**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.

**Monitoring**

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

This policy was adopted by Little Buds management team.

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

(on behalf of the management team)

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

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

Reviewed on:

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

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

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