varied selection of activities will be provided throughout the day, using both indoor and outdoor activities.

Consideration will be taken to ensure that provision is made for children with special needs and abilities.

*Messy Play:* A large variety of different mediums, such as foam, paint, glue and dough will be made available.  These will provide different tactile and imaginative experiences and will encourage expressive language.

*Sand and Water:* These will be made available on a regular basis (we have large, fully equipped sand and water table).  Sand and water provide opportunities to experience scientific and mathematical concepts as well as encouraging social and language development.

*Creative Activities:* Activities such as painting, sticking, chalking and box modelling will be made regularly available.  Additionally games such as ring games, lotto and snap will encourage conversation and the learning of social skills – taking turns, sharing, winning and losing.

*Imaginative Play:* Little Buds recognises the importance of imaginative play to children and will aim to provide rich opportunities to widen the imagination.  These will include dolls and accessories, road maps and cars, trains, dressing up clothes and a home corner.  Various different play settings will be made available.  There is also a selection of construction toys which additionally encourage good hand/eye coordination, counting, sorting, etc.

*Physical Play:* Tunnels, balls, hoops, and a parachute; are some examples of the varied apparatus and equipment provided.
*Books:* A variety of books is available for children to look at and read, both under supervision and alone.  In any event children will be read to as a group each day.

*Additional Equipment:* A cd player, a multi-media computer and musical instruments will be available so that in addition to hearing and responding to music children will be encouraged to think about how sounds are produced.

Outside play

Little Buds has access to two outdoor play areas. The play area attached to the playgroup will be used on a daily basis for physical play and gardening. This will undergo a risk assessment on a daily basis.

The primary school playground will used for activities that involve using more space. The children will be able to use the play equipment that is in the playground, though only when it has been checked with the outdoor risk assessment.

When using this area, children will walk from the playroom to the playground by exiting the main doors of the playgroup and round the outside of the school and across to the playground. The gate will be kept locked at all times and a member of staff will supervise the play equipment at all times. Another will stand by the gate while supervising children around that area, while the third member or staff will supervise children playing on bikes and wheeled toys.

Due to Covid-19, the room bubbles will alternate areas on a weekly basis.

**Equipment**

Little Buds are responsible for purchasing equipment for the nursery and we ensure that it has EU/ British Standards approval that is age, stage and development appropriate for the children in our care.

All staff are asked to be vigilant at all times to ensure that the children come to no harm from the equipment, particular attention should be paid in the baby/ toddler area for toys that may present a choking hazard to very young children.

Risk assessments are carried out daily to ensure that equipment and resources are safe and when obtaining natural objects we will ensure that they are safe and do not pose a threat to any children with allergies.

All staff/ students/ volunteers or adults attending a placement in the nursery have a duty to the children in their care to ensure that all the equipment available to them is safe, clean, and secure and age appropriate.

None of the toys available to the children at the nursery should be faulty in any way.

All toys in the Playgroup should be cleaned on a regular basis. It is the staff who work in the room’s responsibility to ensure that the toys are cleaned. The Playgroup Leader will oversee that the cleaning is being done.

If found, any toys or equipment that is broken or faulty, e.g. loose bolts, missing parts, cracks and/or sharp edges should be removed immediately and discarded or placed somewhere safe for repair at a later stage. This is to be recorded on a Damaged Equipment Log Sheet and the Manager is to be informed as soon as possible.

All toys and resources will be cleaned on a daily basis with antibacterial spray at the end of the day. Toys will also be alternated.

**Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

This policy was adopted by Mount St Catherine’s Little Buds Management Team

Signed:……………………………………………………………………………………

(on behalf of the setting)

Position: …………………………………………………………………………………..

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………..

Reviewed on:

Date:…………………. Signed:……………………………………………

Date:…………………. Signed:……………………………………………

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