**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.

**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: …………………………………………