



Chapel Gardens, Riverstown, Co Sligo Tel: 0719165660 Email: [littlebuddiessligo@gmail.com](mailto:littlebuddiessligo@gmail.com)

# *Parents Handbook 2022*

## *Early Learning and Care service (ELC)*

## *Introduction*

Little Buddies is a community not for profit childcare service. Our Purpose built childcare Facility opened its door in June 2008. This was mainly due to the hard work and dedication of a committee that was determined to ensure this important service was available with the Community of Riverstown.

Little Buddies is managed by a voluntary committee who regularly meet and oversee the operations and running of the business. The Committee Consists of the Chairperson : Aislin McGovern; Secretary: Siobhan McNally; Treasurer: Darren Woulfe; Director: Rachel McKeon.

As a Community Service we see parents/guardians as the vital resource to the sustainability of this service, we would encourage your involvement. If you wish to join the committee and get involved please talk with us at any time.

### What your child needs in Little Buddies

- + All belongings should be labelled
- + Sippy cups
- + Correct Outdoor clothes- wellies or outdoors boots and waterproof suit.
- + Bag clearly labelled with at least one spare change of clothes
- + Hats in winter/ sun cream in summer
- + Home link book (provided by us)
- + Spare nappies/wipes/powder/Cream
- + If your child has a specific dietary need, food should be sent in clearly labelled containers.
- + Breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks will be provided daily.
- + Nuts **cannot** be brought to Little Buddies
- + Please note that wellies or crocs are not supportive of young children's growing feet and are not permitted for indoor use in little buddies.

## Registration

- + Little Buddies caters for children aged 1 year to 12 years.
- + All children must be registered prior to attending Little Buddies. Application forms are available from the Manager or Deputy Manager. A completed application form is required to secure your child's place.
- + No deposits are required.

At the end of your child's time with us, a minimum of 2 weeks' notice or payment in lieu of is required.

## Other points to note

- + Please do not bring a sick child into Little Buddies. We care for very young children as well as staff who need to be in their best health to look after the children.
- + If your child becomes ill during the day, we may contact you to collect your child if we feel they need one to one attention and are not well enough to be in Little Buddies.
- + Please inform us about changes in arrangements for the collection of your child as your child will only be allowed to leave the centre with adults named on the registration form.
- + If there are changes occurring in your child's life, we would appreciate it if you discussed these with the Lead educator caring for your child as we will help to minimise any behavioural or emotional upset. All matters will be dealt with confidentially.
- + Fees must be paid weekly. Failure to do so will affect your child's place.

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## Policies and Procedures

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- Administration of Medication Policy
- Infection Control Policy
- Hygiene and Care Policy
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Policy(HACCP)
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- Nappy Changing Policy
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# *Statement of Purpose and Function*

## Mission Statement

Little Buddies Community Childcare Centre strives to provide high-quality childcare service to the surrounding community, which is affordable and accessible to all families.

This mission is solely supported through collective consultation processes with the Board, staff, families, the community, the Child and Family Agency (Tusla), Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA), Sligo County Childcare Community (SCCC), Pobal and local Primary Schools.

Little Buddies recognises the importance with regards to the provision of a high-quality service, to the retention of a highly qualified and experienced team of staff. Additionally, Little Buddies recognises its pivotal role in maintaining a staff team to a level of expertise and experience. We continuously promote, support, and mentor staff to freely access continuous professional development training programmes.

Little Buddies is committed to safeguarding and guaranteeing compliance and maintenance of high standards with all legislative requirements and statutory governing bodies with due regard to child protection, employer's obligations, health and safety, corporate and Revenue compliance and financial sustainability and accountability.

## **Service Provision**

Little Buddies operational hours are Monday to Friday 8 am –6 pmm.

Little Buddies provides Early Years Care and Education to children aged between 1 year to 12years, offering

- Full day-care
- Sessional
- Part-time

## **Ethos and Values**

The Ethos of Little Buddies Childcare Centre is to:

- Consistently provide a warm, caring, and friendly atmosphere that is conducive to the individual needs of each individual child attending the service.

- Treat each child with dignity and respect.
- Promote an environment that is responsive to the individual needs and emerging interests of each individual child.
- Little Buddies recognises and supports Parents/Guardians as the primary caregiver of the child and strives to support them in this role.

At Little Buddies Community Childcare Centre all stakeholders including the Board of directors, Management and Staff are committed to:

- Providing affordable, accessible childcare services equally to all members of the community regardless of their cultural background, ethnicity, beliefs, religion, abilities, and socio-economic circumstances.
- Providing a safe, secure, stimulating, and age-appropriate physical environment for all children within our care, where each individual child is provided with the opportunity to develop holistically, at their own pace.
- Encouraging activities, real-life learning experiences, and explorations for all children so as to support every child's autonomy, interests, enthusiasm to play, have fun, and developmentally progress.
- Having professionally trained and committed staff who will strive to encourage enable and facilitate the children's growth and developmental progression.
- Developing strong partnerships with and collaborations with all parents and guardians, to assist in building the foundations which nurture the child's self-esteem and identity and facilitate them to enter and integrate easily into formal primary education.
- Working with each individual child at their own pace regardless of ability.
- Ensuring that all staff employed by Little Buddies hold recognised childcare qualifications, are Garda Vetted, and participate in compulsory training programmes.
- Updating, maintaining, and implementing systems and processes which support and enable transparency, accuracy ,and accountability of all funds and funding mechanisms accessible to Little Buddies Community Childcare Centre.
- Complying with all of the appropriate guidelines, standards, and legislation relating to children, health and safety of children and employees, visitor,s and funding agencies.

The maximum number of children registered to attend Little Buddies ELC service is 52 children

The maximum number of children who can attend our service at one time is 50 children

Maximum Number of children permitted to attend each of rooms as per allocation of floor space and adult-child ratios.



Room	Number of children per floor space	Number of children per staff employed/ Adult: Child Ratio
Poppy Room Breakfast Club SAC	12	12
Sunflower Room (Toddler 1-2.5 years)	17	10 to 15 children
Bluebell Room (Junior Preschool)	22	18
Bluebell Room (After preschool session care)	16	16
Blossom Room (Senior Preschool Session)	22	11
Blossom Room (School Age Care)	30	24

### **Fees Charged to Parents/Families**

	Weekly Fees	Daily Fees
Full Time Care	€175	€35
Part-time Care	€100	€20
Afterschool 2-6pm	€90	€18
Afterschool 3-6pm	€70	€14
Breakfast Club	€40	€8
Afterschool Collection (2-3 pm)	€25	€5

If the Parent requires further details, please contact

Lisa Scanlon (Manager) and Aisling Anderson (Deputy Manager) via email [littlebuddiessligo@gmail.com](mailto:littlebuddiessligo@gmail.com) and/or Phone 0719165660

## MEET OUR STAFF

### 1. Lisa Scanlon

Lisa is the Manager of Little Buddies, possessing over 10 years of experience in the early year's sector. Lisa has been the Manager of Little Buddies since April 2018. Lisa achieved her B.A. Level 8 honours degree in Early Childhood Care and Education June 2012.

### 2. Aisling Anderson

Aisling is the Deputy Manager of Little Buddies, possessing Level 6 in Supervision in Childcare achieved in 2008. Aisling has been part of the Little Buddies Team since 2008.

### 3. Deborah Dixon

Deborah is the Lead Educator in the Bluebell room. Deborah has been working at Little Buddies since August 2020, possessing 10 years of experience working within the childcare sector. Deborah obtained her Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education in 2014.

### 4. Nune Pilojane

Nune is the Lead Educator within the Sunflower Room. Nune has worked within Little Buddies since June 2020. Nune obtained her Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Early Childhood care and education in June 2020. Nune has also commenced her training in level 6 award in Leadership in Inclusion in the early years. Once completed Nune will be the inclusion co Ordinator within Little Buddies.

## 5. Gillian Lawson

Gillian is the Lead Educator in the senior Preschool session in the Blossom room in the morning and with the daycare group in the afternoons in the Bluebell Room. Gillian achieved her Level 8 honours Degree in Early Childhood Care and Education from Letterkenny I.T. in 2019. Gillian Joined Little Buddies in April 2023.

## 6. Jade Ori Orison

Jade is the Early Years educator in the Blossom room for the senior preschool session in the mornings. Jade is also the School Age Coordinator has been joined Little Buddies in August 2020. Jade obtained her level 6 in advanced certificate in Early Childhood care and education.

## 7. Roisin Whelan

Roisin is the Early Years Educator in the Sunflower room. Roisin joined Little Buddies Team in March 2022. Roisin Obtained her Level 6 Supervision in Childcare in 2017. Roisin Joined little Buddies in March 2022

## 8. Aoife Harte

Aoife joined Little Buddies in September 2021 predominantly working part-time with our school-age children, whilst completing her B.A Level 8 Degree in Early Childhood Care and Education. Aoife is the subsidiary staff member in the ELC and SAC service, primarily supporting break cover and non-contact time.

## 9. Antoinette Kelly

Antoinette joined Little Buddies in October 2018 as part of a CE scheme. Antoinette now works part-time as Little Buddies Kitchen Staff member. Antoinette obtained her HACCP training 2018 refresher obtained July 2022.

#### 10. Bernie Harte

Bernie Joined Little Buddies in February 2020 on a TUS Scheme. Bernie works alongside Antoinette on a part-time basis within the Kitchen. Bernie obtained her HACCP training in June 2019 completing her refresher in July 2022.

Each staff member outlined above is highly motivated, dedicated, and enthusiastic team members. Their loyalty and commitment to Little Buddies and the delivery of high-quality standards is commendable.

## Fee Payment Policy

The management of Parental fees in Little Buddies Community not-for-profit childcare service endeavours to reflect best practices with regards

1. Maintaining long-term financial sustainability.
2. Sustaining effective systems that enhance transparency and good financial governance.
3. Consistent provision of quality childcare service.

This policy applies to all parents/guardians who have enrolled their children to attend Little Buddies. Little Buddies is open 49 weeks of the year, and all places are charged for on this basis. With regards to funding schemes in operation to support families to pay for their childcare costs, the fees list is submitted to and approved by the Sligo County childcare committee and Pobal prior to fees costs being applied

### Fee Payment information and guidelines

- Fees are to be paid weekly by Bank transfer or standing order only, please ensure your name appears on the bank statements to facilitate record keeping.
- Fees must be paid in advance (either at the end of the previous week or on the first day of the forthcoming week).
- Fee statements are distributed via email each month.
- There are extra costs for extracurricular activities such as trips or photos etc., details of which are provided for in advance.
- Regrettably, your child's place cannot be kept if you decide to remove your child from the service for a short-term period, this is mainly due to ensuring the long-term viability of the service.
- Fees will apply for all annual Bank holidays/Public holidays. To sustain our school age childcare service Fees are payable over the academic year including midterm breaks.

- Full time school age childcare is available during midterm breaks, advance notice is required to avail of this service.
- In the event of the closure of the service in exceptional circumstances that is beyond the control of management i.e., weather conditions, fees will not be charged.
- Two weeks' notice, or fees in lieu of notice is required at the end of your child's time with us.
- Late collection will incur a fine of €10.00 up to the first 15mins you are late and a further €10.00 for each subsequent 15 minutes thereafter. This facilitates us to pay the childcare practitioner to be paid for caring for your child outside of their normal working hours.
- Failure to pay your fees will result in losing your child's place and the child will not be allowed to return to any of our services until the arrears are cleared.

### Childcare Fee Costs

	Daily	3 Days	5 days
Full time day-care	€35	€105	€175
Part time day-care	€20	€60	€100
Including preschool session until 2pm	€10	€30	€50
Junior school age childcare 1.50pm to 6pm	€18	€54	€90
Senior school age childcare 2.50pm to 6pm	€14	€42	€70
Breakfast Club	€8	€24	€40

By signing this policy, I agree to the terms of its contents.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information:

If you require any further information regarding this policy, please don't hesitate

Name: Lisa Scanlon – Manager
Contact Details: Phone 071 91 65660 or email <a href="mailto:littlebuddiessligo@gmail.com">littlebuddiessligo@gmail.com</a>

Date this policy was last reviewed and updated: 17/10/2018
Date this policy was reviewed and updated: 18/11/2020
Date this policy was reviewed and updated: 31/08/2022

	Name and Position
Approved By:	Alison McGovern (Chairperson)
Approved by:	Siobhan McNally (Secretary)

## Parent Statement for Partner Services

### 1. Welcome to our Partner Service

Little Buddies Community Playgroup LTD, Chapel Gardens, Riverstown, Co Sligo, is a Partner Service, working together with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and Parents to deliver high Quality, affordable, Inclusive Early Learning and Care and School Age childcare services for Children. As part of that Partnership, this statement outlines some of the important things you can expect from us, Partner service.

#### 1.1 About us

Here are some of the basic things to know about us:

A typical week for us is 08:00am to 6pm Monday to Friday 49 weeks of the year.

At Little Buddies we Offer the following services to children and their families:

✓	Sessional preschool under the ECCE (Free Pre-school)
✓	Full day Care/part time care for Early Learning and care (ELC)
✓	Term time School Age Childcare
✓	Out of Term time School Age Childcare

### 2. Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE), Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and National Childcare Scheme (NCS)

This Partner Service is in contract to deliver the:

✓	National Childcare Scheme (NCS)
✓	Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme
✓	Community Childcare Subvention scheme plus (CCSP)

#### Early Childhood care and education programme (ECCE):

ECCE provides for 15 hours per week of preschool provision over 38 weeks per year before children start primary school at no charge to parents.



Little Buddies will support you in registering your child for the ECCE programme in our service if your child meets the eligibility criteria. Further information about ECCE is available here –

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2459ee-early-childhood-care-and-education-programme-ecce/>

### **Access and Inclusion Model (AIM):**

The Goal of Aim is to create a more inclusive environment in preschools, so all children, regardless of ability, can benefit from quality early learning and care. The model achieves this by providing universal support to preschool settings, and targeted support which focuses the needs of the individual child, without requiring a diagnosis of disability.

Further information about AIM is available here – <https://aim.gov.ie>

### **National childcare scheme NCS**

NCS provides subsidies to parents to offset the cost of ELC and SAC. There are three types of NCS Subsidies that are available for children up to the age of 15.

This service welcomes children who are entitled to any category of NCS subsidy. Further information about the NCS is available here –

<https://www.ncs.gov.ie/en/> or contact the NCS Parent Support Centre on 01 906 8530 (Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5pm).

Little Buddies will support you in applying for support under the NCS for your family.

## **3. Fees Policies**

As a partner Service, we operate a Fees Policy that is transparent and understandable to all of our parents, the objective of which is to prevent any and all misunderstandings where possible. Please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Scanlon or Aisling Anderson who will provide additional clarification as required.

3.1	✓	<p><b>a) Facilities that were in existence in September 2021</b></p> <p>As a partner service, we are committed to operating the fee freeze for the Programme year 2022/2023. This means that we will not charge our parents more for the same service than what we were charging in September 2021.</p>
	✓	<p><b>b) Facilities that have been established since September 2021</b></p> <p>As a partner service, we are committed to operating the ‘fee freeze’ for the programme year 2022/2023. This means that we will not increase our fees during this year.</p>

3.2 **Donations** – We will not request or accept any donations, voluntary or otherwise from parents/guardians, in respect of the ELC/SAC services being provided.

3.3 **Deposits** – We will not charge any non – refundable deposits to parents/guardians in respect of their ELC/SAC service where the parent/guardian takes up the service for which the deposit was paid.

3.4 In order that you can understand what this fee freeze means for you, we have outlined our fees and associated fees policy below.

### **This fees policy will be published widely**

a) The fee policy we are going to implement for 2022/2023 is the same as the fee policy that we had in place on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.  
3.5.1 Our fees policy applicable on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, was as follows:

#### **ECCE Contract only fee policy**

Here at Little Buddies, we offer the ECCE programme to all eligible children. ECCE is free to all eligible children.

Additional information about the ECCE Programme Rule are available here

<https://eee.gov.ie/en/publication/2459ee-early-childhood-care-and-education-programme-ecce/>

### **Fee Policy Table**

Session Type Name	Age range	ECCE available for ECCE eligible children?	Meals Included	Additional information	Number of Hours per day	Number of days per week	Number of Hours per week	Session starts time	Session finishing time	Fee (less ECCE 3 free hours) €	Fee Less NCS universal subsidy €	Full Fee €
Full day-care	1-2 yrs. 2-3yrs 3-6yrs	YES	YES	Breakfast Lunch and Dinner provided	10.00	5.00	50.00	8.00am	6.00pm	110.50	152.50	175.00
Part time day- Care	1-2 yrs. 2-3yrs 3-6yrs	Yes	Yes	Breakfast, lunch and morning snack provided	5.00	5.00	25.00	9:00am	2.00pm	50.00	87.50	10.00
Preschool Sessional AM	2.-3 yrs. and 3-6yrs	Yes	No	Morning session (am)	3.00	5.00	15.00	09:15am	12.15pm	0.00	0.00	64.50
SAC breakfast Club	4-15yrs	N/A	Yes	Breakfast included	1.10	5.00	6.25	8.00am	9.10am	0.00	37.25	40.00
Junior SAC	4-15yrs	N/A	Yes	Dinner Included	4.00	5.00	20.00	2:00pm	6:00pm	0.00	80.00	90.00
Senior SAC	4-15yrs	N/A	Yes	Dinner Included	3.00	5.00	15.00	3:00pm	6:00pm	0.00	62.50	70
SAC full time Care out of term	4-15yrs	N/A	Yes	Breakfast Lunch and Dinner provided	10.00	5.00	50.00	8:00am	6:00pm	0.00	152.50	175.00
SAC Part time care out of term	4-15yrs	N/A	Yes	Breakfast and Lunch Included	5.00	5.00	25.00	9:00am	2:00pm	0.00	87.50	100.00

## SECTION B- FEES EXTRAS: DEPOSIT/DISCOUNT/OPTIONAL EXTRAS/ADDITIONAL SERVICES

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ADDITIONAL DETAILS/CONDITIONS
DEPOSITS	Little Buddies does not require a deposit	
DISCOUNTS	Little Buddies does not offer any discounts	
OPTIONAL EXTRAS	€10 to €20 cost for preschool graduation/Christmas photographs and/or outing preschool SAC tour	Parents will be provided with advanced notice and the service will remain operational for children that do not wish to partake

## SECTION C – OTHER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Fee Payment information and guidelines as per Little Buddies fee payment policy

- Fees are to be paid weekly by Bank transfer or standing order only, please ensure your name appears on the bank statements to facilitate record keeping.
- Fees must be paid in advance (either at the end of the previous week or on the first day of the forthcoming week).
- Fee statements are distributed via email each month.
- There are extra costs for extracurricular activities such as trips or photos etc., details of which are provided for in advance.
- Regrettably, your child's place cannot be kept if you decide to remove your child from the service for a short-term period, this is mainly due to ensuring the long-term viability of the service.
- Fees will apply for all annual Bank holidays/Public holidays. To sustain our school age childcare service Fees are payable over the academic year including midterm breaks.
- Full time school age childcare is available during midterm breaks, advance notice is required to avail of this service.
- In the event of the closure of the service in exceptional circumstances that is beyond the control of management i.e., weather conditions, fees will not be charged.
- Two weeks' notice, or fees in lieu of notice is required at the end of your child's time with us.
- Late collection will incur a fine of €10.00 up to the first 15mins you are late and a further €10.00 for each subsequent 15 minutes thereafter. This facilitates us to pay the childcare practitioner to be paid for caring for your child outside of their normal working hours.

- Failure to pay your fees will result in losing your child's place and the child will not be allowed to return to any of our services until the arrears are cleared.

#### 4. Quality Measures

As a Partner Service, Little Buddies is committed to delivering quality for children and families. There are a number of ways we can show you this.

ROOM/SESSION	QUALIFICATION
Sunflower Room (Wobblers/Toddlers)	2 QQI level 6,
Bluebell Room ECCE 1 and Day-care	1 QQI Level 6, 1QQI Level 5
Blossom Room ECCE 2	1 QQI Level 8, 1 QQI Level 6
Blossom Room SAC	1 QQI Level 6, 1QQI Level 5, 1 QQI Level 8
Poppy Room SAC Breakfast Club	1 QQI Level 6

✓	At Little Buddies we are working to implement our quality action plan and we will report on its progress at the end of the year
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## CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

<b>Document Title:</b>	<b>Child Safeguarding Statement</b>
<b>Document Author and Relevant Person under Children First Act 2015:</b>	<b>Lisa Scanlon - Manager</b> <b>Aisling Anderson - Deputy Manager</b> <b>Deirdre Feeney - Chairperson</b>
<b>Document Approved:</b>	<b>19/02/2021 Lisa Scanlon (Manager)</b>
<b>Date the Document is Effective From:</b>	<b>19/02/2021</b>

<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	<b>19/02/2023</b>
<b>Number of Pages:</b>	<b>18</b>

## 2. Type of Service

Little Buddies is:

A Full Day Care Service in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

AND

A school-aged service (afterschool service, in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age services) Regulations 2018

This Service is a community-based facility operated by a Managing Committee

Board of Directors:

Chairperson: Alison McGovern

Secretary: Margaret Garry

Treasurer: Darren Woulfe

Director: Rachel McKeon

Staff:

Manager: Lisa Scanlon

Deputy Manager: Aisling Anderson

Deputies: Deborah Dixon, Nune Pilojane.



## KEY INFORMATION

<b>Opening Hours:</b>	<p>Little Buddies opening hours are 7.30 am to 6pm Monday to Friday.</p> <p>Within these opening hours, Little Buddies provides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full-time day-care service for Early Years &amp; SAC (midterm breaks, Summer Holidays)</li><li>• ECCE preschool Service from 9.15 am to 12.15 pm</li><li>• Part-time Day-care 9 am to 2 pm</li><li>• Breakfast Club 7.30 am to 9.10 am</li><li>• Junior School Age Childcare from 1.50 pm to 6 pm</li><li>• Senior School Age Childcare from 2.50 pm to 6 pm</li><li>• Junior School Age collection service 1.50 pm – 2.50 pm</li></ul>
<b>No of Weeks per year:</b>	Little Buddies operates its Early years and SAC services 49 weeks per year
<b>Capacity:</b>	A maximum of 50 children are insured to be on the premises of Little Buddies at one time. Within each age group, minimum adult-to-child ratios are strictly adhered to at all times.
<b>Age Range:</b>	The range of services outlined above are provided for childaged age 1year to 12 years

<b>Ratios:</b>	<p>Wobbler (1 to 2 years) 1 adult to 5 children</p> <p>Toddler (2 to 3 years) 1 adult to 6 Children</p> <p>ECCE Preschool (3 to 4 Years) 2 adults to 22 children</p> <p>ECCE Preschool (4 to 5 Years) 1 adult to 11 children</p> <p>School Age Childcare Service 1 adult to 12 children</p> <p>The above ratios are the minimum standard applied and Little Buddies strives to ensure that as much as practicably possible maximum level of staffing is applied to the adult-to-child ratios.</p>
<b>Curriculum/Learning Ethos:</b>	<p>Little Buddies curriculum/Learning ethos is a play-based curriculum that aims to support and enhance the autonomy of each child within their own Learning. At Little Buddies we recognise the fundamental component to achieving this autonomy is recognition and observation of the children's likes and dislikes and planning the curriculum accordingly to incorporate the emergent interests of each child within the curriculum. Subsequently, this is in keeping with Aistear that National Curriculum Framework.</p>
<b>Address:</b>	Chapel Gardens, Riverstown, Co, Sligo
<b>Phone Number:</b>	071 91 65660
<b>Email:</b>	littlebuddiessligo@gmail.com

## Key Personnel: In-House

<b>Manager (Person in charge):</b>	Lisa Scanlon
<b>Deputy in the absence of Manager:</b>	Aisling Anderson
<b>Designated Liaison Officer:</b>	Lisa Scanlon
<b>Deputy Designated Liaison Officer:</b>	Aisling Anderson

## Key Personnel: External

<b>TUSLA Early Years Inspection Team:</b>	Early Years Services, Markievicz House, Barrack Street, Sligo  071 9149667
<b>TUSLA Social Work Department:</b>  <b>Contact: Liam Whyte</b>	Office of the Area Manager,  Child and Family Agency,  Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan,  Markievicz House,  Barrack Street,  Sligo.  Tel 071 9155133 liam.whyte@tusla.ie
<b>Garda:</b>	071 91 65122
<b>Doctor:</b>  <b>Contact: Doctor Swan Riverstown</b>	071 91 65463
<b>Pharmacist:</b>	071 91 65865
<b>Hospital:</b>  <b>Sligo General Hospital</b>	071 91 1111

<b>Fire Brigade:</b>	999 / 112
<b>Fire Maintenance:</b> <b>Contact: Coleman Electronics</b>	071 91 44554
<b>Pest Control:</b> <b>Contact: Mr. Hygiene (Alan Kelly)</b>	0860418822

**Principles**

Our priority is to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who attends our service. The safety and welfare of the child is paramount to us. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and we will review our guiding principles and Child Safeguarding Procedures every 24 months at least. We understand fully that the safeguarding of children is every adult’s responsibility. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the right to be kept safe and protected from harm, to be listened to, and to be heard. We understand that all children and young people have an equal right to attend a service that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring that all children in Little Buddies are protected and kept safe from harm while they are in our care. We do this by:

- Making sure that our staff and students are carefully selected, trained, and supervised.
- Having procedures readily in place to recognise, respond to and report concerns in relation to children’s protection and welfare.
- Making sure all staff are Garda vetted prior to engagement.
- Having clear Codes of Behaviour for management, staff, and students in the form of a Handbook.
- Having a procedure to respond to accidents and incidents.

- Giving parents/guardians, children, and staff information about what we do and what to expect from us.
- Let parents/guardians and children know how to voice their concerns or complain if there is something that they are not happy about.  
Having a procedure to respond to these complaints.
- Having a clear reporting procedure to be followed should a staff member have a concern about a child in line with the obligations of Mandated persons outlined in *Children First (2017)* and *The Children First Act 2015*.
- Having a procedure to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect against staff members.
- Having a system where the policy and safeguarding statement is reviewed annually at least by the Management, or as regularly as is required following any changes or updates.

## Risk Assessment

All potential risks identified have a relevant procedure to manage the risks as outlined below

RISK IDENTIFIED	PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO MANAGE RISK	RESPONSIBILITY
<p><b>1. Risk of harm of bullying a child by a member of staff/volunteer/peer</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include but are not limited to: repeated acts of bullying (i.e., verbal or psychological) in the form of taunting, criticising, slagging, humiliating, excluding, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Children use social media platforms to post derogatory or harmful threats or comments, or unauthorised photographs of other children. Unwanted texts or calls to a child's personal device.</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place:</b></p> <p>Managing Behaviour SAC Policy includes an anti-bullying policy.</p> <p>Internet, Photography, and Recording Devices Policy.</p> <p>Parents are aware of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy and their responsibilities.</p> <p>School-Aged children aware of the policy regarding phones, tablets, and other devices (signs in place in care room)</p> <p>No use of mobile phones permitted by staff or School-aged children inside care rooms (safe storage is provided).</p> <p>Staff Training in Child Protection</p> <p>Staff Supervision of Children (awareness of any area blind spots and enhanced supervision of these)</p> <p>Discipline and Complaints Procedure.</p>	<p>Management, Staff, DLPs</p>

	School-Aged children have access to complaints policy in a child-friendly format.  Child Protection and Welfare Policy	
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<p><b>2. Risk of harm of sexual abuse or abuse of a child within the setting (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) by a member of staff/student or peer</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Children are placed at risk due to inadequate supervision.</i></p> <p><i>Children are being harmed because of staff not reporting appropriate concerns.</i></p> <p><i>Children being harmed by inappropriate actions or interactions by staff. –</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place:</b></p> <p>Recruitment Policy: Vetting in place to include Garda vetting, police checks, and validated references.</p> <p>Staff Supervision of Children (awareness of any area blind spots and enhanced supervision of these).</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Statement and Policy</p> <p>No unsupervised access by unauthorised personnel. Staff is trained to recognise signs and are aware of the mandated requirements to report.</p> <p>Staff trained in Child Protection (Children First) and aware of types and signs.</p> <p>DLPs appointed.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians/Siblings not permitted into Toilet or Nappy Changing Facilities.</p> <p>Mandated persons named and listed.</p> <p>Visitors or persons unknown to staff will not have unsupervised access and visiting times will, if possible, be arranged by appointment only and when children are not present.</p> <p>Child Protection and Welfare Policy</p>	<p>Management, Staff, DLPs</p>
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	School-Aged children have access to complaints policy in child-friendly format	
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<p><b>3. Risk of harm or physical/psychological/ emotional harm (as defined by the Children First Act 2015) of a child by a member of staff/volunteer</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Rough handling of children by staff in a way that causes harm to a child.</i></p> <p><i>Staff/volunteers shouting at or chastising children to the extent that it causes harm to a child.</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place:</b></p> <p>Recruitment Policy - Vetting in place to include Garda vetting, police checks, and validated references.</p> <p>No unsupervised access by unauthorised personnel. Staff is trained to recognise signs and aware of mandated requirement to report.</p> <p>Staff trained in child protection (Children First).</p> <p>DLPs appointed.</p> <p>Staff Supervision of Children (awareness of any area blind-spots and enhanced supervision of these).</p> <p>Child Protection and welfare Policy</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>Managing Behaviour Policy in place</p> <p>Positive Reinforcement Skills and Strategies only used.</p> <p>Staff trained in evidence-based behaviour management strategies.</p> <p>Staff Supports available for managing specifically challenging behaviours.</p>	<p>Management, Staff, DLPs</p>
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	<p>Mandated persons named and listed.</p> <p>Disciplinary Procedure.</p> <p>Visitors or persons unknown to staff will not have unsupervised access and visiting times will, if possible, be by appointment only and arranged when children are not present (out-of-hours).</p> <p>School-Aged children have access to complaints policy in child-friendly format.</p>	
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<p><b>4. Risk of harm of a child from an unauthorised Visitor/Contractor</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Children placed at risk due to inadequate supervision</i></p> <p><i>Risk of children absconding from services due to procedures for entering and exiting buildings not being adhered to, such as doors being closed etc.</i></p> <p><i>Risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse to children from visitors</i></p>	<p>Staff Supervision of Children (no unsupervised access to children by visitors or contractors)</p> <p>Visitor Signing in Procedure</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Policy in place</p> <p>No unsupervised access by unauthorised personnel.</p> <p>Visitors or persons unknown to staff will not have unsupervised access and visiting times will, if possible, be arranged by appointment only and when children are not present.</p>	<p>Management, staff, DLPs</p>
<p><b>5. Lost child</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Risk of children absconding from services due to procedures for entering and exiting buildings not being adhered to, such</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place</b></p> <p>School Drop off and Collections Policy.</p> <p>Outings Policy in place and followed.</p> <p>Fully secured Entrance and Exit points.</p> <p>Health and Safety Policy - Risk Assessments and Safety Audits carried out.</p>	<p>Management, Staff, DLPs</p>

<p><i>as doors being closed etc.</i></p> <p><i>Risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse to children from strangers</i></p> <p><i>Children placed at risk of harm due to inadequate supervision</i></p>	<p>DLPs appointed.</p> <p>CCTV in working use.</p> <p>Only authorised Persons allowed access to the service.</p> <p>Child safeguarding statement.</p> <p>Child Protection and Welfare Policy</p>	
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<p><b>6. Accidents Caused by Neglect</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Child tripping or falling due to unnoticed hazards.</i></p> <p><i>Accidentally ingestion of a hazardous substance due to poor storage and accessibility.</i></p> <p><i>Choking as a result of being left unattended while eating.</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place</b></p> <p>Health and Safety Policy and Statement in place and followed.</p> <p>Daily Risk Assessments (Manager's Morning Check and Care Room Risk Assessments) carried out.</p> <p>Risk Assessments carried out following an accident and corrective action taken.</p> <p>Close Supervision during all mealtimes (and awareness of any area blind-spots and enhanced supervision of these).</p> <p>Accident and Incident Policy in place and followed.</p> <p>Correct storage procedures for all potentially hazardous substances (cleaning and medications).</p>	<p>Management, Staff, DLPs</p>
<p><b>7. Medical Neglect</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Accidentally ingestion of a hazardous substance due to poor storage and accessibility.</i></p> <p><i>Failure to administer required medication to a child.</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place</b></p> <p>Medicines Policy in place and followed.</p> <p>Parental Consent Forms signed.</p> <p>Individual Child Care/Emergency Plans are in place and followed.</p> <p>Inaccessible safe storage and labelling of Medicines in place.</p>	<p>Management, staff, DLPs</p>

Failure to follow care plans for a child.		
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<p><b>8. Child not collected/ Unauthorised collection and Access Rights or Persons unfit to collect</b></p> <p><i>Risk of physical, sexual or emotional abuse to children from strangers or unauthorised care persons.</i></p> <p><i>Children placed at risk of harm due to inadequate supervision or care capabilities of unauthorised persons.</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place</b></p> <p>Collections Policy in place and followed.</p> <p>Emergency Collectors available. Parental Agreements &amp; Permissions in place.</p> <p>Child Registration Form fully completed with emergency contacts and authorisations listed. Amendments made to Authorised Collection List as necessary.</p> <p>Children are not released to unauthorised persons.</p> <p>Where there is a dispute between parents, we will seek legal clarification regarding access and may require copies of a court order.</p> <p>If we have never met a parent and a parent is not listed on the registration form, we may seek clarification of identity from parent/guardian before engaging with the collector, and subsequently photographic identification once clarity is sought.</p> <p>Children will not be released to parents/guardians who are in an unfit state. Alternative Authorised person will be contacted, or Gardai will be phoned.</p> <p>School aged children have access to child-friendly policy.</p>	<p>Management, staff, DLPs</p>
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<p><b>9. Unvetted Staff or students that may lead to children being harmed (including not recognising or reporting signs of abuse)</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Children placed at risk due to inadequate supervision.</i></p> <p><i>Children being harmed as a result of staff not reporting appropriate concerns.</i></p> <p><i>Children being harmed by inappropriate actions or interactions by staff</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place</b></p> <p>Recruitment and Selection Policy in place.</p> <p>Garda Vetting Policy in place (Process to be Fully completed before commencement of work). No unsupervised access to children by unvetted persons (or vetted students/visitors/contractors)</p> <p>Relevant validated References available for all staff.</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Policy in place.</p> <p>Child Protection and welfare Policy</p> <p>Risk Assessment of Disclosures on Garda Vetting forms completed if required.</p>	<p>Management, Staff, DLPs</p>
<p><b>10. Risk of abuse by staff and volunteers/visitors not knowing correct procedures (such as not recognising or</b></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place</b></p> <p>Staff Training Procedure/Policy</p> <p>Staff Supervision Procedure/Policy</p>	<p>Management, Staff, DLPs</p>

<p><b>reporting signs of abuse)</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Children placed at risk due to inadequate supervision.</i></p> <p><i>Children being harmed as a result of staff not reporting appropriate concerns.</i></p> <p><i>Children being harmed by inappropriate actions or interactions by staff</i></p>	<p>Child Protection and Welfare Policy - Code of Behaviour for staff and reporting format/procedure.</p> <p>Child Safeguarding Procedure/Policy</p> <p>Complaints Procedure/Policy</p> <p>Procedure/Policy on Managing Behaviour</p> <p>No unsupervised access to children by students, volunteers, visitors or any unvetted personnel.</p>	
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<p><b>11. Poor behaviour strategies where the dignity of the child is undermined</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Rough handling of children by staff in a way that causes harm to a child.</i></p> <p><i>Staff/volunteers shouting at or chastising children</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place</b></p> <p>Managing Behaviour Policy in place and followed.</p> <p>Positive Reinforcement Skills and Strategies only used.</p> <p>No Corporal punishment.</p> <p>No isolation or exemption used.</p> <p>Disciplinary procedures.</p> <p>Professional assistance and support sought for particularly challenging behaviour.</p>	<p>Management, staff, DLPs</p>
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<p><i>to the extent that it causes harm to a child.</i></p> <p><i>Exemption, humiliation or isolation methods used to behaviour manage.</i></p>	<p>Support and supervision policy</p> <p>Continuous professional development training to assist Staff in implementing evidence-based behaviour management strategies.</p> <p>Management support is provided to staff in relation to particularly challenging behaviour.</p> <p>Child Protection and welfare Policy.</p>	
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<p><b>12. Risk of harm or abuse when on outings by Staff Member/Peer</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Children placed at risk of harm due to inadequate supervision on outings.</i></p> <p><i>A child going missing, or is unaccounted for, for any period of time</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place</b></p> <p>Outings policy in place.</p> <p>All Outings/excursions risk assessed.</p> <p>Risk checklist used.</p> <p>Vetting in place to include Garda vetting, police checks, validated references.</p> <p>No unsupervised access by unauthorised personnel.</p> <p>Staff aware of mandated requirement to report abuse.</p> <p>Staff trained in child protection.</p>	<p>Management, Staff, DLPs</p>
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	<p>Supervision (assessment and awareness of any area blind spots and enhanced supervision of these).</p> <p>DLPs appointed.</p> <p>Regular head-counting and roll calls are in place on outings.</p> <p>Mandated persons named and listed.</p> <p>Visitors or persons unknown to staff will not have unsupervised access and visiting times will, if possible, be arranged by appointment only and when children are not present as they are unvetted.</p>	
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<p><b>13. Access to inappropriate online resources.</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to: Unauthorised sharing of images and information about a child. Poor management of images or recordings of children, including those shared</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures in place:</b></p> <p>Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy.</p> <p>No use of mobile phones permitted by staff or School-aged children inside classrooms (safe storage is provided).</p> <p>Child Protection and welfare policy - Supervision of Children.</p>	<p>Management, staff, DLPs</p>
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publicly or on social media.	<p>Parental Consent Forms completed.</p> <p>No images of children are published externally or on social media without parent/guardian consent. Identities protected.</p> <p>Parents are aware of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy and their responsibilities.</p> <p>School-Aged children aware of the policy regarding phones, tablets, and other devices (signs in place in care room)</p>	
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<p><b>14. Risk of harm of a child from unauthorised Photography in the setting</b></p> <p><i>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p><i>Unauthorised distribution of a photo of a child on social media or other platforms.</i></p> <p><i>Poor management of images or recordings of children, including those shared publicly or on social media</i></p>	<p><b>Procedures:</b></p> <p>No use of mobile phones permitted by staff or School-aged children inside classrooms (safe storage is provided).</p> <p>Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy.</p> <p>Parents are aware of the Internet and Photographic and Recording Devices Policy and their responsibilities.</p> <p>Retention of Records Procedure/Policy</p>	<p>Management, staff, DLPs</p>
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## Responsibility

The Management of Little Buddies is fully responsible for ensuring the above risks are managed.

## Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure, and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Procedures to manage any risk identified.
- Procedure for reporting harm or abuse or allegations of these to Tusla by Little Buddies as a provider or member of staff (whether mandated or not).
- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child while attending our service.
- Procedure for selection or recruitment of any person as a member of staff of the provider with regards to that person's suitability to work with children.
- Procedure for the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training to members of staff in relation to the occurrence of harm.

**This Safeguarding Statement will be displayed prominently.**

## Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our Service is fully committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every *twenty-four months* or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2023 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: .....(Provider) Date 23/02/2021

**Name:** Lisa Scanlon **Tel:** 071 91 65660

**Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015**

**Name:** Lisa Scanlon **Tel:** 071 91 65660

For further information on this Statement please contact the named **Relevant Person:**

**RELEVANT PERSON NAME:** Lisa Scanlon

**CONTACT:** littlebuddiessligo@gmail.com or 0719165660

Little Buddies welcomes all families and children into our service inclusive of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, membership of the traveling community, and religious belief. Families are welcome at any time, especially during the settling-in period.

This policy is underpinned by the childcare preschool Services Regulations 2006, the national curriculum framework (Aistear), and the National Quality Standards (Síolta).

#### **Admission Procedure:**

- Inquiries from Parents/Guardians regarding booking a place and availability of ELC or Sac Place will be accepted via email to [Littlebuddies0@gmail.com](mailto:Littlebuddies0@gmail.com). This method of inquiry will be encouraged to ensure efficiency and support record-keeping.
- Parents/Guardians must fully complete registration forms even when moving through the service e.g., preschool to SAC. This is to ensure all information required is maintained and updated regularly.
- The annual intake of new children starting with Little Buddies is in September, this is to facilitate age-appropriate transitions and maintain staffing levels accordingly.
- Registration forms are to be stored securely locked in a filing cabinet.

Offer of Places to Parents/Guardians is dependent on a number of factors:

1. Child is aged 12 months/1 year or older when starting in Little Buddies.
2. Staffing levels employed meet the levels required to meet the regulatory requirements of adult-to-child ratios: ELC Ratios:

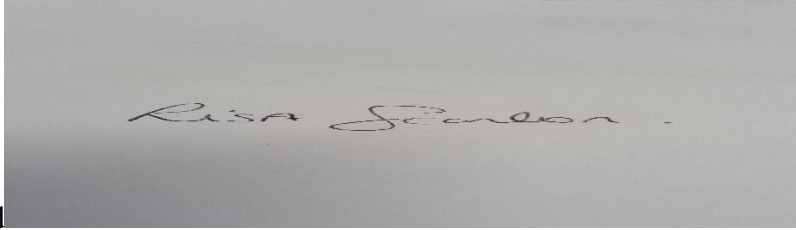


Wobblers/Toddlers 1 adult to 5 children  
Preschool 1 adult to 11 children  
Daycare 1 adult to 8 children  
SAC Ratios:  
Afterschool and Breakfast club 1 adult to 12 children

3. A sibling of a child who attends Little Buddies will be accommodated as much as feasibly possible in line with the above factors considered also.
4. When places become available places will be offered on a first come first serve basis.
  - Parents/Guardians will have the opportunity to visit Little Buddies before their child attends Little Buddies. Strategies will be implemented, recorded, and monitored to encourage a positive relationship /rapport between the Service and the Parents/Guardians. This is in line with Little Buddies' partnership with Parents/Guardians policy.
  - Referrals will be considered as places become available.
  - Consistent promotion of equal opportunities.
  - Open and fair admission procedure
  - Anti Discriminatory procedures
  - Respecting Cultural and language differences
  - All policies and procedures are available to parents/guardians.
  - Parents/Guardians must agree to adhere to all policies and procedures when accepting a place.
  - Once a place is secured and agreed Parents' handbook will be shared with the parents which provide the following information.
    1. Purpose and function of Little Buddies
    2. Little Buddies policies and Procedures.
    3. Management structure: staff and Qualifications.

This policy was agreed upon and adopted by Little Buddies

Date: 27/02/2023

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Gordon".

Signed on behalf of Management.

This policy will be reviewed and updated on 27/02/2025.

## CURRICULUM POLICY

We at Little Buddies implement a curriculum that is conducive to the following:

- Consistently provide a warm, caring, and friendly atmosphere that is conducive to the individual needs of each individual child attending the service.
- Treat each child with dignity and respect.
- Promote an environment that is responsive to the individual needs and emerging interests of each individual child.
- Little Buddies recognises and supports Parents/Guardians as the primary caregiver of the child and strives to support them in this role.

Little Buddies offers a play-based curriculum to provide a stimulating, age-appropriate programme of activities and opportunities for young children.

Little Buddies uses Aistear, the National Framework for Curriculum, and Siolta, the National Framework for Quality as our Framework to ensure a quality standard of curriculum programme is implemented.

In Little Buddies, we use short, medium, and long-term plans over the course of the year.

- Our long-term curriculum plan follows a holistic approach to the implementation of our curriculum and is outlined throughout our curriculum policy.
- Our medium-term plans look at each month and the various events and learning themes that take place within a month period. Due reflection is placed to the individual needs/interests of the children and linkage to the learning objectives set out over the month. These learning objectives are echoed within the National Curriculum Framework Aistear.
- Our short-term plans are our weekly plans which outline the learning objectives and learning experiences we aim to provide. Our weekly plans are specifically designed to align with the Aistear framework providing opportunities to record in-the-moment learning experiences and extended learning experiences. Subsequently, this element of our weekly plans, places due regard to the uniqueness and key interests expressed by the children, enabling a child-centred curriculum programme to be delivered.

We place a strong emphasis on the emerging interests of the children both individually and as a group to develop activities to actively engage children in their learning. We use child observations to plan for activities for both individuals and groups of children.

Each room has designed its own daily routine which is conducive to the age and stage of the children attending. These daily routines are displayed on entry to each room, for Parents/Guardians to review. Display of these daily routines also provides structure and layout of the day for relief staff covering subsequently ensuring consistency regardless of staff absences etc. Each daily routine is linked to the Aistear Framework as we at Little Buddies recognise the importance of this structure whilst delivering a quality standard curriculum programme.

We include both activities and philosophies of High scope, Montessori and Reggio Emilia.

Our curriculum is followed both inside the childcare rooms and out of doors.

Our Early years staff adapt the delivery of curriculum for children who possess additional needs or where deemed appropriate. The design and structure of the curriculum and learning goals are accessible and attainable for all children with due recognition based on their level of need and ability.

Curriculum: Assessment of  
Learning Policy

We at Little Buddies Community Childcare Centre believe that early childhood is a time for learning and development where children can learn through relationships, communication, exploration and play. To ensure the best possible learning outcomes for the children attending our service, we implement a system of meaningful assessment in line with Aistear the National Curriculum Framework and Siolta quality standards. This will take the form of a learning portfolio or learning story unique to each individual.

**Statement of Intent**

We at Little Buddies aim to use the Learning story approach to gather meaningful information on each child's learning so that we can build a holistic and real picture of him/her as a unique individual. This will also act as an effective mechanism to inform, support and enhance the next steps in the child's learning.

**Permission and Consent**

Prior to commencing assessment procedure, a signed copy of the parents/guardian's permission must be obtained during the registration process.

**Responsibility and Storage**

Management has overall responsibility for supervising the safe storage of children's files. All children's personal files will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office and access to the files is permitted to the childcare team and parents/guardians only. All staff are made aware and adhere to the strict policy on confidentiality. Please refer to our Storage of Records Policy.

**A Learning Story Portfolio will be compiled over the year/period of time in each room.**

**This will include:**

- A variety of learning stories (Individual/Group)
- Photographs
- Examples of Child's work, comments, conversations recorded
- Comments from Parents

## **Transition**

At Little Buddies we are committed to supporting children through times of transition in their formative years, from home to the setting, within the setting, and to other settings/schools in recognition of the quality framework, Siolta Standard 13: Transitions.

It is our policy to support children's transition to the setting by:

- Meeting with parents prior to enrolment to discuss the child, their needs and expectations of care.
- The child, parents, and staff will have the opportunity to meet before the child starts their settling in time.
- Helping parents to understand that children can mirror the feelings of the parent and how important it is for a parent to feel happy and as content as possible leaving their child.
- To help manage separation anxiety that may occur and recognise it as a result of a strong bond of attachment between the child and their parents/guardian.

Within the setting we will support transitions using the following methods:

- Communicating with parents at the beginning and end of each day providing feedback and sharing information and updates on the child's development as well as daily care routines.
- Ensure that transitions within the daily routine are sensitively planned with children being alerted to an impending change e.g., new activity, mealtime, etc which gives children the opportunity to finish their current activity.
- Being sensitive to the child's needs at transition time.
- By providing the child with secure attachment relationships with the adults in the setting.

- Special toys and blankets, soothers and pictures from home (transitional objects) help to support the child from home to the setting and within the setting.
- Where distress occurs, we will plan and implement a strategy to meet the child's/parents' needs.
- Providing where possible the same adults to care for the child throughout the year.
- In the case of staff absence where children may need to be moved to another group within the setting in order to adhere to Preschool Regulations 2006, a child will be informed of this change, and parents will be informed at the beginning and end of the day, the transition will be recorded in the child's home link book.
- Staff will communicate with each other to provide updates, advice, and progress about the child.
- The child will be moved to his/her nearest age group taking into consideration the child's stage of development.

From the setting to another setting or school:

- With parents' permission, we will provide the school/new setting with information such as observations, collections of the child's work, and photographs. The "Mo Scéal" preschool book will be used to help a child transition to school.
- Staff will be available with parents' permission to talk to other professionals and share information about the child.
- Work with external agencies such as the Early Intervention Team and the Home School Community Liaison Teacher where needed.
- Open communication and consultation with the lead educator of preschool and junior infant primary school teacher to implement strategies e.g., visits and visual aids, to assist this transition process. **Please see the Policy on Transition from Preschool to Primary School for additional information.**

### **Settling-In**

Settling in should be a positive experience as it influences children's self-confidence, attitude to relationships, and socialising and lays the foundation for lifelong learning. Settling-in is a collaborative process between parents/guardians, staff, and children. Family involvement will be encouraged to assist all children to develop secure relationships as we recognise that children's most important educators are their families.

### **Pre-Admission**

- The service will provide information on the Settling-in policy to the parent or guardian on the initial inquiry.



- Services will learn from the parent or guardian about the child's feeding and sleeping routine and rituals, preferences, and will create close links with home, bringing familiar items/photos.
- Parents/guardians must have completed an Enrolment Form with all the relevant details about the child, especially contact and collection information in accordance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.
- Parents and guardians will be encouraged to drop in at various times during opening hours with their children to familiarise the children and themselves with the routine, the setting, and the staff.

### Guidance for Parents

We aim to work closely with parents to support your child in the move from home, family and familiar people, into the new community of this childcare service. We seek to help your child make a strong attachment to the staff and to help your child feel secure and confident in our childcare service. We will work with you to help your child with any difficulties that might arise.

- We provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before he/she 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.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents/guardians the child's registration records.
- 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 childcare service.

### Helping Your Child to Settle In

Children settle into Little Buddies in lots of different ways. Some children will confidently move into the Day-care/Preschool Room as soon as they come in. Other children may be nervous and anxious about leaving their parents/guardians. Most children will be somewhere in between. Please try not to worry if your child experiences difficulties – it is a very normal part of a child's development to be anxious, nervous or angry about starting Day-care/preschool. We also recognise that many parents/guardians will find this a difficult and sometimes upsetting process. We hope that we can use our experience to support you and your child in whatever way suits you. Please remember that we require all parents/guardians and carers to help their children settle in. In our experience, all children benefit greatly when the nursery/preschool works closely with the family on settling in.

### The Settling in Period

Different children need different amounts of time to settle in. We recommend that you plan for two weeks to support your child. The settling-in period is a time for your child to get to know his or her key person – with the reassurance of having you here too. As the relationship develops, your child will be able to trust that:

- The key person and the other staff are able to meet her or his needs.
- They can be helpful and comforting and deal positively with any problems.
- They can provide interesting experiences which make it worthwhile to come to the service.

The settling-in process gives you a chance to check out:

- What type of service this is.
- How the staff work.
- What kinds of experiences do we offer to the children.

You will be able to see how we:

- Play with children.
- Talk with them.
- Have fun together.

**At any stage of the process** – if you would like to talk to someone or support then please talk to your child's key person or the Childcare Manager.

### Settling In Procedure

- Visits will occur prior to the child commencing care. This enables staff and families to discuss ideas, routines, procedures, and policies, and any child allergy or medical condition.
- Verbal and written communication channels are established between families and staff to outline children's routines and share daily events.
- Feedback about the child's day is provided to families after each attendance.

- Families are welcome to share information about their child's interests and experiences outside of the setting.
- Families are included in decision-making about their child's day at the setting.
- Informal and formal meetings between families and staff can be arranged to discuss children's learning and development and to express any concerns that may arise at home or in the setting.
- When families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are enrolled in the setting, the manager will make every effort to provide translations of policies and procedures.
- Staff participate in a range of professional development relating to effective communication and relationships with families.
- Any family involvement is welcome and appreciated. We encourage families to get involved in the curriculum and share their knowledge and/or skills where appropriate. Families also have the option of not being involved (beyond a minimum level of communication with educators each day) if that is their preference.
- Staff create a welcoming environment where the diversity of families and communities, and the aspirations they hold for their children, are respected.
- Family photos and other aspects of children's home life are incorporated into the environment and the curriculum.
- Staff will ensure that all transitions and progressions within the setting adhere to the settling in procedure.

At Little Buddies we are very conscious of the importance of support, guidance, and sensitivity at the time when a child is transitioning from any level of education to another. This is no different for the child who is transitioning from preschool to primary school. This policy is informed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's (NCCA) *Preschool to Primary Transition Initiative*, *Transition from Preschool to Primary School: Research Report 19* (O'Kane, 2016), *Starting Strong: Transitions from Early Childhood Education and Care to Primary Education*, OECD (2017) and *Early Years: An Inspector's Perspective on Practice and Policy*, Hislop (2018)

At Little Buddies our aim is to support the progression and continuity of the learning experience of the children, as they move from our Preschool Service to the next step in their education, Primary School.

We aim to make this transition.

1. A positive experience for all involved.
2. A meaningful experience for your child, that will support them in their lifelong learning.
3. As smooth as possible, by promoting certain dispositions, skills, and knowledge, including a strong focus on oral language/communication, and the development of positive learning dispositions, including curiosity, independence, and resilience.
4. Easier for the child by fostering a greater alignment between the curriculum of the preschool (inspired by Aistear) and the curriculum of the Primary School.
5. Pleasant for the child and his/her family by the development of trusting relationships between the preschool and the Primary School
6. Positive experience for those children who may be experiencing disadvantage, children whose first language is not English, or children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
7. We aim to provide an informed transition by ensuring the transfer of information on children's learning and development between the preschool and the Primary School- we use the Mo Scéal templates ([ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/mo-scéal/](http://ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/mo-scéal/)) Appendix 2
8. Mo Scéal means '**my story**' and the templates help to tell the story of the child's learning and development. This information will be shared with parents and, **with their consent**, with the primary school.

## Procedure

Preparation for the move to primary school begins, at Little Buddies, as soon as a young child comes through our doors for the first time. It is important to remember that transformative transitions are not a one-off event, they are something that is prepared for over several months and even years.

Every time the child develops another aspect of independence, sitting comfortably on a chair, using a spoon, holding a crayon, or being confident enough to express an opinion, – he or she is getting ready for the next stage – getting ready to move on to Primary School.

## The Voice of the Child

In mid-April, preceding children's entry into Primary School the following September, a more structured programme of preparation is initiated- we begin to compile. This includes the **children** themselves, as they are the most **important people in the process**, personnel from the Primary schools, the parents and families of the child, and the Educators from Little Buddies. The child is the starting point, the centre, and the end of what we do. We value their voice and actively work on supporting them to fully understand the transition that will be taking place. We work with the children and engage them in a range of activities under the transition programme. We seek to ensure the individual interests of each child are captured in the Mo Scéal templates.

The following is a list of activities that may be used by Little Buddies to support the transition:

- A visit to the school by the Early Years team
- Children preparing artwork that they might show their new Primary School teacher, photos of them in preschool playing with their favorite toy.
- Children/ families visiting the Primary School.
- Stories about going to school.
- Use of a Transition Resource Box with school-related items- uniforms/ books/equipment/ photos of the school
- Role-play (at 'big School')

- Use of a HOPE TREE – where the leaves represent the hopes of both parents and children for their new school.
- Room displays of photographs of the different schools with children attending below each one.
- Display of picture maps showing where the schools are located.
- Social Stories that can have a focus on children getting ready to go to Primary School.

### **Role of Parents/Guardians**

Parents play an important role in the transition process and should be seen as collaborators, with respectful dialogue being all important. In pursuit of this aim a Parent-Preschool team meeting is organised for every child moving to Primary School. With the use of a form Mo Scéal, the parents are informed of their child's strengths, talents, relationships with others, and skills and then any areas for development are outlined. Parents are encouraged to share the information they have received with the new teacher, particularly if the child needs any special support or has a specific need or circumstance. The meeting with the parent focuses on the Mo Scéal templates.

### **Working in Partnership with Primary Schools**

During the month of March/April, a letter is sent to the Principals of the Primary Schools which will be attended by our children. This invites them or a Junior Infant teacher to visit the crèche to meet the children in their current setting. A date in late May is then arranged for the visit. Many of the Primary schools also arrange for the children to spend a little time at the Primary school around this time, and this is supported by the Educator through discussion, role play, and preparing art/work they might like to share with the new primary school teacher, etc.

**Review:** Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy annually.

This policy was adopted and designed Collaborated by Little Buddies and Tús Maith:

Transitions in Action- A Preschool to Primary School Project.

Person Responsible: Manager and Preschool Lead Educator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_12/04/2023\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_Lisa Scanlon\_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_12/04/2024\_\_\_\_\_



## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

### **Policy Statement**

The management and board of directors at Little Buddies are committed to supporting the safe transport of staff and families to and from the service in the event of extreme inclement weather.

At all times, Little Buddies will adhere to advice on weather warnings issued by Met Eireann to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to ensure the safety of staff and families using the service.

### **Measures to be taken to ensure the safety and welfare of all children:**

- We will adhere to government advice and any weather alerts/warnings issues.
- We will undertake a risk assessment to identify any potential hazards for the children in relation to travel, building structure, and compliance with regulations.
- Depending on the outcome of our risk assessment, Management will consider whether it is necessary to close the service.
- Little Buddies will Implement the Communications Procedure outlined within this policy, to ensure that all staff and families are kept aware and informed as events unfold and to ensure there is no unnecessary travel or risks taken.
- Management will implement the procedure of short notice of closure procedure, which is outlined within this policy.

### **Communications Procedure**

#### **Families**

- Inform families via social media and/or text message in the event of a national warning pre-emptively being issued.
- If in the event of Little Buddies implementing a decision to close, families will be informed via social media and/or text as soon as possible so families can make alternative arrangements.



- Families will be informed that a decision to close Little Buddies Service was not made in haste and was taken considering all risk assessments and potential Hazards being identified with due regard to the health and safety of the children and our ability to comply with the regulations.
- On mornings of extremely bad weather, parents will be notified via text and social media if there is to be a delay in opening Little Buddies to allow staff to travel to work safely.
- During extreme weather conditions, it may be necessary for us to call parents to come and collect their children early so families and staff can travel safely home.

### **Staff**

- Staff will be advised via staff notice board, staff what's App group messaging or phone in the event of a planned closure or short notice closure occurring within Little Buddies due to severe weather conditions being forecasted and weather warning being issued by Met Eireann.
- As the service will be closed the staff will be advised to stay at home.
- Management of Little Buddies will act as reasonable as possible given the circumstances
- In the case that employees are not required to attend for work, because management has closed Little Buddies service for the day(s) or if the service is open later in the day or even earlier than business opening hours, then Little Buddies employees will be paid as normal for that day(s).

If a staff member is unavailable to work because their child's school or creche is closed this is an emergency leave situation. However, this does not fall under the legal definition of force majeure leave. Where the staff member is unable to arrange alternative childcare annual leave or unpaid leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**In recent years Met Eireann has introduced colour-coded weather warnings as follows:**

- Status Yellow – be aware
- Status Orange – be prepared
- Status Red – take action

**Little Buddies will endeavour to respond appropriately to such warnings utilising the above policy as a guidance.**

## OUTINGS POLICY

Little Buddies is committed to supporting each child's health and well-being. Outings are planned to provide varied and interesting learning experiences for children in our care. Risk assessments are carried out prior to all outings and adequate insurance is in place. Parents/Guardians will be provided with advance notice of each outing and written consent will be obtained from Parents/Guardians. This policy outlines how we conduct outings in Little Buddies. This policy is available to all Parents/Guardians. There is a consent form for outings included as an appendix to this policy

This policy is underwritten by the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Quality Regulatory Framework.

### **Risk Assessment:**

- A detailed Risk Assessment is carried out by Little Buddies on the proposed outing location and transportation for the outing, this is carried out prior to the outing itself.
- The risk assessment completed prior to the outing is used to determine how many members of staff are needed to accompany children. The ratio for the outing is established through this risk assessment.
- The risk assessment identifies and assesses the risks a particular outing may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child being taken on the outing and specifies how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.
- An exploratory visit is to be carried out by at least one staff member to the proposed location of the outing as part of the risk assessment process.
- Consideration of the following is included in the risk assessment:
  - ❖ The route and transportation for the outing.
  - ❖ The destination and proposed duration.
  - ❖ The type of activities that will be taking place on the outing.
  - ❖ The weather forecast – will sunscreen and/or rain gear be required?

- ❖ The number of adults and children involved in the outing.
- ❖ Additional needs of children.
- ❖ Water hazards and water-based activities.
- ❖ Children's allergies.
- ❖ Insurance requirements.
- ❖ Potential of public accessibility on the outing.
  - Depending on the outcome of the Risk Assessment, it may be necessary to consider alternative locations for the outing.
  - All staff are made aware of the Risk Assessment prior to the outing. Parents/Guardians are advised that the risk assessment is available to them in Little Buddies prior to the outing.

**Consent:**

- Parents/Guardians are given a copy of the outings policy when their child commences in Little Buddies.
- Children can only attend an outing with parental/guardians' consent.
- Written consent from Parents/Guardians is sought for each outing for their child to attend in line with this outings policy.
- The consent forms must be returned to Little Buddies prior to the outing.
- Staff are aware of any children who do not have consent to attend an outing.

The consent forms include:

- ❖ The date of the proposed outing (or details if it will be a regular occurrence)
- ❖ Information on the destination of the outing and transport to the location
- ❖ The duration of the outing and how long the child will be away from the premises
- ❖ The adult: child ratio for the outing
- ❖ Details of adults who are not staff of Little Buddies attending the outing
- ❖ Details of the drop off and pick up arrangements and times
- ❖ Cost of the outing

See appendix for sample consent form

**Prior to an outing:**

- Prior to each outing taking place a checklist is prepared. The checklist is in place to ensure that all procedures in relation to the conduct of outings is adhered to.
- All staff who work in Little Buddies and all Parents/Guardians with children attending the service are informed that an outing is taking place.
- It is checked that adequate insurance is in place for the outing.
- A plan is put in place prior to any outing that outlines what staff will do if a child goes missing while on the outing. This plan outlines who will help to search for the child, how the search will be carried out and who will take charge of the rest of the group of children.
- A named member of staff is designated the person in charge for the outing

### **Supervision:**

- All staff attending the outing are aware of the number of children they are supervising and also the specific children that they have responsibility for.
- There is a named person on charge on the outing.
- A roll call is taken of all the children attending the outing, with a name to face check, before
- leaving Little Buddies, on arrival at the outing location, at regular intervals while on the
- outing, leaving the destination and on return to Little Buddies.
- A group photograph is taken (with prior consent from Parents/Guardians) before each outing so there is an up to date photograph of all children in the clothes they are wearing on the day.
- Children are given a bright coloured vest or similar to wear so that they are easily identifiable as being with Little Buddies.
- At all times when on an outing, children are appropriately supervised by a member of staff.
- Particular care is given to supervising children at pick up and drop off especially if this is taking place in a different location to normal.
- There will be an extra adult on each outing who is not included in the adult: child ratio who has a supervisory role.
- Little Buddies ensures that adult: child ratios are adhered to in line with our insurance policy,
- the needs of the group and the risk assessment we have conducted.
- If Parents/Guardians are attending the outing they are aware that they must only supervise their own child.
- Parents/Guardians attending the outing are provided with information about the
- outing and their role on the outing a set period of time before the outing takes place.
- Parents/Guardians are aware of who the person in charge is on the day of the outing.

- All adults are made aware of their responsibilities prior to the outing.

**Communication during an outing:**

- A fully charged mobile phone is taken on all outings by the person in charge. The mobile has
- emergency numbers saved on it. Parents/Guardians of the children attending have the contact
- number of this phone while the children are on the outing.
- Staff are aware if there is a landline available at the outing location in case of emergency.
- Parent and guardian contact details are brought on the outing for all children in attendance. One staff member has a responsibility for these contact details and all staff know where they can be accessed.

**Clothing requirements:**

- Parents/Guardians are informed prior to the outing the clothing that is required to be by children worn and if any additional clothing items are needed.
- For outings during the summer months, sun cream is required for outings and also protective
- clothing such as sun hats.
- For outings during the winter, children are advised to wear warm clothes such as coats, hats and gloves.

**Food and Drink:**

- Parents/Guardians are advised of food and drink requirements prior to the outing taking place.
- If packed lunches are needed, they are stored appropriately in accordance with food safety
- guidelines.
- If food is to be provided on the outing this is communicated to Parents/Guardians
- beforehand.
- Children wash their hands prior to eating on an outing.
- Children have access to water and are kept well hydrated on an outing.
- Any child with an allergy attending an outing is known to staff and their emergency plan and

- medication is brought on the outing.

**Accidents and Incidents:**

- There is a fully stocked first aid kit and at least one qualified first aid officer on every outing who is always available to adults and children on the outing.
- Medications required by any children attending the outing are brought on the outing and stored in accordance with the guidelines for the medication.
- The individual care plans of any children attending the outing are brought on the outing.
- There is a clear plan in place in the event of an accident or incident.

**The following steps are followed:**

- 1) First aid is administered by the trained first aider if required.
- 2) Pre-assigned staff members take the other children back to the service.
- 3) Communication is co-ordinated between the emergency services and the child's
- 4) Parents/Guardians/guardians where necessary.
- 5) The registered provider/service manager is contacted immediately
- 6) On return to the service the accident/incident is recorded in the accident/incident book

**Transport:**

Little Buddies ensures that all transport vehicles to and from the outing venue are roadworthy, fully insured and fit for purpose. Records will be kept of vehicles used to transport children and adults with named drivers and insurance cover. All vehicles will have appropriate seat belts and child restraint systems correctly fitted where necessary.

**Management of a Critical Incident on an Outing:**

There is a procedure to follow if a child goes missing on an outing. This procedure outlines:

- The search methods that would be used
- Who is contacted and when
- Who stays at the outing venue
- Who returns with the group to the pre-school

Staff are prepared for all possible incidents that may occur while on the outing (e.g., choking, drowning etc.) and receive training as needed.

Review and Evaluation - After each outing:

The Management and staff of Little Buddies will review and evaluate each outing after it has taken place to ensure that all safety measures and procedures were conducted and contributed to the safety, health and welfare of the children, staff and Parents/Guardians attending. Outcomes of these reviews will be recorded.

Person Responsible: Management and supervisors/leaders within care rooms

Date implemented: reviewed and updated 24/09/2021

Document author: Lisa Scanlon Manager Document approver: Lisa Scanlon Manager

Signed by: Lisa Scanlon Manager On behalf of Management (Manager, Owner, Chairperson)

Review Date: October 2022

Outing Parental Consent Form

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of outing: \_\_\_\_\_

Location and address of outing:

\_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of outing: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan of activities on the outing: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of departure: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of return: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of transport: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff member in charge of outing: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed number of children on the outing: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult: Child ratio for the outing (determined by risk assessment): \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed number of additional adults other than staff on the outing: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Requirements for the outing: Packed lunch, rain jacket, sun cream, sunhat, wellies. Add additional requirements needed for your outing.

I consent to my child \_\_\_\_\_ (Child's name in block capitals) going on the above outing.

Parent's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## SUNSAFETY POLICY

Little Buddies Community Playgroup Ltd Sun safety policy is in place to protect and safeguard children from strong ultraviolet rays that can seriously damage the skin. At Little Buddies Community Playgroup, we recognise and prioritise outdoor play as an essential element of the curriculum which facilitates children to experience safe, regular, engaging opportunities for a wide variety of play outdoors which ensures their well-being, learning, and developmental needs are fully met.

Our Sun Safety Policy is in line with the current HSE Be SunSmart initiative.



**S**lip on clothing that covers your skin, long sleeves, collared t-shirts



**S**lop on sunscreen on exposed areas using factor 50+ for children



**S**lap on a wide-brimmed hat



**S**eek shade - especially if outdoors between 11 am and 3 pm



**S**lide on sunglasses to protect your eyes

Be SunSmart



nccp  
National Child Care  
Practitioner Programme



Procedure: (preparing Children for the Sun)

Parents/Guardians

1. Parents/ Guardians are to provide confirmed written consent with regards to childcare practitioners applying sun cream to their child's skin. (Consent form attached to this policy). ELC practitioner will apply sun cream, whilst the SAC children will be supervised and assisted where requested by the child in the application process of the sun cream.
2. Provision of labelled sunhat with wide brim that gives shade to face, neck and ears.

3. It is important that children as soon as they can wear wraparound sunglasses that give UV protection.
4. Provision of Labelled Sun cream bottle which is of the recommended SPF50

All the above-named items are to remain within the service especially during summer months.

ELC and SAC practitioners:

1. Staff are to ensure consent form has been completed and retained on file.
2. Staff are to ensure sun cream (SPF50), sunhat and sunglasses are collected
3. Staff to seek shady areas outdoors during 11am and 3pm
4. The application of SPF50 sun cream on dry skin is to occur 20 minutes prior to the children going outdoors. Areas not protected by clothes require the application of sun cream.
5. As school Age children are older and possess appropriate self-help skills and, in an effort, to support and encourage autonomy, the children will be encouraged by the staff to apply sun cream themselves. This application process will be supervised by staff and if/when a child requests assistance this will be provided by the staff.
6. A record of each time application of sunscreen is applied will be recorded within the daily diary or within the sunscreen log for SAC children.
7. Should a child forget their sunscreen, the staff member will contact parent/guardian to discuss the parent's options such as alternative sunscreen or if the parent is available to bring the sunscreen to the service.
8. If a child has any sunscreen allergies this needs to be entered into their enrolment form and/or entered on the consent form

## Drop off and collection of children policy

The main objective of this policy is to ensure that the procedures are maintained and implemented to a high standard endorsing safe and secure collections of the children attending Little Buddies. The core ethos surrounding this Policy is to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of each child attending our service.

On enrolment, information must be obtained by Little Buddies about:

Who the child's guardians are and their contact details.

Names, addresses and telephone numbers of anyone, other than a guardian, who is authorised by the legal parent/guardian to take the child from the service.

The information outlined above is obtained from completed enrolment forms, which are to be completed in full prior to any child commencing their time here at Little Buddies.

This information is updated as often as necessary. Parents/guardians must inform Little Buddies in person and/or in writing of any changes to the planned arrangements for their child/ren leaving the service. See Appendix B for a Sample Form.

All persons authorised/ by parents/guardians to take a child from the care of the service must be over the age of 16 years, be fit to care for the child and be authorised in writing or in person by the child's parent/guardian.

Parents/guardians must inform the Little Buddies if their child will not be attending on a given day and also inform us when their child is expected to return.

To ensure that children transition safely into the service, parents/ guardians or their nominated carers must ensure that they make direct contact with an appropriate member of staff on arrival and share any information that is relevant to the child's care, wellbeing and development for the day/session.

[See Settling In Policy and For Guidance on Transitions See [Síolta](#) - Standard 13: Transitions:

'Ensuring continuity of experiences for children requires policies, procedures and practice that promote sensitive management of transitions, consistency in key relationships, liaison within and between settings, the keeping and transfer of relevant information (with parental consent), and the close involvement of parents and, where appropriate, relevant professionals']

Persons who have not been named in the enrolment form by the parent/guardian must:  
Have a dated note from the parent/guardian allowing the child to leave with them; and  
Present photo identification for verification upon collection of any children.

The parent/guardian must also have confirmed this arrangement with the service by phone or in person beforehand.

Adequate supervision is provided to ensure that no one can remove a child from the service without at least one staff member's knowledge and a record being kept. Any person, including a parent/guardian, who comes to take a child out of the service, must be over 16 and must make contact directly with an appropriate member of staff before doing so.

These rules are clearly set out for parents/guardians at enrolment.

On returning daily to take their child out of the service, parents/guardians or their nominated carers are encouraged to meet with their child's Key Person to be given information on how the child has got on during the session/day and any on significant events, experiences or incidents involving or relevant to the child. If parents cannot attend in person and wish to be given the information directly, this can be arranged with their child's Key Person.

The safety and welfare of the children will always be our first consideration. This includes where parents/guardians or their nominated carers fail to come for their child on time or arrive for a child in what appears to be an unfit state. All appropriate measures will be taken to protect children in keeping with our Child Safeguarding Statement and Policy and we will do our best to support parents.

A custodial parent has the right to request that the service does not allow another parent to visit or call for the child, provided that the custodial parent makes the request in writing and shows the provider a dated letter from a solicitor confirming the existence of a certified copy of the relevant Court Order. Only a Court can limit the guardianship rights of parents even where they have separated or divorced.

## **Procedures & Practices**

### **Authorised persons to collect a child**

Parents must provide information on who the child's legal guardians are and provide their contact details on enrolment.

Parents must inform the service directly if the child will not be attending and also when they expect that their child will be returning. The staff member who receives this notification is to record it in the Deputy Manager's tray (Aisling Anderson) and Manager's (Lisa Scanlon) Communication at the main reception area.

Parents/guardians must notify the service personally (either verbally or in writing) if any person other than those already authorised is to collect their child/ren on any given day. Any such person is required to produce photo identification on arrival.

Details about any changes to persons collecting child/ren for any given day must be recorded and left in the management communications tray in the main reception area

If there is no written record by a staff member or a parent/guardian as to alternative arrangements for the child leaving the service, nobody but the parent/guardian or a previously authorised person known to the service will be given access to the child.

### **Routine for drop off and pick up**

On daily arrival at the service, parents/guardians/carers must ensure that they make direct contact with an appropriate member of staff. This is for the child's safety and is also an important opportunity to share any information that is relevant to their child's care, wellbeing and development for the day (see Settling-In Policy Transitions).

Parents/guardians must have stated on the Registration/Enrolment Form the names of persons (over the age of 16 years) whom they authorise to come to the service for their child/ren.

Parents/guardians/authorised carers are to present to an appropriate staff member when arriving to take their child/ren from the service.

Parents/guardians/carers are encouraged to meet with their child's Key Person to be given information on how their child has got on during the day and any significant events, experiences, or incidents involving or relevant to their child.

### **Supervision during collection times and drop off**

During collection and drop-off times, each child is under the direct supervision of a competent staff member, until it is ensured that the child leaves the premises in the care of their parent/guardian, or a person nominated by their parent/guardian.

When a non-authorised person arrives to collect

If a discrepancy arises about who the child is to leave the service with, a staff member (usually the Key Person) must consult the manager and contact a parent/guardian. In these situations, all children must remain on the premises until parents/guardians have been notified.

In situations where parents are in disagreement about who should collect a child, the appropriate action depends on whether there is a court order relating to custody. A parent who is a guardian can only be denied access to their child by a court.]

When the person who is to take the child out of the service does not arrive

Parents/guardians are informed that if they are not able to collect their child as planned, they must inform the appropriate staff member. Parents are provided with our contact number to phone.

Parents/guardians are informed of our procedures so that, if they or their nominated carer are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their child will be properly cared for.

Parents are also informed that in the event that they or the person they have nominated do not arrive and we can no longer supervise the child on our premises, we will apply our Procedures as set out in our Child Safeguarding Statement and Policy.

In this event, we will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to help avoid them becoming distressed.

Where we have not been contacted before the assigned time by a parent/guardian:

A staff member will contact a parent/guardian as soon as possible.

The manager will be notified.

Staff members will ensure that the child is cared for appropriately until the situation is resolved.

In a situation where a parent or carer has not arrived for the child at close to normal time, or prior to 6 pm the following is the procedure:

Two staff members are to remain at Little Buddies with the child/ren until the situation has been resolved.

A parent/guardian is to be contacted via the information on the enrolment form to establish a time for them to get to the service.

If unsuccessful in contacting a parent/guardian, notify the manager.

After 20 minutes, staff members are to choose the best-suited option:

Remain at the Service– continuing to try to contact a parent/guardian.

Ring [include required information here for an emergency name and number] and after consultation with them, arrange for the child/ren to become the responsibility of [name a designated person].

Do not allow the child to leave with any person not nominated by parent/guardian except (name of designated person).

Under no circumstances are staff members to go to look for the parent/guardian or to take the child home with them.

A full written report of the incident is to be recorded within the incident report book. The incident report book is located within each room of our service.

The appropriate report book to be completed within this incidence is the incident book located within the specific room that the child/children attend.

When parents/carers arrive late

Ensure that the parents are aware of the session ending times and ask them for their co-operation.

A late fee charge of €5 is applied every 15 mins of time recorded.

Consistent lateness of parents/guardians/carers may require care arrangements to be reviewed.

Staff members who stay late are to document overtime to the manager, for time off in lieu (TOIL) at a convenient stage.

Habitual lateness in arriving for a child/child

Little Buddies will ensure that the child's parents/guardians are clear about session ending times and ask them for their co-operation.

If the problem continues:

1. Discussion with the parents/guardians whether they are experiencing particular difficulties in arriving on time.
2. Enforcement of late fee will be applied.

Parents/guardians/carers who arrive for children in an 'unfit state'

It may happen that a person arrives for a child in an 'unfit state' due to illness, drugs, or alcohol. Where the condition is severe, it may be quite distressing for staff members who have concerns for the child's safety and/or well-being.

The [Children First Act 2015](#), Article 10 requires that a provider of a relevant service shall ensure, as far as practicable, that each child availing of the service from the provider is safe from harm while availing of that service. In this regard, we will always act in the child's best interests. In the case of a nominated carer who is not a guardian, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately.

In the case of a parent/guardian being in an unfit state, the following measures may be adopted where appropriate:

1. Attempt to get the parent/guardian to take some time before they leave with the child, for example, invite them to sit down for a cup of tea/coffee and talk with a staff member.
2. Offer to contact a family member or friend, or the person(s) listed as the child's emergency contact person on their enrolment form.
3. Offer to call a taxi.

If the parent/guardian rejects the above suggestions and insists on taking the child, the service will follow their Child Safeguarding Procedures by contacting an Garda Síochána where there is a perceived risk to the child for example through negligent driving or the person's inability to appropriately supervise the child on the way home.

### **Procedure if an unauthorised or unknown person attempts to remove a child from the service**

If an unauthorised or unknown person tries to take a child from our service, staff/Management will ask for the person's identification with a photograph. Emphasis will be placed on the rules and procedures Little Buddies are obliged to follow whenever you allow a child to leave the service.

If possible, give the person a copy of your policies to show that these rules apply to everyone, including grandparents, siblings, other relatives, neighbours and family friends.



An explanation that because we are legally bound to follow the instructions of the person with legal guardianship, you cannot allow the child to leave unless you have that person's personal or written authorisation.

If a person (even a child's parent or parent's partner) is not a guardian and does not have legal custody and is not otherwise authorised by the person who has legal custody, a child will not be released to the unauthorised person.

If the unauthorised or unknown person insists, telephone the parent/guardian who has legal custody and inform them of the situation.

If staff/management feels that the situation is getting out of control or if the person threatens staff/management or the children in your care in any way, An Garda Síochána will be called.

### **Record keeping**

All records relating to arrangements for collecting children will be kept for two years following the date that the child leaves the service for good.

### **COVID 19 Drop off and Collection Procedures**

In response to COVID-19 reopening on 29<sup>th</sup> 2020 arrangements for daily drop off and collections of children to and from Little Buddies is organised and maintained to ensure distance between parents/Guardians and childcare staff as far as practicable. Drop off and collection arrangements also aim to ensure distance is maintained as far as practicably possible between both Sunflower play pod children and Bluebell play pod children.

- Drop off and collection to and from both play pods are accessible through the rear access point of the building
- Hand sanitising station and signage is displayed upon entry to the rear access point.
- Distance markers displayed to outline walkways and social distancing between each of the adults and play pods.
- Each play pod is supplied with their own outdoor handwashing station. Each child attending each play pod must wash their hands upon prior to entry.
- A member of staff will receive the child/children and avoid or limit physical contact with the accompanying guardian/parent.
- Staggered drop-off and collection times are not required at this stage of reopening owing to drop off and collection times required by families to be staggered.

A similar process will be followed for pick up.



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