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| Logo JPEG  Stepping Stones Playschool  Prospectus  2017/18 |

**Mission Statement**

The Stepping Stones ethos is the celebration of childhood in its own right-not just as a step to formal education.

Everyone having links with the group will welcome, support, value and respect each other.

Children will have opportunities for ‘playing to learn’ through a variety of activities and experiences.

Staff will work hard to provide the best quality care by establishing close links with parent/carers, other settings, schools and outside agencies.

First Days

Starting playschool is a big step and although exciting can also be an unsettling time for both the parent and child.

To help with this we offer home visits before children start with the group. All children offered a place are also given the opportunity to visit for at least one ‘stay and play’ session. This is intended to provide time for the parent and child to familiarise themselves with the setting, meet the staff and ask any questions they may have. It will also reassure you that the children are happy, safe and enjoying being in a stimulating environment.

The children will be offered the opportunity to decorate a ‘treasure box’ which they can bring to playschool during their first few sessions. These boxes should contain some personal memorabilia for the children to aid the settling in process.

We would also ask that every family send in family photos. This will offer opportunities for discussion and support your child in the settling in process.

The Playschool Session

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| 8.45 am/12.15pm | Welcome/Free play |
| 8.55am/12.25pm | Talk time |
| 9.10 am /12.35pm | Free play/Snack/Large group activity |
| 11.00am/2.30pm | Tidy up time |
| 11.30 am /3.00pm | Story time |
| 11.45 am/3.15 pm | Home time |

Session Options

Stepping Stones operates from 8.45am-3.15 Monday-Thursday and 8.45-12.45 on Fridays. Lunch sessions are offered Monday-Thursday 11.45am-12.15pm. All sessions are regularly staffed and the children will be surrounded by familiar adults with whom they will feel confident and secure. Families can request flexible session times within the opening hours.

The Setting

Stepping Stones Playschool comprises of two class bases- each accommodating up to 26 children- and a large outside play area.

The classes are known as ‘Adventurers’ and ‘Explorers’. The children are allocated a class for registration purposes, but, are able to ‘free flow’ between both classes and the outside play area during the free play session.

Outside play

We have a large enclosed play area which is both paved and grassed. The access gate is kept securely locked during sessions.

The garden is regularly checked to ensure it is clean and safe for play. Outside play is carefully supervised allowing children to enjoy the benefits of fresh air in a safe, stimulating environment.

Outside play incorporates all the activities carried out in the classroom, both free play and more structured sessions.

Outside play also gives opportunities for the children to become involved in gardening projects when they can tend to seeds and plants, as well as using the natural habitat to view insects and animals.

The children may spend a large part of the session outside and we would encourage them to be appropriately dressed for the conditions. A coat and wellies are needed for colder weather and during warm spells we encourage the children to use ‘Slip, Slap, Slop’ (slip on a t-shirt, slap on a hat and slop on some sun cream). We appreciate your support with this.

Key Person

We believe that for a child to progress, close links between home and setting are essential. As part of the settling in process we carry out home visits. This provides an opportunity for a more detailed discussion about your child and a chance for both you and your child to meet your key person.

The key person will monitor your child’s progress and liaise closely with you to plan the ‘next steps’ in their development. Your key person is there to share achievements from home, discuss progress and talk through any concerns you may have.

Tapestry Learning Journal

This is a secure online record of your child’s progress during their time at playschool. It will be regularly updated to include photos and observations of your child. It can be accessed at any time and parents are able to add photos and comments. The system can be shared with other family members.

Family Play

We would also like to invite you to participate in our ‘Family Play’ sessions. Spending a session playing alongside your child provide an opportunity for you to see your child among their playschool friends, get to know staff better and if you wish, speak to your child’s key person about their progress.

Please remember it is not just parents who can take part in these sessions, Grandparents, Aunts or Uncles can also take a turn!

‘Family Play’ sessions can be arranged by speaking to a member of staff.

General Information

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| Start/  Finish Times | The playschool operates from 8.45-3.15 Mon-Thurs and 8.45-12.45 Fri. Free entitlement is offered in line with the current ‘Free Entitlement Policy’.  At the start of session please encourage your child to find their name and ‘self register’. Parents are asked to help their child find their named coat peg and hang their coats (bags should be left outside in the tray provided). At the end of session a member of staff will monitor the gate while another member of staff will monitor the classroom door. Your child will be encouraged to remain seated until their name is called and they are handed over to their parent/carer. Another member of staff marks the children ‘out’ of the register. |
| Late collection | Please collect your child promptly at the end of their session-staff are not concerned if you arrive late-but, it may be distressing for your child. If you are inexplicably delayed picking up your child, staff are required to  try all emergency contact numbers you provided  If no-one has been contacted within half an hour of the session ending, staff must inform the Social Care Team.  A fee is due for persistent lateness-please see the ‘Payment Policy’ for details. |
| Fees | Your child’s fees are due weekly or monthly in advance. The current session fee for a non-funded child is £5.50 for 2 year olds and £4.50 for 3&4 year olds per hour. Failure to pay your child’s fees for two weeks will result in the place being withdrawn. Court action is always taken to recover unpaid debt.  We accept cash, cheques, credit and debit cards as well as childcare vouchers. *There is a £2.50 charge for using a credit card.* |
| Snack | Water is available throughout every session. Each child is asked to bring in one healthy snack per week (fruit, bread sticks, cheese biscuits etc) to share in our snack bar. We operate a ‘rolling snack bar’ which is open throughout the free flow session. Children are offered something to eat and either milk or water to drink. |
| Holidays/  sickness | Please let a member of staff know if your child will be absent during term time for a holiday or is absent due to sickness as a sudden unexplained absence may result in your child’s place being withdrawn. Unfortunately fees are still due during times of absence whether or not we have been informed. |
| Security | The outside gate is kept locked during sessions. Please ensure the gate is locked behind you if you call in during sessions. |
| Clothing | We provide aprons for messy play, but, not all children like to wear them. Please ensure your child comes to playschool in clothes suitable for activities which may involve paint, clay and water as we cannot guarantee that all marks will come out. Uniform is available to order and we recommend your child wears this. Appropriate clothing for the weather should be provided.  We ask that you provide two pairs of shoes for sessions-plimsolls are required for inside the classroom and wellies or trainers for outside depending on the weather. We ask that you provide footwear that your child can manage themselves with adult support (**laces or open toed shoes are not suitable**). A coat peg is provided to store your child’s outside shoes.  ***ALL ITEMS MUST BE NAMED****.* |
| Toilet/  nappies | All the children are reminded to go to the toilet at regular intervals and staff are on hand to provide help if needed. However, in case your child should have a toileting accident we ask you to send in a change of clothes every session.  There is a screened area in each class for nappy changing. Staff will work closely with parent/carers to support their child’s toilet training. |
| Infectious diseases | If we are notified that a child has an infectious disease or condition including mumps, measles, chicken pox or head lice, a notice will be displayed in the classroom window or in the ‘Info Zone’. |
| Fire drill | We will hold regular fire drills (in line with the school) to familiarise the children with the drill procedure.  In the event of a fire, we will evacuate the building and assemble at the church, when you will be contacted to collect your child.  Visitors to the group will be given an ‘emergency evacuation card’ detailing their role in a fire drill. |
| Outings | We will carry out regular group outings around the community. There will always be adequate supervision and a risk assessment will be carried out before every playschool outing. |
| Staff/  supervision | At every session there is always a team leader and a suitable number of staff who are known to the children by their first names. All our staff hold, or are currently training for, an appropriate childcare qualification. All staff have undergone an enhanced DBS check.  Students from local schools or colleges may sometimes be present during sessions as part of their course work or a parent participating in the parent rota. Visitors to the group will be supervised at all times.  Details of staffing levels and qualifications can be found on the staff board by the gate. |
| Toys | The children are always encouraged to bring in things to display. These could include items relevant to the season, colour or shape of the week. However, we do not encourage the children to bring in their own toys as this makes ‘sharing’ and ‘turn taking’ difficult. If your child brings something in, we will encourage them to put it on their peg until home time. We are unable to take responsibility for lost, damaged or stolen items. |
| Cultures or customs | At Stepping Stones we welcome the opportunity to observe and learn about different cultures and customs. If any parent/carer has a religious festival/event and/or custom they would like their child to observe whilst at playschool please speak to a member of staff to arrange the necessary details to enable the whole group to understand and appreciate other religions, cultures and customs. |
| Dummies/  bottles | We do not encourage the use of dummies and bottles at playschool because of the risk of contamination. However, staff will work closely with parent/carers to ensure a suitable compromise is reached. |
| Lost Child | If a child is lost during a playschool session staff will immediately inform the police, contact the parent/carer and inform Ofsted. |
| Info Zone | Situated outside each classroom, this area contains information for parents about a range of issues which may concern them. Please help yourself to any leaflets or booklets which interest you. |
| Home Library/  resource boxes/  story sacks/  chatterpacks | A box of books for reading at home is provided outside each class. There are a number of resource boxes, story sacks and ‘chatterpacks’ available for families to borrow. These offer opportunities to share a variety of equipment and stories with your child. Please speak to your key person for more details. |
| Abacus System | This secure system allows parents to access the family details and financial information held by the playschool. You can log in using the following link:  <https://my.parenta.com/ParentPortal/login.aspx?nno=I76FcMW6EQI>= |
| Walk once a Week | The playschool supports this initiative run by the charity Living Streets. Every child is asked to walk to playschool at least once each week and to record their method of transport every session. Children who walk once a week every week for the half term receive a badge to celebrate their achievement. Further details can be accessed on their website:  <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-with-us/walk-to-school/primary-schools/walk-once-a-week> |
| Tiny Pebbles | The playschool operates a family morning for babies and toddlers of preschool age on Wednesday mornings 9.00-11.00am from Gossops Green Community Centre. |
| Introduce a friend | A number of children who attend the playschool have been recommended by friends or family. In a new scheme to reward this loyalty we are offering a £20 ‘Love to Shop’ voucher to anyone whose recommendation results in a new family joining the group. |

Grievance Procedure

We believe that children and parent/carers are entitled to expect courtesy, and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parent/carers, outside professionals and the community generally. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our service at any time.

Making concerns known

A parent/carer who is uneasy about any aspect of the group’s provision should in the first instance talk over their concerns with Jackie Tubb, the playschool manager.

If this does not have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem recurs, the parent/carer should put their concern or complaint in writing and request a formal meeting with the manager.

Each party should have a friend or partner present and a record of the meeting will be made. Copies of this record will be made available to the parent/carer and the playschool manager.

Most complaints should be resolved informally; however, if the matter is still not resolved to the parent’s satisfaction, mediation will be sought.

We believe that most grievances are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe that it is in the best interest of the playschool that complaints are taken seriously, dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality.

Parent/carers have the right to complain directly to Ofsted, The Office for Standards in Education, if they feel their complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily:

Royal Exchange Buildings

St. Ann’s Square

Manchester

M2 7LA

0300 123 1231

Email- enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Finally

If at any time you have questions or grievances regarding any aspect of the playschool please bring it to Jackie’s attention.

But, we would also like you to share ideas, skills or comments you feel would be of benefit to the group. This can be done via the annual survey or directly to the staff.

**Remember-it’s *your* playschool!!!**