**Infection Control Policy and Procedure**

**Statement of Intent**

Stepping Stones has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of children, families and team members as well as a duty of care. In addition to this the prevention and control of infection is essential in helping to establish a safe and secure environment in which children can learn and develop through play.

Good practice infection control is paramount in early years settings. Young children’s immune systems are still developing, and they are therefore more susceptible to illness.

**Aim**

This policy is aimed to ensure that a safe, healthy environment is maintained at Stepping Stones. The setting recognises that infections can spread quickly amongst children in the childcare environment therefore we will endeavour to ensure that infections are controlled and good health and hygiene practices are maintained at all times.

**Who is responsible?**

It is the responsibility of the supervisor and manager to ensure that any children, parent/carers and members of staff who have a contagious illness are excluded from the setting for the recommended period of time. The setting has a responsibility to inform parents and carers when their child enters the setting with a contagious illness. The supervisor must also inform all parents/carers if more than 10% of the children attending the setting have a contagious illness. All members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that any children who arrive at the setting unwell, ensure that the child’s parent/carer must speak to staff before a decision is made about whether the child should remain at the setting or go home. All members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that they do not attend the session if they have an infectious illness, this will assist Stepping Stones to prevent the spread of any infectious illness. We strongly suggest that you consider plans for the care of your child ahead of time, before it is needed, as Stepping Stones is not equipped to care for sick children.

**Minimise sources of contamination**

* We will ensure all staff have training in food hygiene
* We store food that requires refrigeration, covered and dated within a refrigerator, at a temperature of 8°C or below
* We wash hands before and after handling food
* We clean and disinfect food storage and preparation areas
* Food is bought from reputable sources and used by recommended date

**Prevention**

* Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have symptoms of an infectious illness do not attend settings and stay at home for the recommended exclusion time (see below UKHSA link).
* Always clean hands thoroughly, and more often than usual where there is an infection outbreak.
* Ensure good respiratory hygiene amongst children and staff by promoting ‘catch it, bin it, kill it’ approach.
* Where necessary, for instance, where there is an infection outbreak, wear appropriate PPE.

**To control the spread of infection**

* We ensure good hand washing procedures (toilet, handling animals, soil, food)
* Children are encouraged to blow and wipe their own noses when necessary and to dispose of the soiled tissues hygienically, then wash their hands.
* All equipment is cleaned on a regular basis
* Ensure different cloths and towels are kept for different areas
* We cover all cuts and open sores
* Aprons are worn when preparing food
* We wear protective clothing when dealing with accidents (eg gloves and apron)
* A protocol is in place that is followed regarding contact with blood and body fluids
  + Gloves and apron worn
  + Soiled articles sealed in a plastic bag
  + Staff aware of procedures for prevention of HIV infection

**To raise awareness of hygiene procedures**

* Inform all attending adults of the existing policy and procedures
* Ensure that student induction includes this information
* Provide visual instructions where possible for ease of understanding

**To prevent cross-contamination**

* Adults and children have separate toilet facilities

**To prevent the persistence and further spread of infection**

* Ensure that dedicated sinks are clearly marked
* Be vigilant as to signs of infection persisting or recurring
* Ask parents/carers to keep their child at home if they have an infection and to inform playgroup as to the nature of the infection
* Remind parent/carers not to bring a child to playgroup who has been vomiting or had diarrhoea until at least 48 hours has elapsed since the last attack.

As stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 – Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements (3.49). We would notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises. We would notify as soon as possible and within 14 days.

**Procedure**

Stepping Stones aims to prevent the spread of infectious illnesses and infections by adhering to the following procedures:

* Excluding children with infectious illnesses and infections for the recommended period of time (please see the NHS Exclusion Guidelines for further information on this).
* Excluding all members of staff with infectious illnesses and infections for the recommended period of time (please see the NHS Exclusion Guidelines for further information on this).
* Identifying signs of illness in children and staff whilst they are in the setting
* Informing parents and carers of sick children that their children are ill and arranging for them to be collected at the earliest opportunity.
* Limiting the contact of sick children with other children until they can be collected from the setting, taking into account the sensitivity of the situation and that the child does not feel bad as a result of any action.
* Preventing the spread of infection by adhering to the setting's health and safety policy, personal hygiene policy and food safety policy and procedures.
* Reporting incidences of certain infections to other parent/carers and members of staff whilst maintaining the anonymity of all children and members of staff involved**.**

In instances where any medication is administered as a form of treatment, such medication will be administered in accordance with the administration of medication policy and will only be administered with the express permission of the child's parent. Any and all administration of medications will be recorded in the medicine administration form.

If a child becomes unwell at Nursery Staff build up a close relationship with the children and become very familiar with each individual child’s personality and behaviour. Staff can quickly pick up on signs of a child not being themselves i.e. not having snack, wanting lots of cuddles or wanting to sleep more than usual. Physical signs of not being well might include being flushed in the face, watery eyes, and clammy skin. In this case a member of staff will phone the parent/carer and inform them of the situation and ask that the child is collected as soon as possible. Where the parent or carer cannot be contacted the setting will contact the child’s emergency contact provided on the registration form. The person collecting the child will be asked to sign any records, for example, illness form and administration of medication form.

On discovering a child who is unwell staff will:

• Remove layers of clothing.

• Provide the child with a drink of water.

• Move the child to a quieter area of the playgroup.

• Open a window and allow the child to cool slowly.

• A staff member will comfort the child.

If a child is being sick or has diarrhoea then the parent/carer will be contacted straight away and the child must be taken home and have 48 hours away from playgroup without any symptoms. At all times staff will: • Maintain high standards of personal hygiene.

• Summon emergency medical help if required.

• Contact parent/carer if the child is particularly distressed and upset and not their normal self.

If we have a reason to believe that any child is suffering from a notifiable disease identified as such in the Public Health (Infection Diseases) Regulations 1988, we will inform the parent/carer and Ofsted. Stepping Stones will act on any advice given by the Health Protection Agency and inform Ofsted of any action taken. Similarly if a national outbreak occurs if any contagious disease/infection we will always follow government guidance on what action is needed including closure of he setting until advised it is safe to open.

**Response to an infection outbreak**

* Manage confirmed cases of a contagious illness by following the guidance from the [UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/chapter-4-what-to-do-if-you-suspect-an-outbreak-of-infection)

**Informing others**

Early years providers have a duty to inform Ofsted of any serious accidents, illnesses or injuries as follows:

* anything that requires resuscitation
* admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
* a broken bone or fracture
* dislocation of any major joint, such as the shoulder, knee, hip or elbow
* any loss of consciousness
* severe breathing difficulties, including asphyxia
* anything leading to hypothermia or heat-induced illness

In some circumstances this may include a confirmed case of a Notifiable Disease in their setting, if it meets the criteria defined by Ofsted above. Please note that it is not the responsibility of the setting to diagnose a notifiable disease. This can only be done by a clinician (GP or Doctor). If a child is displaying symptoms that indicate they may be suffering from a notifiable disease, parents must be advised to seek a medical diagnosis, which will then be ‘notified’ to the relevant body. Once a diagnosis is confirmed, the setting may be contacted by the UKHSA, or may wish to contact them for further advice.

**Further guidance**

[Good Practice in Early Years Infection Control](https://portal.eyalliance.org.uk/Shop#!prod/43aaf2a6-7364-ea11-a811-000d3a0bad7c/curr/GBP) (Alliance 2009)

Updated and implemented Autumn Term 2023 – reviewed regularly and the procedure monitored and evaluated