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Admissions Policy

The criteria considered when deciding whether a child can be offered a place at Stepping Stones Pre-school are as follows:

- Availability of spaces (taking into account staffing, safeguarding and welfare requirements, the age of the child and the registration requirements).
- Due to ratio requirements, pre-school children and children who have turned 3, thus requiring a standard ratio of 1:8 may be given priority to maximise numbers of children we can support.
- Children who are siblings of those already with us will usually have next priority.
- The date the application is received. If a place is not immediately available, parents/carers will be offered a place on the waiting list.
- The setting's ability to provide the facilities for the welfare and wellbeing of the child.
- Admission of children aged below 2 years 6 months is at the Manager's discretion.
- Eligible children wishing to take up the free entitlement only two, three and four year olds, will be offered a place for 38 weeks as per the Funding Free Early Education (FEE) 38-week term-time dates, as available during the set hours, given the above criteria. Parents/carers will be informed of the hours available when they apply to the setting. The conditions once a place has been offered at Stepping Stones Pre-school are as follows:
 - Parents/carers who do not take up a place at the agreed time may have their place withdrawn.
 - Stepping Stones Pre-school reserves the right to withdraw a child's place in the event of inappropriate parental/carer behaviour.
 - All parents/carers must adhere to all Stepping Stones Pre-school's terms and conditions and all of the setting's policies and procedures.
 - If a parent/carer wishes to appeal an admissions decision, they can write to: Chair of the Committee. We never discriminate against any child on the grounds of sex, race, religion, colour, ethnicity or disability.

Allergies, Food Intolerance & Special Requirements Policy

Children with allergies and food intolerances will be closely supervised at snack-time and lunchtime.

All staff, especially new staff, students/volunteers must be made aware of any allergies and of appropriate action to take.

Staff must ensure all information is passed to the Manager who will record and disseminate it amongst staff. It is the Manager's duty to ensure that all staff are aware of any changes to children's requirements.

A list of children and their food allergies and intolerances is kept in the kitchen, inside the small wall-cupboard door. Where there is a specific food preference such as vegan diet, this will also be detailed. Details of other allergies will be kept in the child's file.

Prior to the child starting at Stepping Stones Pre-school, parents/carers must discuss in detail the nature of the allergy/intolerance and give information regarding individual dietary needs, daily routines, signs and symptoms and any required medical treatment. Unless this information is obtained the child's attendance at the setting will be delayed.

We will have a written care plan in place for any child with severe symptoms and this will be reviewed regularly.

In cases where a possible reaction may be very severe, there will be a designated member of staff (usually the child's key person) who can attend to the child's dietary needs (using colour-coded utensils and crockery if required). All staff will be made aware of this as well as the reasons why. A written record of all that the child consumes will be kept and relayed back to the parent/carer at pick up time.

All cases should be discussed with the child's parents/carers to ensure that everybody is working together in a way that benefits the child. The keyperson must seek regular updates from the parent/carer to ascertain that everybody is continuing to follow correct procedures – all communications will be shared with the Manager or Deputy.

All staff must be made aware of the emergency procedure for each child as well as symptoms and administration of any medication.

Arrivals and Departure Procedure

It is the Manager's responsibility to ensure that the records kept on the children are accurate and that any arrivals and departures are recorded promptly.

A member of Staff will take a register of attendance first thing, noting number of children, staff and visitors present.

The register will be kept in an accessible place on the premises at all times.

Staff will record their arrival and departure in the Signing In book, as per the Staff Handbook.

The time of arrival of every child will be recorded by parents/carers in the Signing In book and also time of departure. In exceptional circumstances (EG: covid) a member of staff may sign children in and out.

Irrespective of the number of children in the setting, there will always be at least two staff on duty. At least one of these will be qualified to a minimum of level 3 in a senior role and have a full paediatric first aid qualification.

Outdoor Play: When going outside of the usual play area, staff must physically count the children in their care and checked by another member of staff. Staff also count, check and sign to ensure they have the correct number of children when returning into the building.

Departures: If the child is to be collected by someone other than the parent/carer, staff must be told and it should be recorded at the start of the session. The adult concerned should be named on the registration form, known to the staff and be 16 years of age or older. If an adult who isn't on the registration form arrives at the setting to pick up a child, the setting will ring the parent/carer immediately. A password system is used to identify a person not known by staff. Only with permission from the parent/carer will a child be released to an unknown person, such as a family member or friend.

The parent/carer must telephone the setting straight away if they are likely to be late collecting their child. A charge may be imposed for late collection of £5 for every fifteen minutes (or part thereof).

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Staff will record when children depart from the setting and update their tally accordingly.

The attendance register will be available at all times for inspection.

The last two staff on duty must check the building is securely locked.

Staff and visitors MUST also sign in and out of the setting – including dates and times.

Absences

There will be a daily charge for any absences unless there are extenuating reasons.

Stepping Stones Pre-school will not charge for any days that are out of the parents'/ carers' control e.g. early closure of the setting.

It is at the discretion of Stepping Stones Preschool to waive these fees due to long-term sickness.

If a child is absent without explanation for more than three days, the manager (Deputy or key person) may telephone to find out the reason for the absence. Regular absence from the setting may indicate that the family is having some sort of difficulty. The manager will try to find out the cause and will offer support where necessary by linking the family with appropriate statutory agencies. Stepping Stones Pre-school staff will always try to find out the reason for any prolonged, unexplained absences.

Child Protection & Safeguarding

Our Commitment to Safeguarding Children:

Stepping Stones Pre-school always considers the health, development, safety, security, welfare and well-being of the children to be paramount. We recognise the fundamental importance of the bond between the child and their parent/carer and aim to provide support and assistance in strengthening this in any way we can. With this in mind, we view it as our responsibility to identify and act on any concerns for children or their parents/carers across the entire safeguarding spectrum of need, from early low-level support to targeted interventions, through to child protection.

Our primary responsibility will always be to the child, and we follow government and local guidance - ***What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018*** (last updated July 2022), which all staff have awareness of. We work to the Early Years Foundation Stage, Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements and other relevant legislation, as well as advice and guidance from Gloucestershire County Council.

This safeguarding policy and accompanying child protection procedures detail our approach to safeguarding children and/or their parents/carers. This policy was updated by **Allison Brisland in May 2021; September 2021, October 2021, May 2022 and May 2023**. We will review this policy annually (or as required) as a reflection of our commitment to safeguarding children and their families. This will be in addition to ongoing reflection/review and updates to our practice.

In addition to exceeding our legal duty in safeguarding and child protection, we have included a copy of the Birmingham Review, the Plymouth Review, NSPCC guidance on child protection legislation in the UK and an effective child protection and safeguarding checklist.

In line with Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, education and skills settings, we are fully aware of the following - which are included within Stepping Stones Pre-school's other policies:

- children's and learners' health and safety and well-being, including their mental health – ***Key Person policy, Supporting Children with their Behaviour policy***
- meeting the needs of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities - ***Inclusion & Disability policy***
- the use of reasonable force - ***Child Protection and Safeguarding policy***
- meeting the needs of children and learners with medical conditions or providing first aid - ***First Aid, Medication and Sickness policy***
- educational visits - ***Visits and Outings policy***
- intimate care and emotional well-being - ***Key Person policy***
- online safety and associated issues - ***Information, Communication and Technology policy, Social Networking policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Children policy***
- appropriate arrangements to ensure children's and learners' security, taking into account the local context - ***Child Protection and Safeguarding Children policy and Education policy***

Designated Safeguarding Officer / Lead (DSL)

The designated safeguarding officer for Stepping Stones Pre-school is: **Allison Brisland**; she has suitable training and expertise, which is updated at regular intervals. In her absence, the deputy designated officer is: **Chanelle Uzzell**

Child Protection and Safeguarding

The key responsibilities of the designated safeguarding officer are:

- to be a key point for liaison between the setting and other professional services including the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services and Ofsted;
- to develop a strategy for staff training, professional development and support.

Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers

Stepping Stones Pre-school's staff team aims to work in close partnership with parents/carers. We keep parents/carers informed of our safeguarding duties and discuss the policy with them at the time a child begins their settling-in period.

We encourage parents/carers to feel that they can openly discuss any concerns they may have regarding either their own child and wider family and/or another child or parent/carer. We are equally open to any feedback on our staff conduct. When we have concerns of a safeguarding nature, for either a child or their parent/carer, our aim will always be to provide ongoing support and advice (whether or not a referral is made to the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services or other services). In the vast majority of cases, parents/carers will be contacted before we make a referral to any service. However, if there is an immediate concern about the child's welfare or safety, including where the parent/carer appears mentally or physically unwell or incapacitated in any way, then we may need to contact the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services without the parent's/carer's knowledge, to agree how to proceed.

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Concerns of a safeguarding nature will be shared within setting on a 'need to know' basis; they will however need to be shared with other professional services.

Key Responsibilities in Safeguarding Children and their Families

We are aware that we can contact the Early Help Team and their details are:

Stroud [01452328130](tel:01452328130) stroudearlyhelp@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Gloucestershire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: 01452 426565

In an emergency - call 999

GSCP Child Protection Process should be followed, this can be found at: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gscp/>
(formerly <http://www.gsrb.org.uk/>)

These procedures should be checked as they are 'live' and subject to change. Stepping Stones has signed up to receive updates from GSCP.

Practitioners can request support from a Community Social Worker by emailing cswadvice@gloucestershire.gov.uk with queries or a discussion in principle.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

The setting team receives regular training in child protection and safeguarding children, and they are familiar with their legal responsibilities including the procedures to be followed should an allegation be made against either a member of the team, or of inappropriate behaviour from other adults (Whistleblowing policy). Staff update their safeguarding training at least every 3 years and all new members of the team (including students, agency and support educator/volunteers) are informed of their responsibilities during the induction process.

All staff are aware of their right to invoke escalation procedures should they feel it is appropriate. If, after professional discussion with the DSL the member of staff does not feel they have achieved a satisfactory resolution, they may then make a referral to the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services themselves.

Child protection and safeguarding issues are also discussed within team meetings and one-on-one supervisions. The designated officer and deputy receive specific training biennially, in relation to their role and responsibilities within the setting.

Stepping Stones Pre-school's key responsibilities are as follows:

- Be alert to possible signs of abuse, neglect or concern for a child, parent/carer or a member of the setting team's welfare.
- Be aware of the child protection procedure and how to follow it when concerns arise.
- Report any concerns of a child protection nature to the designated safeguarding officer (DSL).
- Keep clear and accurate records on child protection, safeguarding or welfare concerns (these confidential records should include clearly signed and dated entries and be stored securely).
- Discuss safeguarding and child protection within all meetings; this includes one-on-one supervision.
- Make ALL staff aware of their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Have regard for 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance, and awareness of Keeping Children Safe in Education (part 1) updated September 2022.
- Provide ongoing support and advice to parents/carers, including help in developing capacity to meet their child's needs or assistance in accessing a range of services in the area.

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- Discuss safeguarding and child protection within meetings.
- Provide appropriate activities for children and their parents/carers with regard to staying safe.
- Establish and maintain professional relationships with children and their families.
- Adopt consistent safe work practices across the setting that reflect a proactive attitude towards promoting high standards in childcare and preventing allegations against staff and complaints arising.
- Record all existing injuries and/or concerns that a child has come into the setting with.
- Contact the local authority with any concerns, in accordance with reporting procedures.
- If we are concerned that a child is in immediate danger, we reserve the right not to inform the child's parents/carers especially if sexual abuse is suspected.
- Every member of staff receives a copy of these Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures.

The Registered Person makes sure that staff understand all policies and procedures via induction, staff meetings and one-on-one supervisions.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Safe Caring

All staff, students and volunteers are carefully recruited, have verified references and have a full Enhanced DBS check or a Disclosure and Barring Service check. As a part of the induction process, principles of safe caring are also addressed, which include the expectation that all staff work to Stepping Stones Pre-school's Code of Professional Practice.

Key principles of the code to ensure the safety and security of all the children in our care include:

- being responsive, warm and nurturing towards children, including being open to children's displays of affection;
- following the setting's agreed procedure for personal care routines; (Illness or disability with eating or drinking, or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing)
- being approachable, warm and friendly, without losing objectivity, blurring or breaching professional boundaries, e.g. educators and the wider setting team being friendly, but not friends with parents/carers;
- All staff undertake training in regard to Prevent Duty & FGM: <https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/free-courses/recognising-and-preventing-fgm>

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- refraining from entering into personal, social, romantic or sexual relationships with parents/carers or their children;
- striving to avoid the giving of 'special attention' or having 'favourite' children or parents/carers;
- ensuring that any professional discussion about a child or their parent/carer is not conducted in their presence, unless in open discussion, where they have equal opportunity to express themselves, e.g. not talking or gossiping over children's or parent's/carer's heads.

Steps Taken when a Child Protection Concern Arises

Stepping Stones Pre-school's staff team recognises that a concern for a child's and/ or parent's/carer's protection, welfare, safety and/or well-being can arise at any time during the day and can come to an educator's notice through:

- a child's behaviour, including signs of discomfort or distress
- physical signs of harm or neglect
- what a child or parent/carer might say
- information received from another party.

Having identified the concern for the child, it will be necessary to assess the level of seriousness and consider the most appropriate course of action. Such decisions should be made in consultation with the designated safeguarding officer and where the matter relates to an allegation against a member of staff, student or volunteer, the setting manager (see section below – Allegations Made Against staff, Student or Volunteer).

Child Protection and Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services is available to provide advice and assistance as to whether:

- the concerns meet the threshold for referral to their service; or
- whether a referral should be made to other services as a response to a child or parent/carer 'in need', including completion of My Assessment with the parent/carer; or
- the setting should provide a package of support, including initiating the completion of My Assessment, as appropriate.

Details of the concerns for the child and/or their siblings and parents/carer will be noted as soon as possible after the observation or disclosure is made.

Written records will be signed (with printed name in brackets), dated and stored securely, separately from the child's observation records.

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Existing injury:

If a child arrives into the setting with a noticeable injury the educator must sensitively ask the parent how the injury has happened. The educator must complete an existing injury form to be signed by the parent. This must be completed before the parent leaves. The manager should be informed.

If the existing injury is noticed at any time during the day, the educator must complete the form and contact the parent to explain what is observed and ask sensitively how it happened. It must be signed by the parent/carer that day.

If age appropriate the child may have said how the injury happened. Make sure not to ask the child any leading questions.

If the parent is not collecting their child that day, it should be agreed that the existing injury form must be completed as soon as possible.

If this is not possible then the form is to be emailed to the parent to sign electronically. It must be stated on the existing injury form that the parent has signed electronically.

We work in full partnership with the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services, in relation to children who are the subject of a child in need plan or child protection plan or who are looked after. These children have a robust written plan in order that we can support them effectively within the setting.

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Allegations Made Against Staff, Supply staff, Ancillary staff, Student, Volunteer or Contractor (see also Whistleblowing Policy)

The setting will always consider an allegation made against staff, Supply staff, Ancillary staff, Student, Volunteer or Contractor as a child protection matter in the first instance. In all cases the setting manager and Registered Person must be informed of the allegation at the earliest opportunity, as they hold both a duty of care towards all children and parents/ carers, and a legal obligation to act as a 'reasonable employer' towards the member of staff.

A referral will be made to the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and the setting manager will co-operate fully in the investigation process, as appropriate.

The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child, or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk to children. (Working Together 2018)

January 2023

To report a concern about a professional working with children (Allegations Management)

Gloucestershire LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer): **Nigel Hatten** **01452 426994**
nigel.hatten@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Supported by **Jenny Kadodia**, the Allegations Management Co-Ordinator
For general Allegation Management advice, please contact Jenny on **01452 426320**
jenny.kadodia@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Stepping Stones Pre-school's disciplinary procedure will only be initiated in agreement with the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services and the LADO. Ofsted will be informed of all allegations made against staff, students or volunteers by the setting manager and Registered Person.

Allegations made against staff, students or volunteers will not be made public knowledge within the setting. It is recognised, however, that those who need to know that a suspension has been made, if appropriate, will not need to know the nature of the suspension. This should be kept confidential.

The Independent Safeguarding Board, any appropriate professional body and the vetting and barring board will be informed, should any staff, student or volunteer be dismissed on the grounds of childcare-related misconduct. Under no circumstances will the setting allow staff, students or volunteers to be 'let go' or resign where an allegation of childcare-related misconduct has been made.

We fully adhere to the EYFS Statutory Framework and educators are informed of the signs to be aware of if they are concerned about any adult's (staff, parent, volunteer and student) behaviour.



Reporting Incidents to Ofsted - Early years incident online form to report:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-a-serious-childcare-incident#what-you-must-tell-ofsted>

As an Ofsted registered provider, we are required to notify Ofsted of any significant events or changes occurring at, or affecting our provision. *Further details about regarding when to notify Ofsted can be found in the EYFS.*

- allegations that someone living, working or looking after children on the premises has committed serious harm or abuse
- anything that might affect the suitability of someone on the premises to look after children
- a serious accident, injury or illness to a child, for example food poisoning
- a child's death

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Prevent covers all forms of terrorism and extremism and some aspects of non-violent extremism. The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police also play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes.

If a member of staff is concerned a child might be at risk of extremism, they should contact the Home Office helpline. Open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm (excluding bank holidays).

Email: counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk Telephone 020 7340 7264

Information on Gloucestershire's GSCP's Prevent referral pathway:

https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2103917/prevent_referral_guidance.pdf

Stepping Stones Pre-school takes the Prevent Duty Guidance extremely seriously. The Prevent duty comes under our safeguarding and child protection policy and procedure. These link the main principles of British values:

- **Democracy**
- **The rule of law**
- **Individual liberty and mutual respect**
- **Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs**

We promote British values as an integral part of our EYFS curriculum. For example:

- Children learn about the principles of democracy because they are involved in decision making and have choices about where they play and what they play with.
- The rule of law features throughout our approach to supporting children's behaviour, within the resources we have, to identify people who help us such as police officers.
- We focus on building children's self-confidence and encourage their thinking skills to endorse the principles behind the value of individual liberty.

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- We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and all cultures and beliefs are valued and promoted through a range of activities such as learning about different cultural festivals and proactively challenging negative attitudes and stereotypes.

These principles form an integral part of Stepping Stones Pre-school and can be seen in practice linking to the seven areas of the EYFS and three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. As with other behaviours, staff are alert to those that would be a cause for concern and have an impact on children's well-being and safety. These are:

- Staff know the procedures to take if they are concerned about a child's behaviour and are able to swiftly identify children who may be at risk of radicalization.

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- Staff would record information to share, if need be, with the Police, Prevent co-ordinators, Channel Police practitioners and their Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. They would also work in close partnership with these professionals and organisations, to endeavour to safeguard children.
- In line with equality of opportunity, challenge and discuss with children negative stereotypes and attitudes – this is closely linked to children's personal, social and emotional development. All members of staff have and will include this useful online course, cross reference CPD files for further information.

https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channel_awareness/01-welcome.html

Child Protection Procedure

Child abuse can manifest itself in a variety of different ways – some obvious, some not so obvious. All of Stepping Stones Pre-school's staff should be vigilant to possible clues to harm, including:

- significant changes in children's behaviour;
- deterioration in their general well-being;
- unexplained bruising, marks or repeated 'accidents' whilst in the parent's/carer's care;
- injuries to children, reported by parents/carers, that appear to be inconsistent with the explanation given;
- neglect, including untreated injuries, failure to provide appropriate medical care, suggestion of numerous 'carers' for the child etc.;
- comments a child might make, including disclosure of harm;
- observed change in the parent's/carer's coping capacity, including concern for their physical, mental and emotional health and well-being (influence of drugs/ alcohol and/or signals of domestic violence);
- any signs of harm caused to children by work colleagues or other professionals in positions of trust.

The setting will respond to concerns of a child protection nature with sensitivity and professional responsibility, in line with their legal obligations. We encourage staff to trust their professional instincts if they believe either a child or parent/carer is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

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All staff should apply the following principles to practice:

- Be receptive and observant to both children and parents/carers within the setting.
- Where observations are made of a concerning nature, these should be recorded as soon as possible.
- The record should include exactly what was seen or heard, who was involved, any intervention made by staff and relevant observation made by colleagues. Care should be taken to distinguish between fact and opinion. It is appropriate to make professional comment, based on experience, but this must be identified as a professional view.

Where either a child or parent/carer is in conversation with a member of staff (or making a disclosure), care should be taken to:

- listen carefully to what is being said and the physical and emotional responses of the child and/or parent/carer as they are talking;
 - be non-judgemental nor give opinion about what is being said;
 - ask open-ended questions only, (who was there, how did that happen? according to the level of understanding) – a couple of questions to a child is usually enough to understand what they are telling you;
 - not make promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anybody.
-
- Care should be taken to respond to such situations in a calm and reassuring way. If appropriate staff may then suggest to the child or parent/carer that they go to talk to the designated safeguarding officer together.
 - Details of the observation and/or disclosure (and accompanying record) should be taken to the designated safeguarding officer as soon as possible.
 - The designated safeguarding lead and educator should discuss the concerns for the child and/or parent/carer and reach a decision as to the most appropriate course of action. Reference should be made to the attached sheet, which gives details on possible manifestations of harm. The Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services is available to provide advice and assistance in this.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

Where the parent/carer is still in the building, they should be asked about the harm to the child and the circumstances surrounding it. Where the parent/carer is no longer in the building, they should be contacted to gather relevant information prior to making the decision to contact the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services or not.

Where concerns relate to possible child sexual abuse, the parent should NOT be contacted. Equally, the parent(s)/carer(s) should NOT be contacted in the few cases where it is believed that this would place the child at further risk of harm – e.g. if the parent appears quite seriously mentally unwell or has been violent or threatened violence.

A referral to the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services should be made where a child has been harmed or is at risk of significant harm or impairment. This referral should be made to the borough or authority *in which the child resides*, using the appropriate referral form and attaching relevant information. All relevant information known to Stepping Stones Pre-school should be shared, including the following details:

Child Protection and Safeguarding ...

- The child and parent's names, child's date of birth, address and details of the household.
- The ethnic origin of the child and parent/carer, their first language and any disability or specific needs.
- Detailed information about concerns that led to the referral, dates and times of observations, conversations and/or incidents, including whether these were observed by referrer or reported by another member of staff.
- Any significant known family history.
- Knowledge of any agencies, services or professionals involved with the family.
- A log of the phone calls made, including times and the name of the person spoken to, should be kept. The Chair of the Committee should be informed that a referral has been made.

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- Where the threshold has not been met for a referral to the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services, consideration should be given to:
 - whether a referral should be made to other services as a response to a child or parent/carer 'in need', including completion of an Early Help Assessment with the parent/carer; or
 - whether the setting should provide a package of support, including initiating the completion of an Assessment as appropriate.
- In all cases information should be shared as appropriate with a wider network of professional services, in most cases with parental knowledge. Sensitivity should be exercised in keeping confidential information private.
- It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to ensure that feedback is received from the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services. Where it is believed that an inappropriate response has been made, this should be questioned, and a referral escalated through the higher management levels of the service as necessary.
- In circumstances where a member of staff is not satisfied that the Designated Safeguarding Officer has taken appropriate action in the best interests of the child, they should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve this with the officer concerned. If professional discussion does not result in satisfactory resolution, the member of staff may then make a referral to the Safeguarding Children Team of Children's Services themselves.

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Child Protection and Safeguarding Recording Devices, Cameras and Mobile Phones

Working with children can involve taking images with a range of devices. This can enhance our understanding of the child, their needs and to record or plan for the next stage of their development. Photographs are regularly shared with parents/carers and used to enhance information sharing between setting and home.

All photographs are taken with due regard for the law and the need to safeguard the child's privacy, dignity, safety and well-being. No photographs will be taken for personal use. No photographs will be taken on personal digital media, such as: tablets, mobile phones, watches or any other recording device - which are NOT allowed in any children's areas of Stepping Stones Pre-school. Staff may use wearable technology such as Fit bit for their own personal information.

Digital media can only be used during breaks, before or after work and away from ANY children. Phones are to be kept in the office, away from main rooms whilst children are present.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

All parents/carers have the opportunity to grant or withhold the use of photographs of their child. Some may not wish any images to be inserted in the local media or on the website; some may not wish any photos at all. Each child and their parent/carer may make individual requests and these will be followed without question. Educators have access to e-learning journeys and have signed a confidentiality agreement to state that they are not to share any children's photographs outside the setting, neither are they allowed to take from the site children's and family photographs or any information that relates to them.

No Stepping Stones Pre-school staff member is allowed to use a personal recording device, within any areas of the setting.

All digital devices belonging to the setting are password protected so that children cannot inadvertently access the internet from a practitioner's device. Practitioners explain the need to keep ourselves safe when using digital devices through the use of passwords and appropriate relevant materials such as Digi-Duck. Parents are given information and advice relating to online safety for children and the safe use of technology in the home.

On occasions group play may be photographed to show a particular area of learning and this may be added to a number of children's learning journey folders as photographic observations. This will only be permitted if the parents of all children captured have given written permission. These photographs and learning journey folders are not to be taken off the premises by staff at any time.

Once the photographs are printed or uploaded the image should be deleted.

All visitors and parents will be asked not to use their mobile phones and other digital devices whilst they are in the setting. They will be informed of this when they sign the visitor's book.

Staff, students and volunteers will be asked to leave their mobile phones and other digital devices in the office.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8 38

Categories of Harm

Safeguarding action may be needed to protect children and learners from:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Staff are vigilant and aware that peer-on-peer abuse can happen. They are knowledgeable in child development and know when children's behaviour is outside of their developmental norms and becomes a cause for concern. If they do observe and/or are informed of peer-on-peer abuse, then the appropriate procedures are to be carried out in line with these Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Physical Abuse

may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse

is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - protect a child from physical and emotional harm and danger;
 - ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
 - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
-
- Staff are also alert to the impact of domestic violence on children and recognise that children who see, hear or experience the effects of abuse are victims and will be considered in a safeguarding context. Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Staff are also mindful of other possible child protection incidents, including: witchcraft and religious or faith based practices and incidents relating to female genital mutilation. Staff also know that they must report this to the designated safeguarding lead.

Important references:

- Education Act 2002
- Keeping Children Safe in Education revised 2022
- Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures
- Serious Crime Act 2015 (reference female genital mutilation)
- The Childcare Act 2006
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Children's Act 2004
- The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (this includes the Prevent duty)
- The EYFS 2021
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Closure in the Event of an Emergency

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.55, 3.77

In very exceptional cases Stepping Stones Pre-school may need to close at very short notice due to an unexpected emergency.

Such incidents could include:

- Serious weather conditions
- Structural damage
- Fire or bomb scare
- Suspected gas leak
- Death or serious injury of a child and/or a member of staff
- Serious assault on a staff member
- Serious accident or illness (including outbreaks of food poisoning or illness)
- Burst pipe
- Lack of toileting facilities

In such circumstances the manager will ensure that all staff, children and visitors are safe. Everyone must meet at a pre-arranged meeting point where a register will be taken. The assembly point is the gate at the entrance to the main walkway.

The manager will make sure that parents/carers are informed and necessary actions will be taken in relation to the cause of the closure.

All children will be supervised until they are safely collected.

Ofsted and all necessary agencies will be notified as required.

If the setting is unable to open, the staff will endeavour to contact the parents/ carers to inform them of such.

The staff will remain in post until directed by the manager to leave.

Complaints Procedure

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.70, 3.74, 3.75

Your views count – if things are going well, we would love to hear about it, a telephone call or a note will let us know we have got things right! If things start to go wrong, let a member of staff know straight away. If you have a worry or comment, we assure you that your views will be taken seriously.

In the first instance, you should contact your child's key person, face to face, or by telephone, email or letter. They will do their best to solve your enquiry and will assure you that all comments will be treated confidentially, and if shared this will be in line with data protection legislation.

If you are not happy with this response you should contact the setting manager, in person, email, or by telephone or letter, who will investigate the complaint.

If you still have concerns, please put the issue in writing to the Chair of the Committee, Email: steppingstoneschair@gmail.com or by letter to Stepping Stones Pre-school, School Road, Dursley, Glos, GL11 4NZ
Ofsted URN: 101730

Stepping Stones Pre-school will send you an acknowledgement by email or letter within three working days, advising you that the complaint has been received. The acknowledgement will contain the name of the employee who will be investigating the complaint and give a date by which you should receive a written response.

The complaint should be investigated, and a written response sent to you within ten working days. This exceeds statutory requirements.

The setting has a procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents/ carers and keeps a written record of complaints and their outcome.

We investigate all written complaints relating to the requirements and notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of having received the complaint.

We provide Ofsted, on request, with a written record of all complaints made during any specified period and the action that was taken as a result of the complaint.

For advice at any time please contact PATA on 01452 541244 or info@pataglos.org.uk

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.70, 3.74, 3.75 47

If you remain dissatisfied at any time during the investigation, you may then take the issue to Ofsted: Postal Address:
Applications,
Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team,
Ofsted,
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquires@ofsted.gov.uk

We place great value on working in partnership with parents/carers and it is our belief that this is not only good childcare practice, but also essential for the wellbeing and development of all our children.

Confidentiality Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71

Within Stepping Stones Pre-school, respecting confidentiality is of utmost importance. Due to the nature of childcare, the information that setting managers and educators hold about children and their families is quite detailed. It is vital that everyone working within our setting respects the need for confidentiality and discretion.

This policy is in line with General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and relevant sections of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Stepping Stones Pre-school lays down strict guidelines with regard to confidentiality. Any breaches of professional practice will be dealt with severely and may lead to dismissal.

- No information about a child or their family is shared with any person outside of the setting, or within setting apart from the manager and the child's key person, unless agreed by the parent in advance, or the issue relates to a child protection concern where no parental agreement is required. Other teaching staff may be informed if it will be beneficial to the child. Students will not normally have access to such information.
- No gossip about a child or their family is shared within or outside of the setting.
- Every child, parent or staff member within the setting has their privacy respected. Any infringement will be treated seriously.
- It is not acceptable to discuss any business relating to the setting with anyone.
- Rumour and gossip is cruel and anyone employed within the setting who indulges in this unprofessional action will be disciplined.
- Where there is cause to refer to another agency due to concern about a child, especially with regard to child protection, the procedure will be carried out as per local regulations. No one outside of the 'need to know' circle will be given any information especially, if by so doing, this could prejudice the situation.

The following information is taken from the **ICO** website <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/principles/> [accessed 08/05/23]

Article 5 of the GDPR sets out seven key principles which lie at the heart of the general data protection regime.

Article 5(1) requires that personal data shall be:

(a) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals ('lawfulness, fairness and transparency')

(b) collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes shall not be considered to be incompatible with the initial purposes ('purpose limitation')

Confidentiality Policy

(c) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed ('data minimisation')

(d) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay ('accuracy')

(e) kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed; personal data may be stored for longer periods insofar as the personal data will be processed solely for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes subject to implementation of the appropriate technical and organisational measures required by the GDPR in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms of individuals ('storage limitation');

(f) processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures ('integrity and confidentiality')."

Article 5(2) adds that:

"The controller shall be responsible for, and be able to demonstrate compliance with, paragraph 1 ('accountability')."

Checklist

Lawfulness

- ✓ We have identified an appropriate lawful basis (or bases) for our processing.
- ✓ If we are processing special category data or criminal offence data, we have identified a condition for processing this type of data.
- ✓ We don't do anything generally unlawful with personal data.

Fairness

- ✓ We have considered how the processing may affect the individuals concerned and can justify any adverse impact.
- ✓ We only handle people's data in ways they would reasonably expect, or we can explain why any unexpected processing is justified.
- ✓ We do not deceive or mislead people when we collect their personal data.

Transparency

- ✓ We are open and honest, and comply with the transparency obligations of the right to be informed.

Documentation & Information Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.16, 3.49, 3.51, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71, 3.72, 3.73, 3.74, 3.77

Stepping Stones Pre-school is aware of its obligations with regard to storing and sharing information under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It is also committed to complying with the legislation and the guidance. The manager and staff must be aware of the implications of the data protection and freedom of information legislation and of all roles and responsibilities.

The setting is committed to being open to parents/carers with regard to its policies and procedures and the information that each setting may hold on a child. Records and information will be available to parents/carers upon written request. There may be exemptions to this rule, but a letter will confirm this, stating the reason for any refusal in line with the Information Commissioner's Office.

Record Keeping

Information kept on a child will include the following:

- Birth name (and any other name by which the child is known)
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Religion
- Languages spoken
- Home address and telephone numbers
- Parent's/carer's name, who is known to the provider
- Name of parent/carer the child normally lives with
- Who is legally responsible for the child
- Parent's/carer's place of work and contact number (including emergency contact)
- Any other emergency contact names, relationship to the child and contact details
- Family doctor's name, address and telephone number
- Details of any special dietary requirements, allergies, food and drink preferences, needs of child
- List of immunisations

Any other information relating to the child that staff or parents feel is relevant.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.16, 3.49, 3.51, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71, 3.72, 3.73, 3.74, 3.77 57

The setting must record and submit the following to their local authority about individual children receiving the free entitlement to Early Years Provision as part of their Early Years Census.

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Special educational needs status
- The number of funded hours taken up during the census week
- Total number of hours (funded and unfunded) taken up at the setting during the census week.

Additionally, Parent date of birth and National Insurance number are required in order to receive free funding entitlement.

Documentation and Information Policy

Additionally, in accordance with our policies, other records will be kept and maintained by the setting:

- An up-to-date record of all staff, students and volunteers who are working at each setting including their name, address, telephone number, the number and date of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, qualifications and emergency contact name, address and telephone number.
- The attendance registers.
- An up-to-date waiting list with details of all children waiting for a place at the setting.
- Records of any medication being held by the staff for children on behalf of the parent/carer.
- Records of signed emergency treatments authorised by the parent/carer.
- A fully completed and up-to-date accident, incident book and fire book.
- An up-to-date admissions list (signing-in book or register) that will be kept nearby in case of a fire and/or other emergency.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.16, 3.49, 3.51, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71, 3.72, 3.73, 3.74, 3.77 58

Information on children will be kept in a locked file or office; the information will be restricted to staff on a 'need to know basis' – as a small setting this may include all staff where appropriate. The manager is responsible for keeping up-to-date records on the children.

All records relating to an individual child will be retained for two years from the last day the child attended Stepping Stones Pre-school.

Notification

Stepping Stones Pre-school recognises that it is their responsibility to notify parents/carers, Ofsted and staff of any changes to the settings. If changes are to be made to the setting, the manager will contact anyone that will be affected as soon as possible. If there are significant proposed changes there will be consultation with anyone who is directly affected.

It is mandatory for Ofsted to be informed of:

- any change in the manager or deputy manager of the setting;
- any significant changes to the premises;
- any significant change to the operational plan of the setting;
- any event that is likely to affect the suitability of the manager or owner
- any changes to the company;
- any complaints made against the setting;
- where two or more children suffer from food poisoning;
- any allegation of abuse by a member of staff or volunteer or any abuse that has allegedly taken place on the premises;
- any significant event that is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children;
- any serious accident, illness or injury to, or death of, any child while in their care; or
- any other significant events.

Education Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.73

Philosophy

At Stepping Stones Pre-school we reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage educational programmes as well as considering latest research, best practice and a range of pedagogies. We provide an excellent early learning environment, tailored to each individual child in a safe, secure, warm and - most importantly - a happy setting. Children learn and develop at different rates and it is vital to encourage each child to reach their full potential at their own pace. Learning should be relaxed and purposeful, taking into account the individual child's abilities, interests and needs

Mission Statement

Our mission statement highlights children's holistic wellbeing alongside the more educational aspects of the EYFS:

As the **stepping stone** between home and school, children's wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do. Working in partnership with parents and carers, children's holistic development is nurtured as they are guided and educated in our warm, caring, safe, and stimulating environment.

We focus on supporting children to make the next steps in life towards becoming independent, curious, confident and motivated life-long learners.

Curriculum Planning

At Stepping Stones Pre-school we plan to provide a range of experiences, resources and activities that cover the **educational programmes** and **7 areas of learning**, both indoors and out. We ensure that the provision allows children to experience a balanced range of child-led and educator-directed activities. Alongside group activities, we use a 'blended curriculum' taking inspiration from respected pedagogies and approaches which promote both independent and guided learning - based upon our belief that children learn best when interested, motivated and engaged. We refer to the **7 key features of effective practice to support our practice**.

We focus on the 3 prime areas of learning for our younger children as these underpin children's development, and these are also key areas for our older children, as they are interwoven and support the **4 specific areas**. We recognise the need for secure foundations and solid building blocks of development and practice for children to be able to reach their full potential.

Staff build warm, nurturing relationships with their key children to assess their needs, interests, preferences and learning styles. If additional support is required then help will be sought from external agencies if needed.

During child led activities, children at Stepping Stones are able to access activities of their choosing from the resources available; through skilful support and interactions staff use the **characteristics of effective teaching and learning** to extend and consolidate children's learning *at that moment*. We place importance on consolidation and embedding learning (moving sideways) as we do for next steps in learning (moving forward). Adult led and adult guided activities are also provided to additionally support children's learning and progression - whether that is with new learning or revisiting prior learning to help children make connections and embed concepts and understanding.

Environmental Policy

Stepping Stones Pre-school is committed to improving the quality of life of both the local and wider community now, and in the future.

Our policy recognises that quality of life in the longer term is dependent on the health and quality of the local and global environment. We also recognise that improvements in the standard of living of developed countries have, in part, been achieved through wasteful use of resources and exploitation of fossil fuels across the world. This is contributing to:

- global warming and climate change through greenhouse gases emitted by burning fossil fuels;
- pollution of air, land and water; and
- loss of forests, soils, fish stocks and other resources through harvesting them more rapidly than they can regenerate.

All three of the above are acting to destroy ecosystems; the communities of interdependent plants and animals across the globe that help to regulate the environment and keep the planet fit for life. We demonstrate our commitment to the environment by ensuring our activities are designed to reduce adverse impact and to use resources increasingly efficiently over time. In practice this means:

- discussing environmental issues and bio-diversity with children
- teaching respect for our planet and living things
- recycling where possible
- reducing and monitoring waste

Also, *where possible* we would prefer

- using equipment and resources that have been recycled
- our suppliers to be committed to environmental issues
- using eco-friendly products and produce.

Review Checklist for Policy for:

Environment

Review Date	Name	Position	Signature
September 2021	Laura Frayne	Chair	
May 22	Allison Brisland	Manager	
May 23	Allison Brisland	Manager	

Equality & Diversity Policy

Statement of Intent

Stepping Stones is an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory organisation. We take great care to treat each individual as a person in their own right, with equal rights and responsibilities to any other individual, whether they are an adult or child.

Discrimination has no place within the setting, whether due to **sex, gender, race, religion, colour, creed, marital status, ethnic or national origin, political belief or ability**. Should any person believe that this policy is not being complied with, it is everyone's duty to bring the matter to the attention of the manager at the earliest opportunity.

The staff are committed to:

- encouraging positive role models, displayed through toys, imaginary play and activities that promote non-stereotyped images – books will be selected to promote diversity and images of non stereo-typical gender bias.
- all children will be encouraged to join in activities, e.g. dressing up, shop, home corner, dolls, climbing on large apparatus, bikes, etc.;
- regularly reviewing childcare practice to ensure the policy is effective.

Staff

The setting aims to ensure that individuals are recruited, selected, trained and promoted on the basis of occupational skill requirements. In this respect, the setting will ensure that no job application or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, gender, marital status, race, religion, colour, cultural or national origin or sexuality, which cannot be justified as being necessary for the safe and effective performance of the work.

Service Provision

No child will be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, religion, colour or creed.

Wherever possible those designated disabled or disadvantaged will be considered for a place, taking into account their individual circumstances and the ability of the setting to provide the necessary standard of care.

The setting will strive to ensure that all services and projects are accessible and relevant to all groups and individuals in the community within agreed targeted age groups; we will strive to promote equal and fair access to services and projects by taking practical steps, such as ensuring access for disabled people and producing material in relevant languages and media.

We encourage children and adults to value themselves, and *as a consequence*, see the value in others. Our intention is to support every child towards independence and autonomy.

Children who learn to think for themselves are more likely to understand that differences are as important as similarities. **We believe the uniqueness of every child and adult should be a celebration rather than something that creates suspicion and fear.**

Equality & Diversity Policy

Procedure for Dealing with Harassment

This policy considers discrimination and harassment which may be experienced due to a range of factors (such as protected characteristics), not just racism. We apply the same standards to all forms of harassment, prejudice and discrimination.

Introduction

Stepping Stones Pre-school has a duty to create and implement strategies to prevent and address racism. This is in line with the Race Equality Scheme 2002. Such strategies include:

- that the setting records all racist incidents;
- that all recorded incidents are reported to the child's parents/carers and when appropriate to the relevant authority.

Parents have a right to know when racism occurs and what actions the setting will take to tackle it. In the Equality Act 2010 there is a statement of the duty "to promote harmony and good relations" between groups in society. We have a statutory responsibility to monitor, review and eliminate racial discrimination. Definition of racial harassment "Violence which may be verbal or physical and which includes attacks on property and people because of their race, nationality, ethnic origins; when the victim believes that the perpetrator was acting on racial grounds and/or there is evidence of racism". (Equality and Human Rights Commission). We also apply this to discrimination and harassment which may be experienced due to other factors (such as *protected characteristics*)

Examples of racial harassment:

- Physical assault against a person or group of people
- Derogatory name calling, insults and racial jokes
- Racist graffiti and written insults
- Provocative behaviour such as wearing racist badges and insignia and the distribution of racist literature
- Threat against a person or group of people because of their colour and race
- Discriminatory comment including ridicule made in the course of discussions in class or elsewhere (EG: internet)
- Patronising words or actions

Procedure

- All staff in the setting should be aware of any harassment (racial, sexual or otherwise) taking place.
 - They must intervene firmly and quickly to prevent all forms of harassment. Any allegation should be taken seriously and reported to the manager.
- Each incident should be investigated and recorded in detail as accurately as possible. This record should be available for inspection by staff, and parents where appropriate, on request.
- The manager is responsible for ensuring that incidents are handled appropriately and sensitively and entered in the manager's book. Any pattern of behaviour should be indicated. Perpetrator and victim's initials may be used in the record book, as information on individuals is confidential to the setting.

- Where an allegation is substantiated following an investigation, the parents/ carers of children who are victims should be informed of the incident and of the outcome.
- Continued harassment may lead to exclusion, but such steps should only be taken when other strategies have failed to modify behaviour.
- Adults found to be perpetrators must be reported immediately to the manager.

Equality & Diversity Policy

Setting Staff

All staff should be alert and seek to overcome ignorant or offensive behaviour based on fear or dislike of racial or other distinctions or differences that children or adults may express in the setting. An atmosphere must be created where the victims of any form of prejudice or harassment have confidence to report such behaviour and that subsequently they feel positively supported by the staff of the setting.

It is incumbent upon all members of staff to ensure that they do not express any views or comments that are racist, prejudiced or discriminatory against certain societal groups. Nor must staff appear to endorse such views by failing to counter behaviour that is prejudicial in a direct manner. A sensitive and informal approach must be used to counter any racial (or other) harassment perpetrated out of ignorance. When a member of staff violates Stepping Stones Pre-school's code of practice they will be counselled by the manager. It will be explained to them why the behaviour is unacceptable and what steps will be taken to remedy the situation. A repetition of such behaviour will lead to the normal disciplinary codes of practice for employees.

Equipment Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.54, 3.55, 3.64, 3.67

Statement of Intent

At Stepping Stones Pre-school we believe that high quality care is promoted by providing children with a safe and stimulating environment. The resources used to support this are clean and attractive as well as ability, age and stage appropriate.

Aim

We aim to provide children with resources and equipment that help to consolidate and also extend their knowledge, skills, interests and aptitudes within an environment that enhances their all-round skills ability.

Method

In order to achieve this aim:

- We provide play equipment and resources that are safe and, where applicable, conform to BSEN safety standards or Toys (Safety) Regulation (1995).
- We provide a sufficient quantity of equipment and resources for the number of children.
- The setting is adequately spacious for purpose, as well as safe and secure.
- The atmosphere and environment is welcoming to children and parents/carers.
- The manager has the responsibility to ensure that the setting is clean, well ventilated and maintained at the appropriate temperature.
- It is the manager's responsibility to ensure a daily risk assessment of the site is completed, to ensure that the facilities are maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration.
- As far as possible, the premises should only be used by the children and adults concerned with the setting during the official opening hours.
- Where possible, the activities should be displayed in an open-plan layout, so that the children can move freely between activities.
- The setting should have adequate storage space to store equipment safely.
- The setting provides one toilet for every twelve children, and includes hot and cold running water.
- The setting is provided with a telephone for emergency use by staff, parents/ carers.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.54, 3.55, 3.64, 3.67 77

- We provide resources that promote all areas of children's learning and development, which may be child or adult led.
- We select books, equipment and resources that promote positive images of people of all races, cultures and abilities and are non-discriminatory and avoid racial and gender stereotyping.

Equipment Policy

- We provide play equipment and resources that promote continuity and progression, provide sufficient challenge and meet the needs and interests of all children.
- We provide developed, natural and re-cycled materials that are clean, in good condition and safe for the children to use.
- We provide furniture that is suitable for children and adults.
- We store and display resources and equipment where children can independently choose and select them.
- We check all resources and equipment regularly as they are set out at the beginning of each session and put away at the end of each session.
- We repair, clean or replace any unsafe, worn out or dirty/damaged equipment.
- We plan the provision of activities and appropriate resources so that a balance of familiar equipment and resources plus new exciting challenges is offered.

Outdoor Play

Our outdoor play area is used as part of our continuous provision. Any outdoor play will be carried out in a safe and secure place and will be supervised at all times. All outside play areas receive a daily risk assessment. Outdoor play areas must be well maintained; it is the manager's responsibility to report any problems with the outside area to the committee and deal with them accordingly. It is the staff's responsibility to keep the paths to the setting safe and clear, including free from snow or ice, litter and leaves.

Essential Contractor / Work Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.9, 3.28, 3.77

As far as practicable and possible any work is to be carried out during the closure of the setting, e.g. before 9am and after 2pm, bearing in mind that the building and grounds are used by another group from 7.30am – 6.30pm, alternatively work may be carried out during weekends or public/ bank holidays. For all works (excepting emergency works) the setting must have at least 24 hours' prior notice. The manager will try to arrange any works to be carried out at the most convenient time in order to accommodate the children's needs and their safety. If it is not possible to allow works at the time requested, an alternative time and date will be offered.

The manager and the contractor/work person will discuss the works required, time frame and the impact on the children's routine, with regard to the need to safeguard the child's privacy, dignity, safety and well-being. Any contractor/work person MUST report to the manager (or their deputy) in the first instance. They will then be required to sign in and out of the setting – dates and times are to be included.

Contractors/work people will undergo an induction. This will include the use of and responsibility for tools, equipment and chemicals.

Contractors/work people will be told of Stepping Stones Pre-school's policy that mobile phones are NOT allowed in any children's areas of the setting.

It is preferable for any contractor/work person to have a current DBS. If they have a relevant document, they are asked to provide the manager with a copy in order for this to be checked and record the details.

Contractors/work people must never be left alone with any children.

Contractors must operate within the guidelines Health & Safety and Confidentiality policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of others, particularly children, is prioritised.

First Aid, Medication & Sickness Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.44, 3.45, 3.46, 3.50, 3.51 3.53, 3.54, 3.67, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71

At all times, at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate (relevant to young children and infants) is on the premises at Stepping Stones Pre-school.

At least one suitably qualified member of staff will also accompany all outings.

The first aid qualification includes first aid training for infants and young children.

Our first aid kit:

- complies with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- is regularly checked by a designated member of staff and re-stocked etc.
- is easily accessible to adults
- is kept out of the way of children.

At the time of admission to the setting, parents'/carers' written permission for emergency medical advice or treatment is sought. Parents sign and date their written approval.

Our accident book:

- is kept safely and accessible
- is known to all staff, including how to complete it
- is reviewed at least half termly to identify any potential or actual hazards.

Ofsted is notified of any injury requiring treatment by a GP or hospital, as well as in the extremely unlikely circumstances of the death of a child or adult. Confidentiality will always be adhered to. This is a requirement of registration, from the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Accident Procedure

All accidents must be recorded in the appropriate book. This is to ensure legal compliance and appropriate gathering of information needed to inform all relevant persons.

Detailed records will be kept of any accidents, which will outline how the accident occurred, any injury sustained, time, treatment and follow-up process.

Parents are required to sign the entry when they arrive to collect their child.

Depending on the accident and impact on the child, parents will be informed immediately.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.44, 3.45, 3.46, 3.50, 3.51 3.53, 3.54, 3.67, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71 87

First Aid, Medication and Sickness Policy

Sickness and Medicine Policy

If a child becomes ill whilst they are attending the setting, they will be monitored (e.g. taking the child's temperature on a regular basis) and if it is felt that it is not beneficial for them to continue with us that day, the setting manager will phone the parent/carer and inform them of the situation. A thermometer does not have to be used - temperature may be taken by touch, and experienced staff can determine if a child feels excessively hot.

Parents must notify us immediately if they are aware that their child has a contagious illness, even if it has yet to be confirmed by a doctor. If a child has such an illness, we may require medical confirmation that they are fit to return to the setting.

Children suffering from sickness, diarrhoea, high temperature or the possibility of being infectious must refrain from attending the setting until they are clear from the symptoms for **at least 48 hours**.

If a child has been sent home from Stepping Stones Pre-school due to ill health they should not be re-admitted until the child is suitably recovered or until the GP says they can return.

The setting will only administer prescribed medicine (doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist) which is clearly labelled with the child's name, medicine type, amount to be administered and the correct date. A first dose MUST have already been given at home and the setting informed of the time of the last dose the child was given. A specific consent form must be completed and a record will be made of all medicines administered.

Stepping Stones do not routinely administer paracetamol as we believe that children with high temperatures are better cared for at home. Should a child develop a high temperature we will attempt to reduce the temperature by gentle cooling and giving fluids – parents'/carers' attendance will be requested as soon as possible. (It is no longer recommended to cool a child with tepid sponging or by removing clothing, although removing a layer is acceptable.)

If a parent/carer wishes their child to be given paracetamol in this situation, they must have previously completed a consent form and a record will be made of all medicines administered.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.44, 3.45, 3.46, 3.50, 3.51 3.53, 3.54, 3.67, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71 88

First Aid, Medication and Sickness Policy

If a child is taking antibiotics, they must be kept away from the setting for at least 48 hours to enable the medicine to take effect.

Parents/carers of a child who requires prescribed medicine during their time with us must complete a medicine form which must be signed by the parent/carer before the medicine will be administered.

Details of when the last dosage was given must be reported and recorded when the child arrives at the setting. However, if the medication is a long-term arrangement then a specific consent form may be used.

A risk assessment will be carried out by the setting to make sure that we can fully support any children with long-term medical conditions.

First Aid, Medication and Sickness Policy

We will work closely with parents and any other health professional to fully meet the needs of all children.

Where necessary, staff will receive extra training to support children with their medical conditions and, if appropriate, learn techniques to administer medication and specific medical procedures.

Every child with a specific medical need will have a robust medical care plan, which will be completed by the key person/manager/SENCO and parent.

Where it is age, stage and ability appropriate the child's opinion will be included within their care plan.

Children will be administered the correct dose by a senior member of staff, which will be witnessed by another member of staff. They will both sign and record the time accurately.

On collecting their child, parents/carers will be informed of the time that the medicine has been administered.

If a child has a severe allergy and requires epinephrine (epi-pen), then training must be completed by the child's key person and other staff. Unless this training is completed the child's attendance at the setting will be delayed.

Any injury to a child or parent requiring a GP or hospital visit is reported to the local office of the Health and Safety Executive and Ofsted.

We meet our legal requirements for the safety of our employees by complying with RIDDOR.

We report to the local office of the Health & Safety Executive:

- any accident to a member of staff requiring treatment by a GP or hospital; or
- any dangerous occurrences (e.g. an event which does not cause an accident but might have done).

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.44, 3.45, 3.46, 3.50, 3.51 3.53, 3.54, 3.67, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71 89

Children's prescribed medicines are stored in their original containers, are clearly labelled and are not accessible to the children.

If the administered prescription requires medical knowledge, training will be provided for the relevant member of staff by a health professional, for example, the use of an EpiPen® or Insulin.

Medical Guidelines:

Please refer to public health guidelines on: Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

First Aid, Medication and Sickness Policy

The following diseases are notifiable under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 or the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988.

- Acute encephalitis
- Acute poliomyelitis
- Anthrax
- Cholera
- Diphtheria
- Dysentery
- Food poisoning
- Leptospirosis
- Malaria
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Meningococcal
- Pneumococcal
- Haemophilus influenzae
- Viral Meningococcal septicaemia (without meningitis)
- Mumps
- Ophthalmia neonatorum
- Paratyphoid fever
- Plague
- Rabies
- Relapsing fever
- Rubella
- Scarlet fever
- Smallpox
- Tetanus
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid fever
- Viral haemorrhagic fever
- Viral hepatitis
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C
- Whooping cough
- Yellow fever

Leprosy is also notifiable, but directly to the Health Protection Agency © Health Protection Agency

In the event of an outbreak of COVID, reporting will be in line with the latest guidelines according to South West Health Protection Team and UKHSA.

Food & Drink Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.47, 3.48, 3.49, 3.67

Statement of Intent

Stepping Stones Pre-school regards meal times and snacks as an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about oral health and healthy eating.

Aim

We aim to meet the full requirements of The Early Years Foundation Stage related to oral health and healthy eating.

At snack times, we aim to provide a variety of nutritious food, which meets children's dietary needs, providing them with some carbohydrate for energy and fruit and/or vegetables for essential vitamins and nutrients. We regularly discuss the importance of healthy eating and healthy teeth & gums; we talk about different foods are good for us and which are not. Children are offered milk and cheese to provide protein and calcium for healthy teeth and bones. Cheese neutralises fruit acids and thus helps to protect teeth.

Oral health is an important part of our food and drink policy and we discuss it with children as part of our curriculum; we invite the Tooth Fairy (children's Oral Health Nurse) to visit us and help children learn about oral health and healthy eating through age appropriate activities and games.

Information and advice is offered to parents regarding appropriate nutrition and oral health.

Methods

- Before a child starts at the setting we find out from parents/carers their children's dietary needs, including any allergies. Parents/carers will be asked to supply food for children with severe allergies, to ensure they are fully protected. These must be named and stored appropriately.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs on their registration record which parents/carers sign
- Parents/carers are requested to regularly update us to ensure that our records are current and relevant.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff are fully informed.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and parents'/carers' wishes.
- We inform parents/carers of our snacks each day.
- Water or semi-skimmed pasteurised milk is offered at snack-time. We do not provide juice drinks to children and request that parents do not include juice, squash or smoothies in the packed lunch from home.
- We provide nutritious food, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- Through discussion with parents/carers and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary requirements of the religious groups to which children and their parents/carers belong, plus of vegetarians and vegans and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies.

Food and Drink Policy

Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy. Staff also discuss differences with children and have conversations with children on food preferences, be they philosophical, dietary or health.

- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to provide a healthy lunchbox and are given guidelines regarding types and amounts of food which are suitable to include.
- Sweets and fizzy drinks are not allowed to be included in the lunch box
- If lunchboxes are persistently unhealthy then the keyperson will discuss with parents/carers more suitable, healthy foods to include.
- We have fresh drinking water available at all times for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day. In addition, we explain why drinking water keeps them hydrated.
- We have rules about children sharing and swapping their food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies.
- Staff must never consume hot drinks when the safety of the children could be compromised and they must ensure these are only drunk at appropriate times, for example in areas where children are not allowed.

No Nuts Policy

When we have a child (or adult) registered at the setting who has a nut allergy we will notify all parents/carers/staff etc and enforce a strict policy of no nuts or nut products, including where practicable ensuring that there are no nuts or nut traces in any of our food.

- Parents/carers must confirm with Stepping Stones Pre-school that, if sending cakes etc. to setting for their child's birthday, they do not contain any nuts or nut traces and must list the ingredients.

Whilst we welcome families bringing in foods for celebrations and festivals, these must be shop bought and with their original packaging showing the ingredients and packaging detail.

Health & Safety Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.54, 3.55, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66

Stepping Stones Pre-school believes that the health and safety of children is of paramount importance. We make our setting a safe and healthy place for children, parents/carers and staff.

Aim

We aim to make children, parents/carers and staff aware of health and safety issues and to minimise the hazards and risks, to enable the children to thrive in a healthy and safe environment.

Methods

The person responsible for health and safety overall is the: **Chair of the Committee**, who should undertake health and safety training and keep abreast of relevant updates.

The necessary health and safety poster is displayed in: **the activity room**

Day to day responsibility lies with the Manager and Deputy Manager, with all staff committing to ensuring the environment is as safe as necessary.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment process includes the following:

- Checking for hazards and risks indoors and outside, and in our activities and procedures.
- The assessment covers adults and children.
- Deciding which area needs attention.
- Developing a plan that specifies the action required including timescales. It also details the person responsible for the action. We keep written risk assessments and these are reviewed at least annually.

We maintain lists of health and safety issues that are checked:

- daily before the session begins
- weekly
- termly – when a full risk assessment is carried out.

Insurance Cover

We have public liability insurance and employers' liability insurance.

The certificate is displayed on: **the notice board**

Health and Safety Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.54, 3.55, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66 101

Awareness Raising

The risk assessment process includes the following:

Our induction training for staff includes a clear explanation of health and safety issues so that all adults are able to adhere to our policy and understand their shared responsibility for health and safety. Records of induction training is kept and new staff sign the records to confirm that they have taken part.

Stepping Stones Pre-school has a no smoking and no vaping policy.

Children are made aware of health and safety issues through discussions, planned activities and routines.

Children's safety and security whilst at the setting is vitally important and is the responsibility of each staff member.

Only people who have been checked for criminal records by an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and are registered with Ofsted as a child carer have unsupervised access to the children, including helping them with toileting.

- Adults do not normally supervise children on their own.
- All children are supervised by adults at all times.
- At least two adults are present whenever children are on the premises.
- Security Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children.
- There is also a system in place to ensure security in the outside areas of the setting.
- The times of the children's arrival and departure are recorded.
- Staff count children to ensure they are fully aware of the number of children in their care before and after outside play.
- The arrival and departure times of staff are recorded.
- Our systems prevent unauthorised access to our premises.

Doors/Gates

- Entrance to the setting will only be granted by a member of staff opening the door or by a member of staff viewing a recognised parent/carer at the entrance and buzzing them in.
- Garden gates are secure and supervised whilst children are outside.

Outside Play

It is the responsibility of each staff member to ensure outdoor play is a secure, happy and engaging learning environment.

Health and Safety Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.54, 3.55, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66 102

Staff are to be deployed at key points during outside play to enhance the children's play experience, and to enable the children to participate in appropriate age/stage related activities safely.

- The outdoor area is securely fenced.
- The outdoor area is checked for safety and cleared of rubbish/foreign bodies before it is used.
- Adults and children are alerted to the dangers of poisonous plants, herbicides and pesticides.
- Where water can form a pool on equipment, it is emptied before children start playing with it.
- The outdoor sand pit is covered when not in use.
- All outdoor activities are supervised at all times.
- Parents are requested to send children with cycling helmets in order that they can play safely on balance bikes and scooters

Floors

All surfaces are checked daily to ensure they are clean and not uneven or damaged.

Any accidents that occur are recorded, monitored and assessed.

Kitchen

- Children do not have unsupervised access to the kitchen.
- All surfaces are clean and non-porous.
- Staff wash their hands thoroughly before preparing food.
- At least one member of staff who prepares food has Food Hygiene training.
- There are separate facilities for hand washing and for washing up.
- Cleaning materials and other dangerous materials are stored out of children's reach.
- Only kitchen-appropriate cleaners are stored in this area
- When children take part in cooking activities, they are supervised at all times. They are kept away from hot surfaces and hot water and do not have unsupervised access to electrical equipment.

Electrical/Gas Equipment

- All electrical equipment conforms to safety requirements and is checked regularly.
- The boiler/electrical switchgear/meter cupboard is not accessible to the children.
- Fires, heaters, electric sockets, wires and leads are properly guarded, and the children are taught not to touch them.
- There are sufficient sockets to prevent overloading.
- The temperature of hot water is controlled to prevent scalds.
- Lighting and ventilation is adequate in all areas including storage areas.

Health and Safety Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.54, 3.55, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66 104

Storage

- All resources and materials that children select are stored safely.
- All equipment and resources are stored or stacked safely to prevent them accidentally falling or collapsing.

Hygiene

- Our daily routines encourage the children to learn about personal hygiene.
- We have a daily cleaning routine for the setting, which includes children's rooms, kitchen, staff room, toilets and nappy changing areas.
- We have a schedule for cleaning resources and equipment, dressing up clothes and furnishings.
- The toilet area has a high standard of hygiene including hand washing and drying facilities and the disposal of nappies.

We implement good hygiene practices by:

- cleaning tables between activities
- checking toilets regularly
- wearing protective clothing such as aprons and disposable gloves as appropriate whilst changing nappies and helping children with personal care
- Double wrapping used nappies
- providing sets of clean clothes
- providing tissues and wipes

Activities

Before purchasing equipment and resources, the setting staff will check to ensure that they are safe for the age and stage of the children currently attending the setting.

- The layout of play equipment allows adults and children to safely and freely move between activities.
- If areas become too full staff will make them safe by moving equipment and helping children to space out
- All equipment is regularly checked for cleanliness and safety and any dangerous items are repaired or discarded.
 - All materials, including paint and glue, are non-toxic.
 - Sand is clean and suitable for children's play.
 - Physical play is constantly supervised.
 - Children are taught to handle and store tools safely.
 - Children who are sleeping are checked every five minutes.
 - Children learn about health, safety and personal hygiene through the activities we provide and the routines we follow.

Health and Safety Policy

Food and Drink

- Staff who prepare and handle food receive appropriate training.
- They understand and comply with food safety and hygiene regulations.
- All food and drink is stored appropriately.
- Adults do not drink hot drinks in the play areas and at no time is a hot drink placed within reach of children.
- Snack and meal times are appropriately supervised and children do not walk about with food and drink.
- Staff actively engage with children whilst they have their meals, making the meal time a positive experience.
- Children are encouraged to serve themselves food and drink as appropriate to their age/stage of development.
- Fresh drinking water is available to the children at all times.
- We operate systems to ensure that children do not have access to food/drinks to which they are allergic.

Outings and Visits

Stepping Stones Pre-school has agreed procedures for the safe conduct of outings:

- A risk assessment is carried out before an outing takes place.
- Parents/carers always sign consent forms before major outings and have given consent to local outings.
- Our adult to child ratio is high, normally one adult to two/three children, depending on their age.
- Children are appropriately supervised to ensure no child gets lost and that no other person has unauthorised access to them.
- For children remaining at the setting the correct ratios are maintained.

Animals

- Animals visiting the setting are free from disease, safe to be with children and do not pose a health risk.
- From time to time the setting may keep small, non-furry animals, such as fish, giant snails or stick insects. This promotes good animal husbandry and discussion regarding responsibility of care.

Fire Safety

All staff are aware of the location of all fire exits, the fire meeting point and where all the fire safety equipment is stored. All children according to their age and stage ability must be made aware of the setting's fire safety procedures. These should be discussed with new children and followed up by regular reminders. If applicable, children should be aware of the location of the safe meeting point.

- Fire doors and exits are clearly marked; not obstructed and must open easily from the inside.
- Fire exits should be closed, but never locked while people are in the building.
- Fire extinguishers and fire alarms should be tested regularly as per the fire officer's instruction.
- The manager is responsible for either arranging fire drills or appointing a fire safety officer to do so.
- Fire drills will take place every half term. Staff will be informed when this is going to happen.
- On occasion, fire drills will take place without prior notice.
- The drills may include non-exit routes to ensure a more realistic situation.
- All drills, equipment checks and fire incidents must be recorded in the fire book and available for inspection.

Health and Safety Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.54, 3.55, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66 107

Fire Prevention

Stepping Stones Pre-school will take steps to prevent fires occurring. The manager and staff must ensure the following:

- That power points or sockets are not overloaded with plugs.
- That the no smoking policy is adhered to.
- That wiring is not frayed or damaged and that fuses are checked.
- That all electrical appliances are checked before use to ensure safety.
- All electrical appliances must have an annual PAT certificate.
- That flammable materials are stored safely.
- The manager will discuss with new staff, volunteers and students fire safety within their induction

In the Event of a Fire

A member of staff should raise the alarm and the emergency services should be called at the earliest opportunity. All the children will be immediately escorted off the premises to a safe meeting point (Entrance gate to school playground) using the nearest fire exit. All personal belongings must be left behind and nobody must re-enter the building at any time. A register of the children and staff will be taken. If a person is missing from the register, the emergency services will be informed immediately. If for any reason there is no designated fire safety officer at the time of an incident, the manager will assume responsibility.

Incident Procedure

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.50, 3.51, 3.73

An incident book is kept in the office at Stepping Stones Pre-school. To maintain confidentiality all logs should be recorded separately for each child. This book is to document any incidents that cannot be described as an accident.

If a child arrives at the setting with a recent injury that occurred at home (such as a cut, bump, or burn) this must be written up on an **existing injury record form** with the parents' account of the injury and the parent must be asked to sign before they leave the child. Professional discretion must be used regarding this.

If the injury is noticed when the parent has left, the parent must be called and countersign the form when they arrive.

Any incident involving one child harming another child will be documented in the incident book.

- The child who caused the incident will need to be documented in the incident book and signed by the parent/carer.
- The child who was harmed should have a record of this written up in the accident book and their parent needs to sign this.

Incidents could include biting, pinching, pulling hair, hitting, kicking, spitting etc. (this is not a definitive list).

If one child has caused an injury to another child, we will explain the nature of the injury caused and how we dealt with the incident.

We will not name the child on either form, in accordance with our confidentiality policy, and parents should not ask for this information as educators are not permitted to discuss a child with another parent.

The manager will need to sign a confirmation of the entry.

Any serious incidents need to be brought to the attention of the manager immediately and recorded in the child's file or in the incidentbook. For example, unreported markings on a child, a child verbalising something unusual or displaying unusual behaviour. This information is confidential and documented information must be kept in a lockable place. If appropriate the manager will speak to the parents/carers of a child or report to the authorities.

Other examples of incidents might involve adults only, such as a person seen loitering near the premises etc. This must be detailed and if persistent or serious cause for concern, the police notified.

Intruder / Incident

If an intruder succeeds in accessing the premises then staff will immediately call for the lockdown procedure to be implemented to protect children and themselves. This procedure is known to staff and is regularly discussed along with other safeguarding issues.

Inclusion & Disabilities Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.67, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.72

Stepping Stones Pre-school is committed to the integration of children with special needs. All children have the right to be educated and develop to their full potential alongside each other. It is a positive experience to be able to share the same opportunities and overcome any difficulties together.

This policy is in line with:

The Children and Families Act 2014

Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015 (updated 2020)

We also have read and understood key local authority special needs and disability guidance and/or information that has been provided. We make sure that we adhere to local guidance and our intention is to seek support, if necessary.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-early-years-settings>

Aims

- To recognise any special needs a child may have and ensure all staff are aware of the above legislation and guidance.
- To employ a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who is experienced in the care and assessment of children with special needs. The SENCO at Stepping Stones is **Chanelle Uzzell**
- To assess each child's specific needs and adapt our facilities if possible.
- To liaise with other agencies including health and education authorities and seek advice, support and training.
- To make sure that at the earliest opportunity, children who need support are identified.
- To make sure good use is made of observing children and recording their development.
- To robustly track children's learning and development, to ascertain if they are progressing well.
- To make sure that each two-year-old's development has been recorded via the two-year progress check and support has been identified if need be.
- To ensure that all children are treated as equals and are encouraged to take part in every aspect of the setting day.
- To promote positive images of those with special needs wherever possible.
- To monitor and record the child's progress and regularly review their changing needs.
- To provide adequate resources to support their learning.
- To provide suitable help for the child in setting whilst ensuring that they receive a broad and balanced curriculum.
- To involve parents/carers as early as possible and ask for their support in assisting the child at home.
- To build a partnership with support services for the benefit of those children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) in our setting.
- To make sure that staff are extra vigilant when working with children with special educational needs and disability, in terms of safeguarding and child protection

Inclusion and Disabilities Policy

Access to the Curriculum

Stepping Stones Pre-school recognises that the extent to which a learning difficulty influences a child's development depends not only on the severity but also:

- the extent to which their environment supports them in coping with their difficulties;
- the child's motivation;
- appropriateness of learning resources;
- appropriateness of the setting's curriculum, content and delivery.

For these reasons our setting:

- considers the needs of children with SEND at all stages of curriculum development;
- works closely with special support agencies;
- ensures that there is an appropriate range of teaching strategies and approaches;
- investigates, with advice from specialist support agencies, the appropriateness and availability of any equipment that may be required to facilitate access to the curriculum;
- coordinates support available both from within the setting's resources and from external agencies to most effectively enable access for children with SEND.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.67, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.72 118

Role of the Person Responsible for SEND

The SENCO is responsible for:

- day-to-day operations of the setting's SEND policy;
- liaising with and advising fellow members of staff;
- co-ordinating provision for children with SEND across the setting;
- maintaining a SEND register and overseeing the records of all children with special educational needs;
- liaising with external agencies e.g. portage and health visitors;
- making existing and new members of staff aware of SEND policies and procedures;
- ensuring that documents are in place, such as the education, health and care plans.



Inclusion and Disabilities Policy

Stepping Stones Pre-school believes that all children have a right to experience and develop alongside their peers. Each child's needs are unique, therefore any attempt to categorise children is inappropriate.

The setting is committed to working alongside parents/carers in the provision of their child's individual needs in order to enable us to help their child develop to their full potential.

All children with special needs/disabilities have a right to a broad and well-balanced education.

We feel it is paramount to find out as much as possible about a particular child's needs, and the way that these affect their educational needs, by:

- liaison with child's parents/carers;
- liaison with any professional agencies and specialist professional colleagues;
- reading any reports that have been prepared;
- attending any review meetings with the local authority;
- regular monitoring of observations undertaken on the child's development.

Information Communication & Technology Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.67, 3.69, 3.72

Stepping Stones Pre-school is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office to ensure compliance.

- The Internet will only be used by authorised individuals.
- The Internet will only be used for business purposes.
- Any computer connected to the Internet will run the latest version of anti-virus software.
- It is the responsibility of the computer user to ensure that anti-virus software is updated whenever a new release is made available.
- Users will not browse, download or send material that could be considered offensive to colleagues.
- It is the user's responsibility to ensure that any software downloaded from the Internet is adequately licensed.
- Users are reminded that the use of non-standard screen savers is not permitted.
- Staff are to be reminded of how they use social media outside of the setting for their own personal use.
- Derogatory, libellous or offensive terms must not be used in relation to any person, or anything to do with Stepping Stones.
- Failure to comply with the Internet Usage Policy will result in disciplinary action.

This policy also applies to tablets, phones and smart watches where appropriate.

Involving & Consulting Children Policy

Consulting with children is good practice and is beneficial not only to the setting as a whole but also to the children and staff. Stepping Stones Pre-school's commitment stems from "listening to children" - articles 12 and 13 from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These state that:

- A child's opinion should be taken into account on anything that affects them.
- Children should have information disseminated in a way that enables them to make choices and decisions.

Children learn new skills from consultation such as, listening, negotiation, sharing and understanding. It helps them understand how decisions are made and the importance and value of their opinion; it also links to British Values. There are many benefits of approaching provision in this way. Children feel that they have ownership in their setting, which can result in better behaviour. This is largely due to the fact children will feel that they are working in partnership and that the setting provides activities for their needs and interests. All children will be consulted and listened to on a regular basis; the consultation will be done in the following formats:

- Taking notice of what the children say in everyday conversations.
- Observing and monitoring body language and behaviour.
- Through drama and role play.
- Through play and visual aids.
- Question and answer sessions.

We actively support children to have a voice, which is age, stage and ability appropriate. Listening to children is central to our values. Included within this, children have the right to say no and we use scenarios and discussions with children to give them the tools to protect themselves within the setting, online and outside of the setting. The type of decision and the level of involvement from the children will be assessed by the appropriateness and the maturity of the children. However, it is important to involve the children as much as possible in decision making. The consultations will be monitored and outcomes noted, so that the children can see their opinions are regularly acted upon. If consultation is seen to be inappropriate there will be an explanation as to why that has been decided.

Key Person Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.27

At Stepping Stones Pre-school we understand that children are better able to reach their full potential by having good home-setting links and when feeling settled and secure. Therefore, as part of our philosophy we make sure that every child has their own key person. Our key person system enables children to relate to one special adult right from the settling-in stage. Each member of staff has particular responsibility for children in their key group.

Staff observe and notice children's individual needs and views so they can be incorporated into our curriculum. The key person also maintains links with parents/carers and outside agencies, sharing information on children's unique needs and achievements. We ensure that our procedures are flexible and aim to allocate children and their families to the most suitable member of staff. We aim to ensure ongoing ease of communication and a confident exchange of information between the parent/carer and the setting.

Lockdown Policy and Procedure

Go In, Stay In, Tune In

Stepping Stones Pre-School recognises the potentially serious risks to children, staff and visitors in emergency or harmful situations. A lockdown may take place where there is a perceived risk of threat to the pre-school, its staff, children, visitors or property. Where possible, the Pre-school will act to ensure the safety of all personnel in the setting in the following situations:

- In the event that unauthorized person(s) considered dangerous, are on school grounds.
- In Instances included domestic breakdowns where estranged parties are attempting to abduct children.
- In instances where personnel, students, volunteers or staff from within the setting become a threat to the well-being of others.
- In emergency situations within the environment of the setting where there is potential risk from spills or poisonous fumes.

A lockdown will be initiated by a recognisable signal of 3 long whistle blows followed by the adult calling LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE. Lock down procedures will be practiced from time to time to ensure that staff and children are familiar with them.

Practices and Procedure - Follow the **CLOSE** Procedure:

- C** close all windows and doors.
- L** lock up.
- O** out of sight and minimise movement.
- S** stay silent and avoid drawing any attention.
- E** endure. Be aware that you may be in Lockdown for some time.

The following steps provide guidelines for staff, students and visitors in an emergency situation:

1. On hearing the lock down signal the Pre-School Manager and/or Deputy will call for assistance using 999.
2. Staff will lock the front outer door and door to garden.
3. Three (3) long whistle blows will signal lockdown procedures to take effect immediately.
4. Staff will call LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE and repeat whistle blows / calling until all staff are aware

In the setting:

Upon hearing the Lockdown signal, these steps will be followed:

1. Staff to guide all children into the main room if playing outside, check toilets etc
2. Do a head count immediately
3. Staff to secure all windows and doors then instruct children to move into the office and keep them calm. If anyone is outside, call them in.
4. Collect medical box, register & mobile phone.
5. Call register
6. Supervise, ensuring everyone remains out of sight and are sitting quietly.
7. No one should be allowed out of the room or safe area during a lockdown procedure.
8. Remain in lockdown until the all-clear has been given by the police.

Lost Child Procedure

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.55, 3.64, 3.65, 3.73

Outing

In the unlikely event that a child is lost during an outing whilst in the care of Stepping Stones Pre-school, the procedure is as follows:

- Immediately look for the child in the last known location, shouting their name and involving others in the search, whilst staff ensure the safety of the remaining children.
- Keep looking and calling for at least 5 minutes. If after 10 minutes the child hasn't been found then -
 - Contact the police, giving the child's description (including clothing) and advise them that the child should be wearing a badge containing the setting's details. The parents'/carers' contact details must also be given.
 - The Chair of the Committee must be informed.
 - One member of staff is to stay where the child was seen last, while the rest of the staff and children return to the setting.
- It is imperative that staff ensure that all children are wearing a setting identity badge before they leave for any outing.
- Staff should also have a list of the names of all children they are taking and their personal details.
- A full incident log will need to be recorded and Ofsted informed.

Setting

If a child leaves the premises and/or is lost within the setting, the procedure is as follows:

- Staff should thoroughly check the premises and the outside area of the site, shouting their name and involving others in the search, whilst staff ensure the safety of the remaining children.
- Keep looking and calling for at least 5 minutes. If after 10 minutes the child hasn't been found then -
 - Contact the police, giving the child's description (including clothing). The parents'/ carers' contact details must also be given.
 - Contact the parents/carers, talk to them calmly and give factual information.
 - The Chair of the committee must be informed.
 - Children at the setting will need to be supervised by a minimum number of staff, while the rest of the staff search the area.
- A full incident log will need to be recorded and Ofsted informed.

Nappy Changing, Toileting & Personal Independence Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.27, 3.28, 3.60

At Stepping Stones Pre-school we recognise that strict procedures and guidelines are in place and MUST be adhered to when changing nappies and supervising toileting. Parents/carers **must** provide own nappies and wipes. The use of nappies over pull-up pants is encouraged during toilet training as absorbent pants give mixed messages to the child.

- Children who need personal care must have their privacy and dignity respected.
- Only staff who currently work for Stepping Stones Pre-school and hold enhanced DBS clearance are allowed to change nappies, assist with toileting or personal care routines.
- Under no circumstances should a volunteer or student be asked to provide personal care for a child.
- Nappies are changed in appropriate areas only.
- Staff should wear disposable gloves and apron for each nappy change.
- The changing mat is wiped after each nappy change, using an anti-bacterial cleaner
- All items are double wrapped and disposed of in the outside bin.
- The member of staff should wash their hands after each routine is carried out.
- Babies and young children are cleaned using warm water and cotton wool only and/or wipes.
- Proprietary creams may only be used when provided by the parent/carer.
- With regard to older children, the educator will ensure that their personal independence skills are promoted, with supervision if required.
- Gloves are worn when changing soiled pants.
- All routines are prominently displayed in appropriate areas.
- A record is maintained of all nappies changed for the younger children and toileting accidents/changes for the older children.
- The nappy area is regularly risk assessed.
- All educators should be aware that lifting and handling is part of their daily duties. It is the responsibility of a trained person to instruct any untrained staff of the correct procedures in this area.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.27, 3.28, 3.60 143

- A risk assessment must be written when a child needs lifting because of their toileting needs. Educators should follow the risk assessment appropriately. This will prevent injuries to both the educator and child.



Operational Policy

At Stepping Stones Pre-school it is our aim to provide care and an early learning environment, which is tailored to each individual child's needs, in safe, secure, happy and relaxed surroundings. We adhere to The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework 2021.

We provide a place for a child to develop a strong sense of belonging and to build their self-esteem and confidence through encouragement to reach their full potential socially, physically and intellectually.

It is our aim to employ Early Years educators who are qualified in Early Years and have a high regard to their own professionalism, who wish to continue their personal development through CPD courses and to continually updating their skills and keep abreast of new ideas and developments. Any unqualified staff should be strongly encouraged to undertake an appropriate qualification.

We carry out annual appraisals and regular performance reviews, which enable us to identify ongoing training requirements.

Our staff are deployed to cover the correct ratios in each area of the setting. This ensures that the children's needs are fully met as their safety and security is of paramount importance.

Our setting is organised to cater for children's needs with appropriate equipment and facilities to promote independence, confidence and intellectual growth.

We regularly evaluate our practices and make adjustments where necessary.

We consider parents/carers as partners and have an open-door policy; the child's parent/carer can phone, visit or stay at any time.

Each child is allocated a key person. The key person will build a positive and secure relationship with each child.

Pandemic Procedures:

Living with Covid - Effective from 01.04.22

From 1st April 2022 we moved to the 'Living with Covid' phase of managing the pandemic as set out by the government. Stepping Stones will continue to follow advice given by government and the UKHSA on how to manage in a pandemic and with contagious or other common respiratory illnesses.

Our priority throughout the pandemic and going forward, is to support children's wellbeing, and we recognise the need for children to receive face-to-face, high-quality education and childcare to support their achievements, life chances and mental and physical health. It has been highlighted that children are at a greater risk to wider harms caused through missed education rather than from covid.

Whether or not symptoms are present, young children should not be requested to test unless directed by a Health professional.

To minimise the risk of transmission and to protect the vulnerable, UKHSA recommends the following baseline measures which Stepping Stones support -

- Individuals take up the full course of vaccination offered
- Engage in regular handwashing and improved hygiene practices (catch it, kill it, bin it)
- Ensure good ventilation when inside
- In education and care settings, the need to enforce cleaning regimes.

In practice we will reinforce baseline measures to help prevent transmission and infection so that face to face education can remain a priority. Use of resources such as E-bug will support our education of young children to understand covid and mitigate the risks.

However, it is important that we take the following common sense measures:

- People with symptoms of a respiratory infection (including covid 19) and a high temperature, OR who feel unwell, should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people until they feel well enough to resume normal activities AND NO LONGER have a high temperature.
- We request that anyone with a positive, or possible positive covid-19 test result should try to stay at home and avoid contact with Stepping Stones for 3 days.
- Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. They can go back to setting when they no longer have a high temperature and are well enough to attend.

Stepping Stones can reasonably refuse children if we feel it is necessary to protect other pupils and staff from possible infection with COVID-19 *or other communicable illnesses*.

Risk Assessment & Identifying harm

We will continue to assess the risks for children in our care who have EHC plans or additional needs and ensure they are safely cared for whether in setting or at home. We will continue to work together with local agencies and services to actively look for signs of harm, given that some children may have been exposed to greater harm because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the case of a local outbreak, we will seek advice from UKHSA.

Control measures: We will -

1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone.
2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, using standard products such as detergents.
3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated.



1. Ensure good hygiene for everyone

- ✓ *Hand hygiene* - Frequent and thorough hand cleaning will continue as our regular practice. We will continue to ensure that children clean their hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- ✓ *Respiratory hygiene* – Our ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach continues as good practice.
- ✓ We refer to [e-Bug website](#) for resources and materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.
- ✓ *Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)* - Most staff in settings will not require PPE beyond what is normally needed for their work.

It is important for staff to recognise the need to educate young children in preventative and hygienic measures which should be embedded into their thinking and daily lives.

2. Maintain appropriate cleaning regimes

We have a thorough cleaning schedule in place, which includes regular cleaning of areas and equipment with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces. We use standard products such as detergents and a fogger to sanitise non-wipeable items. We refer to latest PHE guidance on [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings outside the home](#).

3. Keep occupied spaces well ventilated

We will keep the building well ventilated whilst in use and between different groups. We will try to balance the need for increased ventilation while maintaining a comfortable temperature, but children may need extra clothing on cold days.

Prioritising early years places

In the uncommon event of high levels of workforce absence may mean we need to restrict attendance (for example, if we are unable to operate at full capacity) we will give priority to:

- children of critical workers, and vulnerable children – some children may be vulnerable who are not officially in statutory systems and we would seek to support any children who we believe may have challenging circumstances at home
- then 3- and 4-year-olds, in particular those who will be transitioning to Reception
- followed by younger age groups

Admitting children back to the setting

In most cases, parents and carers will agree that a child with symptoms should not attend the setting; if a parent or carer insists on a child attending our setting, we can take the reasonable decision to refuse the child if we feel it is in their best interests or the interests of the other children. The setting's decision is final.

Staying in touch with parents or carers whose child is at home

If appropriate we will:

- continue to support the learning of children who cannot attend - including maintaining contact with their key person and peers
- parents and carers can be supported to provide a positive learning environment at home. Resources for home learning can be found at:
 - ✓ [Hungry Little Minds](#) - provides simple fun, activities for kids aged 0 to 5 for parents to do at home with children to support their early learning
 - ✓ [BBC Tiny Happy People](#) - activities for babies, toddlers and children
 - ✓ [Words for Life](#)



Wellbeing and support

It is possible to experience a variety of emotions in response to a pandemic or other serious illness - such as anxiety, stress or low mood. We will liaise with families and monitor individual children for issues where we may need to provide more focused support. The same applies to staff and we will support members of staff with their wellbeing and mental health.

It is important that all staff have regular opportunities to discuss any concerns and issues with management. Wellbeing interviews will continue to be conducted with staff where they have been absent due to serious illness or because of closure due to a pandemic. All staff have received information and signposting to useful wellbeing resources. Further useful info from MindEd can be accessed at [coronavirus staff resilience tips](#) with advice and tips for frontline staff. Regular supervision meetings enable staff to discuss any concerns or issues relating to mental health and well-being.

There will be no charge for children unable to take up their place due to any pandemic related reasons

Public liability insurance

We have appropriate insurance with Morton Michel.

Parents as Partners Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.27, 3.45, 3.46, 3.47, 3.52, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.71, 3.72, 3.73, 3.74, 3.75

The Stepping Stones Pre-school team will work with parents/carers as partners, ensuring we provide the most appropriate care and education for their children. We believe that children benefit most from the setting when parents/carers and staff work together in partnership.

We will ensure that we recognise and support parents/carers as their children's first educators and are committed to an ongoing dialogue with parents/carers to improve our knowledge of the individual needs of children.

We develop a partnership with parents/carers based on shared responsibility, understanding, mutual respect and honest dialogue.

- All parents/carers are welcome to visit the setting at any time.
- We welcome parents/carers to share their skills and talents with us, for example, reading a story in their first language.
- We will inform parents/carers of any relevant training or workshops to support their own professional development.
- Parents/carers have access to their child's records at all times and are consulted in respect of the care given. They will be informed of their child's progress on a regular basis and will have constant access to their child's learning journey.
- Information about setting activities and events is regularly distributed.
- In compliance with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements we ensure that all the required policies are in place.
- Parents/carers are able to inspect all policies and procedures of the setting at any time and these are available on line.
- We encourage parents to share what they know about their child and use this information to inform our provision.
- Parents/carers have access to and will be informed of the systems for complaints procedures.
- We ensure that parents are fully involved in any changes that occur and are encouraged to contribute any ideas and suggestions.
- We recruit parents/carers views through annual questionnaires and through provision of a prominently displayed suggestion box. Parents are encouraged to join the Committee to enable them to give their views and to help shape the group.

Change of Details

Parents/carers are required to notify the setting as soon as possible in writing of any change of address, phone numbers, allergies and doctor's details. It is in the child's interest that all details are kept up to date at all times.



Payment & Fees Policy

At Stepping Stones Pre-school we endeavour to be flexible, however in order to maintain high standards the following must be adhered to:

GENERAL ADMISSIONS

- Sending your child to Stepping Stones is an agreement to abide by our policies and procedures and to pay all fees due promptly.
- Fees are payable promptly **in advance**. You will receive an invoice each month.
- Please pay fees via BACS payment where possible. We also accept cheque, cash or childcare vouchers. We are signed up to Tax free childcare. Please speak to a member of staff for more information.
- Fees are payable for each complete session a child is enrolled to attend. The hourly rate is subject to an annual review and is currently **£5.00** per hour
- A full calendar month's notice is required to reduce sessions or remove a child from the setting; alternatively, one month's fees are required.
- Fees are payable for Term Time only but do not include bank holidays or staff inset days.
- Any fees outstanding when a child leaves, will require payment in full. If this is not forthcoming the payment will be pursued through the county court if necessary.
- Fees are payable during periods of absence, including sickness and family holidays.
- Fees are reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Parents/carers are informed at least one month in advance of any increase.
- No session can be swapped for another. Extra sessions, if available, will be charged for at the full day rate.
- Persistent lateness in collecting a child at the end of their session will result in a charge of £10.00 for every 15 minutes or part thereof.
- A child will be eligible for the free entitlement the term following their third birthday. All hours exceeding the free entitlement will be charged at the hourly rate.

Stepping Stones Pre-school operates a 38-week term, with closures of two weeks at Christmas, two weeks at Easter and six weeks in the summer, with 3 half-term breaks of a week. Exact dates are available on request. A further week is added on to one of the longer holidays to achieve 38 weeks. Please note, the primary school year is 39 weeks.

- A term's notice is required to change sessions.
- Session times are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9-2pm & Weds 9-12 noon

Safer Recruitment Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.69, 3.70, 3.78

Before any staff recruitment, at least one member of the interview panel will have been properly trained in Safer Recruitment.

At Stepping Stones Pre-school we understand and respect the importance of safeguarding children and that part of our duty of care is to ensure we appoint staff who are the most suitable.

We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice and we use Ofsted guidance on obtaining references and checks (from the Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS) for staff.

We make sure that every prospective employee's DBS disclosures are checked before they start work. This makes sure that they are suitable to work with children.

- All educational and ancillary staff will have a defined job description, which is made available to applicants prior to completing an application form.
- Whilst a CV is a useful tool in assessing suitability, a full application form must be completed prior to interview.
- Verbal references may be sought prior to interview, or after the candidate has been asked back for a second interview or a supervised stay and play session. However, written references will be obtained if the candidate is successful in their application and employed by Stepping Stones Pre-school.
- All gaps in employment history will be scrutinised and rigorously explored.
- Probing questions (value based) will be asked of the candidate in order to best judge their views and opinions. In addition, site-specific questions will also be asked of the candidate.
- All appointments will be carried out by a minimum of two members of the management team.
- All prospective and current staff are informed that they have to disclose convictions, etc. before and during employment.
- Confidential records are kept on staff qualification, identity checks, DBS.
- All potential employees will be seen at least two to three times prior to taking up a position with the nursery. All staff are employed on a six-month probation period to ensure they maintain high standards of care and support to children. We provide staff with a handbook and induction training in the first week of employment. This induction includes our health and safety policy and safeguarding children procedures. Other policies and procedures will be introduced within an induction plan.

Settling in Policy

We understand that children are unique, and the amount of time they take to settle at Stepping Stones Pre-school may differ. It is our responsibility to make children feel welcome, safe and secure. Please see the key person policy for our commitment to child - educator relationships and keeping children emotionally and physically safe.

The setting staff will work in partnership with parents/carers to help settle the child into the setting environment.

- When the setting accepts a child, arrangements will be made for a 'Visit' session where the child can familiarise him/herself with the setting with a parent/carer present. During this visit the parent/carer will be requested to complete regulatory paperwork which is required before any child can be left at Stepping Stones. After the paperwork has been completed parents/carers are welcome to stay until they feel their son/daughter is feeling happy and secure, then leave for a short time before returning. This is different for all children and we do not operate a one size fits all policy.
- When a child stays by themselves for the first time, Staff will telephone the parent/carer of new children to give an update and reassure parents.

Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol & Drugs Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.19, 3.56

All staff should be made aware of the provisions of this policy in their induction, including the importance of setting a positive example for children. Any contravention of this policy will lead to disciplinary action.

Drugs or Alcohol

Staff, visitors, students or volunteers who arrive at Stepping Stones Pre-school clearly under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave immediately and disciplinary procedures will be implemented. If staff are found in possession of illegal drugs or alcohol disciplinary procedures will be put in place.

In cases where staff are taking prescribed drugs, which may affect their working efficiency, the staff member must inform the manager as soon as possible. Staff medication will be stored safely in a suitable place, outside of children's reach.

If a member of staff has a good reason to suspect a parent/carer is under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they drop off or collect their child they have a duty to inform the manager. In such circumstances the manager must decide the best course of action to safeguard the child. Where an illegal act is suspected to have taken place the police will be called.

Smoking and Vaping

Smoking and vaping is not allowed on the premises. Staff cannot smoke in the vicinity of the setting and not in uniform. On entering the setting, they must wash their hands thoroughly. Staff, visitors, volunteers and students must never smoke directly in front of the children. Staff are not permitted to smoke when they are on a trip or outing.

Social Networking Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.9, 3.69, 3.70

In light of recent high-profile cases and with regard to safeguarding all the children in our care the Stepping Stones Pre-school management team has decided to issue the following guidelines.

With regard to the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and similar, whilst employed by the setting (including maternity leave) staff, including students and volunteers, MUST be VERY aware of what they are posting and that inappropriate matter will result in disciplinary proceedings including termination of employment in some cases. This also includes supporting unsuitable posts and/or comments.

All staff, including students and volunteers, employed by the setting have a duty of confidentiality at all times. They represent their setting community and as such could inadvertently post unsuitable comments or, for example, staff photos from nights out that could be misrepresented or display the setting in an unfavourable way. Thus, staff, including students and volunteers, must not post anything on these sites that may offend any other member of staff, parent/carer or child. They must not post anything on to a social networking site that refers to their employment at the setting or working in the Early Years profession. They must ensure that their level of security inhibits access to anyone other than accepted contacts.

Staff, including students and volunteers, must remember that social networking sites are highly visible.

Staff, including students and volunteers, employed by the setting are professional and must ensure they keep their home life and work life separate. Any of the above points not adhered to will result in the staff member in question facing disciplinary action and/or the termination of their contract with the setting.

Parents who are contacts of staff on social network sites must be directed to contact Stepping Stones directly if they have any questions about the setting or sessions.

Staff must not privately message parents or carers regarding Stepping Stones issues. Should a parent / carer message a member of staff regarding Stepping Stones issues then they must be redirected to our website, Facebook page or requested to email or telephone. This is to ensure that the information given is correct and consistent.



Staff Babysitting Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.9, 3.69, 3.70 (if setting is assuming responsibility)

If a parent has an arrangement whereby a staff member looks after a child outside the setting hours, this is a private arrangement undertaken by the parent and the staff member concerned. As such, Stepping Stones Pre-school's confidentiality MUST be maintained at all times. Failure to do so could lead to the staff member's dismissal.

Stepping Stones takes no responsibility in any form for this private arrangement.

If the staff member is to take a child out of the setting at the end of their session, the manager needs written parental permission before this occurs.

The staff member and child will not be covered under the setting insurance for any private arrangements and the setting takes no responsibility for this arrangement.

However, if a member of staff is concerned about the child at any time (child protection/safeguarding), they must without delay contact the local children's services.

Staffing, Disciplinary & Employment Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.8, 3.9, 3.19, 3.68, 3.70

Stepping Stones Pre-school provides a high staffing ratio to ensure that all children have sufficient individual attention and to guarantee care and education of a high quality.

All staff are appropriately qualified and are checked for criminal records through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in accordance with Ofsted's requirements.

Aim

To ensure that children and their parents are offered high quality Early Years education.

Methods To meet this aim

We use the following ratios of adult to child:

- Children aged two to three years of age: One adult to four children.
- Children aged three to five plus years of age: One adult to eight children.
- Minimum of two staff/adults are on duty at any one time.
- We use a key person system to ensure each child has a particular member of staff for discussion and consultation.
- We hold regular staff meetings and team meetings to review the efficacy of the curriculum and to discuss children's progress, their achievements and any difficulties, which may arise from time to time.
- We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.
- All of our staff have received a job description, which sets out their roles and responsibilities.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of marital status, age, gender, culture, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. We do not place applicants at a disadvantage by imposing conditions which are not justifiable.
- Staff are employed on a six-month probation period to ensure they maintain high standards of care and support to children.

Staffing, Disciplinary and Employment Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.8, 3.9, 3.19, 3.68, 3.70 187

- The setting staff hold appropriate Early Years qualifications.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff.
- The setting allocates resources to training.
- We provide staff induction training in the first week of employment. This induction includes our health and safety policy and safeguarding children procedures.
- We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervisions and appraisals.
- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.
- We use Ofsted guidance on obtaining references and checks through the DBS for staff.

Stepping Stones Pre-school aims to encourage all staff in various ways to promote good attendance, conduct and to evaluate their own performance. Staff are encouraged to be involved in the running of the setting and feel that they are part of a team.

Disciplinary Procedure At Stepping Stones Pre-school

We recognise that employment law can change rapidly and as such we will always follow the latest legislation. All staff are issued with an employee handbook and should refer to this as necessary.

Intent

It is our intent to deal with all disciplinary matters quickly and fairly for all parties. All matters will be recorded and both parties will have copies.

Procedure

The procedure is designed to establish facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated.

Staffing, Disciplinary and Employment Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.8, 3.9, 3.19, 3.68, 3.70

- At every stage the staff member will be advised of the nature of the complaint.
- The staff member will be given the opportunity to state his or her own case, and be represented or accompanied by a fellow employee of their choice. A staff member will not be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty will normally be dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice.
- A staff member has the right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken against them. The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the alleged misconduct warrants such action. The manager will make every effort to resolve the matter informally, only where this fails will disciplinary action be taken. Disciplinary action will take the form of a pre-disciplinary meeting where all parties can put their points across; the staff member may be accompanied by a colleague. If the matter can still not be resolved then the partners will take the next step in the disciplinary procedure to issue a written warning.

Written Warning

This will state the reason/s for the written warning and note that if there is no improvement after three months, a final written warning will be given. It will also state the right to appeal. A copy of this first written warning will be kept on file for six months and then removed if the company is satisfied with subsequent conduct and/or performance.

Final Written Warning

This will be issued if the matter is still not resolved or attendance or performance has not improved. The final written warning will be given making it clear that any recurrence of the offence or other serious misconduct within a period of three months will result in dismissal. A copy of this final written warning will be kept on file for 12 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance.

Dismissal

Where there is no satisfactory improvement or if further serious misconduct occurs, the staff member will be dismissed.

Staffing, Disciplinary and Employment Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.8, 3.9, 3.19, 3.68, 3.70

Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct includes the following offences:

- Any action relating to the care of a child which in the opinion of the manager or deputies has put the child in danger or breached our duty of care to the child. This would include consistently shouting at a child or group of children, which whilst clearly not a potential cause of danger can cause both emotional and psychological distress, is not acceptable within the setting and as such is considered gross misconduct.
- Theft, fraud, deliberate falsification of company documents.
- Fighting, assaulting another person.
- Deliberate damage to company property.
- Sexual or racial harassment.
- Being unfit for work through alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Gross negligence.
- Gross insubordination.

This list is an example only. While the alleged gross misconduct is being investigated, the staff member may be suspended, during which time the normal hourly rate will be paid. Such suspension is not to be regarded as a form of disciplinary action and will be for as short a period as possible. Any decision to dismiss will be taken only after a full investigation. If it is found that an act of gross misconduct has been committed, the staff member will be dismissed without notice or payment in lieu. Any appeal against a disciplinary decision must be in writing within five working days of the decision being communicated.

Students & Volunteers Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.19, 3.68, 3.70, 3.71, 3.74, 3.75

Stepping Stones Pre-school recognises that the quality of care and activities we offer make an ideal place for students on placement, whether from schools or college childcare courses. We welcome students under the following conditions:

- Students and volunteers will only be offered a place following discussion with a tutor from their place of learning.
- All students and volunteers need to undergo induction training upon starting at the setting.
- All students and volunteers will need to have up-to-date clearance from the Disclosure and Barring service (DBS).
- The manager will need to understand the requirements of the course that the student is taking, as far as possible, in order to provide the opportunity to experience the most relevant aspects of setting life.
- The manager will complete reports and assist the student in achieving their target.
- Students will undergo an induction with the manager to ensure they are aware of Stepping Stones Pre-school's high professional expectations. The manager will enter into a formal written agreement with students and volunteers at the start of the placement agreeing hours of work, dress code and expected behaviour within the setting. Students and volunteers must read and sign the conditions before making a commitment to voluntary work.
- Students and volunteers must never be left alone with any children. All activities will be supervised by a member of staff.
- Any information gained by the student or volunteers either verbally or written must remain confidential.
- Written parental permission must be sought before an observation or child study occurs.
- Stepping Stones can take a maximum of two students or volunteers at a time.
- Students and volunteers on placement should not be counted within the staff to children ratio.
- Students and volunteers are encouraged to ask if they have any queries about the setting, its policies and practices.



Sun Protection Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.44, 3.64

Stepping Stones Pre-school understands the dangers posed to staff and children by over-exposure to the sun. In hot weather parents/carers MUST put sun cream on their child before they arrive at the setting. We will assume that ALL children come into the setting protected with sun cream at the start of their session. In addition to this, staff will apply sun cream to the children as necessary later in the day to ensure their protection. Parents/carers must supply their own sun cream which must be kept within the child's bag, this is for the sole use of their child and should be clearly named (in a named plastic bag if necessary). Parents/carers are also reminded that their child will be required to wear a suitable sun hat before going outdoors. We do have some spare hats that are available to give to children who do not have their own. Staff are encouraged to wear hats when sunny outside, to set a good example.

In hot weather staff will ensure there is plenty of drinking water available both inside and outside. Children will be encouraged to drink water frequently. Staff should ensure that there are also shady areas in the outdoor area. Sun protection will be discussed with all children at the beginning of the summer term and repeated as appropriate. Staff will make sure that the time is limited for children to be outside during peak times during hot periods.

Supervision Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.20, 3.21, 3.22, 3.76

Statement of Intent

At Stepping Stones Pre-school we recognise that supporting staff is essential to their well-being and to their long-term personal and professional development. We wholeheartedly agree with the Plymouth Review and the following recommendations:

- 6.4 Encourage open discussions amongst the staff group about good and poor practice and facilitate constructive challenge of each other
- 8.15 All Early Years teams to have regular supervision which always includes a safeguarding element

During staff supervision as well as in more general situations the following is discussed sensitively, openly and professionally:

- Workload (amount, time, duties etc.)
- Concerns/team issues (worker relationships, well-being in work and out of work, rotas, new ideas, areas of work, safeguarding, children and families).

We make sure to discuss within Supervision, as stated within the EYFS;

- Discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being, including child protection concerns
- Identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- Receive coaching to improve

We have taken on board the EYFS requirements regarding supervision: we see supervision taking place in many forms, such as coaching, training and support. We recognise the value of regular, face-to-face, personal supervision of staff by the manager. Therefore, staff will have face-to-face supervision sessions, the frequency and length determined by how long they have been in post, their qualifications, experience and whether there are any personal or professional concerns that need to be discussed. Managers must discuss safeguarding and staff well-being during the one-to-one supervision sessions. The manager and the staff member will need to record and date any actions which will be kept in the staff members’ file.

Supporting Children with their Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.52, 3.53

We recognise that children's behaviour is a form of communication. We also recognise that children need the skills to manage and self-regulate their behaviour. At Stepping Stones Pre-school we aim to support children to regulate their feelings and behaviour - in line with their personal, social and emotional development - until they are able to self-regulate. This strongly links to British values.

Children's behaviour is supported through daily activities, experiences, routines and boundaries - for example ensuring that children are sat down when eating, and also by providing suitable equipment and resources.

We use carpet time and circle time to discuss how children are feeling and to help children to vocalise boundaries within the setting.

We treat every child's behaviour based on their age, stage and ability. With this in mind, educators have a sound grasp of child development, which helps them ascertain how to respond to children and their behaviour.

The setting's SENCO (**Chanelle Uzzell**) is also the person who is responsible for children's behaviour.

The manager or deputy shall ensure that the parents/carers are fully informed about the support that the setting has given their child.

Corporal punishment (slapping, smacking, or shaking) will never be acceptable practices and will not be used, neither will shaming or humiliating a child.

It may be necessary, on very rare occasions, to use restraining actions to prevent personal injury or serious damage, for example, in an emergency. These incidents will be recorded and shared with the child or children's parents/carers, who will countersign. Ofsted will be notified of serious incidents. Parents/carers should feel free to discuss any concerns they may have with the manager. All matters will be treated in the strictest confidence.

If we are concerned about a child's behaviour, we will reference our safeguarding and child protection policy and inclusion and disabilities policy, to make sure that we are fully supporting every child. We will carry out robust observations of the child throughout the day, identifying any triggers, which will be recorded and shared with parents/carers. This will help educators to further support the child. Depending on the behaviour, we use a range of strategies.

Inappropriate language/swearing:

- Explain that the language should not be used in the setting.
- Model Describe positively with the children the language that they should use.
- Make use of key person time to discuss appropriate language.
- Record and speak to parents if need be.

Gun play and superhero

- Support children with this and have discussions on 'safe play'.
- Support children to give them the 'language' they need to discuss with other children if they do not want to be included.

Supporting Children With Their Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.52, 3.53 208

Sharing and conflict

Stepping Stones has the motto *sharing and caring*. We regularly discuss the notion of sharing and taking turns and remind children to communicate respectfully with each other. We discuss *kind hands, kind hearts and kind thoughts*.

Alongside this, staff use observation and skilful intervention to reduce conflict, for example an intervention may take the following process:

- 1: Approach quickly and calmly stopping any hurtful behaviour
- 2: Acknowledge feelings
- 3: Gather information
- 4: Restate the problem
- 5: Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
- 6: Give follow-up support

Other points to consider:

The educator should role model appropriate language and describe acceptable behaviour -

- Describe the situation.
- I like the way that you are sitting.
- I have noticed that you walked over to the sand tray and put back the shovel.
- You look sad, would you like to tell me what the matter is?

Self regulation

Children are taught calming and breathing techniques through practices such as Yoga, and also to find a safe space in which they can calm themselves. Other techniques to support desired behaviour include giving children a choice in everyday activities: For example: Would you like an apple or a banana?

Supporting Children With Their Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.52, 3.53 208

Self-protection and assertiveness:

We support children to protect themselves, linking with the setting's safeguarding and child protection policy.

- Please stop touching my hair, I don't like it.
- Please can I have my jumper back?

Uncooperative children:

- Listening to children.
- Warning that an activity or experience will change is helpful (how many minutes/ egg timers help).
- Identify children and give support to those who find change difficult.

Biting:

- Firmly say stop.
- Staff will take into consideration the age, stage and ability of the child.
- Pay full attention to the child who has been bitten.
- Give appropriate first aid.
- Record as an incident.
- Use one-on-one time and key person time to show gentle behaviour.

Melt down/tantrums:

- It is important to note that children who are experiencing a meltdown are supported safely and that they cannot harm themselves or others. Try not to reason with the child at this stage.
- Offer a cuddle.
- Once the child has calmed down and if there has been destructiveness, gently discuss with the child how they may help to clear up.

Supporting Children With Their Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.52, 3.53 209

Upset and distressed children:

- Be mindful of children who are settling, experiencing separation and/or a personal family issue as these can affect children's well-being and/or behaviour.
- Key person to be aware and offer appropriate attention and TLC if need be. Discuss with parents' strategies or personal items that offer comfort. Identify the needs of the child and what might help the child. Communication between parents and setting can be helpful in addressing the child's needs.

ABC approach:

We use the ABC approach to identify triggers:

- Antecedents • Behaviour • Consequences

The key person will observe and record children's behaviour in a variety of situations if there is a concern, and share with parents/carers, the colleague who is responsible for behaviour and other professionals if appropriate.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Stepping Stones Pre-school regards bullying of any description as a unique issue. Within this policy for the setting, we expect that everyone will regard each other with respect, whether the individuals are staff, parents/carers or children. Bullying takes many forms, some of which are indicated below, all of which will be challenged and dealt with in an appropriate manner:

- Actual physical assault
- Threatening physical assault
- Criticism and making derogatory comments
- Ostracising individuals
- Keeping silent when an individual approaches
- On-line abuse / cyber bullying
- Prejudice based and/or discriminatory bullying

KCSiE 2021 specifically mentions sexual harassment and although this is rare in early years settings, we nevertheless have regard and due vigilance for it. It also remains a potential issue between staff and adults.

Supporting Children With Their Behaviour Policy

Where a child or children are the instigators of bullying, the setting should make use of the “**behavioural statements**” approach. This depends on the age and level of emotional understanding of the children involved. Children respond more to factual information rather than an adult assuming they understand how someone else feels. Making a statement such as: “You hit Joshua”. “He is hurt”. “He is crying because he is hurt” will have more impact because it is a matter of fact, rather than asking the child how they would feel if it happened to them. Children need to understand that any behaviour has a consequence. Naming emotions helps children to understand their feelings and supporting self-regulation helps children to control unwanted behaviour.

Staff should not feel scared or intimidated whilst carrying out their work. It is expected that parents and visitors will be respectful towards staff and offensive, rude or inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. The setting also takes a very serious view of any adult who threatens staff (verbally, or in writing) or actually carries out a physical assault on another person.

Where offensive, rude, or threatening behaviour or assault takes place

- A member of staff will be instantly dismissed if they are the instigator.
- A parent/carer will be informed that they are no longer welcome at the setting and that another person must be named to drop off and collect their child
- If the situation persists or staff are concerned, then at the Manager's discretion, the parent/carer will be informed that they may no longer use the setting for their child's care. In the event of physical assault then the police will be informed.

If bullying takes the form of criticism or making fun of an individual, again, the behaviour will be challenged and dealt with in a similar manner as physical threats. Stepping Stones Pre-school takes any kind of bullying seriously and all staff will be trained to identify and challenge it appropriately. The long-term consequences of bullying on the self-esteem and confidence of children and adults is serious and will be treated as such.

At no time will a child:

- receive any form of corporal punishment
- be shouted at or intimidated
- be made to appear foolish
- be made to feel bad or devalued
- be deprived of drink or food
- be isolated away from the group or be on their own.

There will be no naughty chair or place in the setting. We do not use 'time out' and use a 'time in' approach. If a child is continuously disruptive this should be brought to the attention of the manager who will meet the parent/carer and agree a plan of action whereby everyone works in partnership to encourage positive behaviour.

Uncollected Child Procedure

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.73

Stepping Stones Pre-school puts the safety of the children first, from the moment they arrive to the moment they leave. At the end each session the setting will make sure that each child is collected by a responsible adult as permitted on the child's registration form.

If any children are not collected at the end of the session the following procedure will be put into place:

The manager should contact the parent/carer, or other designated adult, and use the emergency contact details on the child's form. The manager should leave messages on any answer-phones asking the person to get in contact with the setting immediately, leaving the setting's telephone number. While waiting to be collected the child must be supervised by staff who should support and reassure the child. If contact with a designated adult has not been achieved within one hour, the duty social worker should be contacted

on: 01452 426565 (Children & Families Front door desk)

Out of hours: 01452 614194. (leave message & someone will call back)

A child left uncollected at the setting remains in the charge of the manager. That responsibility can only be discharged by passing the child into the care of another appropriate adult or into the care of the local social services. The statutory responsibility for the child at risk rests with the Children's Services Department. The response of Children's Services in an emergency will vary, depending on the details of each case. If it is not possible to secure practical assistance within a reasonable period, the police should be contacted. The police should be able to offer support, but not take charge of the child.

If the setting building ceases to be available, the parent/carer or alternative carer and social services should be made aware that the child and a member of staff will be waiting at the local police station.

One member of staff must stay with the child until an authorised adult arrives at the police station to collect him/her. The manager should then attempt to leave a phone message with the parents/ carers if the child has been taken to a child protection agency or to the police station.

A note should be left on the door of the building informing the parent/carer in case they turn up.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.73 215

Under no circumstances must a member of staff take a child to their own home, or leave the site with a child (unless taking the child to the police station). Incidents of late collection will be recorded by the manager in the incident book, and reported to the setting owner. The manager must discuss the lateness with the parent/carer and highlight the fact that continued lateness could result in the loss of their child's place at the setting,

Visits & Outings Procedure

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.28, 3.29, 3.30, 3.58, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66, 3.68, 3.72, 3.73

Walks within the local environment may occasionally take place as a learning experience and parents/carers will be informed of these. Permission for such trips is given on the Registration form when children enrol.

Prior to a visit outside of the local area, a member of staff will carry out an exploratory visit of the proposed destination to evaluate any potential difficulties. The manager will ensure that a thorough risk assessment for the outing is completed and signed at the very least 1 week before the outing is to take place. This should take into consideration the journey and transport involved.

Staff will involve children, when possible, in the planning of outings. Staff will explain to the children the objectives of the event and what is expected of them on the outing.

Parental Consent

The manager is responsible for collecting parental consent forms for each child who will be attending the outing. The parents/carers will be given information on the cost, where the outing is going, what the children will be doing when they get there, the mode of transport being used, any special clothing needed and the times of the trip.

Children will be asked to wear Stepping Stones uniform on that day, if they do not have their own then Stepping Stones may request that the parent/carer allows their child to borrow uniform from our stores. This will be returned to us after the trip.

Parental consents are required for any activity where the children have to leave the setting and parents/carers have the absolute right to withhold consent for a proposed visit or outing. Parent/carer Contact Details for the day of the outing will be written and these will be taken on the day by the member of staff in charge.

Morning of Outing

Prior to the commencement of the outing all children will wear a name identity badge on which the name of the setting, address and telephone number are clearly written.

The children should have a pre-outing talk (age and stage appropriate), which should include the following topics:

- Which member of staff is in charge of which children.
- How to behave and what to do on different types of transport.
- Behaviour while out on the visit.
- To always stay with their member of staff and not to wander off.

Visits and Outings Procedure

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.28, 3.29, 3.30, 3.58, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66, 3.68, 3.72, 3.73 221

The manager must nominate a member of staff to be in charge of the trip.

All members of staff on the trip must be informed of the names of all children for whom they have direct responsibility.

The manager should also discuss the following issues with staff prior to the outing:

- In cases of incidents, the setting (manager and/or senior person) should be contacted first and then parents/carers.
- Staff should make sure that children are secure and safe on various modes of transport.
- How to keep the children safe when walking to a venue.
- To return to the setting if a venue appears unsafe.
- Toilet issues.

The person in charge of the trip should ensure that the names of all the children and their parent contact details are listed on the outing form, along with staff details. The staff must have adequate funds for emergencies and phone calls. The setting mobile phone will be taken by the member of staff in charge and parents will be reminded of the phone number in writing.

Children must have all that they need for the outing e.g. packed lunch boxes, coats etc.

The staff must all have the relevant paperwork for the children.

One member of staff is to be responsible for the first aid box.

Outing logs include:

- Who is the leader of the outing.
- Manager or deputy must give signed permission for the outing.
- Time and date of departure, estimated return time, time and date of actual return.
- Names of staff and children.
- Brief description of what the children are wearing.
- Setting identity badge.
- Mobile phone.
- Named paediatric first aiders.
- First aid kit and evaluation.
- Action of outing.

Visits and Outings Procedure

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.28, 3.29, 3.30, 3.58, 3.64, 3.65, 3.66, 3.68, 3.72, 3.73 222

During Visits and Outings

- Children will remain under close supervision at all times.
- The person in charge will ensure that they have a full first aid kit that complies with the Health and Safety Policy.
- Two designated members of staff will have their mobile phones with them in case there is no signal on the staff mobile. Their numbers must also be left with the manager in case of the need for emergency contact.
- A register must be taken at the beginning, middle and end of the outing, with regular head counts throughout the day.

On visits and outings the number of staff required will be as follows:

Outings considered a low risk:

This category includes visits to the theatre, museum or other educational or cultural centres, such as historic buildings where there are no physical activities or proximity to water and where travel will be on foot or by hired or public transport. Minimum of two staff per outing.

Outings considered a high risk (involving hazardous activities):

This category includes visits to recreational and educational activity centres, such as farms, theme parks, fun fairs and seaside. Minimum of three staff per outing. When on a visit to the seaside it is recommended that unless the ratio of adult to child is one to one, no child should be allowed to paddle (up to the child's ankle) in the sea. Under no circumstances should children be allowed to swim in the sea.

Travel Arrangements for Outings

The adult-child ratio will be determined by the mode of transport e.g. bus, train or coach and by the activity to be undertaken at the destination. 'Outings considered being a low and high risk' should be referred to.

If the manager is in doubt as to the ratio that should be used for a specific outing, they should discuss the situation with all staff and the Chair of the committee .

It is recommended to complete an 'Outings Evaluation' at the end of the outing, stating how it went and any issues that need to be considered for future reference.

Whistle Blowing Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements / 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.68, 3.69, 3.70, 3.72, 3.73, 3.74, 3.75, 3.76

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, commonly called the Whistleblowing Act, provides protection for staff who disclose information on wrongdoing at work that might otherwise be seen as confidential.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. However, where an individual discovers information that is believed to show malpractice or wrongdoing within Stepping Stones Pre-school, then this information should be disclosed without fear of reprisal and may be made independently of line management and the setting. For example, staff should be aware that they can contact Ofsted.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed for the questioning of financial or business decisions taken by the setting, nor may it be used to reconsider any matters that have already been addressed under harassment, complaint or disciplinary procedures. It is expected that staff will use this policy rather than air their complaints outside the setting.

The setting will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential as long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required. This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered at the discretion of the setting owner.

Procedures for Making a Disclosure

The individual should usually make the disclosure to their designated manager or deputy. If the concern is in regard to either of the above, then the disclosure should be made to the Chair of the Committee. This person will consider the information made available to them and decide on the form of investigation to be undertaken. Normally the person making this decision will take into account the views of at least one other member of staff. The decision may be:

- to investigate the matter internally
- to refer the matter to the police.

Whistleblowing Policy

If the decision is that investigations should be conducted by more than one of these means, the designated person should be satisfied that such a course of action is warranted, the possibility of double jeopardy notwithstanding. Investigations should not be carried out by the person who will have to reach a decision on the matter. Any investigation will be conducted as sensitively and speedily as possible.

As a result of this investigation other internal procedures may be invoked, such as:

- Disciplinary
- Grievance or complaints
- Harassment
- Or it might form the basis of a special investigation.

In some instances, it might be necessary to refer the matter to an external authority for further investigation. In particular, cases alleging fraud. The designated person will inform the individual making the disclosure what action, if any, is to be taken. If no action is to be taken then the individual concerned should be informed of the reason for this and allowed the opportunity to remake the disclosure to another appropriate person. The person or persons against whom a disclosure is made will be told of it, the evidence supporting it and will be allowed to comment before any investigation is concluded or further action commenced. A report of all disclosures and any subsequent actions taken will be made by the designated person, who will retain such reports for a specified period of time. We are aware of the NSPCC Whistleblowing advice line for professionals <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

If an employee or volunteer feels that the matter cannot be discussed with the managers then Ofsted can be contacted by email- whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or by phone on **0300 123 1231**