*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).
  + 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.

Monitoring

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

This policy was adopted by Little Budsmanagement Team.

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

(on behalf of the management team)

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

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

Reviewed on:

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

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

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