



Policies and Terms and Conditions

Our Aim

Our aim is to provide a safe, fun and stimulating environment for children to thrive in. We aim to ensure that children can relax and wind-down or take part in any of the daily activities, either inside or outside (weather permitting).

We aim to allow children to develop and learn through play experiences. We encourage friendship, sharing, teamwork, self-expression, in a play environment which has structured but is always child-led and adaptable to the changing needs of the group of children we care for. We provide the opportunity for challenge, risk, the growth of confidence and self-esteem.

We aim to offer a wide variety of games, toys, equipment, activities to suit children of all ages and abilities to achieve these aims, combined with caring and friendly staff to provide a supporting environment. However, we aim to facilitate play, not control it. The emphasis is on play that is freely chosen and self-directed where the children determine and control the content and intent of their play.

The safety and well-being of your child is of utmost important to us. In the following pages, we will endeavour to explain the policies and procedures we will adhere to, to ensure that your child is happy and safe at all times.

Managers/Owners

Stepping Stones After School Club (hereafter referred to as Stepping Stones) is owned and managed by Sharon and Philip Stone.

Contacting Us

Correspondence address: Stepping Stones c/o Connaught Junior School, Manor Way, Bagshot GU19 5JY
Our business addresses: The Chertsey Road Hall, Chertsey Road, Windlesham, Surrey GU20 6EW
Connaught Junior School, Manor Way, Bagshot, GU19 5JY
Sharon's mobile number is: 07748 531278
Philip's mobile Number is: 07747 013667
Our e-mail address is: steppingstonesafterschoolclub@gmail.com
Our website address is: www.steppingstonesafterschoolclub.co.uk

Employees

Our staff will have an important one-to-one relationship with your child and we will take the utmost care in selecting the right staff to look after them.

We will ensure that our staff are:-

- suitably qualified, trained and experienced (NVQ L3 qualified or training towards a playworks qualification)
- mentally and physically fit to care for children
- understand the policies and procedures operated by the Managers of Stepping Stones
- first aid qualified and trained in our Health & Safety procedures
- have an understanding of the Ofsted Early Years Foundation Stage and the ability to meet them
- friendly and approachable
- positive and respectful of children of all backgrounds and abilities
- able to give encouragement and appropriate praise
- value each child and what they have to offer
- able to encourage children to try new activities in a safe and supportive environment
- continually monitored and review working practices to meet best practice standards and Ofsted regulations.

Prior to commencing employment at Stepping Stones we will endeavour to-

- interview candidates to ensure suitability

- police check (DBS enhanced disclosure) each member of staff
- take up references
- check qualifications
- obtain a self declaration relating to health and if necessary, obtain a doctor's report.

Due to delays in obtaining DBS checks, etc, staff may start work at Stepping Stones before the full DBS check has been completed. In such circumstances, such staff will be fully supervised at all times during their work with the children.

As soon as practicably possible, we will:-

- fully induct each new employee
- train new employees relating to Emergency Procedures and other Health & Safety Matters.

Training

This handbook will form the basis of our training manual and induction process. All employees, volunteers and students will be conversant with our policies and procedures.

Volunteers and Students

In the event that Volunteers or Students are involved in the day to day care of children at Stepping Stones, the same principles will apply. However, volunteers or students will not be expected to be qualified to the same level as members of staff and will not necessarily be fully first aid trained.

Emergency Contact Information Verification

You will be asked to confirm all of the information we hold on your child at the beginning of each school year. However, please inform us immediately if there are any changes to the details we hold.

This information will be held at Stepping Stones at all times for health and safety reasons (please see Records Kept on Your Child). Emergency contact information will be kept by staff travelling to/from all schools.

Late collection, fees and Payment

Charges are on a `per session` basis and calculated over the year then divided by 12 to give a set monthly fee. Collection must be made by 6pm each day (for the setting at Connaught Junior school this is extended to 6.15pm). If you know that you are going to be late then you will need to make arrangements for your child to be collected by somebody else by that time and please call/text Sharon on 07748 531278 to notify who will be collecting. If you are late then a charge of £25 per 15 minutes will apply and you will be invoiced separately. If you are late 3 times in a month, then we reserve the right to terminate your contract as our service may not suit your childcare needs.

Please ensure all payments are made by the 1st month, late payment will result in a £25 charge. If payment is repeatedly late we reserve the right to terminate the contract. Your child will no longer be collected and the deposit will be used to cover any outstanding fees. Our prices are reviewed annually.

Please note that we do not accept payment by cheque. Payment can be paid by childcare vouchers, bank transfer or in cash.

Holidays

We operate a Holiday club for a select few weeks a year, October half term, the first week of Easter holidays and the first 3 weeks of the summer along with all Inset days (exact dates confirmed at the start of every school year). As we do not offer a term time only contracts these holiday dates will automatically be charged and incorporated in your monthly calculation.

Collection from School

We will collect from Valley End School, Windlesham Village Infant school, Lightwater Village School, Bagshot Infant School, Connaught Junior School and Hammond Junior School. From there the children will be taken by minibus to the relevant setting (with the exception of Bagshot Infant School and Connaught Junior School where we are located on the same premises), all vehicles are privately owned by ourselves and we have carried out a full risk assessment of the journey in accordance with Ofsted guidelines.

- We will endeavour to park the minibus outside the main gates whenever possible to ensure that the children will have the minimum amount of distance to cover once they leave the school grounds.
- When required, additional staff will be employed specifically to help supervise the journey in accordance with Ofsted ratio guidelines issued.
- A register will be taken at both ends of the journey
- Once the journey to the setting has commenced, staff will not turn back to collect any "forgotten" belongings
- Children will wear bright, reflective safety wear for the duration of the walk from collection point in the school to the transport
- Car seats will be fitted where appropriate.
- Staff will discuss with children the importance of adhering to road safety guidelines and walking quietly and sensibly from school to the transport to ensure their safety at all times.
- The journey will be from the designated schools to the Hall with no other stops en route.
- In the event that for any reason it is not possible to transport all of the children back to the hall in one go then we will have to `shuttle` them in smaller groups with the remaining children being kept at school with a member of staff until we return to collect them.

Registration Procedure

A daily register will be kept, recording the names of the children being looked after at Stepping Stones.

Missing children

In the event that a child is believed to be missing we will immediately:-

- re-take the register
- inform the school
- search the surrounding area
- call you
- call the police

We would appreciate your co-operation in reinforcing the fact that it is entirely unacceptable to "pretend" to be missing during any registration, or indeed answering for someone else.

After-School Clubs

Due to the number of schools that we collect from we are unable to arrange collection from any after school clubs with the exception of Bagshot Infant School and Connaught Junior School.

Security & Safety

The doors to Stepping Stones at Windlesham and Bagshot will remain locked at all times. Staff will explain that children are not allowed to open the front door and we do request that you reinforce this by discouraging your child from attempting to open the door even when leaving. At Bagshot, where there is outdoor play, the children will be supervised at all times.

You will be required to sign your child out on the daily sheet to confirm you have collected and we do request that you keep hold of any siblings for their own safety.

Connaught school is a more open area, but within the school building, they will be fully supervised at all times.

Collection of Your Child

If you are not collecting your child yourself, please advise us (preferably by email or text beforehand) if someone else will be picking your child up from Stepping Stones. **We will not release your child to anyone else unless you have notified us beforehand. Please also be aware that if we do not recognise a person trying to enter the building, we will ask them to remain outside until we have verified that they have permission to collect a child.**

Children will not be released to older siblings unless the sibling is age 16 or over and we have been notified by you in advance.

If necessary, please call Sharon on 07748 531278.

We will aim to feed your child at 4.30pm for them to finish by 5pm, if you do wish to collect your child early then please let Sharon know as soon as possible so that food is not prepared unnecessarily and your child's' routine is not disturbed.

Parking is sometimes available outside the Chertsey Road Hall, we try to keep at least one space available for parents to collect but please collect promptly to allow other parents to use the space.

Non-Collection of Your Child

In accordance with Ofsted regulations, we are required to state our procedure relating to uncollected children. This covers circumstances whereby a parent or carer fails to collect a child and despite trying all emergency contact numbers, no one can be contacted regarding the child.

In such circumstances the child will be taken back to our own home at Little Haining, Brockenhurst Road, Ascot SL5 9HB as we are required to vacate the premises by 6pm (6.15pm at Connaught). However, in line with Ofsted guidelines, if a child is not collected and all attempts to reach an emergency contact have failed, we must advise you that we will be required to contact Social Care Services and report the matter by calling 0300 2001 1006. Social Care Services will then implement their procedures, which may include your child being handed over to Social Services for their care.

Naturally this procedure would only be followed in the most extreme circumstances and when all other alternatives have been investigated. We will also notify Ofsted.

If you have any questions relating to this procedure, please contact us.

Contingency Plan/Closure

In extreme circumstances where it is not possible to maintain the appropriate ratio of children to staff, we will be forced to close Stepping Stones. In such circumstances, we reserve the right to call the first emergency contact given to us by you, to arrange for collection of your child. However, please note that this is a contingency plan and as such, this procedure will only be followed in very special circumstances. As a general rule, when a member of staff is absent due to sickness or any other reason, other staff or our emergency helpers will be called in at short notice to ensure our staff ratios remain correct and in line with Ofsted requirements.

Stepping Stones follow guidance from Surrey Heath regarding school closures due to snow/ice or any adverse conditions or events which cause the school to close and we will therefore close accordingly. No refund of fees paid will be made if this is the case.

Sickness Absence – Your Child

Please can you ensure that you contact us as soon as you know that your child will not be attending school due to sickness. Although we do have a very good working relationship with the schools they do NOT keep us informed of any absences and we would like to be notified by yourselves so that there is not any confusion at collection time.

Health & Safety Policy Statement

It is the policy of **STEPPING STONES** to ensure that employees, children cared for and visitors are provided with a healthy and safe environment.

STEPPING STONES will do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent personal injury and damage to property and to protect everyone from foreseeable hazards.

Co-operation and participation of all employees, children cared for and visitors is essential to obtain high standards of safety practices.

Stepping Stones is committed to full participation in all aspects of Health and Safety and it should rank equally with the responsibilities of maintenance, costs etc.

STEPPING STONES has the following responsibilities in accordance with current legislation:

- To provide and maintain safe and healthy conditions in accordance with the statutory requirements.
- To provide and maintain equipment as required for safe conditions.
- To comply with the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health.
- To make available all necessary information, training, safety devices and personal protective equipment, and to supervise their uses.
- To maintain a full and meaningful interest in health and safety matters that are associated with the Out of School Club's activities and for its Management to set an example in all matters of health and safety.
- To ensure that there is a consulting mechanism between employees, parents and management concerning Health, Safety and Welfare.

- To comply with all Government legislation, both statutory, regulatory and accepted code of practice. Those of which are designed to establish the minimum standards will be developed, maintained and improved wherever possible.
- To provide regular safety training, and training for all new equipment/systems of work.

Consultation and Communication with Parents relating to Health & Safety Matters

When necessary, we will issue a Health & Safety update. Philip will be happy to discuss any concerns you have relating to the health & safety procedures of Stepping Stones at any time. If you have any suggestions or recommendations, we will be pleased to hear them.

Visitors to Stepping Stones

We will endeavour to ensure that Visitors to Stepping Stones are kept to an absolute minimum.

However, if Visitors are allowed into Stepping Stones during operating hours we will ensure:-

- that the Visitor Book is signed, confirming arrival and leaving time and reason for the visit
- that the Visitor is accompanied at all times by a member of staff
- that the children are aware a Visitor is on site and why

Accident Records

Should your child be involved in any kind of accident and receive any kind of injury whilst in our care, full details will be kept in an Accident Record Book. The supervisor will discuss the injury and treatment with you when you collect your child. You will be asked to sign the accident book to confirm you are aware of the incident and the action taken.

Please note that if we notice a previous injury when your child arrives at Stepping Stones, this will also be noted in our accident book and will be mentioned to you when you collect your child. This procedure is necessary to record injuries which are evident but did not occur on site, to protect ourselves and to form part of our child protection procedure.

Administration of Medicines

Non-prescription medicines, for example cough preparations, will not be administered to children in our care. If you do have prescription medicine which you would like to be administered this will be done so at our discretion and only after this has been discussed with Sharon in advance at which point you will be asked to complete a Permission to administer Medicine form which can be downloaded from our website and then put in your child's book bag.

First Aid

At least 1 member of staff at each site will be qualified first aiders. First aid boxes will be held on site and will be maintained by Sharon Stone.

Sickness and Infectious Diseases

We cannot care for children who are sick or have any kind of infectious disease. Should a child become sick whilst in our care, you will be contacted using the Emergency Contact Information and asked to collect your child.

Please note that a child who has been sick or suffering from diarrhoea should not attend Stepping Stones for at least 48 hours after the last sickness/diarrhoea. This 48-hour exclusion is necessary to avoid the spread of infection and your attention to this is important.

We will keep all parents informed of any infectious diseases, which your children may have come into contact with (via the Notice Board).

Sun Safety

During the summer, children must wear a sun hat and sun cream before they will be allowed outside. Parents must ensure that children are provided with a suitable hat and sun cream.

Clothing

Children must be appropriately clothed for participation in all activities, and suitable to weather conditions.

Please be aware that we believe “dirty children are happy children” - we encourage all children in our care to play outside whenever possible and they may get dirty. Some of our craft activities may also be messy and although we provide overalls that they can wear, we cannot guarantee that the school uniform will remain clean.

No Smoking, Drugs or Alcohol Policy

We operate a No Smoking, drugs or alcohol Policy. No smoking, taking of drugs or consuming alcohol will be allowed on the premises of Stepping Stones – please ensure if you arrive smoking a cigarette that it is extinguished before entering the building. Anybody found doing any of the above will be asked to leave.

Fire Safety

On a regular basis, on different days of the week and when new children join the club staff and children will be given instruction on what to do in the event of fire including active evacuation of the building and following the fire drill. The Manager is responsible for ensuring that this happens and will log when these drills are carried out and take steps to make any changes required to the procedure.

Fire Drill

For your information, our fire drill is as follows:

If you discover a fire

- 1 Shout “FIRE, FIRE ,FIRE!”
 - 2 Leave the building using the nearest available fire exit
- Do not**
- stop to pick up any personal belongings -
 - re-enter the building
- 3 Report to the Supervisor and line up with the Supervisor at the assembly point in the designated part of the Car Park.
 - 4 Stay with the Supervisor until the “all clear” call has been given.

Risk Assessments

We will undertake risk assessments on all activities and equipment and put in place control measures where appropriate to reduce an identified risk.

Insurance

The Stepping Stones Public Liability Insurance certificate will be displayed on the Notice Board.

Hygiene

Cleaning

The settings are all cleaned daily to ensure that all play areas, toilets and the kitchen are hygienic, however, in addition to this we do also carry out our own daily checks.

Hand-Washing

Children will be asked to wash their hands:-

- before eating
- after using the toilet
- after any messy play

Runny Noses, Coughs and Colds

Please ensure that if your child has a cold/runny nose or cough that they are supplied with tissues, although there will be some available at each setting. We will encourage your child to wipe their nose/cough into their hand and dispose of the tissue to try and avoid the spread of infections.

Guidance to Intimate care and Toileting

It may be necessary to help children if they need assistance when using the toilet or have had an accident and need help to change their clothes. Their privacy and modesty will be respected at all times and staff attending will do so in a professional manner. Another member of staff will be notified that a child needs assistance so that safeguarding regulations are met. We will promote personal care and development to help the children be confident in dealing with these situations.

Food and Drink

Jugs of water and cups will be available throughout the session to encourage children to help themselves when they are thirsty.

A hot cooked meal will be provided at around 4.30pm. This will consist of a main hot meal with vegetables. The children all sit down to eat together which provides a great opportunity for social interaction. Please do not collect before 5pm unless advising us in advance as the children may not have finished eating.

Food Handling

All staff responsible for food preparation and handling will receive appropriate training. All food will be stored and prepared hygienically.

Special Dietary Needs

If your child has special dietary needs then please discuss this with Sharon.

Records Held on Your Child

We will hold the following records on you and/or your child:-

- name, address, telephone number, date of birth
- emergency contact information
- any special dietary needs
- any allergy information
- any medical condition/medication records
- accident record
- any special needs requirements
- any special religious requirements

Photographs

We may take photographs of your children playing. These may be displayed on our Notice Board, around the setting and on our website. We ask for your permission to use the photos on the Permission form. Please let us know if you have any questions relating to this.

If there are any other circumstances where we wish to use these photographs we will ask for specific written permission beforehand.

Data Protection/ Confidentiality

All information held relating to you and your child, whether on our database or in paper form at Stepping Stones, will be strictly confidential and will only be held because we are legally required to do so. Such information will not be released to any third party, except in the case of an emergency, to qualified medical staff and then only for the sake of the health and well-being of your child.

All staff, students and volunteers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement relating to such data and will not under any circumstances discuss any confidential information outside of Stepping Stones.

Parents will be given access to all information held on their children on request.

Equal opportunities statement

We are fully committed to caring for children in a multi-cultural/racial community. We give the following undertaking and declare that:

We will treat the children in our care with equal concern without prejudice to their religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural background, gender, disability or special needs.

All staff employed will be required to comply with this statement.

Behaviour Expectations

We expect children, staff, parents and visitors to behave in a friendly, kind and respectful way at all times.

We will consult with the children and agree a set of behavioural expectations for all children to abide by. The guiding principles will be:-

- having respect for other people
- sharing
- looking after others
- being kind to others and considering their feelings
- listening carefully and following instructions
- being responsible and helpful

We will encourage positive behaviour by

- praising and reinforcing good behaviour
- encouraging sharing and negotiation
- making sure staff set good examples
- consulting with children about the rules and why we have them
- helping children to understand the effect of their behaviour on others
- helping children to challenge bullying
- operating a "stone" reward scheme
- operating a "sticker" reward system

We will discourage negative behaviour by

- using distraction methods, eg asking the child to play another game
- using "time-out" to calm a child whose behaviour has become inappropriate or unacceptable. This means that after being given two warnings to behave appropriately, a child will be asked to sit out of a game to reflect on their behaviour and /or calm down.
- if a child has repeatedly ignored an instruction or refused to co-operate, or caused danger to themselves or to another, a privilege may be removed – for example, the child may not be allowed to play on the Nintendo game that day, etc

If a child's behaviour has been particularly challenging during a session, this will be discussed with the child's parents at collection time.

In the event that any child's behaviour becomes of concern to staff, specific incidents will be noted on an Incident Record. The behaviour will be discussed privately with the parent on the day the incident occurs and a plan to manage the behaviour agreed. If unacceptable behaviour becomes both regular and serious, the matter will be discussed fully in private at a meeting after closing hours to agree an action plan.

We aim to work with parents and children to resolve any problems. However, if a child's behaviour continues to be unacceptable, it may be necessary to expel a child. Exclusion will be strictly at the discretion of the Management and will only be considered as a last resort. Examples of reasons for exclusion include deliberately ignoring safety rules, ignoring instructions given by staff relating to safely walking from school to the minibus etc.

Behaviour by any person on-site considered by the Management to be unacceptable and inappropriate will not be tolerated. Examples of such behaviour include:-

- smoking, alcohol, drug abuse, solvent abuse.
- bad language
- any other situation which cause disruption or distress

Respect for, and proper use of, all property, equipment and the premises is essential and must be maintained by all persons (child or adult at all times).

Physical Punishment and Intervention

Physical punishment will not be used at any time.

If necessary we will use the following methods to avoid conflict:-

- withdrawing children from the situation (including "time out")
- distracting or redirecting a child's attention
- making the environment as safe as possible to avoid a child causing injury to themselves

Physical intervention will be used, with the minimum of force and for the minimum amount of time to:-

- prevent an accident or injury to another child
- prevent injury to the child (for example, during a temper tantrum)

Any incidents of physical intervention will be noted on an Incident Record and discussed with the parent at collection time. Parents will be required to sign to acknowledge the incident and the action taken by staff.

Comforting Your Child

Staff will give a child comfort (hug, cuddle) if they are distressed, hurt, worried, upset. Our aim is to treat your child as you would, if you were there - we realise the importance of re-assuring a distressed child. Comforting a child is not a physical restraint but nevertheless the incident will be noted on an Incident Record and discussed with you. You will be required to sign and acknowledge the incident.

Child Protection Statement/ Safeguarding

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This duty is part of a comprehensive programme of change which began with the publication of Every Child Matters: Change for Children (September 2003) focusing on improving the following outcomes for children and young people:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Enabling children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Statement of intent

Our setting wants to work with children, parents and the schools to ensure the safety and protection of children and to give them the very best start in life.

Aims

Our aims are to:

- create an environment in our setting which is safe and secure for all children;
- enable children to build their self confidence and self-esteem;
- encourage children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

In order to fulfil these aims

- Our staff have received training in Safeguarding Children
- We follow the guidelines laid down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Members of staff know the settings' procedures for recording and reporting incidents.
- In consultation with parents/carers we are able to refer children for additional help through the Common Assessment Framework
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident which affects the wellbeing of children.

How we ensure that Children are safe and protected

Staffing and volunteering

- We have a named person who coordinates safeguarding children issues (Philip Stone)
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- All staff have a duty to maintain the wellbeing of children in their care.
- Applicants for posts are informed of the need to carry out Enhanced DBS checks and take-up references before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of safeguarding children concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the setting.

We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the setting so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

If we suspect abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern, then we will investigate
- We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the setting take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals. We seek parent's permissions before making a referral unless by seeking this permission we put a child at risk.
- We work co-operatively with the parent unless this is inconsistent with the need to ensure the child's safety

Disclosures made to us

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child;
- listens to the child; and
- gives reassurance that she or he will take action.

The member of staff does not question the child – the golden rule is observe and listen but do not probe.

Recording and Reporting suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff make a record of:

- The child's name; address, date of birth;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The exact words spoken by the child;
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time;
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

The member of staff will discuss the incident with the Supervisor and a decision will be made about who should be notified. If a child's safety is at risk the Intake and assessment team will be contacted immediately. We will take advice from them regarding information then given to parents.

In a case where a child is not in immediate danger we try to discuss the matter with parents before making any referrals. However it is the welfare of the child which is paramount and this is at the forefront of all our actions. We are aware that many children have suffered because of lack of communication between agencies, and that government guidance now encourages the full sharing of information. We shall therefore use our professional judgement in sharing information with the agencies that 'need to know', being open and honest with parents and children as to why we feel we need to share the information.

Full records of conversations will be maintained when any referrals or discussions are held with any other agencies or with parents prior to a referral. These records will include dates and times of the conversation, who we speak to, and the advice we were given.

Informing Parents

We will always aim to involve parents in any referrals before they are made. However if a suspicion of abuse is recorded, and the child is considered at risk an immediate referral will be made to the Intake and assessment team and we will take their advice on informing parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. If there are concerns within a setting it is important that the Supervisor is made aware of them. However children will work with a number of different adults in a setting and they should also be made aware that there are concerns about an aspect of well-being of the child in question. Any information shared with external agencies is done under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Support to families

- The setting takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The setting continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Safeguarding procedure for Stepping Stones Staff

If existing members of staff have any immediate concerns about the conduct of any other members of staff with regards the children's welfare then in the first instance they will speak to Philip or Sharon. If their concern relates to either of those then, circumstances permitting they will speak to the other party. However if they are still not satisfied with the outcome of these discussions or feel they are unable to discuss the matter with that party they will report the matter directly to the Duty Social Worker for Surrey Heath Social Services, Child Protection Team. Under these circumstances we will not be able to keep information relating to your child confidential, but will need to share it with Ofsted, Social Services and the Police if requested. This may also result in the suspension of staff whilst the matter is looked into.

If the member of staff has any immediate concerns which they feel will not be resolved by speaking to either Philip or Sharon then they will call Children's Services Contact Centre on 0300 200 1006 or Ofsted directly on 0800 123 1231 or on their whistleblower hotline number 01206 711055.

Behaviour Expectations

We expect children, staff, parents and visitors to behave in a friendly, kind and respectful way at all times. We will encourage positive behaviour through encouragement and praise and will ensure that the staff are clear about what is expected of them to ensure a consistent approach is achieved should there be any unwanted behaviour.

We aim to provide all children in our care with a secure, consistent and calm environment. Details of our full policy is available on request.

Child Protection Statement/ Safeguarding

Stepping Stones are committed to the welfare and protection of children in its care. We achieve this by identifying emerging issues, intervening early and working in partnership with other agencies.

It is a function of the business to protect children from harm by ensuring that concerns about their safety are properly investigated.

As a childcare business we are fully aware of, and abide by, the local safeguarding children procedures and will work with parents in following these guidelines.

All staff employed by Stepping Stones are fully vetted with a current enhanced DBS check.

Children with Special Needs

We will endeavour to care for any child with a special need by consultation with the child's parents on a case by case basis. Due regard will be given to the suitability of staffing arrangements, resources and the physical environment in relation to the child's care requirements.

Our Premises

Heating, Cleaning and Maintenance

Stepping Stones will ensure that the setting is clean and heated. Any maintenance problems will be referred to the landlord/school to rectify.

Activities will be planned to make the best use of the facilities available to us, both inside and outside.

Maintenance and Storage of Equipment

Equipment will be clean and well maintained at all times by undertaking regular weekly checks/cleaning. Storage will be provided by the use of our own use cupboards where available which will be kept locked at all times when not in use.

Play, Activities and Outings

Structure of Play at the After School Club

On arrival at the after school club, all children will be offered a drink. Thereafter the children can take part in any of the daily craft activities that we offer or just play freely with any of the games and toys available.

Play opportunities will be varied and suitable for all children attending each session. Each child will be able to choose what to take part in and will be encouraged to try new things to vary their experience at our childcare setting. Stepping Stones will plan activities for each day but as our play is always child-lead, the plan may be altered or changed completely to fit the group of children attending or to suit an individual child's preferences.

Adults will become involved in play where it is appropriate, for example in helping to set up a game, reading rules, helping set up camps, playing football or swinging skipping ropes and joining in when children want them to. Children will always be encouraged to develop their own play ideas, using the tent as a camp, or creating one out of a sheet and a table for example. It should be what they decide to do, as we aim to facilitate play not to control it.

Children may become messy during play at Stepping Stones and although we will endeavour to keep them clean we cannot always guarantee it!

Outings

It may be possible for us to on some occasions to go to the park, a local recreation ground or use outdoor play equipment at one of the schools. To enable us to do this parents will be asked to sign a Permission form when joining to allow their child to take part.

We will at all times take registers leaving and returning to Stepping Stones and take information with us in case of emergencies. A first aid kit will all ways be available along with a qualified person.

Children will be supervised at all times when using outside play equipment.

Toys, Books and Play Equipment

Toys and play equipment will be provided to meet the learning needs of the children attending Stepping Stones. We will take care to ensure that all play equipment:-

- meets the intellectual, social, emotional, cultural and development needs of the children
- is challenging and stimulating to maintain the child's interest
- is clean and safe to use by regularly cleaning and maintenance
- is appropriate for the age and needs of the children

We will involve children in evaluation (usually by discussing what they enjoyed or what new toys they would like us to buy) on an informal basis.

Complaints Procedure

All complaints should immediately be addressed verbally to either Philip or Sharon as soon as practicably possible. We will take notes relating to your complaint and will ask you to follow it up in writing, for our records. We will endeavour to meet with you to discuss your complaint and undertake a full investigation where appropriate. If the grounds for your complaint are accepted, we will do our utmost to rectify the problem. We have 28 days to resolve your complaint and provide you with a written response.

If after thorough and impartial investigation, we consider your complaint is unfounded, we will advise you accordingly in writing. If you are not satisfied at any stage you can Ofsted to discuss the matter further.

Ofsted may be contacted at **0300 123 1231** Website address: www.ofsted.gov.uk

You can also write to Ofsted at:

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Mobile Phone and Social Media policy

Stepping Stones staff are not permitted to have their mobile phones on them during working hours, with the exception of the supervisor of the setting so that parents and other settings can get contact them. The drivers of the vehicles are also required to have their phone in case of emergencies but this will be put away once they have returned to the setting.

Social media policy. Stepping Stones limit their use of Social media and staff are not allowed to post about Stepping Stones at any time without the express permission of the owners and at NO TIME will the names of any children or parents be used.