Staff Policy Book



Little Buds Playgroup

Staff Policy Booklet

**The Absence of the Manager**

**Principle**

At Little Buds management is committed to organizing the staff, resources and environment to ensure the provision of a high quality of care at all times.

**Policy**

This policy has been introduced to ensure that the appropriate processes are in place to ensure that all absences by the Person-in-Charge of whatever duration are covered under the agreed deputizing arrangements in the playgroup.

At all times management will ensure that:

* The designated deputy will reflect the management structure in Little Buds and will have appropriate levels of experience and qualifications required to deputize.
* A minimum of two vetted staff are on duty at any one time.

To meet this we use the following ratios of adult to children:

**1:8**

*(Guidance can be taken from the Childminding and Daycare Minimum Standards* [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)*).*

**Procedure**

* All employees understand their responsibilities and follow absence and sickness notification procedures.
* Management at Little Buds will ensure that there is a suitably qualified and experienced deputy employed within the setting at all times.
* Management has contingency arrangements in place with relief staff *(named list available)* to cover both absences and emergencies, to ensure that ratios are maintained at all times.
* Management will use Health and Social Care Trust guidance on obtaining references and enhanced criminal record checks for staff and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children.
* Management will keep all records relating to employment of staff and volunteers, in particular those demonstrating that checks have been done in staff personnel files.
* Little Buds will continue to comply with all policies within the setting and those in a deputizing role will be aware of their additional duties, during the absence of the person in charge as reflected in their terms of employment.

NOTE: Management reserves the right to review the duties of the deputy during the absence of the person in charge to ensure all aspects of the setting can remain operational.

**Accidents- Prevention, Reporting, Recording and Notification**

***Policy Statement***

We follow the guidelines of the Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (RIDDOR) for the reporting of accidents and incidents. Any cases of Covid-19 will be reported to the PHA and Social Services. Child protection matters or behavioural incidents between children are NOT regarded as incidents and there are separate procedures for this.

***Procedures***

Each group has their own accident book which:

* is kept safely and accessibly;
* is accessible to all staff and volunteers, who know how to complete it; and
* is reviewed at least half termly to identify any potential or actual hazards.

Social Services and Health and Safety are notified of any injury requiring treatment by a general practitioner or hospital doctor, or the death of a child or adult.

When there is any injury requiring general practitioner or hospital treatment to a child, parent, volunteer or visitor or where there is a death of a child or adult on the premises, we make a report to Social Services and Health and Safety

***Dealing with accident***

We meet our legal requirements for the safety of our employees by complying with RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injury, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). We report to the Health and Safety Executive:

* any accident to a member of staff requiring treatment by a general practitioner or hospital; and any dangerous occurrences. This may be an event that causes injury or fatalities or an event that does not cause an accident but could have done, such as a gas leak.
* Any dangerous occurrence is recorded in our incident book. See below.
* Information for reporting the incident to Health and Safety Officer is detailed in the Early Years and Childcare’s Accident Record publication.

**Additional Needs Policy**

Little Buds provide an environment in which all children, including those with special educational needs, are supported to reach their full potential. At our setting there is a ramp at the outside door and double doors with immediate access to facilitate a wheelchair. There are disabled toilet facilities and we have tables of differing heights and soft furnishings for the floor. There is a changing mat available for children who require changing. The curriculum plan and staff duties will be changed in order to help accommodate any child with SEN whenever possible. All staff will promote the children’s independence.

Our system of observation and record keeping, which operates in conjunction with parents, enables us to monitor all children’s needs on an individual basis. A child with SEN will have additional observations carried out by their key worker to help plan Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) which will identify how we can help a child with SEN make progress. All observations will be non-judgmental, clear and concise, appropriate for their purpose and presented in a user-friendly format. All staff within the setting has knowledge of observation techniques. Observations will help show gaps in development/play, which equipment is well used, which activity needs adult support to help specific learning outcomes, give evidence to support concerns and help the group in deployment of staff. The leader will, via observations and assessments done by members of staff, gain information to help plan how children can interact, ensuring inclusion and participation of each child.

* We have regard for the DfES Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001).
* We ensure our provision is inclusive to all children with special educational needs.
* We support parents and children with special educational needs (SEN).
* We identify the specific needs of children with special educational needs and meet those needs through a range of SEN strategies.
* We work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual children’s needs. By working closely with parents it ensures Little Buds Playgroup draws upon their knowledge and expertise in planning provision for children.
* We monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments.

**Procedures**

 We designate a member of staff to be the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and give their name to parents. Our SENCO is Mrs C McKenna.

* We ensure that the provision for children with special educational needs is the responsibility of all members of the setting.
* We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity.
* We use the graduated response system for identifying, assessing and responding to children’s special educational needs.
* We work closely with parents of children with special education needs to create and maintain a positive partnership.
* We ensure that parents are informed at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their children’s education.
* We provide parents with information on sources of independent advice and support.
* We liaise with other professionals involved with children with special educational needs and their families, including transfer arrangements to other settings and schools.
* We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum for all children with special educational needs.
* We use a system of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing individual educational plans (IEPs) for children with special educational needs.
* We ensure that children with special educational needs are appropriately involved at all stages of the graduated response, taking into account their levels of ability.
* We have systems in place for supporting children during Early Years Action, early Years Action Plus, Statutory Assessment and the Statementing process.
* We use a system for keeping records of the assessment, planning, provision and review for children with special educational needs.
* We provide in-service training for parents, practitioners and volunteers.
* We raise awareness of any specialism the setting has to offer, e.g. Makaton trained staff.
* We ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs provision by collecting information from a range of sources, e.g. Individual Education Plan reviews, staff and management meetings, parental and external agency’s views, inspections and complaints. This information is collated, evaluated and reviewed annually.
* We provide a complaints procedure.
* We monitor and review our policy annually.

**Admissions Policy**

Little Buds believes that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

 We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff in the absence of their parents. They should recognise other adults as a source of authority, help and friendship. They should be able to share with their parents afterwards the new learning experiences enjoyed in the pre-school. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

  We aim to make the setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

**Little Buds Admission Criteria**

1. Child has returned to Little Buds for their pre-school year
2. Child has turned 2 Years and 10 months old
3. Child has parents who work in Mount St Catherine’s P.S or St Catherine’s College
4. Child has older siblings in Mount St Catherine’s P.S
5. Child has no siblings
6. Child has had siblings previously in Little Buds Playgroup
7. Child has siblings in other primary schools

**Procedures**

* We allocate a key person before the child starts.
* The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.
* The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
* The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child’s well-being, care and leaning.
* The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child’s development with those carers.
* A key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child’s parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
* The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
* We promote the role of the key person as the child’s primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

**Settling-in to Little Buds Playgroup**

* Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our procedures and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
* We encourage parents to take the child for visits to the playgroup before they start. These should last 15-20mins and how many of these will depend on the child. The parent will stay for each visit. When the child turns 3, parents will then be given the option to leave the child for an hour to see how they react.
* We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
* When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
* Young children take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
* We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
* When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
* We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left.
* We may request you to collect your child early in the first few weeks of attendance if they are having trouble settling in.
* We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.
* We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
* Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to start to create their child's record of achievement.

**Adverse Winter Conditions**

**Principle**

Little Buds considers that during severe weather conditions, e.g. snow or if there is a power/heating problem, the health and safety of children, parents/carers, staff and volunteers will be our main priority.

**Policy**

The setting has implemented this policy to ensure committee members and staff have the appropriate authority to exercise powers and carry out certain actions for which they are personally accountable. Little Buds wants to ensure that health and safety is of paramount importance at all times and does not want to endanger children, parents/carers, staff, volunteers or any persons.

The management team maintains the policy of remaining open during bad weather, unless the severity of conditions within the locality makes opening the setting too dangerous. In the event of closure as a result of adverse weather conditions, employees will be paid. However they will be expected to an extra day in lieu of this payment; the management team will oversee this e.g. by ensuring staff work an additional day in the summer before commencement of new term.

**Procedures**

To ensure this policy is implemented appropriately, the staff will:

* Consult with the leader prior to any decision being made about closing the setting due to adverse weather conditions or health and safety issues.
* Notification will be given to parents/carers as soon as the decision has been agreed to aid minimal disruption.
* If the leader in charge/manager is unable to open due to the conditions and possible staff shortages, the management team must be notified and they will assist with contacting families to minimize disruption.
* If applicable, consult with local primary schools.

Allegations against staff

**Policy Statement**

Our setting will work with children, parents/carers and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

**Procedures**

* We ensure that all parents/carers know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff within the setting, or anyone working/volunteering within the community centre, which may include an allegation of abuse. See Complaints Policy.
* We refer to Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy when responding to any complaint that a member of staff within the setting or anyone working in Little Buds, has abused a child.
* We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff within the setting or anyone working in Little Buds, may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
* We refer any such complaint immediately to one of the Designated Child Protection Officers. We also report any such alleged incident to Social Services and what measures we have taken. We are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by children’s social care in conjunction with the police.
* We would report any allegations to social services

**Complaints Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds aims to provide the highest quality care and education for all children attending the setting. At Little Buds we aim to provide a warm welcome and caring environment within which all children can learn and develop as they play. The setting intends to work in partnership with parents/carers to meet their needs and the needs of their children and welcome comments/suggestions on how to improve the playgroup and club.

**Policy**

Management of Little Buds endeavour to quickly and informally resolve concerns through discussion with the appropriate member of the setting staff. All comments and complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. If a parent/carer is not satisfied with any aspect of the provision of care and cannot informally resolve the issue, they may then follow the complaints procedure.

**Procedure**

At Little Buds we will seek parents view by:

*Comments:*

* Encouraging parents to place comments in the comments book/box which can be located in the hall beside the parent’s notice board.
* Ensuring comments are shared with staff and the management team on a regular basis.

*Complaints:*

Parents should follow the following steps if they wish to make a complaint:

* Speak to the leader in charge.
* If the issue is not resolved or reoccurs, the parent/carer should put their complaint in writing to the leader in charge.
* If this fails to resolve the issue, a meeting may be requested with the management team and leader (if appropriate) by writing to the management team.
* Both parties may have a friend/partner present and a written record of the meeting will be kept.
* Most complaints should be resolved at this stage, however should we be unable to reach an agreement, an external mediator may be invited to help resolve the issue.
* In some circumstances it may be necessary to involve the Health and Social Care Trust if a child appeared to be at risk or there was a possible breach of registration requirements. In this case a further investigation of the complaint would be carried out. They can be contacted by phoning The Early Years Team 028 37564020 or Early Years, [87 Lisanally Lane, Armagh BT61 7HF](https://www.bing.com/local?lid=YN1007x261121838&id=YN1007x261121838&q=Southern+Health+%26+Social+Care+Trust&name=Southern+Health+%26+Social+Care+Trust&cp=54.35628128051758%7e-6.649918079376221&ppois=54.35628128051758_-6.649918079376221_Southern+Health+%26+Social+Care+Trust&FORM=SNAPST).

**Confidentiality Policy**

**Principle**

Our work within Little Buds Little Buds Playgroup will bring us into contact with confidential information. It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality care.

**Policy**

To ensure that all those working and volunteering in the playgroup and club can do so with confidence, through the use of the confidentiality policy.

**Procedure**

At Little Buds we expect management teams, staff and volunteers to respect the confidentiality policy in the following ways:

* Parents/carers will have ready access to files and records of their own children – but not of any other child.
* Staff will not discuss individual children with people other than the parents/carers of that child.
* Information given by parents/carers to members of the staff will not be passed on to third parties.
* Personnel issues will remain confidential to the people involved.
* Any anxieties/evidence relating to a child's personal safety will be kept in a confidential file and will not be shared within the setting except for the child's key worker and Manager.

Little Buds will comply with all requirements of the Data Protection legislation and policy implemented in the setting.

**Conflict of Interest Policy**

**Principle**

Committee Members have an obligation to act in the best interests of Little Buds, and in accordance with Little Buds governing document. [Staff and volunteers have similar obligations.] Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual’s personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of Little Buds.

Such conflicts may create problems; they can:

* Inhibit free discussion;
* Result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of [the governing body]; and
* Risk the impression that Little Buds has acted improperly.

The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

**Policy**

Accordingly, we are asking committee members and staff to declare their interests are provided for this purpose.

To be effective, the declaration of interests needs to be updated at least annually, and also when any changes occur.

If you are not sure what to declare, or whether/when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact Little Buds committee secretary or Chairperson for confidential guidance. Interests will be recorded on the governing body’s register of interests, which will be maintained by Little Buds secretary. The register will be accessible by parents/staff/committee of Little Buds.

**Data Protection**

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be processed only to ensure that committee members and senior staff in Little Buds, act in the best interests of Little Buds. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

**Procedure**

If you are a user of Little Buds services, or the carer of someone who uses Little Buds services, you should not be involved in decisions that directly affect the service that you, or the person you care for, receive(s). You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion. The same applies if you face a conflict for any other reason. You may, however, participate in discussions from which you may indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users, or where your benefit is minimal.

If you fail to declare an interest that is known to Little Buds secretary and/or the chairman Little Buds the secretary and chairman will declare that interest.

**Decisions taken where a board member or member of staff has an interest**

In the event of the committee having to decide upon a question in which a Committee Member or member of staff has an interest, all decisions will be made by vote, with a simple majority required. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision; interested parties will not be counted when deciding whether the meeting is quorate.

Interested board members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests. They may participate in the discussion but not the decision-making process.

All decisions under a conflict of interest will be recorded by Little Buds secretary and reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

* The nature and extent of the conflict;
* An outline of the discussion;
* The actions taken to manage the conflict.

A *de minimis* exemption applies to contracts less than £500 in value. Random checks against the register of interest will be made on the award of contracts below this value. If the cumulative value of a series of small contracts exceeds £500, the Committee Member will operate the policy used for individual contracts over that sum.

The *de minimis* exemption does not apply to contracts of employment with Little Buds.

Independent external moderation will be used where conflicts cannot be resolved through the usual procedures through an EGM.

(*Organisations should add any further requirements that relate to the nature of the organisation’s work*.)

**Managing contracts**

If you have a conflict of interest, you must not be involved in managing or monitoring a contract in which you have an interest. Monitoring arrangements for such contracts will include provisions for an independent challenge of bills and invoices, and termination of the contract if the relationship is unsatisfactory.

**Consent Policy**

**Principle**

The purpose of this policy is to enable parents to have a say on what their children can part take in the playgroup.

**Policy**

The setting has implemented this policy to enable children to give consent to allow their children exposure to certain aspects of playgroup life.

**Procedure**

To enable parents to have a say on what their child can part take in, Little Buds will ensure that all parents give written consent to the following aspects of playgroup life.

*List of consents:*

* Outings
* Emergencies
* Observations
* Changing clothes
* Contact with animals
* Messy and sensory play
* Suncream
* Photographs
* Photographs for press
* Video

**Data Protection Policy**

**Principle**

In order to work effectively, Little Buds needs to gather and process relevant information (data) about the committee, staff, parents, children and professionals and others (data subjects) involved in the day-to-day running of the setting.

A designated person ((Maura McCleary) data controller) will decide what information is required and how it is to be obtained. This information will be handled by (a) person(s) (data processor) acting on the instructions of the data controller.

**Policy**

The setting has implemented this policy to ensure committee members and staff are fully aware of procedures for handling data.

By adhering to this policy, Little Buds will ensure that data is handled properly and confidentially at all times. This applies to data held on paper and by electronic means Little Buds recognizes its responsibility to ensure that all persons acting on behalf of the group are made aware of this policy and receive any necessary training.

**Responsibility**

The management team is responsible for ensuring that all staff and volunteers act in accordance with this policy with delegated responsibility to the leader in charge/manager to follow through.

**Purpose and Remit of Policy**

Data collection.

Data storage/security.

Data updates.

Data disclosure.

Data access.

Data disposal/destruction.

The management team of Little Buds will review this policy annually to ensure that:

* Data is collected fairly.
* Data is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
* Data is accurate and up to date.
* Data is stored securely.
* Data is only retained as long as is necessary.
* New staff/parents/committee are made aware of the policy.

**Data Protection Procedure**

Little Buds will comply with:

* The terms of the 2018 Data Protection Act and any subsequent relevant legislation
* Any guidance on or update to this policy notified by Early Years – the organization for young children.
* Data Collection
* Only relevant personal data will be collected. The person(s) from whom it will be collected will be informed of its uses and of any possible disclosures that may be made.
* Systems will be put in place to facilitate updating information held.
* Data Storage/Security

Manual data will be stored in a secure place only accessible to those with a legitimate reason to view/use that data.

Electronic data (if applicable) will be protected by password. If the computer is connected to the internet, a firewall system will be used.

The computer (if applicable) will be positioned to ensure that information is not visible to a casual observer.

Sensitive personal data, eg medical records/child protection records/interview material, will be stored using a coding system and access will be strictly limited (need to know basis) and recorded.

**Data Update**

Forms will be issued to staff/parents/others to ensure that data held is up to date and accurate (See appendix 3).

Data held will be updated promptly on receipt of the appropriate form. If incorrect or out of date data has been disclosed to a third party, the recipient will be informed of corrected data and this will be recorded.

**Data Disclosure**

The consent of the data subject will be obtained before the group discloses personal information to any organization or individual.

All requests for disclosure will be in writing and telephone enquirers advised accordingly.

In cases of child protection, the law requires the disclosure of information, without consent, to relevant Health and Social Care Trust personnel and PSNI officers.

If a request for information relating to child protection is received by telephone, steps should be taken to ensure that such information is disclosed to identifiable personnel (ie seek verification of identity) and only if the individual is entitled to receive that information (authorization). It is advisable to disclose such information only to those known to be involved in child protection. If doubt exists, ask the enquirer to route enquiry through a known channel. Always call an enquirer back and be very alert if the number given is that of a mobile telephone.

Requests from parents for a printed list of children’s names/addresses will be politely refused. On occasion, first names may be given for Christmas cards or party invites.

Personal data (including images) will not be used in newsletters, websites or in other media without the consent of the data subject. The conditions outlined in will be adhered to strictly.

A record will be kept of any data disclosed so that the recipient can be informed should data be updated/altered at a later date.

**Data Access**

Data subjects have the right to access any personal data held about them.

Any person(s) wishing to exercise this right must make a request in writing to the Data Controller.

The Data Controller will issue the appropriate form.

On receipt of the completed and signed form, the designated Data Controller will make the information available. The information will be made available as soon as possible and within the 28-day period recommended by the Information Commissioner.

Any delay occasioned by the necessity to consult with an appropriate healthcare professional in relation to a data subject’s medical information will be explained in writing to the individual making the request.

**Data Disposal/Destruction**

The Data Controller(s) will review personal data regularly and delete information which is no longer required for the purposes of the group.

The Data Controller(s) will keep a deletion file and record the type of deletion and the date on which it occurred.

The Data Controller(s) will seek advice from the Labour Relations Agency before deleting information regarding the recruitment and selection of employees.

The Data Controller(s) will not delete information relating to accidents on the premises or child protection issues until the required statutory period has expired.

**Data Breach**

In the event of a data breach, all persons whose information is involved will be notified with 72hrs of the breach.

**Information management**

Only information that is required to comply with the regulations of minimum standards will be held by Little Buds:

* Registration forms
* Permission slips
* Observations
* Accident sheets
* Incident sheets
* Complaints

**Document Retention**

Little Buds will only hold on to information until it is deemed unnecessary or is no longer required. The committee has put a time frame on the following documents, which means that they must be destroyed when they have reached the period of time.

* Registration forms, permission slips, observations and complaints- 7 Years
* Accident/incident sheets- until the child has reached the age of 21 years
* Photographs- once the child leaves the group.

**The Disposal of Documents**

When any document is no longer required by Little Buds they will be disposed of by either being shredded on the premises or put in a sealed bag and sent to Restore Data Shred.

**Dealing with Fraud Policy**

**Principle**

At Little Buds, management recognise the importance of having proper and adequate internal financial controls in place.

**Policy**

A policy on dealing with financial irregularities has been agreed and implemented within Little Buds to ensure that the management team, staff and volunteers know how to report their concerns within the organisation. This also includes concerns about the conduct of committee members or senior managers. If members of the management team, staff or volunteers know or suspect an individual is misusing the funds from Little Buds, for their own purpose or misappropriating funds, they should take immediate and appropriate action to resolve the issue.

If it is known or suspected that Little Buds is a victim of financial crime, then this should be reported to the police, the management team and as a matter or best practice if a charity, to the Charity Commission NI immediately. It would also be important to notify your insurance company.

**Procedure**

The management team of Little Buds are committed to developing and maintaining effective controls to prevent fraud, and to ensuring that if it does occur, it will be detected promptly;

* All alleged incidents must be reported to the whole management team at the earliest possible time and documented.
* All cases of reported fraud or related concern must be dealt with in the strictest confidence.
* The management team will do the utmost to protect the accounting records from loss or destruction.
* Any cases of fraud which do occur shall be vigorously and promptly invested with the necessary legal and/or disciplinary action taken.
* All necessary system changes shall be made to ensure that similar frauds cannot occur in future.

**Equality Policy**

**Principle**

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of the whole community of Little Buds

– children, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors, with whom we have engaged and who are actively involved in the setting.

**Policy**

This policy clearly sets out how our practice and policies have due regard to the need to:

* Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization.
* Advance equality of opportunity.
* Foster good relations between groups.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

* Gender, including gender reassignment.
* Marital or civil partnership status.
* Having or not having dependents.
* Religious belief or political opinion.
* Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins).
* Disability.
* Sexual orientation.
* Age.

The setting is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work/volunteer for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination. Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work and volunteer for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilized fully to maximize the efficiency of the organization.

The policy explains how we aim to listen to and involve children, staff/volunteers and parents/carers and the wider community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people:

* To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization.
* To promote equality of access and opportunity within our setting and within our wider community.
* To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of the work of Little Buds, the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, well-being, and material outcomes.

Issues relating to adults within the setting can be embraced under these themes and will be reflected in the action plan.

**Procedure**

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all the beneficiaries of our setting.

The Roles and Responsibilities within Little Buds

Our Leader will:

* Ensure that staff/volunteers, parents/carers, children, visitors and contractors are engaged in the development of, and are informed about the Equality Policy.
* Oversee the effective implementation of the policy.
* Ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy.
* Develop partnerships with external agencies regarding the policy so that actions are in line with the best advice available.
* Monitor the policy and report to the management team at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy.
* Ensure that the staff team is kept up to date with any developments affecting the policy or actions arising from it.
* Have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this policy.
* Provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the policy.

The management team will:

* Have specific responsibility for the Equality Policy.
* Support the Leader in implementing any actions necessary.
* Engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy.
* Evaluate and review the policy annually.

Little Buds staff will:

* Be involved in the development of the policy.
* Be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
* Understand that this is issue all staff need to be aware of and support the Equality Policy.
* Make known any queries or training requirements.

**First Aid Policy**

**Principles**

Little Buds is committed to the health and safety of every child and adult in the setting. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that if an accident or incident, involving either child or adult, will be dealt with quickly and as reassuring as possible

**Policy**

This policy is put in place to ensure that both staff and volunteers with in the setting are aware of the First Aid policy and what its expectations are.

**Procedure**

* At least one member of staff on duty will be fully trained in pediatric first aid.
* All staff will attend pediatric first aid when required to do so.
* All staff will attend refresher courses every 3 years.

**When dealing with an accident**

1. Staff will approach the situation calmly
2. Staff will reassure child/adult throughout treatment
3. A member of staff will fetch the First Aid box
4. Other staff will remove the other children from the area and take them to a safe contained place.
5. A member of staff will treat the child or adult in accordance with the training they have received.
6. Staff will phone for an ambulance if needed.
7. Staff will phone next of kin to inform them of what has happened.

**Contents of First Aid Box**

* Triangular bandages
* Sterile dressings- small, medium and large
* Composite pack containing 20 assorted plasters (adults only)
* Sterile eye pads (with bandage or attachment)
* Container of 6 safety pins
* Pediatric First Aid book.
* The First Aid box is easily accessible to adult and is kept out of reach of childnre.
* No unprescribed medicine is given to children, parents or staff
* At the time of admission to the setting, parent’s written permission for emergency medical advice or treatment is sought. Parents sign and date their written approval.

Parents sign a consent form at registration allowing staff to take their child to the nearest Accident and Emergency unit to be examined, treated or admitted as necessary on the understanding at parents have been informed and are on their way to the hospital.

**Fundraising Policy**

**Principle**

Fundraising is an integral part of Little Buds. It supports the overall development of the setting and is an integral part of our financial planning. Fundraising allows us to keep our fees to a minimum and enables us to make our playgroup accessible to all children.

**Policy**

The setting has implemented this policy to ensure committee members and staff have the appropriate authority to exercise powers and carry out certain actions for which they are personally accountable when they are dealing with fundraising. It is the responsibility of the management team and delegated staff to ensure that fundraising is in line with policies and procedures and promotes the aims and values of the setting.

The management team is accountable for all funds raised and for ensuring that the setting can respond appropriately to any additional funding requirements.

**Procedure**

The management team will ensure that:

* At all times the setting will adhere to the Charity Commission guidelines on collection of monies in the setting.
* Through a sub-committee the setting will organise a number of fundraising events throughout the year and apply to other sources of funding, eg Awards for All, the Blackburn Trust.
* The setting will encourage all the parents/carers, staff and the local community to support us in our fundraising efforts.
* In April each year the playgroup committee and staff will agree a fundraising strategy for the incoming year to meet financial commitments.
* Fundraising activities must follow all the HSC guidelines in relation to Covid-19

**General Issue Policy**

**Principle**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate employment processes are known and adhered to throughout. This is to ensure consistency and fairness throughout the setting.

**Policy**

The setting has implemented this policy to ensure management team members and staff have the appropriate authority to exercise powers and carry out certain actions for which they are accountable.

The whole management team is responsible as the employer of the staff within the setting.

**Procedure**

To ensure this, we have encompassed general employment terms and conditions, these include:

**General Obligations**

Staff are required to devote the whole of their time and attention during working hours to their duties. Staff members must not, without consent of the management team, directly engage in, be concerned with or have interest in any activities of a similar nature or with other private business ventures or activities.

The management team recognises that everyone has the right to conduct his/her private life according to his/her own conscience, but staff should conform to standards of behaviour that will not bring the setting into disrepute.

**Outside Commitments**

An employee will advise their line manager in writing if she/he is invited to partake in additional activities, eg training course, or other such commitment run by an outside organisation. The situation will be assessed in relation to the current needs of the setting if it is agreed that there will be no conflict.

Only such commitments as above undertaken on behalf of and approved in writing by the line manager will be regarded as part of normal working hours and will be separately identified on timesheets and diary. Any remuneration payable for such approved commitments must be remitted directly to the setting.

**Entry to Little Buds Playgroup Premises**

Employees are not allowed on the premises except during their normal working hours, unless prior permission has been sought and is given by the management team.

**Personal Property**

Little Buds Playgroup cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage to an employee’s personal property whilst on the premises. Any personal property lost or found should be reported to the management team immediately.

**Collections and Clubs**

No collection should be made or club formed without seeking and obtaining prior permission from the management team. The distribution of bills, literature or advertising material is strictly forbidden.

**Personal Telephone Calls**

The setting’s telephone may be used by employees only in cases of emergency.

**Grants Policy**

**Principle**

Grants are an integral part of Little Buds Playgroup that supports the overall development of the setting and is an integral part of its financial planning. Grants enable Little Buds Playgroup to provide additional learning opportunities and new experiences for the children in our care and enhance sustainability for the setting.

**Policy**

Income raised form grants/funders should be handled in the same manner as all income sources.

**Procedure**

Those with delegated authority are expected to ensure:

* A log of receipts is kept.
* Money is lodged accordingly.
* All relevant documentation is filed accordingly, ie a copy of the application (whether successful or not), letter of offer, evaluation/monitoring forms.
* Communication with the funder is maintained as required.
* Records are kept up to date for end of year accounts.

**Infection prevention and control- including the exclusion of children who are infectious or ill Policy**

**Policy statement**

We provide care for healthy children and promote health through identifying allergies and preventing contact with the allergenic substance and through preventing cross infection of viruses and bacterial infections.

**Procedures**

When parents start their children at the setting they are asked if their child suffers from any known allergies. This is recorded on the registration form.

This form is kept in the child’s personal file and a copy is displayed where staff can see it.

Generally, no nuts or nut products are used within the setting.

Parents are made aware so that no nut or nut products are accidentally brought in, for example to a party.

 Oral Medication

*Asthma inhalers are now regarded as "oral medication".*

* Oral medications must be prescribed by a GP or have manufacturer’s instructions clearly written on them.
* The group must be provided with clear written instructions on how to administer such

medication.

* All risk assessment procedures need to be adhered to for the correct storage and

administration of the medication.

* The group must have the parents or guardians prior written consent. This consent is kept on file.

Lifesaving medication & invasive treatments

*Adrenaline injections (Epipens) for anaphylactic shock reactions (caused by allergies to nuts, eggs etc) or invasive treatments such as rectal administration of Diazepam (for epilepsy).*

*The setting must have:*

* A letter from the child's GP/consultant/school nurse stating the child's condition and what medication if any is to be administered;
* Written consent from the parent or guardian allowing staff to administer medication; and:
* Proof of training in the administration of such medication by the child's GP, a district nurse, children’s’ nurse specialist or a community pediatric nurse.

**Procedures for children who are sick or infectious**

*If children appear unwell during the day – have a temperature, sickness, diarrhoea or pains,*

*particularly in the head or stomach – the Leader calls the parents and asks them to collect*

*the child, or send a known carer to collect on their behalf.*

* If a child has a temperature, they are kept cool, by removing top clothing, sponging their heads with cool water, but kept away from draughts.
* In extreme cases of emergency the child should be taken to the nearest hospital and the parent informed.
* Parents are asked to take their child to the doctor before returning them to playgroup; the playgroup or club can refuse admittance to children who have a temperature, sickness and diarrhea or a contagious infection or disease.
* Where children have been prescribed antibiotics, parents are asked to keep them at home for 48 hours before returning to the setting.
* After diarrhoea, parents are asked to keep children home for 48 hours or until normal toileting has returned.

Covid-19

* Children, staff and visitors will have temperature taken before entering the building.
* Parents will be asked if the child has had signs of Covid (sore throat, temperature, loss of sense of smell and taste, persistent cough (younger children can also have a runny nose along with any of these symptoms).
* Staff, children and visitors will wash their hands when they enter the settin.
* Children/staff who develop a temperature when in the setting will be seated in an allocated area with ventilation. Any staff who are dealing with that particular child will wear a mask, apron and gloves at all times.
* The area in which the staff member or child has been placed will be deep cleaned when the child/staff member has left.

Reporting of ‘notifiable diseases’

* If a child or adult is diagnosed suffering from a notifiable disease under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988, the GP will report this to the Health Protection Agency.
* When the setting becomes aware, or is formally informed of the notifiable disease, the Leader informs SHSS and acts on any advice given by the Health Protection Agency.

 HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis procedure

* HIV virus, like other viruses such as Hepatitis, (A, B and C) are spread through body fluids.
* Hygiene precautions for dealing with body fluids are the same for all children and adults.
* Single use vinyl gloves and aprons are worn when changing children’s nappies, pants and

clothing that are soiled with blood, urine, faeces or vomit.

* Soiled clothing is bagged for parents to collect.
* Spills of blood, urine, faeces or vomit are cleared using mild disinfectant solution and mops; cloths used are disposed of.
* Tables and other furniture, furnishings or toys affected by blood, urine, faeces or vomit are cleaned using a disinfectant.

Nits and head lice

* Nits and head lice are not an excludable condition, although in exceptional cases a parent may be asked to keep the child away until the infestation has cleared.
* On identifying cases of head lice, all parents are informed and asked to treat their child and all the family if they are found to have head lice.

**Insurance policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds Playgroup understands that there is now legislation which holds the owners or managers of businesses and organisations personally responsible for compensating ‘injured parties’ when things go wrong. This can range from breaches of Health and Safety regulations to employment disputes.

**Policy**

The setting has implemented this policy to ensure committee members and staff have the appropriate insurance cover in place to operate a quality childcare setting on a daily basis.

**Procedure**

The management team is responsible for ensuring that the group or organisation has adequate insurance cover. This will be renewed on an annual basis.

Little Buds Playgroup Playgroup is currently insured by Allianz, while the Out of Schools Club is currently insured with which covers our setting for:

* Contents
* Consequential Loss Additional Sum insures
* Employers liability limit of indemnity
* Public liability limit of indemnity

Contact details of Insurer

*Allianz*

*AHA.Leslie & Co*

*5 Crescent Gardens*

*Belfast*

*Co Antrim*

*BT7 1NS*

**Intimate/Personal Care Policy**

**Principles**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate processes with regard to intimate personal care are known and adhered to within the setting. Little Buds Playgroup is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children or young people will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. We recognise that there is a need to treat all children/young people with respect and dignity when intimate care is given.

**Policy**

This policy has been introduced to ensure that staff and volunteers within the setting are aware of the Intimate Personal Care Policy and conform to the expectations of Little Buds Playgroup in line with current standards of care.

At all times management and staff will ensure that there is positive engagement with parents/carers and Little Buds Playgroup will work in partnership with regard to toilet training, unless there are medical or other developmental reasons why this may not be appropriate at the time. While we are aware that toilet training can be a long process, we ask that children have at least started the process a few weeks before starting playgroup.

**Procedure**

Management and staff will endeavour to ensure that:

* There is adequate support for children/young people with intimate care needs and individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child.
* Staff who provide intimate care are trained to meet the needs of individual children.
* Only vetted staff are allowed to be involved in the intimate care of the children.
* All staff adhere to Little Buds Playgroup, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
* Suitable equipment and facilities are made available.
* Staff carrying out intimate care are appropriately supported.
* Where possible one to one care will be provided unless there is an identified need for having more adults.
* Intimate care is discussed and agreed with parents and carers.
* The needs and wishes of the child/young person are taken into consideration.
* The constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation are taken into account, therefore, parents will be asked to come to the playgroup or have a nominated person to come and change child when needed.
* Changing areas are warm with safe areas to lay children. For safety, children will be changed on the floor.
* Each child has their own pull-ups and changing wipes to hand.
* Gloves, aprons and masks are put on by staff before changing starts and the areas are prepared.
* Children will be encouraged to help as much as possible.

**Late Collection Policy**

**Policy statement**

Children may only leave the premises with a person for whom permission has been granted on registration form. The person must be over 18 years of age. If a person is not known to staff, ID and signature must be checked against the registration form. If person’s details are not on the form the child must not leave the premises until the parent/carer has been contacted.

If a child is not collected at the end of the session staff will attempt to contact the parents and/or emergency contact person. If this is unsuccessful 2 staff will remain with the child and continue to try to make contact. If after 30 minutes the child is not collected then Mrs Monica Jordan will be contacted for guidance. During this time we will ensure the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

**Procedures**

* Parents of children starting at Little Buds are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on our *Registration Form:*
	+ Home address and telephone number - if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbor or close relative.
	+ Mobile telephone number (if applicable).
	+ Names, addresses, telephone numbers and signatures of adults who are authorized by the parents to collect their child from the setting, for example a childminder or grandparent.
* On occasions when parents are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they inform us in writing of how they can be contacted.
* On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorized to collect the child are not able to collect the child, they provide us with written details of the name, address and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child.  We agree with parents how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child.
* Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take back-up measures.  We provide parents with our contact telephone number.
* We inform parents that we apply our child protection procedures as set out in our child protection policy in the event that their children are not collected from the setting by an authorized adult within 30 min after the setting has closed and the staff can no longer supervise the child on our premises.

*If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we follow the following procedures:*

* The child’s file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
* If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
* If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorized by the parents to collect their child from the setting - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Form - are contacted.
* All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
* The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
* The time at which the child is collected, will be noted. If child is collected late on more than 3 occasions, the child’s name will be forwarded to the chairperson. The chairperson will then decide the next way forward.
* If no-one collects the child after 30 min and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children.
* We contact our local authority children’s social services care team
* Social Care will aim to find the parent or relative. If they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority (SHSS Early Years 028 37520541).
* Under no circumstances do staff to go to look for the parent, nor do they take the child home with them.
* Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.

**Maintenance and replacement of play equipment Policy**

At Little Buds Playgroup we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our children, staff, parents, carers and visitors at all times. This includes ensuring that our playroom and resources are well maintained at all times.

Daily room checks and periodic outside play area checks are undertaken and any maintenance issues are to be noted and dealt with as detailed below. All resources are washed or sprayed with antibacterial cleaner every day.

All staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of maintenance and are aware that the first course of action is always to make the area/resource safe immediately. This includes the immediate removal of an unsafe resource and in some cases restricting access to an area/room.

* The Notification of Maintenance issues are the responsibility of all Staff.

• When a member of staff identifies a broken toy or resource, this should be removed and the Removed Toy/resource book should be filled in and given to the Leader or committee member.

• The Leader or committee member should then check if the toy or resource can be fixed and if not fixed, then replaced.

**Management of Emergencies**

**Policy statement**

Little Buds ensure that all parents/guardians are made aware of any closures in the playgroup. We also ensure that all staff, children and parents/guardians feel safe and secure when on the premises. Little Buds also know that sometimes, there are unplanned incidents within the playgroup. This policy outlines these incidents and how Little Buds will deal with them.

**Procedures**

**Fire Safety**

The basis of fire safety is risk assessment. These are carried out by a ‘compètent Person’.

The leader has received training in fire safety sufficient to be competent to carry out risk

assessment; this will be written where there are more than five staff. This will follow the

guidance as set out in the *Fire Safety Risk Assessment – Educational Premises* document.

Fire doors are clearly marked, never obstructed and easily opened from the inside.

Smoke detectors/alarms and firefighting appliances conform to BSEN standards, are fitted in appropriate high risk areas of the building and are checked as specified by the manufacturer.

Our emergency evacuation procedures are approved by the Fire Safety Officer and are:

* clearly displayed in the premises;
* explained to new members of staff, volunteers and parents; and
* Practiced regularly at least once every six weeks.

Records are kept of fire drills and the servicing of fire safety equipment.

 **Emergency evacuation procedure**

Our procedures for practicing drills include:

* How children are familiar with the sound of the fire alarm.
* How the children, staff and parents know where the fire exits are.
* How children are led from the building to the assembly point.
* How they will be accounted for and who by.
* How long it takes to get the children out safely.
* Who calls the emergency services and when in the event of a real fire.
* How parents are contacted.

**The fire drill record book contains:**

Date and time of the drill.

How long it took.

Whether there were any problems that delayed evacuation.

Any further action taken to improve the drill procedure.

  **Intruders**

An intruder is an individual in the setting who has not followed established visitor procedures and may or may not be a safety hazard to the setting. This policy provides a means of dealing with either situation.

  Any member of staff who observes an individual in the setting who appears suspicious or out-of-place should either approach the individual (if safe to do so), ask for their name and purpose in the setting or should contact a member of staff for assistance.

 The person approaching the suspicious individual will determine if the person poses a safety hazard or just needs to be made aware of the settings visitors’ policy.

 While determining the status of a visitor, every effort will be made to ensure children in our care are safe, feeling secure and where possible, continuing to be engaged in their current activities. If need be children will be given reassurances as to their own and others safety and well-being.

**A) Procedure: visitor with legitimate business no pass**

* Staff will identify the person and determine their purpose or need for being in the setting.
* They will escort person and have them check in as a visitor. They will ensure they are aware of the settings visitor policy for future reference.
* Staff will wait until another member of the team can come to them, if safety issues do not permit them to leave their post.
* A review of security to determine how the intruder gained entry will be carried out.

 **B) Procedure: intruder who may pose a safety hazard**

* Staff will politely greet the intruder, identify themselves and ask the purpose of the visit to the setting.
* The staff member will ask a colleague to observe their approach to the intruder.
* Staff will explain that all visitors must report to the Supervisor and they will escort the person to the Supervisor.
* Depending on the circumstances and the demeanour of the intruder, the Leader will make every effort to call the police to report the incident. If the intruder appears agitated, irrational or refuses to leave the building in a peaceful manner, they will endeavor to calm the person by talking in a low calm reassuring voice whilst also trying to gain the attention of another staff member to call the police.
* If police are called and the individual leaves or attempts to leave prior to the police arriving, staff will not attempt to physically detain or restrain the person. Staff will contact the police to inform the responding officers that the individual has left the building, stating the direction and means of transport.
* If the individual stays until the police arrive, officers will be informed as to what has happened that led to the individual being with you so they can establish probable cause for arrest for trespassing. Staff will also verbally ask the subject not to return to the school whilst still in the presence of the police.
* Management/staff will review security immediately.
* Management will log the incident and actions as soon as possible

**C) Procedure: intruder who is armed or otherwise poses a safety hazard**

1. Alert all staff members.
2. The leader will contact the police as soon as possible to report the incident.
	* They will give the operator all the information regarding the location of the intruder, a physical and clothing description and the weapon(s) involved.
	* They will advise the operator as to what the setting is doing to ensure the safety of the children and other staff members.
	* They will remain on the line until the operator advises them to hang up.
	* The Leader will monitor the location of the intruder until police arrive.
3. When confronting an intruder, the leader will take another staff member with them. They will ask a third staff member who is not involved to contact the owner. The Leader will determine who will initiate contact with the intruder and who will be the back-up person. Both staff members should break off contact and leave when it is safe to do so. Staff will attempt to direct the intruder away from areas occupied by the children*.* Staff will use casual conversation or body language to calmly direct the situation. If the intruder refuses to cooperate, staff will not escalate the situation.  If the intruder shows a weapon, staff will assure him/her that it is not necessary for him/her to consider using the weapon.
a. Staff will back away slowly and leave the area.
b. Staff will have both of their hands up with their palms facing the intruder while slowly backing away.
4. Staff will remain calm, and will not attempt to disarm the person
5. Once the police officers arrive staff will provide them with the following information:
	* + Location of intruder
		+ Description of intruder
		+ Any known weapons
		+ Any statements made by the intruder
6. Staff will be prepared to keep media, parents and other community members out of the setting. The police will secure the building. Staff will contact the press office at National Centre if they need help with a press statement.
7. All other staff members and official visitors will remain in their designated area with the children unless otherwise directed by the police, whilst reassuring and engaging with the children as appropriate.

  In any event there will be a thorough investigation of the incident, and a report will be made by all staff involved.

The settings parents will be informed of the incident and the subsequent investigation, with due regard to both data protection and confidentiality policies.

**Adverse Conditions and winter**

***Procedures***

To ensure this policy is implemented appropriately, the staff will:

* Consult with the leader prior to any decision being made about closing the setting due to adverse weather conditions or health and safety issues.
* Notification will be given to parents/carers as soon as the decision has been agreed to aid minimal disruption.
* If the leader in charge/manager is unable to open due to the conditions and possible staff shortages, the management team must be notified and they will assist with contacting families to minimize disruption.
* If applicable, consult with local primary schools.

**Flooding**

***Procedures***

* Children will be removed from the mobile to a safe area. Leader will take mobile phone or contact numbers for the children.
* The caretaker will assess the area and will then advise leader on what to do.
* If unable to return to mobile, staff will contact parents and ask them to collect their child.
* Staff in will be in close contact with parents to keep them informed of any changes.

**Electrical failure**

**Procedures**

* Staff will contact local primary school to check if the electric is off in the school.
* If it is, the caretaker will contact NIE to inform them of the failure and will ask if there is a fault in the area and ask for an estimated time for it to return.
* The leader will determine what to do based on the time of year and the length of time that the electric will be off.

**Covid-19**

**Procedures**

* If a child/adult has a temperature, or has developed a consistent cough, the child/adult will be lead to the designated area (at fire doors in each room) by staff wearing PPE.
* A phone will be made to the child’s parents asking them to collect the child and will be advised to get the child tested for Covid. If the adult is able to drive, then they must go home. If they are not, a phone call will be made to a emergency contact to collect the person as soon as possible.
* If the test comes back positive, then all children and adults in that room must isolate for 10 days.
* Staff to inform PHA and Social Services about the positive case and fill in the needed paperwork. Letters will be sent to contacts and non-contacts.
* The Caretaker will be informed and will then get in a Deep Clean company to help ensure the room is free of Covid-19.
* The infected person may return after 10 days if they have a normal temperature. The rest of the room can return to the playgroup on the day stated by PHA.
* If the test returns and is negative, normal running of the playgroup can be resumed.

**Managing Medicines Policy**

**Principle**

While it is not our policy to care for sick children, who should be at home until they are well enough to return to the setting, we will agree to administer medication as part of maintaining their health and well-being or when they are recovering from an illness.

 **Policy**

In many cases, it is possible for children’s GP’s to prescribe medicine that can be taken at home in the morning and evening. As far as possible, administering medicines will only be done where it would be detrimental to the child’s health if not given in the setting. If a child has not had a medication before, it is advised that the parent keeps the child at home for the first 48 hours to ensure no adverse effect as well as to give time for the medication to take effect.

 The Leader is responsible for the correct administration of medication to children. This includes ensuring that parent consent forms have been completed, that medicines are stored correctly and that records are kept according to procedures.

Parents are asked to keep children at home if they have any infection, and to inform setting as to the nature of the infection.  This will allow the playgroup to alert other parents via the whatsapp and to make careful observations of any child who seems unwell.

Children who have had someone in their household test positive, must isolate for 10 days. The playgroup must be informed of any child isolating.

 Children are not to attend Little Buds if they have been vomiting or had diarrhoea until at least 48 hours has elapsed since their last attack.

 A child should not return until all symptoms have disappeared and they are fully recovered. With regards to the chicken pox virus children should not return until all visible spots have disappeared.

 Little Buds will ensure that the first aid equipment is kept clean, replenished and replaced as necessary.  Sterile items will be kept sealed in their packages until needed.

A member of staff will be responsible for checking first aid equipment and there will always be a first aider present at all sessions.

 If a child is unwell parents/carer or emergency contact person will be contacted to collect them. A member of staff will sit quietly with the child giving care and comfort until they arrive. In an emergency if unable to contact parent/carer the child’s doctor will be consulted for advice.

**Procedures**

* Children taking prescribed medication must be well enough to attend the setting.
* Only prescribed medication is administered. It must be in-date and prescribed for the

current condition.

* Children's prescribed medicines are stored in their original containers, are clearly labelled and are inaccessible to the children.
* Parents give prior written permission for the administration of medication. The staff

receiving the medication must ask the parent to sign a consent form stating the following information. No medication may be given without these details being provided:

* Name of child
* Name of medication
* Dosage
* Frequency of administration
* Date of dispensing
* Storage requirements
* Expiry date
* The administration is recorded accurately each time it is given by staff. Parents sign the record book to acknowledge the administration of a medicine.
* No child may self-administer. Where children are capable of understanding when they need medication, for example with asthma, they should be encouraged to tell staff what they need. However, this does not replace staff vigilance in knowing and responding when a child requires medication.

 Children who have long term medical conditions and who may require on ongoing medication

* A risk assessment is carried out for each child with long term medical conditions that require ongoing medication. This is the responsibility of the Leader alongside the rest of the staff. Other medical or social care personnel may need to be involved in the risk assessment.
* Parents will also contribute to a risk assessment. They should be shown around the setting, understand the routines and activities and point out anything which they think may be a risk factor for their child.
* For some medical conditions key staff will need to have training in a basic understanding of the condition as well as how the medication is to be administered correctly. The training needs for staff is part of the risk assessment.
* The risk assessment includes vigorous activities and any other activity that may give cause for concern regarding an individual child’s health needs.
* The risk assessment includes arrangements for taking medicines on outings and the child’s GP’s advice is sought if necessary where there are concerns.
* A health care plan for the child is drawn up with the parent; outlining the key person’s

role and what information must be shared with other staff who care for the child.

* The health care plan should include the measures to be taken in an emergency.
* The health care plan is reviewed every six months or more if necessary. This includes

reviewing the medication, e.g. changes to the medication or the dosage, any side effects noted etc.

* Parents receive a copy of the health care plan and each contributor, including the parent, signs it.

 Managing medicines on trips and outings

* If children are going on outings, staff accompanying the children must include the key person for the child with a risk assessment, or another member of staff who is fully informed about the child’s needs and/or medication.
* Medication for a child is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child’s name, name of the medication, Inside the box is a copy of the consent form and a card to record when it has been given, with the details as given above.
* On returning to the setting, if medication has been administered, the card is stapled to the medicine record book and the parent signs it.
* If a child on medication has to be taken to hospital, the child’s medication is taken in a sealed plastic box clearly labelled with the child’s name, name of the medication. Inside the box is a copy of the consent form signed by the parent.
* This procedure is read alongside the outings procedure.

**Management of Records**

**Policy Statement**

There are record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; means of storing and sharing that information take place within the framework of the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act.

This policy and procedure is taken in conjunction with the Confidentiality Policy and our procedures for information sharing.

**Procedures**

We keep two kinds of records on children attending our setting:

*Developmental records*

* These include observations of children in the setting, photographs, video clips and samples of their work and summary developmental reports.
* These are usually kept in the playroom and can be freely accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child’s parents.

*Personal records*

* These include registration and admission forms, signed consent forms, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
* These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet and are kept secure by the person in charge in an office or other suitably safe place.
* Parents have access, in accordance with our Access to Records policy, to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.
* Little Buds will be compliant with the regulations around GDPR and other legislation regarding the safe keeping of information.
* Covid-19: A daily record of the child’s temperature will be kept.
* Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
* We retain children’s records for seven years after they have left the setting. These are kept in a secure place.

*Other records*

Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.

Students on recognized qualifications and training, when they are observing in the setting, are advised of our confidentiality policy and are required to respect it.

We also keep records for the purpose of maintaining our business. These include:

* Records pertaining to our registration.
* Financial records pertaining to income and expenditure.
* Risk assessments.
* Employment records of staff.
* Health and Safety

Our records are regarded as confidential on the basis of sensitivity of information, such as with regard to employment records and these are maintained with regard to the framework of the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act.

This policy and procedure is taken in conjunction with the Confidentiality and Access to Records policy.

 All records are the responsibility of the playgroup/club leader and Little Buds management team. .

All records are kept in an orderly way in files and filing is kept up-to-date.

Financial records are kept up-to-date for audit purposes.

Health and safety records are maintained; these include risk assessments, details of checks or inspections and guidance etc.

Our Social Services registration certificate is displayed.

Our Public Liability insurance certificate is displayed.

**Management of Risks Associated with the Care of Individual Service Users Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds believes that the health and safety of those in our care is of utmost importance. The policy within the playgroup and club is to provide the children with a healthy, safe and stimulating environment in which to work and play.

 Little Buds management works to ensure the setting complies with:

* Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
* Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)
* Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) (2002)
* Manual Handling Operations Regulations (1992 (As Amended 2004))

**Policy**

Little Buds management endeavours: to ensure that a high level of health and safety is maintained at all times for all those coming into contact with our setting; all children, parents, staff and volunteers are aware of health and safety issues; to minimise the hazards and risks to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

The member of staff responsible for health and safety is: Áine Kenefick.

* He/she is competent to carry out these responsibilities.
* He/she has undertaken health and safety training and regularly updates his/her knowledge and understanding.

**Procedure**

Insurance cover:

At Little Buds Playgroup there is public liability insurance and employers' liability insurance.

Due to insurance cover children may NOT enter **Little Buds Playgroup** before 8.45am and MUST be collected by 12pm

* The certificate for public liability insurance is displayed in parents notice board
* Our insurance company is: Allianz
* Contact details: HA Leslie & Co 07852 100861

Management will ensure that this is renewed annually.

**Training/Awareness Raising**

1. All staff/volunteers/placement students complete a thorough induction process
2. During induction training staff and volunteers are provided with a clear explanation of health and safety issues and are provided with all the policies and procedures of the setting.
3. Induction training covers matters of employee well-being, including safe lifting and the storage of potentially dangerous substances.
4. Records are kept of these induction training sessions and new staff and volunteers are asked to sign the records to confirm that they have taken part.
5. Health and safety issues are explained to the parents/carers of new children, so that they are fully aware of the policies and procedures which are in place for their child’s well-being.
6. As necessary, health and safety training is included in the annual training plans of staff, and health and safety is discussed regularly at management and staff meetings.
7. At Little Buds there is a no-smoking policy.
8. Health and safety issues are regularly identified with the children through discussions, planned activities and routines.

**Safety of Adults**

1. Induction training covers matters of employee well-being, including safe lifting, movement and the storage of potentially dangerous substances.
2. Safe equipment, eg step ladder, is provided to ensure high areas can be reached.
3. All warning signs are clear and in appropriate languages.
4. Staff are aware that there is no lone working permitted in the setting.
5. Accident and incident reports are maintained and are reviewed regularly to identify any issues that need to be addressed.
6. There is a record of all substances that may be hazardous to health e.g. such as cleaning chemicals. This states what the risks are and what to do if they have contact with eyes or skin or are ingested. It also states where they are stored.
7. All cleaning chemicals are kept in their original containers.
8. The playgroup have a COSHH Folder and follow the guidance.

**Windows**

* Low level windows are made from materials that prevent accidental breakage and are in line with current Health and Social Care Trust regulations.
* Windows are protected from accidental breakage or vandalism from people outside the building.
* Windows above the ground floor are secured so that children cannot climb through them.

**Doors**

* The setting takes precautions to prevent children's fingers from being trapped in doors.
* There is a doorbell/buzzer system in place for those entering and exiting the building.

**Floors**

* All floor surfaces are checked daily to ensure they are clean and not uneven, wet or damaged.

**Electrical/gas equipment**

* All electrical/gas equipment conforms to safety requirements and is checked regularly.
* Our boiler/electrical switch gear/meter cupboard is not accessible to the children.
* Heaters, electric sockets, wires and leads are properly guarded and the children are taught not to touch them.
* There are sufficient sockets to prevent overloading.
* The temperature of hot water is controlled to prevent scalds.
* There is adequate light and ventilation in the building.

**Storage**

* All resources and materials, which are used by the children, are stored safely.
* All equipment and resources are stored or stacked safely to prevent them accidentally falling or collapsing.

**Outdoor area**

* The outdoor area is securely fenced and in line with current regulations.
* There is a health and safety check completed daily prior to going outdoors, eg clearing of rubbish or potential sharp objects.
* All outdoor activities are supervised at all times.
* Safety mats are in place when children are using climbing apparatus or other large equipment.
* All staff are aware of safety when lifting heavy outdoor equipment.

**Hygiene**

* Daily routines within the setting encourage the children to learn about personal hygiene.
* There is a daily cleaning routine for the setting, which includes the play room(s), kitchen and toilets. These will be washed/sterilised as appropriate.
* Equipment and materials, dressing-up clothes, aprons and furnishings will be washed regularly.
* The toilet area has a high standard of hygiene, including hand washing and drying facilities and disposal facilities for nappies.

**Activities and resources**

* All resources are checked to ensure that they are safe for the ages and stages of development for the children currently attending the setting.
* The layout of activities ensures adults and children to move safely and freely.
* All equipment is regularly checked for cleanliness and safety, and any dangerous items are to be removed immediately for repair or discarded with the consent of the manager/management team.
* Any spillage will be cleaned immediately to prevent accident.
* All materials, including paint and glue, are non-toxic.
* Sand is clean and suitable for children's play.
* Physical play is constantly supervised.
* Children are encouraged to respect their environment and the equipment provided.
* Children learn about health, safety and personal hygiene through the activities we provide and the routines we follow
* Children who are sleeping are checked regularly with sleep records maintained.

**Fire Drills**

Little Buds will implement regular fire drills to ensure all staff, volunteers and children coming into contact with the setting are aware of the safety procedures.

* Explain to the children about the need to practise a fire drill and make them aware that this will be followed in an emergency.
* Make the children and staff/volunteers aware that a whistle will be used to get everyone’s attention during a case of emergency.
* Everyone must stop what they are doing and move towards the fire exit door.
* A staff member will get all the children into line.
* A staff member will carry out a head count of those present.
* A staff member will ensure the register is collected.
* A staff member will ensure a working mobile phone will be brought outside.
* A staff member will be the last person to exit the building – he/she will check the room and toilets to make sure nobody is left.
* A staff member will dial 999 for assistance.
* The register will be called as soon as everyone is present at the predetermined assembly point, e.g. the car park, the front of the building.
* This procedure will be documented in the fire drills file, registers included.
* Fire-fighting equipment must be properly maintained and serviced annually.
* Staff/volunteer training on fire safety should be raised with the management team.

**Managing Aggression and Challenging Behaviour including Bullying Policy**

Little Buds believes that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour. We also believe that children are free to develop their play and learning without fear of being hurt or hindered by someone else. Children need to learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others and the impact their behaviour has on people places and objects. This is a developmental task that requires support, encouragement and teaching. Therefore all adults will try and become a role model for the children with regards to their friendliness, care and courtesy and to offer strategies for handling any conflict. All adults in Little Buds will ensure that the rules are applied consistently so that the children have the security of knowing what to expect and can build up useful habits of behaviour. Adults will praise and endorse desirable behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share. We will take positive steps to avoid a situation in which children receive adult attention only in return for undesirable behaviour.

We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of, and respect, those used by members of the setting. We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

**Procedures**

* We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and wiliness to share.
* Children will be given one to one adult support in seeing what was wrong and how to cope more appropriately. This may be done twice. At the third time, an adult may remove them from that area and then do an activity with them for five minutes.
* We encourage children to respect each other and during the first term the rules of are school are reinforced daily and also at story sessions.
* Behaviour which can increase the chances of spreading Covid-19 will not be tolerated (such as spitting and biting).

**The Golden Rules**

1. We play together.
2. We try to be friends with everyone.
3. We share.
4. We walk indoors.
5. We take care or the toys and materials.
6. We tidy up our own mess -when we've finished.
* Parents are encouraged to help their child by discussing the rules at home and work with the playgroup and club to ensure each child is aware of them.
* We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
* When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately. We do this by using conflict resolution steps see appendix1.
* We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our playgroup and club, so that they feel valued and welcomed.
* We never send children out of the room by themselves, nor do we use a 'naughty chair' or a 'time out' strategy that excludes children from the group.
* We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
* We do not use techniques intended to single out or humiliate individual children.
* We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/ or serious damage to property.
* Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom) are recorded in the serious incident book. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
* In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
* We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.
* When children behave in inconsiderate ways we recognise that strategies for supporting them will need to be developmentally appropriate.
* We recognise that very young children are unable to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them to do this.
* Common inconsiderate or hurtful behaviours of young children include tantrums, biting or fighting, staff are calm and patient offering comfort to intense emotions helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues sand promote understanding.
* Sometimes a child has not settled in well and the behaviour may be the result of separation anxiety. We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the setting, their key person, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

**Biting**

Many children go through a stage of biting other children and staff. We know this is an emotive subject and when this occurs, particularly if a child bites regularly, the following procedure will be followed.

* The victim will be comforted by their key person and any required medical treatment given.
* The perpetrator will be taken from the area and told, in a manner appropriate to the child's age and stage of development that the behaviour was unacceptable. The child will not be shouted at and only one member of staff, preferably the child's key worker will deal with this.
* Sanctions will be applied as stated in the behaviour management policy.
* Staff will use their written observations and knowledge of the child to try and pinpoint trigger points and reasons.
* The incident will be reported in the accident.
* Parents of both children will be informed and the child will be removed from the playgroup if this becomes consistant due to the risk of Covid-19.

**Rough and Tumble play and fantasy aggression**

* Children often engage in play that has aggressive themes - such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear preoccupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be in considerate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.
* We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive.
* We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
* We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, such as blowing up, shooting, etc, and that themes often refer to goodies and baddies and as suchlike offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
* We are able to tune into the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

**Hurtful behavioural**

* We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children will, at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying'. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.
* We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that overwhelm them.
* We will help them to manage these feelings as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.
* We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
* Therefore we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her feelings
* We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
* Our way of responding to pre-verbal children is to calm them through holding and cuddling. Verbal children will also respond to cuddling to calm them down, but we offer them an explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.
* We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping them to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. Older children will be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
* We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others feelings.
* We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy and staff will praise positive behaviour when we see it.
* We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn taking develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem so loving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
* We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama, space and stories. We build self- esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
* We help a child understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child,we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.
* When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that

1: They do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs- this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting.

 2: Their parent or career in the setting does not have skills in responding appropriately and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger.

3: The child may have insufficient language or mastery of English to express him or herself and may feel frustrated.

4: The child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse

5: The child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.

**Bullying**

***Definition***

Behaviour by one person or group intended to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation to another person or group.

At Little Buds we take bullying very seriously. Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterized by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour. A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress. If a child bullies another child or children;

*We show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them.*

*We intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the child or children.*

*We explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable.*

*We gave reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied.*

*We help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions.*

*We make sure that the children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practice and reflect on considerate behaviour.*

*We do not children who bully as 'bullies'.*

*We recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry in less it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour.*

*We discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling child's behavior.*

*We share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.*

*We keep written records of all incidents.*

Where this does not work we use the code of practice to support the child and family making the appropriate referrals to the relevant authorities i.e. Health visitors, G.P, Social Worker, Educational psychologist, SENCO.

**Medical Emergencies**

Statement

Little Buds Playgroup acknowledges that while all steps will be taken to ensure the safety of all children in our care, accidents or medical emergencies may happen. We wish to reassure parents that any medical emergencies will be dealt with swiftly and calmly and that at least one member or staff will be qualified in paediatric first aid.

Procedure

Accidents

* If a serious accident has occurred the person in charge will assess the situation to decide the next step.
* All children will be removed from the area and cared for in a safe place (mobile or school) by staff.
* First Aider will administer first aid and ambulance may be called if required. Parents or next of kin will be also called and will be asked to make their way to the playgroup/club.
* If an ambulance is not required, the child or adult may go home with parent or next of kin.
* Staff will follow up that evening/next day with a phone call to check in with casualty.

Illness

If a child or adult in the care of the playgroup or club takes ill or has an illness that might require urgent assistance, the following steps will be followed.

* Designated first aider will assess the situation.
* Child’s file will be checked for any recorded illnesses.
* If the child has a care plan in place and requires medication, this will be administered as stated on the care plan and recorded on the medicine record sheet.
* Parents/next of kin will be notified as soon as possible.
* An ambulance will be called if the situation doesn’t improve.
* A staff member will accompany child in the ambulance if parent is not available.
* That staff member will stay until the child’s/adults family arrive.

Covid-19

If a child or adult in care of the playgroup show symptoms of Covid-19, the following steps will be taken:

* The child’s temperature will be taken and recorded.
* Staff within close proximity to child or adult must wear PPE.
* The child/adult will be placed in the designated area in the room (beside fire door) with the door open and over 2 metres from other children or adults.
* The parents of the child will be contacted and asked to collect the child or if unable, to send someone who can. The adults if able to, can drive home or call for someone to lift them.
* Staff and children within that room must then isolate for 14 days.
* The child/adult can return after 10 days or when their symptoms have subsided after that period.
* Public Health to be notified.

Menu Planning

**Principle**

More children are being diagnosed with food allergies and intolerances. Little Buds acknowledge this and will plan menus around each child’s needs.

**Policy**

To ensure that all children can enjoy not only eating their snack, but also the company of other children, Little Buds has produced this policy. This is put in place to plan menus around any allergies or intolerances that children may have.

**Procedure**

* Children’s enrolment forms will contain a question about children’s allergies. Parents are asked to fill this in before the child starts playgroup or the club. They will also be asked verbally when a member of staff meets with the parent.
* All staff will be notified of any children with allergies and intolerance’s before the child starts playgroup/club.
* A poster containing the child picture and the foods they are to avoid will be displayed in the playroom and the kitchen.
* Staff will be trained on the use of the epipen.
* All children who require any medication for their food allergies will not be able to start the playgroup/club until a Care Plan is in place.
* Staff, parents, children or visitors will not be able to take any food that contains nuts into any of the rooms.
* If a parent wants to donate food towards a party or event, staff will purchase the food and then provide the parent with the receipt.
* During a function which parents are attending, the children and the food that they consume during it are the parent’s responsibility.
* A copy of the menu is displayed on the parent’s notice board.

**Mobile Phone Policy**

**Principle**

E-safety concerns safeguarding children, young people and staff in the digital world. Technology is an important part of everyday life and so E-safety focuses on learning to understand and use new technology in a positive and safe way. The purpose of this policy therefore is to help support and protect children and staff when using technology in the setting.

**Policy**

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, visitors and members of the public who use our premises. The policy covers internet, email and all electronic communications via computers, laptops, mobile phones, iPhones and other wireless technology.

**Procedure**

Specific arrangements for the use of mobile phones are as follows:

1. Staff personal mobile phones must be switched off and not used during the session.
2. Mobile phones should not be carried by staff and should be stored in a secure place e.g. staff locker/ locked cupboard
3. The setting has a telephone/mobile for incoming and outgoing calls – this number may be given by staff as a work/emergency contact number for incoming calls only.
4. If a member of staff is expecting an emergency or important call, then their personal mobile phone may be switched on but must not be kept on their person. Permission may be sought from the supervisor/senior staff member who will agree and determine a suitable area or place where the phone is accessible should the need arise.
5. During group outings nominated staff will have access to the setting's nominated mobile phone, which is to be used for emergency purposes only.
6. Practitioners and their managers who will be required to drive on behalf of the early years setting must ensure any work and/or personal mobile phones are switched off whilst driving.

**Managers/Senior Staff Members**

Managers/senior staff members are responsible for the following:

* Ensuring that mobile phones, even if turned off, are not carried by staff during the session.
* Ensuring that staff are aware of and understand this policy and how it links to other relevant policies.
* Putting relevant systems in place to ensure the protection of information and appropriate access to the internet, e.g. passwords on computers, limited access to certain websites.
* Monitoring the policy to ensure that staff are complying with it; this includes the right of managers/senior staff members to access emails, images and internet sites visited, where there is a suspicion of improper use.
* Dealing with breaches of the policy and ensuring that the highest standards of practice are maintained.

**Breach of Policy**

All employees should be aware that any failure to comply with this policy will be taken seriously and may be dealt with in accordance with Little Buds Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. If an employee is found to have breached the policy, they will face a disciplinary penalty ranging from a verbal warning to a dismissal. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be referred to the PSNI.

**Parents Access to Files Policy**

**Principle**

It is our intention in Little Buds to respect the privacy of children and their parents and legal guardians, whilst ensuring that they access high quality care and education in our setting. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. We meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 with regard to the information we gather from or about families, how we gather it, store it and use it. Our procedures enable us to meet these requirements.

**Policy**

This policy applies only to parents and legal guardians of children in the care of Little Buds. It will provide the relative information needed to view a copy of their child’s records Little Buds.

**Procedure**

* Parents/carers may request access to any records held about their child and family following the procedure below:
* Any request to see the child’s personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the Data Control Officer (Maura McCleary)
* The Data Control Officer will send a written acknowledgement of the request and commits to providing access within 14 days – although this may be extended.
* The Data Control Officer will prepare the file for viewing. As part of this process all third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. A copy of these letters are retained on the file. ‘Third parties’ include all family members who may be referred to in the records and workers from any other agency, including Social Care, the Health Authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
* When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter
* A photocopy of the complete file is taken
* The Data Control Officer will then go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This will be done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file
* What remains is the information recorded by the setting, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the ‘clean copy’
* The ‘clean copy’ is photocopied for the parents/carers who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file will not be handed directly to the parent/carer without an explanatory meeting taking place.
* Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against the setting or another (third party) agency.

**Participation Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds aims to support parents/carers in their essential role as the first educators of their children and encourage involvement by the following means.

**Policy**

At Little Buds we recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers. This policy aims to ensure that all families are actively encouraged to participate in the work of the setting and contribute to the learning environment we provide for their children.

**Procedure**

All parents are issued with a registration/welcome pack (can be emailed or downloaded from school website), which provides detailed information on the policies of the group.

At Little Buds we aim to encourage parental involvement through:

* Due to Covid, parents will not be able to enter the playgroup and if they would like to speak privately to a member of staff, must make an appointment.
* Encouraging parents/carers to share with the children their skills and talents in a safe environment.
* Relying on the involvement of parents for the daily running of the setting.
* A 2 monthly newsletter which is emailed to parents.
* Keeping parents updated through texts.
* Social media is used to show the child’s work and their day to day life in Little Buds.

Parents can join the committee throughout the year or come forward at our annual AGM (the meetings will be held on Zoom or Microsoft meetings) or:

* At Little Buds we have a parents’ committee which actively encourages parents/carers to share their talents and assist with various events within our setting throughout the year.
* Parent/carers are asked to partake in fundraising events, eg sponsored walk, cake sale, quiz.
* Our newsletter informs parents of all the great work completed in the last term and notifies them of any upcoming events they could come along to.
* Little Buds have a noticeboard, and a comments and complaints box which are accessible on the side of the mobile for parents to add their suggestions and pay their fees.
* Little Buds regularly review the child’s development through transition reports. Meetings with the parents/carers can be arranged with parents if needed.. We consider how we can work best together on areas for development.
* Little Buds have open days and family fun days – these are open to all and parents/carers can contribute to them.
* All parents/carers will be asked to fill out a questionnaire twice throughout the year. This will enable Little Buds to further develop and implement changes to ensure that our setting continues to deliver a quality provision for the children in our care.

The contribution from parents/carers is of pivotal importance to our setting. At Little Buds we would recommend that anyone who is interested in becoming more involved should speak to the leader in charge or the management team.

**Petty Cash Policy**

**Principle**

Occasionally Little Buds will have to make some payments by cash. Petty cash will be needed by the staff team for making smaller purchases of sundry items for seasonal activities, cleaning items, snack items and some resources. These should be made from the petty cash float.

**Policy**

A policy on Petty Cash has been implemented within Little Buds to ensure management and staff are aware of their authority for spend within the setting.

**Procedure**

The Management Team has set a Petty Cash Policy which requires:

* Petty cash be maintained at a level of £100 for the playgroup.
* A record of petty cash spent with receipts will be required for each occasion petty cash is used.
* Petty cash will be reconciled on a monthly basis.
* Petty cash activity will be reported at each committee meeting.

The calculation of the required level of petty cash is an integral part of the planning, budget and forecast cycle. It takes into account:

* Level of income and expenditure.
* Planned activity level.
* Little Buds commitments to beneficiaries.

**Photography and videography Policy**

**Policy statement**

At this setting we believe in maintaining confidentiality with regard to the taking of, usage and storage of photographs in the playgroup setting. Photographs are taken at our playgroup for the following reasons.

* To put in each child’s learning diary as part of their record of achievement so that parents can see more of the experiences their child has during their time with us.
* To use as part of our wall display in our main rooms as we feel this gives the children a sense of belonging as well as being a great topic for conversation and recall.
* To use on our website to promote the playgroup in a virtual tour or something simliar.
* To keep for display purposes within the setting for our open evenings and
* anniversary events

To ensure that photographs will only be taken and used for the purposes mentioned above with parental permission, and disposed of correctly we will follow the following procedure

**Cameras**

* All parents will be asked to complete a detailed photograph permission slip where they will indicate whether they give their permission or not for photographs to be taken and used.
* All photographs will be taken using the playgroup digital camera.
* All photographs will be printed by the designated member/s of staff using the playgroup or the school printer.
* All photos will be wiped from the memory card after printing by the designated member/s of staff.
* All photographs to be wiped from the computer after they have been printed or stored securely for a limited period of time in a password protected area.
* Photographs including learning diaries to remain on the setting’s premises unless prior consent has been given by the parents.
* Any photographs to be used on the website will be printed onto a permission slip so that the parent will know exactly what photograph/s will be used.

**Event photographs and video**

At our end of term events and on other special occasions such as trips out we appreciate that many parents want to take photographs and video recordings as a personal record of their child’s participation in these of these activities. We feel this is important as children like to share their experiences with family members such as grandparents and will enjoy recalling their playgroup experiences in years to come.

We do however respect every parent’s right not to have their child in group photographs and so we will therefore:

When a child starts playgroup a letter is enclosed in their welcome pack attached to our photograph policy explaining that permission will only be given to take photographs and videos at playgroup events if:

1. All parents have given their permission
2. Parents have signed our agreement to use the photographs/videos only for personal use and will not put them onto Facebook or Flicker or similar web applications that can be accessed by unauthorized people unless given permission by parent.

**Play Policy**

**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.

**Provision of Food and Drink Policy**

**Policy statement**

Little Buds provides and/or serves food for children on the following basis:

* Snacks.

We maintain the highest possible food hygiene standards with regard to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food. Only staff who has achieved Level 2 in Food Safety may prepare food for the children.

 **Procedures**

* Staff understands the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). This is set out in *safe catering plan*. The basis for this is risk assessment as it applies to the purchase, storage, preparation and serving of food to prevent growth of bacteria and food contamination.
* The person responsible for food preparation and serving carries out daily opening and closing checks on the kitchen to ensure standards are met consistently.
* Food is stored at correct temperatures and is checked to ensure it is in-date and not subject to contamination by pests, rodents or mould.
* Food is served to children within 4 hours of preparation at home.
* Food preparation areas are cleaned before use as well as after use.
* A basin is used to wash dishes only.
* All surfaces are clean and non-porous.
* All utensils, crockery etc. are clean and stored appropriately.
* Waste food is disposed of daily.
* Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
* Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.
* When children take part in cooking activities, they:
	+ - are supervised at all times;
		- understand the importance of hand washing and simple hygiene rules
		- are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water; and
		- Do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment such as blenders etc.

Reporting of food poisoning

* Food poisoning can occur for a number of reasons; not all cases of sickness or diarrhea are as a result of food poisoning and not all cases of sickness or diarrhea are reportable.
* Where children and/or adults have been diagnosed by a GP or hospital doctor to be suffering from food poisoning and where it seems possible that the source of the outbreak is within the setting, the Leader will contact the Environmental Health Department and the Health Protection Agency, to report the outbreak and will comply with any investigation.
* If the food poisoning is identified as a notifiable disease under the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988 the setting will report the matter to HSC Environmental health.

**Reporting Adverse and Untoward Incidents Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds Playgroup will keep children and staff safe while in the playgroup. Although we meet all the standards set out by Social Services, there may be times when something happens beyond our control.

**Policy**

This policy has been put in place to inform staff and parents the steps that we take to deal with matters that may result in endangering the premises, contents or persons within the setting.

**Procedures**

**Dealing with incidents**

We meet our legal requirements for the safety of our employees by complying with RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injury, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). We report to the Health and Safety Executive:

* Any accident to a member of staff requiring treatment by a general practitioner or hospital; and any dangerous occurrences. This may be an event that causes injury or fatalities or an event that does not cause an accident but could have done, such as a gas leak.
* Any dangerous occurrence is recorded in our incident book. See below.
* Information for reporting the incident to Health and Safety Officer is detailed in the Early Years and Childcare’s Accident Record publication.

Our incident book:

We have ready access to telephone numbers for emergency services, including local police. We inform the Head of Childcare and the campus facilities manager of any incidents.

We keep an incident book for recording incidents including those that that are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive as above.

These incidents include:

* break in, burglary, theft of personal or the setting's property
* an intruder gaining unauthorised access to the premises
* Fire, flood, gas leak or electrical failure
* An attack on member of staff or parent on the premises or nearby
* any racist incident involving staff or family on the centre's premises
* death of a child
* a terrorist attack, or threat of one.

In the incident book we record the date and time of the incident, nature of the event, who was affected, what was done about it - or if it was reported to the police, and if so a crime number. Any follow up, or insurance claim made, should also be recorded.

In the unlikely event of a terrorist attack we follow the advice of the emergency services with regard to evacuation, medical aid and contacting children's families. Our standard Fire Safety Policy will be followed and staff will take charge of their key children. The incident is recorded when the threat is averted.

In the unlikely event of a child dying on the premises, if the emergency services are called, and the advice of these services are followed.

The incident book is not for recording issues of concern involving a child. This is recorded in the child's own file.

**Reserves Policy**

**Principal**

Building reserves within Little Buds playgroup supports the overall development of the setting and is an integral part of the settings financial planning. Reserves ensure that the setting has adequate funds available for planning growth and deal with opportunities and issues as they arise.

**Policy**

A policy on reserves for Little Buds was agreed at a meeting of the management team.

Little Buds has set a reserves policy which requires:

* Reserves be maintained at a level of £500 which ensures that the core activity of Little Buds could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty.
* A proportion of these reserves have to be maintained in a readily realisable form.

The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of the planning, budget and forecast cycle of the setting. It takes into account:

* Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted.
* Planned activity level.
* Commitment to beneficiaries.

**Procedure**

To ensure this policy is complied with, Little Buds will endeavour to ensure:

* That we maintain our level of reserves as outline above.
* The level of reserves is consistently reviewed with future financial sustainability in mind.
* The management team works with the treasurer to ensure reserve levels are monitored and maintained.

**Safeguarding Children/Child Protection Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds is committed to safeguarding the well-being of children; promoting their rights and best interests.

This policy outlines the protection of children by identifying clear instructions in accordance with the legislative framework of The Children (NI) Order 1995, taking into consideration the five main principles of the Order, the first being “the welfare of the child is paramount”.

**Policy**

Everyone at Little Buds who comes into contact with children and their families have a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. At Little Buds management/staff/volunteers will work with children, parents/carers and the community to ensure the rights and safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

* Little Buds promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image, which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, culture traditions and home background.
* Little Buds promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence.
* Little Buds promotes children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by enabling children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
* Little Buds helps children establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults.
* Little Buds works with parents/carers to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all our children.

Procedure

In accordance with Trust Guidelines, Our Duty to Care and Social Services at **Little Buds** we will endeavor to safeguard children by:

***Key commitment 1***

Little Buds is committed to building a culture of safety in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery.

*Staff/Students/Trainees and Volunteers*

* Our Designated Child Protection Officer is: Briege Delaney 07842677639
* Our Deputy Child Protection Officer (playgroup) is: Miss Maura McCleary 028 37511003
* Our Deputy Child Protection Officer (out of schools) is: Averil Patton 028 37511003

At Little Buds we endeavor to ensure that:

* All staff and parents/carers are made aware of our safeguarding policy and procedures.
* Little Buds provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
* In the circumstances of a child with an additional need attending the playgroup or club, staff can change nappies, but only if there is an extreme need. If staff is not able to change the child, then parents will contacted to do so. For safety, children will be changed on the floor on a changing mat.
* Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the current up to date vetting procedures before posts can be confirmed. No person will be placed in a position (either paid or unpaid) which involves contact with children without being properly and effectively vetted.
* Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
* The setting adheres to the Health and Social Care Trust requirements in respect of references and criminal record checks for staff/students/trainees and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
* Students/trainees/volunteers do not work unsupervised.
* Little Buds adheres to the relevant guidelines in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
* Little Buds have a procedure for recording the details of visitors to the setting.
* There are security steps in place to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorized person has unsupervised access to the children.

***Key commitment 2***

We are committed to responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set out.

*Responding to suspicions of abuse*

* All those working with children are aware that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional and sexual, as well as neglect and exploitation.
* When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behavior, or their play.
* Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key worker/staff member makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the setting leader who is acting as the designated person. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
* Little Buds will refer concerns to the Gateway team and co-operate fully in any subsequent investigation.
* Those involved will take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

*The management team will use detailed procedures and reporting format when making a referral to Gateway.*

* Contact Early Years Link Social Worker/Early Years Team.
* Where a child is already known to Social Services and has a social worker, we will contact them directly.

Contact details are:

Gateway Team: 028 37415285

Social Services Early Years Team: 028 37564020

Police Telephone: 028 86766000

Out of hours Social Worker: 028 95049999

*Recording suspicions of abuse*

Where a child makes comments to a member of staff that gives cause for concern (disclosure), or a member of staff observes signs or signals that give cause for concern, such as significant changes in behavior, deterioration in general well-being, unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, a member of staff will:

1. Listen to the child, offer reassurance and give assurance that he/she will take action.
2. Not question the child.
3. Make a written record that forms an objective record of the observation or disclosure that includes:
	* + the date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
		+ the exact words spoken by the child as far as possible;
		+ the name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with the date and time;
		+ the names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in the child's personal file which is kept securely and confidentially.

*Making a referral to Gateway*

* Little Buds will follow any procedures that the Gateway team has in place.
* Little Buds will also inform our link social worker that we have made a referral to the Gateway team.
* Where the child already has a social worker, Little Buds will contact them directly.
* Little Buds will retain a copy of any forms filled in for Gateway in the child's personal file.
* All staff is aware of the referral procedures for recording and reporting.

Contact details for Gateway Team are: Gateway Team, Armagh: 028 37415285

*Informing parents*

* Parents are normally the first point of contact.
* If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where guidance does not allow this.
* This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officer will inform parents.

*Liaison with other agencies*

* Little Buds will work with the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.
* All staff is familiar with what to do if they have concerns.
* Little Buds has procedures for contacting the Health and Social Care Trust on child protection issues, including maintaining a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of social workers, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the setting and the Trust to work well together.
* Little Buds will notify the Health and Social Care Trust of any incident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the well-being of children.
* If a referral is to be made to the Gateway team, Little Buds will act within the area's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

*Allegations against staff*

* Little Buds ensures that all parents know the complaints policy if they have concerns regarding the behavior or actions of staff/students/trainees/volunteers within the setting.
* Little Buds will follow the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust when responding to any complaint that a parent/carer has put forward.
* Little Buds will respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff, student/trainee/volunteer within the setting, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
* Management will refer any such complaint immediately to the Gateway team and the link social worker to investigate. Little Buds are aware that it is an offence not to do this.
* The Management of Little Buds will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the Gateway team/Early Years Team.
* Where the management team and Health and Social Care Trust agree it is appropriate in the circumstances, management will suspend the member of staff/volunteer/student/trainee, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as the children and families throughout the process.

*Disciplinary action*

* Where a member of staff/student/trainee/volunteer has been dismissed due to engaging in activities that caused concern for the safeguarding of children, management will notify Gateway/Early Years and the Independent Safeguarding Authority of relevant information so that individuals who pose a threat to children (and vulnerable adults), can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

***Key commitment 3***

Little Buds are committed to promoting awareness of child abuse issues throughout child protection training for staff. Little Buds are also committed to empowering young children, through our curriculum, promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.

*Training*

* Management will seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting to ensure that they are able to recognize the signs and signals of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and that they are aware of the Health and Social Care Trust guidelines for making referrals.
* Management will ensure that all staff knows the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.
* Management will ensure that staff/volunteers are trained in Safeguarding Children/Child Protection in line with current regulations and this will be reviewed annually at staff appraisals where training needs can be identified.

*Planning*

* The layout of the room allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff/volunteer/students/trainees in a one-to-one situation without being visible to others.

*Curriculum*

* Little Buds introduces key elements of keeping children safe into our program to promote the personal, social and emotional development of all children, so that they may grow to be strong, resilient and listened to and that they may develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe.
* Little Buds creates a culture of value and respect for every individual within the setting, having positive regard for children's heritage arising from their colour, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, cultural and social background.

We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is developmentally appropriate for all children.

*Confidentiality*

* All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Health and Social Care Trust.

*Support to families*

* Little Buds believe in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff/students/trainees/volunteers in the group.
* Little Buds makes clear to parents our role and responsibilities in relation to child protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the Health and Social Care Trust.
* Little Buds follows child protection guidelines as set out by Health and Social Care Trust in relation to the setting’s designated role and tasks in supporting that child and their family, subsequent to any investigation.
* Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with Health and Social Care Trust guidelines.

Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCNI)

Little Buds are aware of the referral system of UNOCNI – Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland. The registering social worker and the Gateway Team will keep us informed of any changes and training available.

Contact details are:

Armagh Gateway: 028 37415285

Social Services: 028 37564020

Out of hours Social Worker: 028 95049999

## Procedures for staff reporting suspicions of abuse

In the event that a staff member has a concern about the practices of colleagues, parents or carers relating to the children in the setting, they must follow this procedure.

In the event that staff member has a concern about the practices of the leaser relating to the children in the setting, they must follow this procedure.

## Procedure for parents/carers to report suspicions of abuse

In the event that a parent/carer has a concern about the practices of staff or other parent/carers relating to the children in the setting, they must follow this procedure.

In the event that a parent/carer has a concern about the practices of the leader relating to the children in the setting, they must follow this procedure.

**Security of the setting Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds has a commitment to the children, families, staff and volunteers who are in our care/involved in our setting to ensure that safety is of utmost priority.

**Policy**

The setting has implemented this policy to ensure committee members and staff has the appropriate authority to exercise powers and carry out certain actions for which they are responsible. The management team can delegate particular powers to staff in the playgroup. This enables the efficient running of the setting.

The primary responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to ensuring the security of the setting are shared among:

* Committee members.
* Staff with delegated authority.

**Procedure**

There are various elements within this procedure and these have been laid out to ensure that appropriate measures are in place, these include:

**Answering the door**

* Little Buds will not allow access to the building to anyone who is unknown to the staff in the setting. The setting will use a doorbell system to have control over this.
* During the pandemic, a door bell is used for each room. This is for the use of children only. Visitors must use the main door to enter and exit the building.
* Only staff will be permitted to open the door to parents/visitors. Students or temporary staff will not be permitted to open the door unless under the supervision of the leader.
* If the setting has pre-arranged visitors, all staff will be made aware of their attendance at the setting. The visitors will be asked to sign in and out using the log book provided at reception.
* Children’s personal files will specifically detail parent/carer and emergency contact details.
* If there is a special circumstance where someone is not on the register, but is collecting a child, written parental consent must be provided.
* *At all times it must be adhered to that all external doors, exits and gates are locked and can only be opened from the inside by an adult during session times.*

**Garden security**

Staff will follow the risk assessment procedure and ensure that all maintenance issues are followed up as they occur to ensure security at all times, e.g. if the latch on the front gate is broken and this gate leads to the main road from the outdoor play area.

*At all times it must be adhered to that all external doors, exits and gates are locked and can only be opened from the inside by an adult during session times.*

**Building security**

The management team of Little Buds has assigned responsibility for building security to the leader in charge/manager and keyholders of the building.

Staff is responsible for ensuring that at the beginning and ends of each day staff should check that all doors and windows are closed and locked as appropriate and records this on the appropriate form.

All staff must adhere to the beginning and end of day procedures.

*At all times it must be adhered to that all external doors, exits and gates are locked and can only be opened from the inside by an adult during session times.*

**Information security**

The leader in charge/manager will ensure that all documentation and personal files are stored in locked cupboards/filing cabinets.

The management team will also maintain a separate storage unit for documentation of meetings and 1-2-1/appraisal reports. This will be kept in the locked office.

**Lost keys**

The management team must be made aware if staff loses the keys to the building. This will result in the locks being changed.

**Smoking Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds Playgroup complies with Health and Safety Regulations and operate to a strict no smoking policy.

**Policy**

Little Buds Playgroup adheres to a no smoking policy and smoking is prohibited in the premises and on the surrounding grounds, including the car park.

**Procedure**

All staff, parents and volunteers at Little Buds Playgroup are made aware of our no smoking policy.

* At Little Buds Playgroup no smoking signs are displayed.
* The no smoking policy is stated in our information brochure for parents.
* Staff who smoke do not do so during working hours, unless on a break and off the premises.
* There is to be no smoking during working hours.
* Employees should inform the management team/leader in charge of anyone who fails to comply with the policy.
* Visitors not adhering to the policy will be asked to comply or leave the premises.
* When reentering the building after a smoke break, staff must wash their hands or sanitize them.

*A breach of this policy could lead to disciplinary action.*

**Networking and E-safety Policy**

**Principle**

E-safety concerns safeguarding children, young people and staff in the digital world. Technology is an important part of everyday life and so E-safety focuses on learning to understand and use new technology in a positive and safe way. The purpose of this policy therefore is to help support and protect children and staff when using technology in the setting.

**Policy**

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, visitors and members of the public who use our premises. The policy covers internet, email and all electronic communications via computers, laptops, mobile phones, iPhones and other wireless technology.

**Procedure**

All staff members are responsible for the following:

* Understanding the risks and responsibilities which are part of the 'Duty of Care' that applies to everyone working with children.
* Understanding the significance of E-safety which highlights the importance of safeguarding children.
* Reporting any knowledge or suspicion of behavior that contravenes this policy.
* Being aware of the potential risks of using social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, and the importance of considering the material they post and how publishing unsuitable material may affect their professional status.
* Protecting themselves from legal challenge and ensuring that they work within the boundaries of professional behavior.
* Ensuring that they do not create any unnecessary business risk to Little Buds by the misuse of the internet or email systems.
* Complying with current legislation.
* Using the internet in an acceptable way.

In particular the following behavior and use of systems are deemed unacceptable:

* Visiting internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material.
* Sending, forwarding, distributing or retaining email or text messages that contain language or images that are abusive, aggressive, obscene or offensive.
1. Using the internet to send offensive or harassing material to others.
* Making any improper or discriminatory reference to a person's race, colour, religion or belief system, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disabilities or physique, and forwarding or distributing any material which does so.
* Publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false materials about Little Buds
* Using work email systems to set up or send chain letters, viral emails or spam.
1. Using the internet for personal purposes during work time.
* Using the computer to participate in any form of fraud, theft or software or music piracy.
* Failing to take due care to make sure confidential and/or personal information goes to the correct recipient.
* When representing Little Buds, broadcasting personal views on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters.
* Undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources.
* Sending an unauthorised email on behalf of an individual inside or outside Little Buds without their knowledge or consent.

Specific arrangements for the use of mobile phones are as follows:

1. Staff personal mobile phones must be switched off and not used during the session.
2. Mobile phones should not be carried by staff and should be stored in a secure place e.g. staff locker/ locked cupboard
3. The setting has a telephone/mobile for incoming and outgoing calls – this number may be given by staff as a work/emergency contact number for incoming calls only.
4. If a member of staff is expecting an emergency or important call, then their personal mobile phone may be switched on but must not be kept on their person. Permission may be sought from the supervisor/senior staff member who will agree and determine a suitable area or place where the phone is accessible should the need arise.
5. During group outings nominated staff will have access to the setting's nominated mobile phone, which is to be used for emergency purposes only.
6. Practitioners and their managers who will be required to drive on behalf of the early years setting must ensure any work and/or personal mobile phones are switched off whilst driving.

Managers/Senior Staff Members

Managers/senior staff members are responsible for the following:

* Ensuring that mobile phones, even if turned off, are not carried by staff during the session.
* Ensuring that staff are aware of and understand this policy and how it links to other relevant policies.
* Putting relevant systems in place to ensure the protection of information and appropriate access to the internet, eg passwords on computers, limited access to certain websites.
* Monitoring the policy to ensure that staff are complying with it; this includes the right of managers/senior staff members to access emails, images and internet sites visited, where there is a suspicion of improper use.
* Dealing with breaches of the policy and ensuring that the highest standards of practice are maintained.

Breach of Policy

All employees should be aware that any failure to comply with this policy will be taken seriously and may be dealt with in accordance with Little Buds Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. If an employee is found to have breached the policy, they will face a disciplinary penalty ranging from a verbal warning to a dismissal. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be referred to the PSNI.

**Staff behavior and conduct Policy**

**Policy**

Parents and children are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all the Little Buds staff. We would expect there to be a warm and welcoming ethos when in the playgroup and club. As an outstanding playgroup and club we expect all the policies and procedures to be followed to the letter. This policy has been put into place to help us improve standards. This is also to help protect the staff from any misunderstandings and criticism.

**Standards**

We expect very high standards from all the staff. We expect high levels of care for all the children, advice for parents if asked for and also respect for the other members of staff. All staff members are expected, by following agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the Leader any deficiency in the standards. If it is the leader who is causing the concern, then you can either contact the Chairperson or the Whistleblowing Policy may be followed.

**Appearance**

The appearance of staff is important and can impact the playgroup. Our standards are high and our expectations of all staff are that they conform to the high standards set. The Little Buds polo shirt should be worn in setting at all times. Staff should dress appropriately for their job. Thought has to be taken when wearing skirts or dresses with regards to the length. No high shoes should be worn, flat shoes or trainers are more appropriate when working with children. Long hair should be tied back. Only important rings should be worn and studded earrings.

**Outside Commitments**

All staff should notify the chairperson if seeking additional employment. They should make sure their additional work does not reflect badly on the setting. It must not cause any conflict with their Playgroup employment.

**Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs**

There is to be no smoking on the premises. No drugs must be taken unless prescribed. No staff member should take any substances that could affect their work. No staff member should be under the influence of drink or drugs during their hours of work.

**Personal Hygiene**

Personal hygiene must play an essential part in the day to day running of the setting as the staff must lead by example. The staff and children work very closely together and good personal hygiene is important. Personal cleanliness is:

• Your moral duty.

• Your legal duty.

* Something to be proud of.

Daily Personal Hygiene

• Bathe or shower daily.

• Brush teeth several times aday.

* Wash hair regularly and tie long hair back.
* Keep finger nails short

• Change clothes on a daily basis.

I know you are all very good at getting the children to wash their hands on a regular basis. Please put yourselves first and consider the implications of bad hygiene and what damage it could do to the playgroup. Always wear gloves when changing children and always dispose of nappies etc. in an appropriate manner. Refer to health and safety policy.

**Staff Appointments**

All staff appointed positions will be based on merit. This will avoid any possible action or bias. No staff member will be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside of work. Staff with the exception of the Leader will not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, unless the Leader is the one under investigation. No staff member will be involved in pay adjustments.

**Mobile Phones**

In accordance with the health and safety in setting, mobile phone are not permitted to be carried on your person in setting. Please refer to Mobile Phone Policy.

**Social Networking**

Social networking should be personal to the staff, you must not comment on your work place, your colleagues, and children in setting or parents. Photos should never be put on the internet of any of the children within the setting. Your profiles should be kept closed and not be accessible to all to see. Any staff member found doing any of the above will be subject to disciplinary action. If friends before they start at the setting you must inform the chairperson.

**Staff Clothing/ Uniform Policy**

**Principle**

The appearance of staff is important and can impact upon the reputation of the playgroup. Little Buds requires staff to be identifiable at all time to children, parents, carers, visitors and the general public.

**Policy**

This policy has been introduced to ensure that staff and volunteers within the setting are aware of the Personal Care and Uniform Policy and conform to the high standards of Little Buds.

**Procedure**

Staff are required to purchase the playgroup staff uniform and refresh it annually. The setting requires staff to dress and wear the appropriate uniform for their job.

**Pay and Work Rights Guidance**

Deductions and payments for expenses connected with the job:

Deductions made from a worker's pay to cover the cost of items or expenses that are necessary for the worker's job, such as uniform, tools or equipment, reduce National Minimum Wage pay. This means that where an employer makes deductions for this purpose, they must still ensure that the worker is paid at least National Minimum Wage rates for the time worked.

In response to this, if the deduction was to take the worker below the National Minimum Wage and they were not reimbursed, this would be a breach of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 and would be a criminal offence (further information regarding The National Minimum Wage, Working Time Regulations, The Conduct of Agencies, The Agricultural National MinimumWage,please call the Pay and Work Rights Helpline on0800 917 2368).

At Little Buds we believe personal hygiene plays an essential role in the day-to-day running of the setting and staff must lead by example. Within the setting both staff and children work very closely together and good personal hygiene is of the utmost importance.

To ensure this, we ask that the following be complied with:

* Staff is required to display good personal hygiene, be clean and tidy, and maintain a good professional image.
* Staff is required to wear the uniform provided at all times.
* Flat shoes or trainers must be worn.
* Long hair should be tied back neatly.
* Only wedding/engagement rings and studded earrings should be worn.
* Make-up is permitted.
* Clothing should not have any logos that may be deemed offensive under the Equal Opportunities Act, or include words that may be inappropriate.

If any concerns are raised regarding uniforms or personal care, the leader in charge or management team will raise this with the individual involved. If the issue remains, the disciplinary procedure may be commenced.

**Continuous Professional Development Policy/Training Policy**

**Principle**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a clear structure for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is in place for employees and volunteers. Little Buds recognises the importance of lifelong training and believes that all adults working with young children should be committed to continuing learning and professional development.

**Policy**

Little Buds will endeavour to support all staff in their further development.

**Procedure**

Management would like to ensure that all staff and volunteers are able to access further learning and skills when identified so they are able to carry out their role to a high standard. The management team is responsible for making the decision on request from staff and volunteers/or when identified. This will be supported through:

* One to one support and supervision meetings alongside annual appraisals – these are appropriate times to identify/request additional training. However, staff and volunteers can approach management at any time to discuss what they feel is required.
* Staff is required to complete a training request form which will be passed to the management team prior to the training for a decision to be made. This form should be completed at least two weeks in advance and passed to the Chair or the Staff Liaison Officer who will make the committee aware of this request.
* The management team will accept written requests to attend training.
* The management team requires confirmation/certificate/receipt of attendance at training from staff/volunteers.

At Little Buds we want to ensure that:

* Employees and volunteers develop their skills and knowledge. This is pivotal for employee/volunteer development and will increase standards in the quality care provided within the setting.
* Staff is enabled to regularly refresh existing knowledge and skills to maintain existing competency.
* An enabling working environment is created where continuous professional development and training take place, where staff is enthused and motivated in their roles which in turn enhances staff retention.
* All staff and volunteers are continually working towards improved quality and high standards of service within the setting.

**Equal Opportunities**

The management team will ensure that all staff and volunteers are provided with the opportunity to continually professionally develop and that no person will be excluded from training based on the grounds of gender (including gender reassignment), age, marital status, disability, racial grounds (race, colour, nationality – including citizenship - ethnic or national origin), sexual orientation, religion or belief, responsibility for dependents, trade union membership or employment status.

Part-time and full-time employees will have equal opportunities for training and development, which is appropriate to their post. Volunteers will also be given access to relevant training.

**Funding Requirements (optional theme)**

At Little Buds we are not funded through the PSEP (Pre-School Education Programme) at the moment which requires staff to attend various training dates including cluster support training and other compulsory training dates.

If the group receives funded places, management team demands that staff fulfill these requirements on behalf of the setting and upskill as necessary. Staff is required to complete the full training session and will need to complete the necessary paperwork requirements and ensure closure dates have been approved as per the Early Years contract with DE.

Failing to comply with funding bodies can have a negative impact on the status of the group and may result in termination of the funding contract.

Little Buds recognises the importance of fulfilling funding obligations and will ensure that staff are in attendance when required.

**Cost**

Subject to prior agreement, any eligible costs incurred during training may be reimbursed. The management team will make a decision regarding reimbursement for training during the response to a staff member’s/volunteer’s request to attend.

Staff Discipline

This paper may be adopted by playgroup/clubs as part of the Statement for Employees under the Employment Acts.

The following procedures relate to a community run group but can be adapted to other situations.

**Minor Disagreements**

It is recognised that disagreements may arise among playgroup/club staff or between staff and committee. These can usually be resolved informally by discussion, if necessary, with the help of Area Organiser or local authority adviser, and are outside the limit of disciplinary or grievance procedure.

**Disciplinary Procedure**

A more serious situation arises when a dispute cannot be resolved, or when the committee is dissatisfied with the activities or conduct of an employee. Instant dismissal is possible only in extreme circumstances of gross misconduct Examples of such misconduct would be:

• Theft or fraud

• Ill-treatment of children

• Assault

• Malicious damage

• Gross carelessness which threatens the health and safety of others

• Matters occurring outside the workplace which impinge on the actual job.

This list is not exhaustive. Otherwise an employee will not be dismissed without the proper warnings.

Any disciplinary matter will normally be dealt with in four stages:

1. An oral warning

2. A written warning

3. A final written warning

4. Notice of dismissal

This procedure may be invoked at any stage depending on the seriousness of the offence.

The employee may be accompanied by a friend or trade union official at each stage if she/he wishes and that person may speak on her/his behalf.

*1. Oral Warning*

If an oral warning is to be given:

i) The employee should be interviewed by the playgroup/club chairperson who will explain the complaint

ii) The employee will be given full opportunity to state her/his case.

iii) If the warning is still considered to be appropriate, the employee will then be told:

• What action should be taken to correct the conduct?

• That she/he will be given reasonable time to rectify matters

• That if she/he fails to improve then further action will be taken

• That a record of the warning will be kept

* That she/he may appeal against the decision

*2. Written Warning*

If the employee fails to correct her/his conducts and further action is necessary:

i) The employee will be interviewed and given the opportunity to state her/his case as before.

ii) If the need for disciplinary action is established, a letter will be sent to the employee immediately.

iii) The letter will:

• Contain a clear reprimand and give the reasons for it

• Explain what corrective action is required and that reasonable time will

 be given for improvement.

• Warn that a failure to improve will result in further action being taken.

• Explain that she/he has the right to appeal against the decision.

 (If progress is satisfactory within the time given to rectify matters, the record of verbal warning on the individual’s file will be destroyed)

*3. Final Written Warning*

If the employee still fails to correct her/his conduct then:

i) The employee will again be interviewed and given the opportunity to state her/his case as before.

ii) If the need for disciplinary action is established, a final written warning will be sent to the employee immediately.

*4. Notice of Dismissal*

If the decision is to dismiss, the employee will be given notice of dismissal, stating the reasons for dismissal and giving details of the right to appeal.

**Appeals**

At each stage of the disciplinary procedure the employee must be told that she/he has the right to appeal against any disciplinary action and that the appeal must be made in writing to the playgroup/club secretary within five days of a disciplinary interview.

The playgroup/club committee will normally hear the appeal and it will be heard as soon as possible. Procedure will be informal and the employee may take a friend or trade union official to speak for her/him.

• The employee will explain why she/he is dissatisfied and may be asked questions.

• The playgroup/club supervisor or chairperson will be asked to put their point of view and may be asked questions.

• Witnesses may be heard and may be questioned by the appeal committee and by the employee and supervisor or chairperson.

• The committee will consider the matter and make known its decision. A written record of the meeting will be kept.

If the employee remains dissatisfied she/he may appeal to the Wales PPA county branch.

**Suspension**

If the circumstances appear to warrant instant dismissal and employee may be suspended while investigations are made. (State whether paid or unpaid and if the former applies, state the maximum number of days)

**Grievance Procedure**

If an employee is dissatisfied she/he must have the opportunity for prompt discussion with her/his immediate superior. For the supervisor of a playgroup/club this would normally be the committee chairperson. For other playgroup/club staff it would be the supervisor. If the grievance persists, there should be a subcommittee of the playgroup/club committee set up for this purpose for further discussion, at which the employee may, if she/he wishes, be accompanied by a friend. There must be a right of appeal, perhaps to the full committee at which the employee’s friend or trade union official may be present. The aim of the above procedure is to settle the grievance fairly and as near as possible to the point of origin.

It is intended to be simple and rapid.

**Staff Grievances Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds Playgroup is committed to creating a culture of openness and transparency which encourages issues to be dealt with informally in the first instance. The aim of the grievance procedure is to resolve committee members’ concerns, problems or complaints about their role at an early stage. The management team should aim to resolve most grievances informally with the Chair in the first instance; this allows for problems to be resolved quickly and efficiently.

**Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the opportunity for a committee member to formally raise an individual grievance, when using the normal and customary channel of discussion with the Chair if the issue is not resolved.

**Procedure**

One of the responsibilities of the chair is to deal with complaints/grievances. However, if it is the chair who is making the complaint or is the subject of the complaint, the vice-chair or another office bearer must deal with the issue.

Management will adopt the same procedures as outlined in statutory guidance on grievance procedures.

**Staff induction Policy**

**Principle**

At Little Buds management will normally carry out a four week induction for all new staff and volunteers. This ensures that everyone contributing to the work of the setting is fully aware of our aims, objectives and vision, policies and procedures, the curriculum and the day-to-day running of the sessions, and also the families who use the setting.

**Policy**

This policy has been implemented to ensure that the management team and leader in charge are aware of the induction period which has been developed for working with new staff and volunteers.

**Procedure**

The management team will delegate authority to the leader in charge to ensure that the following process is implemented over the course of the first four weeks in the setting:

* Introduction to all staff/volunteers and the management team.
* New staff/volunteers are provided with details on their roles and responsibilities.
* New staff/volunteers are shown around the setting, taking into account emergency exits.
* New staff/volunteers are provided with a copy of the policies and procedures of the setting which they must sign as having been read and understood.
* New staff/volunteers are introduced to parents/carers and parents/carers are made aware of their role.
* New staff/volunteers are shown where records and confidential details are stored.
* New staff/volunteers are provided with an overview of the daily routine and talked through how a daily session operates and what procedures are in place due to Covid-19

During the induction period all new staff/volunteers must demonstrate an understanding of and compliance with all the areas covered. Induction forms part of the probationary period and new staff/volunteers can give feedback on progress to the management team during support meetings. An induction form will be signed off throughout this process.

**Staff meetings Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds believes that happy content staff will not only have a better relationship with each other, but also with the children.

**Policy**

This policy was put in place to show the measures that Little Buds has taken to ensure that staff feels confident to carry out their everyday tasks and to meet the needs of our children.

Procedure:

* Staff meetings will take place every 2-4wks. At these, meetings staff will discuss various issues such as children, resources and up and coming events.
* One to one meetings will take place every 6-8wks. These meetings will take place between the leader and the other staff. The leader will focus on areas that might need development and will set targets. The leader will then work with the member of staff on achieving these targets. This will be done by seeking training, providing literature or by modeling techniques or strategies.
* Staff appraisals will take place on an annual basis. During this, leader and staff will have a private meeting to discuss the staffs strengths and areas that they feel they are lacking in. Appropriate training or help will be sought to help the staff through their difficulties. The Leader of the playgroup will undertake an appraisal with the Chairperson of Little Buds Committee on a yearly basis.

**Staff records Policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds is aware of the importance of keeping up to date records not only on the children in the playgroup, but also on the staff.

Policy

This policy informs us of the information that is required to be held on each member of staff/volunteer/student

**Procedure**

Information required on each member of staff

1. Full name and address
2. Date of Birth
3. Next of Kin
4. Birth certificate
5. Qualifications
6. Certificates of qualifications and personal development.
7. Staff development
8. Vetting
9. AccessNI
10. Form stating that they have received a copy of the policies.
11. Temperature form (Covid-19).

These records will be held in a secure place during the staff’s time as an employee in Little Buds Playgroup. If a member leaves employment, their records will them be shredded as they will be no longer required.

**Staff recruitment Policy**

Little Buds will aim to recruit and maintain suitably qualified staff within the group at all times. We aim to check all references and also Police check any new staff member before allowing them to join our group. The following procedures reflect our commitment to this by using the following criteria

* We welcome any applications for job vacancies from every section of the community
* Staff may be redeployed into the playgroup from the main school if needed.
* All applicants will be considered on the basis of suitability for any post regardless of; Marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.
* No applicants shall be placed at a disadvantage by us imposing conditions and/or requirements which are not justifiable.
* We aim to offer equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for all staff recruitment selections.
* All staff must complete a AccessNI check before starting at the group. They must also sign a yearly review and must inform us immediately of any changes to their personal circumstances that could affect their suitability to work at the group.
* All staff are required to take part in regular staff meetings to discuss and decide how best to plan and implement activities to ensure that all children are achieving to their potential.
* Staff induction training is provided on site during the first few weeks of employment. This will cover Child Protection policy and Health and Safety Policy.
* All new staff will be provided with a full list of Policies in regard to the safe running of the group on commencement of their employment. They will also be given uniform t-shirts and name badge as soon as is practicable
* All staff will be expected to undertake any additional in service training deemed appropriate to the Playgroup/Club as well as the qualifications already required.
* Staff will have the full support of the group in their endeavours to gain any other qualifications with budgets allocated accordingly.
* Our staff ratios are 3-4 year olds, 1 adult; 8 children.
* A minimum of two staff will be on site at all times regardless of numbers at any session.
* All staff/volunteers are required to inform the playgroup leader/chair of any changes in their or their households’ suitability to work with children. An annual declaration form will have to be completed by ALL staff/volunteers to confirm their suitability.

**Staff redundancy Policy**

*This Policy applies to situations where fewer than 20 employees are at risk of redundancy. In the event that 20 or more employees are at risk of redundancy, the setting should seek advice about current statutory requirements in relation to consultation periods.*

**Principle**

It is the aim of Little Buds to provide security of employment for its employees and to avoid redundancies. However, it is recognised that circumstances may arise when the number of employees exceeds requirements and steps may have to be taken to reduce the number of employees.

**Policy**

This policy has been prepared to try and ensure that any necessary reduction in the number of employees takes place in an orderly, systematic and fair manner. The organisation will adopt the statutory definition of redundancy. Redundancy will therefore occur when:

* Little Buds has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on the activity for the purposes of which the employee is or was employed.
* Little Buds has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on the activity in the place where the employee is or was so employed.
* The requirement of that activity for employees to carry out work of a particular kind has ceased or diminished or is expected to cease or diminish.
* The requirement of the business for employees to carry out work of a particular kind in the place in which they were contracted to work, has ceased or diminished or is expected to cease or diminish.

**Procedure**

*Consultation*

If redundancy becomes likely, Little Buds will inform the appropriate trade union or other representatives (if appropriate) and employees concerned at the earliest opportunity. This action will be taken in order to consult about measures which might be taken to prevent redundancy or minimise its effect.

*Disclosure of Information*

The information that will be supplied will comprise the following:

* The reasons for the proposed redundancies.
* The numbers and job descriptions of employees the setting is proposing to declare redundant.
* The total number of employees of any such job description employed by the employer at the establishment in question.
* The proposed method of selecting employees who may be declared redundant.
* The proposed method of carrying out the redundancies, taking account of any procedures and the period over which the redundancies are to take effect.
* The proposed method of calculating the amount of any redundancy payments which the employer proposes to make (other than those required by statute).

**Measures to Avoid or Minimise the Redundancy**

Prior to making jobs redundant, Little Buds will consider measures which may be taken to prevent redundancy or minimise its effect, as far as practicable, and may include any one or more of the following:

* Natural Wastage – a reduction in the numbers of staff through natural wastage.
* Restriction on recruitment and promotion – restrictions on recruitment and/or promotion subject to operational needs.
* Overtime – a reduction in overtime working subject to operational requirements.
* Early Retirement – employees above an agreed age limit may be allowed to volunteer for early retirement (be aware of the cost implications for employees who wish to retire early).
* Voluntary Redundancy – employees may be given the opportunity to volunteer for redundancy, where appropriate.
	+ Introduction of short-time working or temporary lay-off (where this is provided for in the contract of employment or by an agreed variation of its terms).
	1. Agreed variation to working hours (on a short-term or permanent basis).

The adoption of either early retirement or voluntary redundancy is at the discretion of Little Budsand is subject to operational requirements and the need to maintain a sufficiently skilled and balanced workforce.

After having given consideration to any proposals, the management team will inform the relevant employees if it finds them unacceptable or insufficient to avoid the need for redundancies.

**Selection for Redundancy**

If after any of these steps have been taken, the number of employees still exceeds the requirements of Little Buds Playgroup, or of its operations affected; will be defined and selection for redundancy will be based on an assessment against the following criteria:

* Job performance, with account being taken of the full range of skills and function required within the affected area or areas.
* Conduct/disciplinary record.
* Attendance.
* Timekeeping.

A detailed redundancy evaluation form based on the broad criteria above will be used to score all employees affected and those identified as redundant will be informed.

Length of continuous service is normally only taken into account when selection by the above criteria has not proved adequate in making a clear distinction between employees.

*The needs of the setting will at all times be the principal consideration.*

As an Equality Opportunities employer, Little Buds will endeavour to ensure that, insofar as it is practicable, this policy does not operate unfairly against any section of the community.

**Individual Consultation and Notification**

Those employees provisionally selected for redundancy will be consulted individually and will have an opportunity to make representations on their selection or comment on the information used in their selection before redundancies are implemented. Even where pay in lieu of notice is given, this opportunity will exist up to the proposed date of termination.

The employer will provide the employee with a written statement outlining why their dismissal on the grounds of redundancy is being considered and invite the employee to a meeting to discuss this. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied at this meeting by a Trade Union Representative or work colleague.

Prior to the meeting the employee will be provided with any relevant information that the employer will use when considering the dismissal. The employee will be given reasonable opportunity to consider his/her response to that information before any meeting takes place.

Following the meeting, the employer will confirm in writing whether the employee’s employment is to be terminated on the grounds of redundancy. Each employee selected for redundancy will receive written notification, which will include:

* The date of termination.
* Details of their redundancy payment.
* Details of other termination payment, if any.
* Details of whether or not notice is to be worked or whether they will receive pay in lieu.
* A statement advising the employee that in order to protect their redundancy payment, they must not leave prior to the termination date without the express permission of the management team.
* Details of any alternative positions available.
* Details of their right of appeal against their selection and the procedure to be followed.

**Appeal**

If an employee feels that he/she has been unfairly selected for redundancy, the individual should appeal to the management team within one week of the employee being notified of the selection. A meeting to hear the reasons for the employee’s appeal will be held as a matter of urgency. The appeal will be heard by a person not involved in the initial selection and senior to, or independent of, those who made the selection. The persons who made the initial selection for redundancy may attend the appeal meeting. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied at this meeting by a Trade Union Representative or work colleague.

**Trial Period in Alternative Work**

Should there be a vacancy within the setting, where the terms and conditions of employment are different than those of the affected jobs, management will offer the vacancy to a redundant employee.

The employee can accept the job for a four week trial period without loss of rights to the redundancy payment due for the affected job. The trial period will commence immediately the employee’s contract ends in the affected job. Unless it is agreed in writing to extend the trial period, he/she will be deemed to have accepted the alternative job with its terms and conditions of employment and to have lost the entitlement to a redundancy payment.

**Time Off**

Employees on notice of termination of employment for purposes of redundancy can have reasonable time off by agreement with their line manager, to look for another job, or to arrange training. The employee will be paid for such time off up to a maximum of two days (in total).

**Redundancy Payment**

All payments will be in accordance with the Statutory Redundancy Payment Scheme as detailed in the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996.

**Staff Supervision and Appraisal Policy**

**Principle**

A well-planned and systematic programme of 1-2-1 meetings, to enable evaluation of performance and supervision, is vital to the ongoing development and continuous improvement of staff and volunteers within Little Buds. It is the responsibility of the management team/leader in charge to ensure that sufficient time and energy are designated to evaluating (measuring and assessing) staff and supervising (observing and assisting), and to ensure that the process of 1-2-1 meetings is based upon the values of the setting.

Policy

To ensure that the vision and goals of Little Buds and the staff/volunteers are being met, and to develop staff and volunteers within the setting.

The following are the benefits of an effective 1-2-1 scheme:

To the employee:

* Increased motivation, job satisfaction and sense of personal value.
* Clear understanding of what is expected and what needs to be done.
* Opportunity to discuss work problems and how they can be overcome.
* Opportunity to discuss and plan development and the guidance, support or training needed to fulfill this.
* Improved working relationships with management team/leader in charge.

To the management team/leader in charge:

* Opportunity to develop overview of individual jobs and teams.
* Opportunity to identify ideas for improvement.
* Increased job satisfaction.
* Opportunity to clarify expectations of the contribution expected from the staff/volunteers.
* Forming more productive relationships with staff based on mutual trust and understanding.

To the setting:

* Clear focus on objectives.
* More effective communication.
* Increased cohesiveness and loyalty.
* Improved relationships between management and staff.
* Improved overview of tasks performed by individuals.
* Identification of ideas for improvement.
* Development of expectations.
* Clear identification of training and development needs.
* Creation and maintenance of a culture of continuous improvement and success.
* Delivery of a clear message that people are valued.

Procedure

The designated management team person within Little Buds will be a facilitator who provides support through the one to one process.

***or***

The management team will delegate support duties to the leader in charge to carry out this process with staff and volunteers with the designated management team person supporting the leader through their 1-2-1.

It is recommended that 1-2-1 meetings should take place as follows:

* 1-2-1 meetings will occur as frequently as required, but generally will be held every 6-8 weeks.
1. Each session will last approximately half an hour.
* The 1-2-1 meetings should be focused; each party should therefore have an agenda.
* Notes will be taken of the meeting; the designated person and the staff member/volunteer will sign off two copies of the notes. One copy is kept on each staff member’s/volunteer’s file and one copy can be kept by the person having the support meeting.

**Responsibilities**

The designated person is responsible for:

1. Providing leadership.
2. Agreeing the direction of work and goals with the employee.
3. Ensuring that workloads are allocated fairly.
4. Monitoring performance.
5. Building morale and providing encouragement to perform well.

 Setting development activities:

* To support staff to identify and prioritise development needs.
* To mutually agree a plan to meet identified development needs.
* To give consideration to individual career aspirations and goals.
* To assist individuals in achieving their career aspirations where appropriate.
* To provide on the job instruction, guidance and support where necessary.
* To ensure that employees are clear in relation to child protection issues and to provide support accordingly.
* To identify how individuals can be helped to improve their contribution in their present job.

Reviewing the progress of work and giving feedback on performance:

It is important to:

* Review regularly progress of negotiated and agreed schedule of work.
* Assess current performance against agreed objectives and timescales.
* Identify, analyse and agree ways to solve problems.
* Take opportunities as they arise to nurture good performance and constructively address any areas of under-performance.
* Deal with unsatisfactory staff performance in accordance with Little Buds Disciplinary Policy where appropriate.

The employee is responsible for:

* Participating fully and in a constructive way in the 1-2-1 process.
* Ensuring that he/she seeks clarity in relation to objectives set.
* The identification of development needs and the agreement of a plan to meet identified development needs.

**Staff personal development Policy**

**Principle**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that a clear structure for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is in place for employees and volunteers. Little Buds recognises the importance of lifelong training and believes that all adults working with young children should be committed to continuing learning and professional development.

**Policy**

Little Buds will endeavour to support all staff in their further development.

**Procedure**

Management would like to ensure that all staff and volunteers are able to access further learning and skills when identified so they are able to carry out their role to a high standard. The management team is responsible for making the decision on request from staff and volunteers/or when identified. This will be supported through:

* One to one support and supervision meetings alongside annual appraisals – these are appropriate times to identify/request additional training. However, staff and volunteers can approach management at any time to discuss what they feel is required.
* Staff is required to complete a training request form which will be passed to the management team prior to the training for a decision to be made. This form should be completed at least two weeks in advance and passed to the Chair or the Staff Liaison Officer who will make the committee aware of this request.
* The management team will accept written requests to attend training.
* The management team requires confirmation/certificate/receipt of attendance at training from staff/volunteers.

At Little Buds we want to ensure that:

* Employees and volunteers develop their skills and knowledge. This is pivotal for employee/volunteer development and will increase standards in the quality care provided within the setting.
* Staff is enabled to regularly refresh existing knowledge and skills to maintain existing competency.
* An enabling working environment is created where continuous professional development and training take place, where staff is enthused and motivated in their roles which in turn enhances staff retention.
* All staff and volunteers are continually working towards improved quality and high standards of service within the setting.

**Equal Opportunities**

The management team will ensure that all staff and volunteers are provided with the opportunity to continually professionally develop and that no person will be excluded from training based on the grounds of gender (including gender reassignment), age, marital status, disability, racial grounds (race, colour, nationality – including citizenship - ethnic or national origin), sexual orientation, religion or belief, responsibility for dependents, trade union membership or employment status.

Part-time and full-time employees will have equal opportunities for training and development, which is appropriate to their post. Volunteers will also be given access to relevant training.

**Funding Requirements (optional theme)**

At Little Buds we are not funded through the PSEP (Pre-School Education Programme) at the moment which requires staff to attend various training dates including cluster support training and other compulsory training dates.

If the group receives funded places, management team demands that staff fulfill these requirements on behalf of the setting and upskill as necessary. Staff is required to complete the full training session and will need to complete the necessary paperwork requirements and ensure closure dates have been approved as per the Early Years contract with DE.

Failing to comply with funding bodies can have a negative impact on the status of the group and may result in termination of the funding contract.

Little Buds recognises the importance of fulfilling funding obligations and will ensure that staff are in attendance when required.

**Cost**

Subject to prior agreement, any eligible costs incurred during training may be reimbursed. The management team will make a decision regarding reimbursement for training during the response to a staff member’s/volunteer’s request to attend.

**Student Placement policy**

**Principle**

Little Buds Playgroup welcomes students to take part in placement opportunities. Management offer placements to students undertaking early years and playwork qualifications and training.

**Policy**

Little Buds Playgroup recognises that a student taking part in a placement offer a precious resource by giving their time and dedication to the setting.  Management believe it is important to ensure that all placement students are well looked after and that they are fit to work. Management recognise the role of the student is to complement the role of paid staff; whilst having the opportunity to build skills and experiences which contribute to the successful completion of their studies. The management team aims to provide students with the opportunity to be involved in a setting which delivers quality in early years care and education.

**Procedure**

It is the responsibility of the management team to carry out an Access NI check on all volunteers before they begin the daily work within the setting. The student must be 17 years old or above. The leader in charge will oversee and delegate duties as appropriate to the volunteer. The leader in charge will oversee and delegate duties as appropriate to the placement student.

The management team aims to:

* Provide a safe and welcoming environment for all students.
* Promote the importance and value of attaining qualifications and training.
* Give students the opportunity to work alongside staff as part of a team and develop their professional skills through involvement with young children.
* Provide students with adequate supervision through the use of a staff mentor who will ensure the student is provided with the best learning opportunities while based at the setting.
* Ensure students are aware of the Confidentiality Policy within the setting, along with all the other practice policies and procedures.
* Provide the student with an induction pack which provides all relevant information including hours of work, absences, contact details, etc.

**Restrictions to Duties:**

* Students must not be left unsupervised at any time whilst caring for children.
1. Students are not counted in staffing ratios and therefore appropriate staffing ratios must be adhered to at all times.
* Students must not carry out any form of intimate personal care whilst unsupervised.
* Students must not administer medication.
* Students must not administer first aid.
1. Students must not use personal cameras or mobile phones (see Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy).
2. Students may use IT facilities for duties relating to the setting only as designated by the leader in charge.

Covid 19

Little Buds Playgroup has strict procedures in place to prevent the risk of spreading Covid. Students will be made aware of these before starting their placement.

**Transport for service users Policy**

**Principle**

At Little Buds we organize outings in the local area and also to places of interest which involves using a bus and other transport.

**Policy**

This policy was implemented to ensure that the health and safety of staff and children is of paramount importance at all times.

**Procedure**

At Little Buds when using any form of transportation we will:

* Carry out a risk assessment prior to any journey or activity being taken.
* Ensure there is the required adult/child ratio.
* Ensure parents have completed appropriate forms and given their consent.
* Ensure that the vehicle in use is properly licensed, insured and has a current MOT certificate.
* Ensure anyone driving the vehicle is appropriately qualified and insured.
* Ensure everyone wears the appropriate seat restraints.
* Ensure that a first aid box is on the vehicle.
* Ensure that a working mobile phone accompanies staff during their time away from the setting in case of an emergency.
* A larger bus will be ordered to allow more room for social distancing due to Covid-19.
* Adults will wear masks while on the bus.

**Volunteer policy**

**Principle**

The aim of this policy is to ensure a clear structure is in place for volunteers working within Little Buds. At Little Buds volunteers are deemed as someone who is working in an unpaid capacity offering their time for free, by choice and in order to help others and support the setting’s work. Unpaid work can also include internships, work experience placements, work programs, etc., as part of our daily programmed activities.  This would include any friends and relatives offering their skills and expertise from time to time. Volunteers will need to abide by the values, principles, policies and procedures which underpin the setting.

**Policy**

Little Buds recognises that volunteers offer a precious resource by giving their time and dedication without pay.  Management believe it is important that we ensure that all volunteers are well looked after and that they are fit to work.  Management recognise the role of the volunteer is to complement the role of paid staff; offering something different but complementary. It is important that volunteers are valued and respected in line with employed staff and anyone else who enters our setting.

**Procedure**

It is the responsibility of the management team to carry out an Access NI check on all volunteers before they begin the daily work within the setting. The leader in charge will oversee and delegate duties as appropriate to the volunteer. At Little Buds we are committed to:

* Equal Opportunities

The management team at Little Buds are committed to the development of equal opportunities and believe that opportunities should be open to all regardless of social class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, religion, colour, race or ethnic or national origin.

* Recruitment and Selection

Volunteers will be recruited and selected according to their suitability and the procedure used will be fair, effective and open. Information held on volunteers will be treated confidentially. Volunteers should be over 16 years old

* Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers should sign an agreement which lays out the policies and procedures of Little Buds and the general expectations.  This does not amount to a contract of employment and is binding in honour only, but clearly sets out the terms of volunteering within Little Buds.

Volunteers not Working with Children

Little Buds welcome volunteers to help out with maintenance and general duties around the setting which do not involve direct contact with children. Management will ensure that such persons are aware of the policies and procedures which affect them for the duration of the role they are carrying out.

Expenses

Subject to prior agreement, any out of pocket expenses incurred during volunteering will be reimbursed.

Insurance

Public Liability cover is in place at the setting.

Training and Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and will have access to all relevant policies and procedures. This will be covered as part of our induction for volunteers to the setting which will be included during the first month settling in period.

The development of training and support for volunteers to carry out their role effectively is a high priority for Little Buds and volunteers are asked to make themselves aware of the Development and Training Policy.

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Dealing with Difficult Situations

Little Buds will make arrangements to deal with any difficult situation involving volunteers or their work in a fair, open and effective way. The setting has a duty to protect the well-being of all stakeholders, especially children and young people. A formal complaints procedure will be applied in cases of more serious offences.

**Whistle Blowing Policy**

**Policy Statement**

Whistleblowing can be defined as raising a concern about a malpractice within an organization. At Little Buds we are committed to delivering a high quality pre-school service, promoting organizational accountability and maintaining public confidence. We are committed to safeguarding children and adults and promoting the welfare of every child, and therefore, expect the highest possible standards of openness. To safeguard each individual child and users of our provision, reports of malpractice are taken seriously. It is the duty of every employee and volunteer to report situations of witnessed and/or suspected misconduct or malpractice. Little Buds recognizes that the decision to report a concern can be difficult one to make, not least because of fear of reprisals from those responsible.

This policy provides individuals at Little Buds protection from victimization or punishment where they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in a setting or during an organized trip or outing. This also includes any action likely to bring Pre-school into disrepute the policy is in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns about misconduct or malpractice in the workplace, in order to promote good governance and accountability. Such behavior would include:

* A criminal offence
* Failure to comply with a legal obligation
* Danger to health and safety of an individual and/or environment
* Deliberate concealment of information in relation to any of the above

**Procedure**

* Any staff member, parent/carer, or volunteer who, acting in good faith, has a concern about misconduct or malpractice at Little Buds Playgroup, should in the first instance inform the playgroup leader of their concerns. If the issue concerns the playgroup leader then the Chair of the Committee should be informed. If it relates to the Chair then Social Services should be contacted for advice on the number below.
* The report, written or verbal, should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why there are concerns
* In every instance it is advised to report concerns early.
* Most concerns will be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.
* All concerns will be investigated by the playgroup/club leader or chairperson as quickly and efficiently as possible and resolved.
* The Playgroup leader will then advise the staff member, parent/carer or volunteer what action will be taken in relation to the issue raised without a breach of confidentiality.
* If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the staff, parent/carer or volunteer should put their concern in writing to the Chair of the Committee.
* Confidentiality will be maintained at all times and every effort will be made to ensure the person raising the concern will not suffer any personal detriment as a result of voicing their concerns and likewise the member of staff under investigation.
* Any malicious and unfounded reports will be considered for disciplinary action.
* If an employee, parent/carer or volunteer feels that the matter cannot be dealt with by either the playgroup leader or the Chairperson they should contact Social Services direct on for advice on what steps to take.
* If a situation is deemed to be likely to seriously affect a child/children, and contacting the playgroup leaser or Chair is inappropriate, then they should contact the Early Years Team, Social Services 02837520541. Public Concern can also be contacted at 020 7404 6609/020 3117 2520
* All documentation will be kept securely in staff records or committee files as appropriate.

