**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy and Procedure**

**Statement of intent**

‘I promise you that every day your child will learn something new. Some days they will bring it home in their hands, some days they will bring it home in their heads and some days they will bring it home in their hearts’. Valerie Welk

**About our childcare and early education**

Welcome to Stepping Stones (SW) Ltd and thank you for registering your child with us.

We know how important your child is and aim to deliver the highest quality of care and education to help them to achieve their best.

This document aims to provide you with an introduction to Stepping Stones (SW) Ltd, our routines, our approach to supporting your child’s learning and development and how we aim to work together with you to best meet your child’s individual needs.

**Our setting aims to:**

* provide high quality care and education for children
* work in partnership with parents/carers to help children to learn and develop
* add to the life and well-being of the local community
* offer children and their families a service that promotes equality and values diversity

**Parents/Carers**

You are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

* valued and respected
* kept informed
* consulted
* involved
* included at all levels

**Children's development and learning**

We aim to ensure that each child:

* is in a safe and stimulating environment
* is given generous care and attention, because of our ratio of qualified staff to children
* has the chance to join in with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together
* is helped to take forward her/his learning and development by being helped to build on what she/he already knows and can do
* has a personal key person who makes sure each child makes satisfying progress
* is in a setting that sees parents/carers as partners in helping each child to learn and develop
* is in a setting in which parents/carers help to shape the service it offers

*The Early Years Foundation Stage*

Provision for the development and learning of children from birth to five years is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our provision reflects the four overarching principles of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE 2021):

* *A Unique Child*

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

* *Positive Relationships*

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

* *Enabling Environments*

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between educators, parents and/or carers.

* *Learning and Development*
* Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

**How we provide for learning and development**

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our setting helps children to continue to do this by providing all the children with interesting activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

*The Areas of Learning and Development comprise:*

* *Prime Areas*
* Personal, social and emotional development.
* Physical development.
* Communication and language.
* *Specific Areas*
* Literacy.
* Mathematics.
* Understanding the world.
* Expressive arts and design.

For each area, the level of progress that children are expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is defined by the Early Learning Goals. These goals state what it is expected that children will know, and be able to do, by the end of the reception year of their education.

We refer to non-statutory curriculum guidance to support our professional judgment as we assess each child’s progress and level of development as they progress towards the Early Learning Goals. We have regard to these when we assess children and plan for their learning by creating a curriculum that is ambitious and meets every child’s needs. Our educational programmes support children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for:

*Personal, social and emotional development*

* self-regulation
* managing self
* building relationships

*Physical development*

* gross motor skills
* fine motor skills

*Communication and language*

* listening, attention and understanding
* speaking

*Literacy*

* comprehension
* word reading
* writing

*Mathematics*

* number
* numerical patterns

*Understanding the world*

* past and present
* people, culture and communities
* the natural world

*Expressive arts and design*

* creating with materials
* being imaginative and expressive

**Our approach to learning and development and assessment**

*Learning through play*

Being active and playing supports young children’s learning and development through doing and talking. This is how children learn to think about and understand the world around them. We use the EYFS statutory education programmes to plan and provide opportunities which will help children to make progress in all areas of learning. This programme is made up of a mixture of activities that children plan and organise for themselves and activities planned and led by educators.

*Characteristics of effective learning*

We understand that all children engage with other people and their environment through the characteristics of effective learning that are described in the Early Years Foundation Stage as:

* playing and exploring - engagement
* active learning - motivation
* creating and thinking critically - thinking

We aim to provide for the characteristics of effective learning by observing how a child engages with learning and being clear about what we can do and provide to support each child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

*Assessment*

We assess how young children are learning and developing by observing them. We use information that we gain from observations of the children, to understand their progress and where this may be leading them. We believe that parents/carers know their children best and we will ask you to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what your child likes to do at home and how you, as parents/carers, are supporting development.

We may make periodic assessment summaries of children’s achievement based on our on-going observations. These help us to build a picture of a child’s progress during their time with us and form part of children’s records of achievement/learning journeys. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals, as well as at times of transition, such as when a child goes on to school.

*The progress check at age two*

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires that we supply parents and carers with a short-written summary of their child’s development in the three prime areas of learning and development - personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language - when a child is aged between 24 - 36 months. Your child’s key person is responsible for completing the check using information from on-going observations carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents/carers and other professionals.

**Records of achievement/learning journeys**

We keep a record of achievement/learning journey for each child. Your child's record of achievement/learning journey helps us to celebrate together her/his achievements and to work together to provide what your child needs for her/his well-being and to make progress.

Your child's key person will work in partnership with you to keep this record. To do this you and she/he will collect information about your child's needs, activities, interests and achievements. This information will enable the key person to identify your child's progress. Together, we will then decide on how to further support your child’s learning and development.

**Working together for your children**

We maintain the ratio of adults to children in the setting that is set by the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. We also have multi-agency educators, where possible, to compliment these ratios.

* give time and attention to each child
* talk with the children about their interests and activities
* help children to experience and benefit from the activities we provide
* allow the children to explore and be adventurous in safety

The staff who work at our setting can be found on our website. ([www.steppingstonesstaplegrove.co.uk](http://www.steppingstonesstaplegrove.co.uk))

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| We are open for | 39 | weeks each year. |
| We are closed | 13 | weeks each year. |
| We are open for | 5 | days each week |
| The times we are open are | 9:00am-3:00pm |  |
| We provide care and education for young children between the ages of: |
| 2 | and | 4 | years. |

**How parents/carers take part in the setting**

Our setting recognises parents/carers as the first and most important educators of their children. All our staff see themselves as partners with parents/carers in providing care and education for their children. There are many ways in which parents/carers take part in making our setting a welcoming and stimulating place for children and parents/carers, such as:

* exchanging knowledge about their children's needs, activities, interests and progress with our staff
* contributing to the progress check at age two
* liking our Facebook page
* sharing their own special interests with the children
* sharing and contributing on their children’s learning journal
* helping to provide resources to extend play activities
* joining in community activities, in which the setting takes part
* building friendships with other parents/carers in the setting

**Key person and your child**

Our setting uses a key person approach. This means that each member of staff has a group of children for whom she/he is particularly responsible. Your child's key person will be the person who works with you to make sure that the childcare and early education that we provide is right for your child's particular needs and interests. When your child first starts at the setting, she/he will help your child to settle and throughout your child's time at the setting, she/he will help your child to benefit from our activities.

**Learning opportunities for adults**

As well as gaining relevant qualifications, our staff take part in further training to help them to keep up-to date with thinking about early years care and education. We also keep up-to-date with best practice, as a member of the Early Years Alliance. Occasionally, we hold learning events for families. These usually look at how adults can help children to learn and develop in their early years.

**The setting's timetable and routines**

Our setting believes that care and education are equally important in the experience which we offer children. The routines and activities that make up the day in our setting are provided in ways that:

* help each child to feel that she/he is a valued member of the setting
* ensure the safety of each child
* help children to gain from the social experience of being part of a group
* provide children with opportunities to learn and help them to value learning

**The session\***

We organise our sessions so that the children can choose from, and work at, a range of activities and, in doing so, build up their ability to select and work through a task to its completion. The children are also helped and encouraged to take part in adult-led small and large group activities, which introduce them to new experiences and help them to gain new skills, as well as helping them to learn to work with others. Outdoor activities contribute to all areas of learning and development, including their health and their knowledge of the world around them. The children have the opportunity, and are encouraged, to take part in outdoor child-chosen and adult-led activities, as well as those provided in the indoor playroom.

**Snacks and meals**

We make snacks and meals a social time at which children and adults eat together. Snacks and lunches are provided from home and are encouraged to be healthy and nutritious. Please tell us about your child's dietary needs, particularly any known allergies or food intolerance.

**Clothing**

We provide protective clothing for the children when they play with messy activities. We encourage children to gain the skills that help them to be independent and look after themselves. These include taking themselves to the toilet and taking off, and putting on, outdoor clothes. Clothing that is easy for them to manage will help them to do this. Please ensure everything is clearly named.

**Policies**

Our staff can explain our policies and procedures to you. Copies of which are available on our website.

Our policies help us to make sure that the service we provide is of high quality and that being a member of the setting is an enjoyable and beneficial experience for each child and her/his parents/carers.

Our staff and parents/carers work together to adopt the policies and they all have the opportunity to take part in the annual review of the policies. This review helps us to make sure that the policies are enabling our setting to provide a quality service for its members and the local community.

**Information we hold about you and your child**

We have procedures in place for the recording and sharing of information [data] about you and your child that is compliant with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) as follows:

The data is we collect is:

1. processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject [you and your family]
2. collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed for other purposes incompatible with those purposes
3. adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which data is processed
4. accurate and, where necessary, kept up-to-date
5. kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects [you and your family] for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data is processed
6. processed in a way 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

When you register your child with us, we will provide you with a privacy notice that gives you further details of how we fulfil our obligations with regard to your data.

**Safeguarding children**

Our setting has a duty under the law to help safeguard children against suspected or actual ‘significant harm’. Our employment practices ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role and help to protect children against the likelihood of abuse in our setting and we have a procedure for managing complaints or allegations against a member of staff.

Our way of working with children and their parents/carers ensures that we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary, to help families in difficulty.

**Special educational needs**

To make sure that our provision meets the needs of each individual child, we take account of any special educational needs a child may have. We work to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is | Paula Lukins |

**Fees**

The fees are £5.00 per hour payable monthly in advance. Fees must still be paid if children are absent without notice for a short period of time. If your child has to be absent over a long period of time, talk to Paula Lukins who is the owner or our manager Lauren Wilkinson.

For your child to keep her/his place at our setting, you must pay the fees. We are in receipt of nursery education funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds; where funding is not received, then fees apply.

**Starting at our setting**

*The first days*

We want your child to feel happy and safe with us. To make sure that this is the case, our staff will work with you to decide on how to help your child to settle into the setting. Our policy on the role of the key person and Settling-in is enclosed with this document or is available on our website.

We hope that you and your child enjoy being members of our setting and that you both find taking part in our activities interesting and stimulating. Our staff are always ready and willing to talk with you about your ideas, views or to respond to any questions.

**Early years practice policy**

# Aim

Children are safe, happy, and eager to participate and to learn.

**Objectives**

* Young children need to form a secure attachment to their key person when they join the setting to feel safe, happy and eager to participate and learn. It is their *entitlement* to be settled comfortably into a new environment.
* The needs of part-time children are considered.
* There is a procedure for when children do not settle and for prolonged absences.
* Introductions and induction of the parent/carers is carried out before children start.
* *Prime times* of the day make the very best of routine opportunities to promote ‘tuning-in’ to the child emotionally and create opportunities for learning. We actively promote British values, inclusion, equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity.
* We operate a positive behaviour management approach. Behaviour management procedures cover how staff should respond to all aspects of behaviour, including children who exhibit challenging behaviour towards other children. These procedures are based on three key statements.
	+ 1. Learning is a lifelong process, which enables children and adults to contribute to and shape their world.
		2. We want the curriculum we provide to help children to learn to:
* be confident and independent
* be aware of and responsive to their feelings
* make caring and thoughtful relationships with other people
* become increasingly excited by, interested in, and knowledgeable and questioning about the world around them.
	+ 1. We provide a wide range of interesting child-chosen and adult-initiated activities which:
* give children opportunities to use all their senses
* help children of different ages and stages to play together
* help children be the directors of their own learning
* help children develop an inquiring and questioning attitude to the world around them

**Children (2-5 years)**

* To feel securely settled and ready to learn, children from two to five years need to form attachments with adults who care for them, primarily to a key person, but with other adults and children too. In this way children feel part of a community of learners; they can contribute to that community and receive from it. The three-stage model is applicable, but with some differences in the procedures for children moving up into the next group and for older children.

**Waiting list and admissions**

Our provision is accessible to children and families from all sections of the local and wider community. We aim to ensure that all sections of the community receive accessible information and that our admissions procedures are fair, clear, and open to all parents/carers who apply for places. The availability of a place at the setting considers staff/child ratios, the age of the child and registration requirements.

* We endeavour to operate in an inclusive manner which enables all children and families to access our services.
* We also have regard for the needs of parents/carers who are:
* looking to take up work, remain in work or extend their hours of work
* looking to commence training or education
* We work in partnership with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that our provision is accessible to all sections of the community.
* Services are widely advertised and information is accessible to all sections of the community.
* Where the number of children wanting places exceeds the number of places available a waiting list is operated using clear criteria for allocation of places as detailed in section 09.1 Waiting list and admissions procedure.

**Funded places – free entitlement**

All 3- and 4-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours free childcare and early education each week for 38 weeks of the year. Some eligible two year olds are also entitled. Funded places are offered in accordance with national and local codes of practice and adherence to the relevant Provider Agreement/Contract with the local authority.

# Legal References

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (DfE and DHSC 2014)

Equality Act 2010

Childcare Act 2006

**Establishing children’s starting points**

When children start at the setting they arrive at different levels of learning and development. In order to help them to settle and make rapid progress it is important that they are provided with care and learning opportunities that are suited to their needs, interests and abilities. This means establishing and understanding their starting points and whether there are any obstacles to their learning, so that teaching can be tailored to the ‘unique child’.

* The aim of establishing a child’s starting points is to ensure that the most appropriate care and learning is provided from the outset.
* Starting points are established by gathering information from the first contact with the child’s parents/carers
* at induction and during the ‘settling in’ period. Staff do not ‘wait and see’ how the child is settling before they begin to gather information.
* The key person is responsible for establishing their key children’s starting points by gathering information in the following ways:
* observation of the child during settling in visits
* discussion with the child’s parents/carers
* building on information that has been gathered during registration by referring to the registration form

The information gathered is recorded within two weeks of the child’s official start date and sooner where possible.

* The key person must make a ‘best fit’ judgment about the age band the child is working in, referring to Development Matters or Birth to Five Matters.
* The key person should complete details by indicating where they have gathered their evidence from, using more than one source where possible i.e. parent comment and observation during settling in.
	1. If the initial assessment raises any concerns that extra support may be required procedure Identification, assessment and support for children with SEND is followed.

Updated and Implemented Autumn Term 2023- Reviewed regularly and the procedure monitored and evaluated