



STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL

WELCOME PACK

Children at Stepping Stones enjoy an inspiring learning environment and they thrive in this caring, nurturing pre-school. Their behaviour is exemplary and staff are excellent role models with high expectations.

Jan Harvey, OFSTED Inspector

Mission Statement

We are the '**Stepping Stone**' between home and school, with children's wellbeing at the heart of all 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 'learning through play' and supporting children to make the next steps in life towards becoming independent, curious, confident and motivated life-long learners.

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Contact Details



Stepping Stones Pre-school, School Road, Dursley, Glos., GL11 4NZ Telephone (9-2pm): **01453 544588**
Email address: www.steppingstones001@btconnect.com

Our website address is www.steppingstonesdursley.org.uk where you can find more information about us and also access our policies. We also have a Facebook page **Stepping Stones Pre-School**, please 'Like' us to receive updates.



Our latest Ofsted report can be accessed at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/> Our URN is 101730.

Sessions – Monday to Friday

Stepping Stones sessions are for children aged from 2yrs 6m - 5 years; sessions run from 9.00 – 2pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Wednesday sessions are shorter and more suitable for our younger learners (9.00-12 noon). Friday 'Rising Fives' sessions are reserved for children in their pre-school year. Children stay until 2pm bring a packed lunch with them.

Rising Fives – Friday

Children who will be attending Dursley Primary Academy at the beginning of the *next* academic year can join our Rising Fives sessions on Fridays. We have close links with Dursley Primary Academy and have excellent transition arrangements to support and familiarise children with the school and teachers before they start in September. Rising Fives sessions run on Fridays from 9.00am till 2.00pm. Children bring a packed lunch.



Costs and Funding

Our fees are £20 for a morning session (9-12) and £30 per full day (subject to an annual review each September). Payment is due **in advance** and is invoiced monthly. Once booked, all sessions must be paid, whether your child has attended or not (please see our *Payment Policy*). Should you experience any difficulty with payment of fees then please speak to Allison who will discuss a payment scheme with you.

- **School Funds**

Families are required to pay school funds, equivalent to £1 per session attended. This works out at approximately £20 per half term. This helps us to provide wholesome snacks and a range of exciting activities and resources for the children. You will receive an invoice each half-term.

- **Government Funding**

Currently children become eligible for 15 hours of funded childcare per week *from the term following their third birthday*, (any additional hours are charged at our standard rate of £5.00 per hour). Some working parents can claim up to 30 hours of funded childcare – see [here](#) or check www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Once your son/daughter qualifies for free funding, Stepping Stones will handle the paperwork for you. We will provide you with a form to sign and complete and this will enable us to claim the grant directly. Funding may be shared with up to one other setting your child attends.

Funding for 2 Year Olds – Achieving 2 Year Old (A2YO) (Until April 2024)

Some children qualify for **A2YO** funding. This entitles parents to access 15 hours of **funded** childcare from the term after the child's 2nd birthday. If you believe you may be entitled to free child care for a child aged 2 please visit [Glos CC website](#) or go to www.childcarechoices.gov.uk or www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk. Alternatively contact the Family Information Service on 0800 542 02 02 or 01452 427362 for more information (you may need your National Insurance number). If you are entitled to A2YO funding you will be given a code beginning TYF which you will need to pass on to Stepping Stones. We can accept children with A2YO funding once they are 2 years 6 months.

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Waiting List

We operate a waiting list when the maximum number of children are attending each session, and for children who are not yet 2 years 6 months but would like to attend Stepping Stones when they are old enough. The waiting list is operated according to our *Admissions Policy*.

Should you wish to apply for extra sessions for your child then please ask a member of staff and your child can be put on a waiting list for any available places.

Childcare Costs

Families who do not yet receive the Nursery Education Grant may still be entitled to help with the cost of Stepping Stones' sessions:

Eligibility

Stepping Stones accept Childcare vouchers/Nursery vouchers and families who receive Universal credit may qualify for help with childcare or be entitled to Tax Free Childcare if:

- you are responsible for the child
- the childcare you pay for is registered or approved (we are)
- you work the right number of hours for childcare tax credits

Registered or approved care The childcare must be registered or approved (you will need to state our URN, which is 101730). 'Childcare' can include care provided at home, in school or another place by a childminder, playscheme, nursery or club etc. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs>

Admissions procedure and settling in period

During your initial visit a member of staff will discuss the information in this Welcome Pack with you in more detail and this is a good opportunity for you to ask any questions or discuss any queries you may have. We have an 'Open Door' policy here at Stepping Stones, and you are welcome to stay for all or part of a session until your child feels settled and secure – this is different for all children and we are guided by their needs. We understand this can be just as difficult for parents/carers as for the children and we always give parents a call to let them know how their children are settling. A registration form **MUST** be completed for all children before they can be left in our care. The children call all the staff by their first names and the staff will find out and use favourite names of the children.

In certain circumstances (such as happened during COVID 19 pandemic) policies may be introduced that will supersede usual policies or procedures, such as our Open Door policy.

Safety

Children's safety is of utmost importance to us. Locked gates in the playground ensure that only staff, parents/carers and permitted visitors are admitted into Stepping Stones. **NO** cars are permitted inside the school gates during school hours and **parents/carers are not allowed to park inside the school grounds at any time.**



The walkway gate is closed and opened by a member of Stepping Stones at the beginning and end of sessions so please ensure that you arrive promptly at dropping off and collecting times. If you need to access Stepping Stones at any other time, please press the button at the bottom of the keypad (situated on the left of the walkway gate) and a member of staff will let you in. If you experience any difficulty please telephone 01453 544588

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Parent/Carer and Staff Partnership

At Stepping Stones, we actively encourage participation from parents/carers as we recognise that parents know their children best. Staff and Committee are always open and happy to hear your points of view, ideas and suggestions.

Handover information

Staff and parents exchange information at the beginning and end of the session so that we have the most up to date information about your children. You **must** tell us if someone else will be collecting your child and they must use the password you have given to us. You must also let us know if children have been given medicine that morning. It is helpful if you share any significant issues, happenings or concerns you may have as they can affect a child's well-being and/or their emotions and behaviour.

Late or Non-Collection

If you are going to be late to collect your son or daughter, please telephone us and let us know asap so that we know everything is ok and we can reassure your child. We will try and call you but if we don't hear from you within 15 minutes we will telephone the emergency contacts listed on your Registration form. If we cannot get in touch with the nominated contacts then we will wait for 1 hour before calling the Children's Helpdesk for support. If you ask someone else to collect your child, you must let us know and they will need to use the password you specified.

WOW cards

We use Wow cards to celebrate children's achievements and to support links between home setting and Stepping Stones. WOW Cards are on the signing in table for you to help yourselves (or ask a member of staff). Please fill them in and send them back to Stepping Stones whenever your child has done something special and deserves a WOW! 'Something special' could be that your child has achieved something for the first time, was helpful at home, listened well or did something you feel they deserve a WOW! for. These cards will be shared at Registration time each morning and displayed on our WOW board.

Key Person system

At Stepping Stones we operate a '**key person**' system where each child is assigned a key staff member who cares for, and works closely with your son or daughter to support their learning and development and follow their progress. The key person will build a warm relationship to ensure your child feels secure, and to provide familiarity and consistency. They will get to know your child, finding out their likes, dislikes, preferred learning styles etc and complete their personal Tapestry Learning Journey. Each key person liaises with either the Manager or Deputy to ensure support and continuity for all children. We hold **2 year review** meetings for children who have not yet turned 3, where parents/carers can discuss their child's progress and development with their own key person in more depth. Staff are always available to talk confidentially to parents/carers about their child and will provide a quiet area for this. In order to keep to the full staff/child ratio of supervision, the end of the session may be the most appropriate time for longer chats, however, **please do share any relevant important info at drop off time.**

Tapestry & your child's learning journey

At Stepping Stones we use an on-line learning journey called 'Tapestry'. Through Tapestry you are able to instantly view your children's achievements, progress and photos through a secure and downloadable app.

When new observations, photos or comments are added you will receive a notification keeping you up to date with information about your child. Parents are requested to contribute to their child's Tapestry - adding their own comments/photos regarding activities that take place at home. This enables us to build on familiar activities, encourage discussion and extend children's interest and enjoyment. It also makes the learning journey a more

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complete and rounded picture of your child's early years. At the end of term, the information and photos will be sent to you as a PDF for you to download and keep or share with family. We also upload newsletters and information to Tapestry.

Barley Bear

We have a resident teddy named 'Barley', who goes on home adventures with the children.

Committee

Parents/carers and families can also input their views and actively take part in running our group through joining our Committee. An AGM is held annually which all parents/carers are welcome to attend. We hold meetings half-termly and occasional fundraising events.



Suggestion Box

A suggestion box is provided on the signing in table; we welcome any suggestions you would like to make.

Parent Questionnaire

A parent questionnaire is also sent out annually to help ensure we are addressing families' needs.

2 year check

All children aged 2 who attend Stepping Stones, will receive a progress check on their development. This will be carried out in conjunction with parents/carers and will be undertaken with your child's keyperson. This check is to ensure your son/daughter is making appropriate development in the 3 prime areas of learning (see Early Years Foundation Stage info at back of this pack) and identify any potential needs early on.

Special Educational Needs

At Stepping Stones, we understand that children who have special or additional educational needs will have their needs met most appropriately when staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the unique and individual needs of each child. This is achieved through dialogue and building two-way relationships with parents/carers. **The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in our setting is Chanelle Uzzell**, supported by Allison Brisland.

Staff and parents work together with relevant professionals, which may include Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, GP/Paediatrician, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist and professionals from any other setting that your son/daughter may attend, to ensure that their learning needs are met most appropriately.

We follow the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, and our *Special Educational Needs policy* is available for parents/carers to read in the Policies on our website. This is subject to continuous review as statutory and procedural issues can be subject to frequent change.

Equal Opportunities

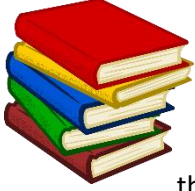
Stepping Stones endeavours to be fully inclusive and actively promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children and adults. We recognise that children's attitudes towards others are established in their early years and we value all children and their families - never discriminating against adults or children on the grounds of gender, religion, ethnicity or ability. Staff will challenge actions or words which do not align with our policy.

Staff and the children's families work together to share information about cultures, home languages, play activities and children's specific needs and preferences. Our *Equal Opportunities policy* is available for parents/carers to read in the Policy document which is available on our website (link on first page of this booklet).

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What is PATA? (Parent and Toddler Association)

We subscribe to the Gloucestershire branch of PATA. All parents of children who attend Stepping Stones are also supported by PATA. PATA can provide information, support and relevant training courses to all members. A regular newsletter is displayed on our noticeboard along with contact telephone numbers should you have anything you wish to discuss with them.



Stepping Stones Library: Bags of Books

We operate a book borrowing scheme whereby after each session parents/carers and their children can choose 1 or 2 books to take home and keep for up to a week. We provide bags to help you transport the books and keep them safe (these remain the property of Stepping Stones and we request they are returned when children leave). Please write in the book when you borrow and return books.

Research has shown that looking at books together and reading with children in their early years increases their reading skills and language development by up to eight months. This in turn boosts their achievement across all areas of learning. We have some helpful information and tips on our website on how to make the most of reading with your children.

Hello! from the Team

On the following pages you will find some information on each member of staff at Stepping Stones. All our staff are qualified to Level 3 or above, and are supported to continue their professional development and training. The team is very dedicated to caring for your children and we value all children as individuals. We offer a warm, nurturing, caring and positive environment in which all children are given individual support and encouragement to further their development and help them achieve their potential.

Stepping Stones follows the **Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS)** and we recognise the importance of children having broad and varied experiences - learning through play both indoors and outdoors in appropriately safe and opportunity-rich environments. We refer to a range of pedagogies to support children's learning and development and include both child-led and adult guided activities.

The staff hold regular meetings to ensure that best practice is achieved the children's developmental and emotional needs are met. Parents are kept informed through regular newsletters and meetings and parents' contributions are valued and actively welcomed.



Details of all staff qualifications can be found in the file marked 'Staff Qualifications' on the signing-in table. All staff are DBS checked and hold up to date certificates for statutory training in First Aid and Safeguarding Children (child protection) and also Food Safety Hygiene.

A little bit about our fantastic staff team...

Allison Brisland - Manager

I first became involved with Stepping Stones when I joined the committee where I helped out with fundraising and gained valuable business experience. In 2004, I became Deputy Manager here and held this post for a number of years before becoming Manager. Previously, I had worked at Uley Playgroup and also as a child minder looking after children in my home. After gaining a number of qualifications I studied for a Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies. I strongly believe in the importance of play in early years education and that children thrive in a nurturing environment where they have secure attachments and plenty of opportunities to explore their world.

Chanelle Uzzell - Deputy Manager

I joined Stepping Stones in 2021 having worked at another local preschool for a number of years where I gained my Level 3 qualification and was Room Leader, SENCO and Acting Deputy when needed. I am enthusiastic and have a passion for Early Years, with a particular interest in story-telling, outdoor play, gardening and sport. I am the SENCO at Stepping Stones and I am currently studying for Level 5 qualification.

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Rosie Brisland – Early Years Educator






I volunteered at Stepping Stones during my GCSE's and also while I studied Level 3 Health & Social Care. I began working at Stepping Stones as bank staff and I enjoyed it so much that in 2019 I began an Apprenticeship and have now qualified as a Level 3 Early Years Educator. I was thrilled to be awarded Early Years Apprentice of the Year 2023 by my training provider. I hope to continue working with children while I study for a degree.

Miranda Tyson – Early Years Educator

I have 2 sons and a daughter at secondary school. Before joining Stepping Stones in 2020, I worked as a Teaching Assistant in Reception; prior to this I worked as a 1:1 practitioner supporting children with SEN. I have Level 3 Early Years Educator qualification and a particular interest in SEN. I am the Inclusion Champion for the setting.

We are regularly joined by students and volunteers. All regular visitors are DBS checked.

Our Daily Routine (flexible)

9.00 am		Session begins. Staff greet children in the playground as they say goodbye to their parents/carers. Once inside, children hang their coats on their own pegs, before posting their name card into our post box. We begin with a group activity and welcoming all the children.
9.20 am		Freeplay/freeflow LEARNING THROUGH PLAY. Children access a range of free play activities and resources. We operate 'free-flow' play, enabling children to play inside and outside as they wish, in one of our outdoor play areas. Please bear in mind we play outdoors in all weathers! Skilful engagement and interactions from practitioners support children to develop their understanding, thinking skills and knowledge.
10.15 am		5-minute notice for tidy up time
10.20 am		Tidy up time. The children and staff help to tidy up together, often to some music
10.30 am		Group activity – songtime / game The children have the opportunity to choose songs and take part in circle songs together or we enjoy a group games.
10.40 am		Snack-time (see sample menu). Children wash their hands before going into the snack room to find their name card on the tables. The children can help themselves to a drink of water or milk and are offered a selection of healthy snacks, including carbohydrate, a variety of fruit and finally some cheese. We have a group snack as we find this supports children's social skills and development.
 11.00am		Freeplay children continue to enjoy a range of child led and adult supported activities throughout the day
11.45 am		Story time. The children listen to a story and sing the goodbye song to the children leaving the session.
12.00 noon		Morning session finishes. Parents collect their child from our playground. 
12.10		Afternoon Registration
12.20		Lunch-time. The children wash their hands and are supported to independently manage their lunch boxes, packets and cartons. This encourages their self-reliance and dexterity - promoting self-esteem, independence and motor skills. Children tidy away their lunch boxes as they finish and continue playing
1pm		Practitioners often undertake small group activities or adult led or guided activities such as parachute games/music time
1.45 – 2pm		Story time and then HOME!

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Sample Snack Menu

DAY	FOOD OFFERED		DRINK
	Carb & Protein	Fruit	
Monday	Toast, cheese	apple, melon, satsuma	Water, Milk
Tuesday	Crackers, cheese	kiwi fruit, banana, apple	Water, Milk
Wednesday	Breadsticks, cheese	apple, banana, grapes	Water, Milk
Thursday	Rice cakes, cheese	blueberries, apple, banana	Water, Milk
Friday	Pitta bread, cheese	grapes, cucumber, banana	Water, Milk

A variety of seasonal fruit and vegetables are offered; after eating fruit the children are offered some cheese to help keep their teeth healthy.

It is a legal requirement that parents are notified of specific allergy information for all food and drink we provide. Please see below the relevant allergy advice for the snacks we provide. It is important that you inform us if your child has an allergy to a particular food.

- cream crackers - wheat, no nuts
- breadsticks - wheat, no nuts, may contain sesame seeds
- Vitalite spread - no dairy, no soya
- wholemeal/pitta bread - wheat
- Cheese - dairy

Snacks offered may also reflect festivals, customs, themes and practices e.g. Lunar New Year & Easter in which case we will let you know in advance of the relevant allergy information.

Birthday cakes – we celebrate birthdays by singing to the children and they have candles to blow out but we request that Parents/carers do NOT bring celebration cakes or sweet treats due to allergies and guidelines. Thankyou



Guidelines for Lunchtime Sessions

Staff are passionate that children have nourishing food that fuels their bodies and brains for learning and developing. It is vital that healthy eating habits are instilled from a young age and a nutritious, balanced diet is essential to children’s long-term health and development. Good nutrition is also associated with improved learning and behaviour. We fully support the requirement of EYFS 2021 to promote the good health, including the oral health, of children attending the setting. Meals, snacks and drinks provided by parents should be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

For information on healthy lunch boxes please visit www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/lifestages/children.html or www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes#lunchbox-recipes

- Please label ALL belongings and include a spoon and/ or cutlery if needed.

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- Please send a packed lunch and a **drink of water** with your child in a clearly **named** lunchbox. Unfortunately, we cannot heat any food for children. Please do not send squash or sugary drinks. NO fizzy drinks allowed.
- The children will be encouraged to manage their lunchboxes independently - unwrapping sandwiches, opening cartons and packets etc. We do, of course, support children until they become more able.

*It would be helpful to your children if you wrap food **loosely** (no knots!) **and provide boxes etc that children can open themselves** – this builds independence, self-reliance and helps them feel a sense of achievement. **It will help your children if you practice these skills at home with them.***

- In line with government healthy eating guidelines, we strongly encourage parents to pack **healthy** lunchboxes, **avoiding relying on processed foods and foods containing lots of sugar or salt** (see websites above)
- Remember that children's oral health is also affected by their diet. **5g sugar = 1 teaspoon**
Read the labels on foods carefully as sugar can be listed as many things including *sucrose, glucose, fructose, dextrose, maltose, corn or rice syrup and barley malt*. Sugary foods are less harmful when consumed at meal times than when given as a snack or treat. NO sweets are allowed and chocolate should only be eaten at mealtimes.

A balanced lunch includes:

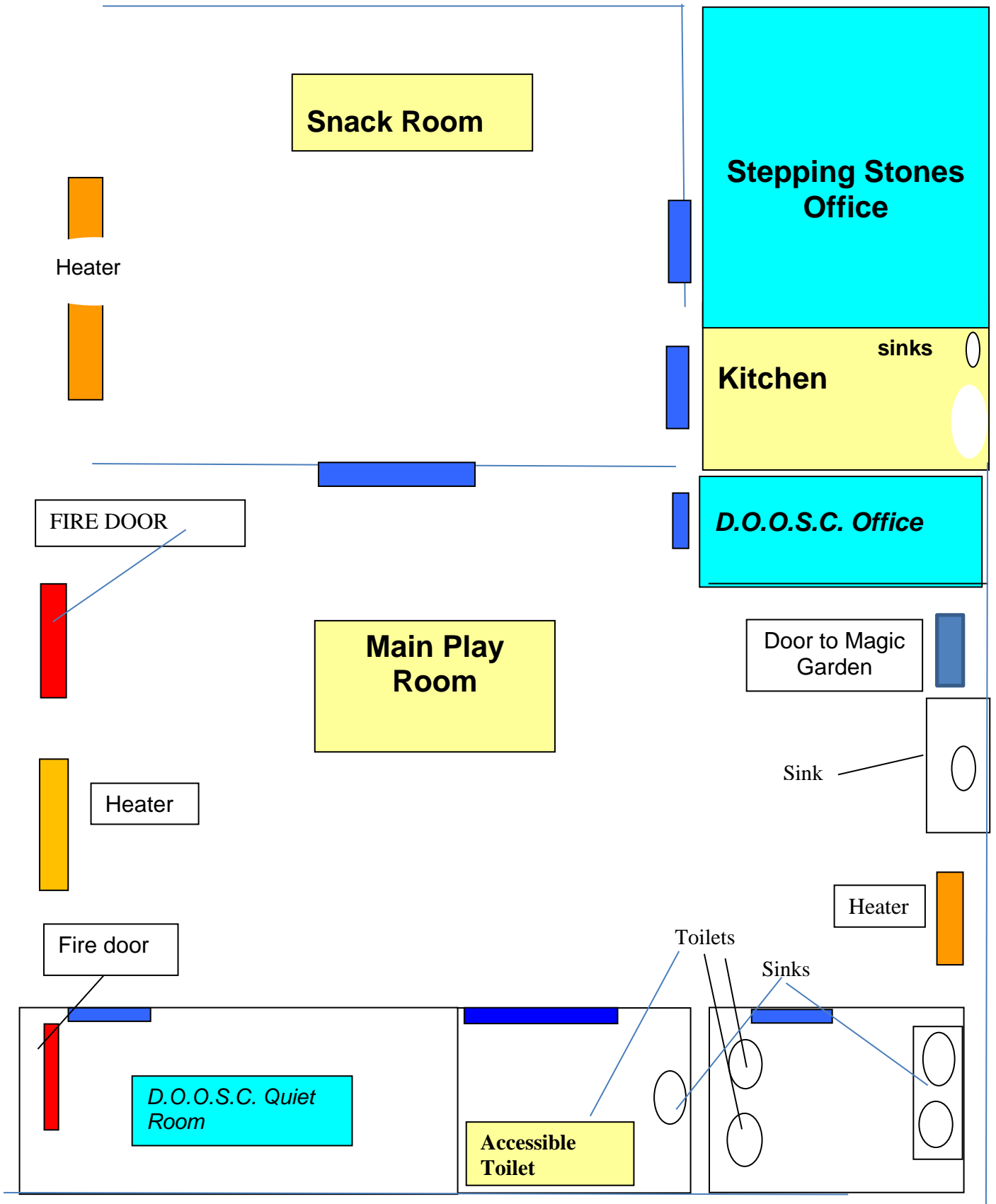
- ✓ **carbohydrate** for energy - such as sandwiches, wraps, crackers, pasta, breadsticks, pitta bread etc
- ✓ **protein** (cheese, meat, egg, fish, hummus, dairy etc)
- ✓ **fruit and/or vegetables.**

Some yoghurts and fromage frais have high sugar content, as do smoothies and some cartons of drink, so please check these before including them.

To avoid choking: Please make sure that small items such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, sausages and olives are cut up small enough so as not to be a choking hazard (cut in half lengthways or into quarters). Do not give children mini eggs.

- We talk about healthy eating and nutrition with the children during snack-time and lunchtime and from time to time, children receive certificates for bringing healthy lunchboxes. We enjoy visits from the Tooth Fairy (dental nurse) who comes to teach the children about healthy, tooth-friendly foods through interactive games etc.
- Food is expensive; to reduce waste and for children's benefit, **please DO NOT overfill lunch boxes**. Although your child may 'graze' at home we find that in a busy environment, children are daunted by a large selection and a lot of food is wasted. In our experience, **children eat better when they have a manageable amount in their lunchboxes.**
- We always encourage children to eat the healthier items from their lunchbox before having the treats or less healthy food. Please bear in mind that we do have a substantial snack during the morning. We return used cartons etc for you to be aware how much food your child has consumed.
- We are unable to cold store any lunchboxes and as a precaution we request that you please include an ice-pack in your child's lunchbox - this is especially important during the summer months.
- We have children with differing medical and dietary issues at Stepping Stones and due to the possibility of severe allergic reaction we respectfully ask parents to avoid packing nut products such as peanut butter, or chocolate/hazelnut spread. Thank you.

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Safety at Stepping Stones

Please see below for tips for parents/carers and visitors to help keep Stepping Stones' environment safe for our children. Please be alert for possible dangers and notify staff if anything concerns you.

- Your children must be supervised at all times. **At drop off time please make sure they are safely with a member of staff before leaving.**
- **No Parking** inside the school gates at any time.
- Firmly shut gates and doors behind you to prevent children getting out or inappropriate people getting in. When leaving the premises PLEASE MAKE SURE THE WALKWAY GATE IS CLOSED BEHIND YOU.
- Please sign in and out when entering and leaving the premises.
- If you take pushchairs into the building, make sure that the wheels are clean and they do not block any doorways or aisles.
- Please supervise younger children carefully, as their safety and the safety of other children is our priority.
- Safety mats should always be used around climbing frames and every effort should be made to keep them in place.
- Any spills from sand, water, or toilet area, should be cleared regularly to prevent slips.
- Scattered small toys should be tidied regularly to prevent tripping.
- Children are required to bring a fitted cycling helmet from home in order to play on the balance bikes and scooters.
- All equipment should be securely stored when not in use.
- Any standing equipment e.g. painting easels, book cases, climbing frames, should be checked to ensure they are secure.
- Doorways and fire exits should be kept clear at all times.
- Always be aware of fire procedure and fire exits (policies are available in setting and on line).
- Staff should be alerted to any broken equipment or toys.
- All hot drinks should be kept in the kitchen area.
- No children should be permitted in the kitchen area.
- There is a strict no smoking/no vaping policy which also applies to the outdoor area of the school grounds.
- **Mobile phones MUST be switched off OR left in the office – please ensure you read our policy regarding use of mobile phones and other media devices**



Accidents can happen but adhering to the points above will ensure that your child and others have an enjoyable time safely.

Opening time

The doors are opened at 9.00am. The staff cannot look after children any earlier because they are preparing for the days' activities and are unable to supervise children during this time. There is a 'signing in' book at the entrance which parents are legally required to sign on arrival with their child and again when they leave the session - please ensure that you write the time of arrival and departure. There is also a section for additional comments. Staff will come and greet your child and bring them in as we have found this helps children to separate more happily and also avoids large groups of people gathering inside. However, if your child needs additional support or you wish to speak to a member of staff then please feel free to come in.



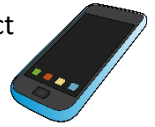
End of Session

Please arrive promptly at the end of the session - the gates are opened just before 12.00/ 2pm. Any new notices will be displayed on the notice board. A summary of the days' activities and any notices will be written on a white-board. Staff are available at the end of the session to talk over any questions or queries you may have. Please let us know ASAP if you are going to be late. **If an alternative contact is collecting your son/daughter this must be discussed with a member of staff in advance.** We operate a password system when other people are picking up your children.

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Contact

It is important that parents/carers ensure that someone is available on the number they have left as emergency contact during the time their child is at Stepping Stones. The Staff MUST be able to contact someone in the case of an emergency. **Please update emergency contact numbers regularly.** There is also a special section in the signing in book if you have any special notes for that day. Please ensure that you seek permission from people you list as your emergency contacts and that they give permission for us to record their contact details.



Illness / Sick Children

Please do not send your child to Stepping Stones if they are unwell or running a temperature. Please consider others - sometimes we have children in our sessions with compromised immune systems. We have a 'sick children' policy for parents to read and we are bound by Government policy to exclude children with certain illnesses, for example, **children with vomiting and diarrhoea should be kept away from Stepping Stones for 48 hours following the last episode.** A comprehensive list of excludable illnesses can be found in the policy.

You must let us know if children have been given medicine before coming to Stepping Stones. *Children who have a fever or who are reliant on Calpol should **stay at home.*** If a child becomes unwell during the session, then we will call parents/contacts to collect them. Please bear in mind that we work to strict ratios and if staff are absent due to illness, we cannot always meet these ratios.

Known absences - Any known absences, such as holidays or extended illness, **please inform staff by email**

Help from parents/carers

We positively welcome help from parents/carers and their families. This is mainly volunteering your time, skills etc. If you feel you could help in any way please see a member of the staff or committee. We always need extra help for fundraising events.

Uniform - Sweatshirts and polo shirts

Stepping Stones has a voluntary uniform which is royal blue with our logo embroidered on the left-hand side, it is sold at cost price - sweatshirts are £9.00 and polo-shirts are £8.00. They help to keep daytime clothes clean and paint free! We sometimes have good quality second hand sweatshirt and Polo shirts available for a reduced price.

Uniform is available to order, please see a member of staff. Second hand uniform may be available at any time.

Please ensure that all children's clothes and belongings are named – especially coats, bags, lunchboxes, hats /helmets etc. as these can easily become misplaced or confused with other children's belongings.

Clothes/Children's Bags We can be a messy bunch here at Stepping Stones so we recommend that your child brings a backpack (no carrier bags please) with a spare set of clothes (or two!) Please pack extra pairs of socks/pants (especially when toilet training). We do have some spare clothes should children need them, but they often feel more comfortable wearing their own.

We play outside in all weathers so please send children with appropriate clothing and footwear. Children who wear wellies may like to bring some comfy shoes for indoors. Children need secure shoes for running around and climbing. We keep our rooms well ventilated even in winter, so please make sure children have warm clothes and plenty of layers.

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In the summer, please make sure children have sun hats. Please apply sun cream to children BEFORE coming to Stepping Stones (we recommend the lotion that lasts all day). If you would like us to re-apply it later on, please put it in a *named* bag and make staff aware.



Cycling Helmets To promote children's safety, we require children to bring fitted cycling helmets (named) in order to play on our balance bikes and scooters. We will not share helmets between children. Children who do not have a helmet can still play on our trikes and cars. Please ensure they are a snug fit.

Nappies/Wipes If your child wears nappies please bring spares and wipes each day in a *named* bag as these are not provided. Staff will support your son / daughter with toilet training once this has begun at home. If you have any concerns please speak to a member of staff.

For tips on toilet training visit <https://www.eric.org.uk/pages/category/potty-training>

Management & Committee Information for Parents/carers

Stepping Stones is a charitable, parent-led group which means that it belongs to, and is run by the parents/carers of the children who attend. This is done through an elected, volunteer Committee, who work in conjunction with the Manager and staff to make decisions that will benefit the children and their families. The committee is supported by PATA who advise and offer support and training. A new committee is elected each year at our AGM, which is held in the Autumn Term. Parents are expected to attend, and it is a requirement that at least 3 parents volunteer as Officers of the committee (see below).

It is essential that we have a dedicated Committee for Stepping Stones to remain as well-run and organised as possible, which in turn frees up time for the staff to spend with your children. The Committee also employs the staff and carries out associated duties.

Everyone is welcome to join the committee - this ensures that **everyone's** views are represented, and everybody is included. It also ensures a close partnership between parents and staff. Staff value Parents/carers as essential partners in providing quality early years education for your children.

The following information details the roles taken on by members of the Committee. It also shows how the support of the parents/carers ensures that the upkeep of Stepping Stones is maintained:

- The Committee is made up of a minimum of 3 officers (Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer). The Officers and members are elected once a year at the AGM (Annual General Meeting), held in October.
- There are at least 2, but no more than 9, elected members of which a minimum of 60% must be parents/carers. If decided by the Committee, there may be up to a maximum of 3 co-opted members (members that are invited onto the Committee who are not parents/carers of children at Stepping Stones).
- Meetings are held regularly, usually once every half term. During these meetings, members will vote on various issues concerning the running of Stepping Stones. The Chairperson will have the casting vote if necessary.

STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework is a government document that all Ofsted-registered early years providers and schools in England must follow. It sets standards for the learning, development and care of your child from birth to 5 years old or to the end of their Reception year at school. The standards ensure your child will learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

What Will My Child Be Learning?

The EYFS framework outlines [7 areas of learning and development](#) and [educational programmes](#). The EYFS was updated in September 2021 (rev. 2023) putting additional focus on the importance of children's early communication, language and vocabulary and includes a new requirement to teach children about oral health and raise awareness of this within families

There are [three prime areas](#) of learning, which are particularly important for your child's development and future learning:

Communication & Language

Personal, Social & Emotional

Physical Development

There are [four specific areas of learning](#), through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the world

Expressive Art & Design

All areas of learning are inter-linked. Early years practitioners also use your child's [needs and interests](#) to plan challenging and enjoyable activities and experiences.

How Will My Child Be Learning?

The EYFS framework identifies [the essential role of play in your child's development](#). It is through both child-led play and adult guided play that your child will develop confidence and relationships with others. Through play, Stepping Stones' practitioners will help your child to extend their vocabulary and develop their communication skills.

The EYFS framework identifies three [characteristics of effective teaching and learning](#):

Playing & Exploring

Active Learning

Creating & Thinking Critically

A greater focus on teaching specific skills will occur once your child starts school, which will help them to prepare for year one (Key stage 1).

How Will I Know How My Child Is Doing?

Each child in the EYFS has a [Key Person](#) who will work in partnership with you, sharing information about your child and may use observations to share your child's key achievements. Stepping Stones' staff use their professional knowledge to understand your child's level of development. If they have any concerns about your child's progress, they will discuss these with you.

STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL

Three formal assessments take place during the EYFS:

Early Years settings - Stepping Stones

1. [Two-Year Progress Check](#) - this will happen between the ages of 24 to 36 months and focuses on the 3 *prime* areas of development. It takes place with the Key person with consultation and involvement from parents and carers and helps to identify if a child needs extra help in any of these areas of their development.

School

2. [Reception Baseline Assessment](#) (at the start of the reception year)

3. [Early Years Foundation Stage Profile](#) (at the end of the EYFS/reception year)

Your child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will be shared with you at the end of the EYFS. This will inform you of your child's progress and whether they have met, or are continuing to work towards their early learning goals (ELGs).

**At Stepping Stones we believe children
learn through play and by having fun**

Websites you may find useful:

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/

<https://www.gov.uk/get-childcare>

<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-tax-credits/eligibility>

www.ofsted.gov.uk/

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/earlyyears>

<http://www.netmums.com/>

www.pataglos.org.uk/

www.saferinternet.org.uk

www.internetmatters.org/advice/0-5/

www.internetmatters.org/advice/sharenting-tips-for-parents/

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/2019/09/resources-for-parents/>

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf>

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/preschooldevelopmentandlearning/nurseriesplaygroupsreceptionclasses/dg171007>

There is also information on our website around common parenting issues such as toilet training, settling your children, the value of messy play, positive parenting strategies, healthy lunchbox ideas etc. Please ask a member of staff for more information.

On the following pages you will find information about our Complaints Procedure. Remember, our full policy file can be accessed on line and a copy is available from the office.

STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Mobile Phones, Cameras & other Media

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.

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.

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 and promote 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 relating to online safety for children.

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 journeys as photographic observations. This will only be permitted if the parents of all children captured have given written permission. These photographs and learning journeys are not to be taken off the premises by staff at any time.

Once the photographs are printed or uploaded the image shall 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.

We take internet safety seriously and teach the children how to keep themselves safe on line. If you would like help with this or further information please speak to a member of staff and see the websites linked above.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stepping Stones considers parents/carers to be partners in the education of their children, and all of the staff and committee officers are available for consultation by parents/carers whenever guidance, clarification, or reassurance may be required. This partnership is intended to work in both directions, so that parents/carers, who know the child well, are encouraged to help the staff by giving them an insight into any problems, or other areas which might be giving the child some concern.

STEPPING STONES PRE-SCHOOL

In the case of a complaint from the parent/carer, the first point of contact is your child's key person, alternatively you can contact the Manager (Allison Brisland). If you wish to speak to a member of the committee, please put your concerns in writing and email to steppingstoneschair@gmail.com. In many cases taking prompt and appropriate action is enough to resolve the matter satisfactorily.

There will be a record of this meeting made for future reference and analysis purposes. Complaints from parents/carers will be acknowledged and responded to.

Parents/carers can seek professional advice from PATA, Glos (Parent and Toddler Association), a professional association which all Stepping Stones' families and users belong to. Contact: 01452 541244 info@pataglos.org.uk

If a complaint warrants a need for investigation, then the parent/carer will be informed in writing and a date will be given when a full reply can be expected. This date will be realistic and achievable and will usually be within 28 days of the complaint being received. If a delay is unavoidable then the parent/carer will be informed in writing and given a revised deadline.

If a complaint made by a parent/carer to Stepping Stones is received in writing or via e-mail and the complaint relates to one or more of the standards in the statutory framework then it is a mandatory requirement for Stepping Stones to investigate the complaint, take any necessary action and tell the parent/carer the outcome of any findings.

- A record of the complaint will be made using the Stepping Stones Complaints Record
- All complaints will be kept for 10 years from the date the complaint was made.
- Both Ofsted and the parent/carer who made the complaint will be given a copy of the Complaints Record.
- NO ADULT OR CHILD WILL BE NAMED IN THE COMPLAINTS REPORT.
- The parent/carer will be notified in writing the outcome and findings of the investigation into the complaint.



From time to time Ofsted receives complaints about providers. They will normally refer all such complaints to the provider to investigate in the first instance. In exceptional circumstances, for example where there are child protection allegations about a provider, they will refer the complaint to the appropriate agency and take any necessary action about the continued registration of the provider. Ofsted contact details are below:

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: **0300 123 4666** or E-mail at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure>

Nutrition Reference:

Reference: **Good nutrition is also associated with improved learning and behaviour.** (<https://app.croneri.co.uk/feature-articles/healthy-eating-early-years>)