



Coronavirus / Covid-19 Policy

Stepping Stones recognises the importance of advanced planning in order to maintain services and limit the spread of the new coronavirus, known as Covid-19, within our setting.

Covid-19 is a viral infection similar to flu, spread from person to person by close contact. It typically causes fever and a dry cough, and in some cases may progress to viral pneumonia which cannot be treated by antibiotics. Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

Cough	Sore throat
Fever	Tiredness
Difficulty breathing	

The initial symptoms are not dissimilar to other colds and flu-type illnesses, so the key question is whether the patient has also travelled to a high risk area in the last two weeks, or been in contact with a person who has.

Any child who becomes ill with symptoms which could be COVID-19 while at the Club will be isolated from the other children by at least two metres until the child can be collected by his or her parents. Most suspected cases turn out to be negative so the Club will remain open unless or until advised otherwise by the local Health Protection Team, but parents and staff will be informed, especially those in high-risk groups.

Should any children or staff experience symptoms of COVID-19 they should stay away from the Club until all symptoms have passed and they test negative for the virus.

If any staff or children have returned from a high risk area they will be asked to stay away from the Club for 14 days from their date of return.

Infection control

Like the common cold and other flu viruses, COVID-19 is spread by:

Infected people passing the virus to others through large droplets when coughing, sneezing, or even talking within a close distance.

Direct contact with an infected person: for example, if you shake or hold their hand, and then touch your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.

Touching objects (eg door handles, light switches) that have previously been touched by an infected person, then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands. Viruses can survive longer on hard surfaces than on soft or absorbent surfaces.

We will limit the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19 at the Club by:

- Regular handwashing by staff and children
- Minimising contact between our hands and mouth/nose
- Covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing; using a tissue when possible, and disposing of the tissue promptly and carefully (bag it and bin it)
- Cleaning hard surfaces (eg door handles, light-switches, tables, etc) with sanitizer frequently
- Encouraging the children at the Club to follow the guidance above
- Instructing staff to remain at home if they display any relevant symptoms, or sending them home if they first display symptoms while at work.

At Stepping Stones we will promote infection control through the methods above, and in addition we will:

- Display posters and information to promote infection control
- Ensure that adequate supplies of cleaning materials are available within the Club
- Dispose of waste promptly and hygienically
- Provide tissues and suitable facilities for their disposal.

Closure

The latest advice is that closing individual settings is of limited benefit in stopping the spread of the disease. However, there may be some occasions when we will have to consider temporarily closing the Club because we have too few unaffected staff to run sessions safely. If this occurs the manager will contact [local Early Years or Childcare service] for further support and guidance.

The Club will also have to close if advised to do so by the local authority in the interest of safeguarding the children in our care.

In the event of closure, the manager will notify parents or carers as soon as possible. The manager will also inform the local Early Years or Childcare service as well as other relevant parties, eg feeder schools, other users of shared premises, etc. The manager will also notify Ofsted of the closure.

Advance planning

In preparation for dealing with COVID-19, the Club will ensure that all contact details for staff, children and parents are up to date.

We will prepare letters of notification for parents and staff, so that they can be distributed immediately if an outbreak occurs.

We will endeavour to build a bank of relief or supply staff who are able to provide cover should staffing levels fall below the required legal minimums. Any relief staff will be DBS checked at the time of joining our team, so that they are legally able to work with children should the situation arise.

The Club will regularly update its information regarding COVID-19, by checking the latest guidance from Public Health England and the local authority and will inform parents and staff of any changes to our emergency plans.

Useful contacts

Early Years or Childcare Service: earlysupport@surreycc.gov.uk
Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

Health Protection Team (HPT):

PHE.sshpu@nhs.net 0344 225 3861 (option 1 to 4 depending on location)