Stepping Stones Pre-School

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**NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2022 AUTUMN TERM 1**

Hello everyone, we hope you are all well and had a lovely summer? We would like to welcome you to Stepping Stones Pre School, where we hope your child/children will feel happy and secure at our setting. We are looking forward to meeting all our new children and their parent/carers on Monday 5th September for their taster sessions. A special welcome to all of you who are Deniz, Amelia, Lily, Eleanor, Eliana, Rudransh, Cian, Theo, Phoebe, Eissa, Nivaan, Joud. Omar, Harry and Reyaan.

We would also like to welcome back our lovely children from our Summer Term, from Tuesday 6th September, Anna, Alex, Arousha, Heavenly, Dominik, Ella Rose, Amaia, Jade, Amelia, Isla, Arthur, Lucy and Nneoma. Please let me know if you would like to add/change days your child attends.

We hope you will enjoy all the fun and learning activities that we have planned for your child during their time with us. As you are all aware, our learning is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). At Stepping Stones, we follow the EYFS and all our learning resources are based on the guidelines of this. I have sent you information on the EYFS for parent/carers in another attachment on your email.

This term we will be focusing our learning on Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), connecting it to “This is me” and “Senses”. Our learning will be based around focus activities and related resources to encourage your child’s learning on these subjects. We will also be learning about Autumn (Understanding the World). For the first two weeks, we will be working on children settling into our setting and socialising with their new friends. Although each child will have their keyperson, all other staff will become to know your child’s needs and their next steps for their learning development. Each week we have a “Show and Tell” theme, where the children are encouraged to bring in a small item from home connected to our learning topics and the children’s interests. Please can the items you send in with your child be small. Your child will be encouraged to talk about their object in a small group, don’t worry if your child is shy at first as this is a way to help encourage their confidence and helps build friendships with other peers. Once they have shown it to their friend’s during registration or circle time, your child will place it on our Interest table for other children to look at during the session. Please could all items have your child’s name on. You will receive weekly text messages from me to let you know what your child should bring into pre-school. We understand that some children may take longer than others to settle into their new routine, we will work together to make sure your child has the best transition into Stepping Stones, that suits him/her.

During our sessions, we like to send you messages and photos of your child at the resources they have chosen to use, to develop their learning. This encourages you and your child to talk about the photo you have been sent and your child to explain to you what they were doing. This is sent via WhatsApp. You are more than welcome to message me if you feel a little anxious and would like to know how your child is getting on. We never leave a child crying for too long, comfort is always given and we will give you a call should we feel the need to.

We are delighted that we have a great community once again at our Pre School!

Many thanks Donna and Staff

**Dropping and Collecting your Child**

**Children have to be signed in and out daily by whomever is dropping or collecting them. The register will be on a table at the entrance gate.**

Please remember that we encourage children to be dropped off at the gate. Children will come into the preschool via the grass area, into the backroom so that they can hang their coat and put their bag on their peg.

 At collection time Parents may come into the hall via the middle main doors and Exit from the far door of the hall, walk through the front pathway towards the double gates. If you would like to speak to your child’s key person or myself, please can you wait until your key person is free before you speak to them or myself. If you would like your child to be collected from the gate, please let me know before collection time. This can be arranged. This is the first time, we are letting parents back into the preschool since the start of lockdown on a daily basis. We will assess the situation and if we find it not safe, we will revert back to children being collected from the double gates once again. I will keep you updated. If the weather is good, children can be collected from the garden area.

**COVID Guidelines at Stepping Stones**

As you are aware the Government guidelines for Self-Isolating has changed and we do not need to isolate should we test positive for COVID. At Stepping Stones, we try extremely hard to keep everyone safe. Please can we ask should your child test positive for COVID, that they are kept away from the preschool until they are feeling better or have a negative test result. Staff will be following the same rules should they test positive at any time.

**Stepping Stones Committee**

Please remember that we are a committee run Pre School and rely on fees, fundraising and donations. All parents are welcome to join our committee. Our current committee members are as follows: -

Chairperson – Fiona Curran (Arthurs Mum), Secretary – Shona Gethin (Previous child’s mum), Treasurer – Glenda Dunne (Amelia D. Mum)

Meetings are held termly TBA. We value your support. We will advise you off the date of our annual general meeting (AGM) as soon as it has been confirmed. This is an important meeting where we vote for our new committee members, and confirm any changes to the preschool. All are welcome.

**Labelling**

Please can you make sure you send your child to Pre School with a change of clothes in a small bag, and that all garments, bags and lunch bags are labelled. If your child is not going to be in Pre School please can you send me a message to let us know? If your child is absent for longer than 3 days, please can you message me again to let me know how they are, unless you have already advised me of how long they will be absent.

**Key Persons**

You will all know the name of your child’s key person, and have/will meet them at our “Taster session”. You are always welcome to speak to myself/key person if you have any questions/concerns about your child at the beginning or end of each session. Should you have a concern which may take longer than five minutes, please message or let me know, so that the keyperson or myself are aware and we can arrange a meeting at a convenient time. You may prefer to make a telephone call which is also fine with us. Please remember that all information is confidential. We sometimes find that we may have to change your child’s Key Person, due to your child “bonding” with another member of staff. We will only make this change if we feel it will help in your child’s developing. We will notify you of any changes.

Each Key person will arrange a meeting with you once a term to advise you of how your child is settling in and his/her developing.

**Lunches**

Please provide your child with a healthy packed lunch and a **water bottle** at each session. **No** **Sweets, Chocolate, Crisps or Nuts, including peanut butter** are allowed on any day, due to **severe allergies** other children have. We will provide Milk at snack/lunch times and refill their water bottle should they need to be. Please make sure Grapes are always cut in half length ways to avoid your child from choking. All staff sit with the children during their lunch, one member at each table. Uneaten food will be returned in your child’s lunchbox.

**Pre School Fees (Book Keeper Nuala Guiney)**

At the beginning of each term, you will receive an email from our “Book keeper” Nuala Guiney.

Nuala will attach your invoice for your child’s fees. Please can all fees be paid within two weeks of us sending you the invoice, unless you have advised us of when the payment will be made? All payments are completed on line through our “Zero” system. We accept childcare vouchers.

If your child attends other childcare, and both parents are working, please remember you may be able to claim up to 30 hours TAX FREE funding, for three and four year olds. This has to be applied for by yourselves via your government gateway termly. The cut off dates for applying are at the end of each term and have to be renewed every three months. Please let me know what your Codes are once this has been authorised.

If your child is under three and you are on benefits, you may be entitled to two year old funding, which has to be applied for via your government gateway. All information provided is completely confidential between yourselves and Donna.

Please make sure you have given us your email addresses that you would like the invoices sent to. All payments to Stepping Stones are made via BACS. Our bank account details are **Barclays Bank sort code: 20-37-16 Acct.No: 20766445.** You will be invoiced for Uniforms etc.

**Please see below our session times and charges**

PRE SCHOOL SESSIONS 8.55-1.00PM MONDAY-FRIDAY TERM TIME ONLY

NON- FUNDED CHILDREN @ £25.00 PER SESSION

FUNDED CHILDREN (TERM AFTER THEIR 3RD BIRTHDAY) I WILL BE SENDING FORMS HOME FOR YOU TO COMPLETE IF YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO BE FUNDED. OUR CHARGE IS £10.00 PER SESSION (CHILDREN ARE NOT FUNDED DURING THEIR LUNCHTIMES WHICH ARE 11.55AM – 12.35PM) FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING 5 DAYS A WEEK THERE WILL BE AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF £8.00 PER WEEK FOR THE EXTRA 1 HOUR 40 MINS THEY WILL BE ATTENDING EACH WEEK

**Please speak to Donna if you know your payment will be late. All information discussed is confidential**

**Children’s days attended**

**Please note we will not be able to change your child’s days if they are unable to attend on the days you have informed us, e.g., child usually attends on a Monday but is ill. You cannot ask for your child to attend another day that week, as they were unable to attend on that Monday. If your child is funded and you have asked if they can attend an extra day on a particular week, that they do not usually attend, a full charge of £25 will be made for the additional session.**

**UNIFORM**

**JUMPERS £10.00, POLO SHIRTS £9.00, T-SHIRTS £8.00**

**UNIFORMS ARE COMPULSARY AT STEPPING STONES. SPARE CLOTHES YOUR CHILD HAS IN THEIR BAG, DOES NOT HAVE TO BE UNIFORM IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ANY SPARE**

**Parent/Carer Table**

Please take time to read/look through our Policy/Procedure Folder and our Parent/carer folder, which is placed on the table at the main entrance. Our register will also be on the table for you to sign your child in/out at each session.

**Breakfast Club (SSBC)**

**We are pleased to advise you that Stepping Stones have a Breakfast Club. Cereal, Fruit, Toast/preserves, milk are offered to children who attend our Breakfast Club. Our hours are 8.00am-8.55am @£8.00 per morning or 8.30am to 8.55am @£4.00 per morning. We will take siblings from our neighbouring school**

**St Anselm’s if needed @ £6.00 per morning. Children attending St Anselm’s will be dropped into school at 8.35. If you feel this will be of use to your family, please speak to a member of staff. Your child may also attend Breakfast Club on a as/when basis, please advise me at least 24 hours before attending.**

**Instagram**

**We regularly put pictures of our children at the activities they are exploring. Please follow us to see what activities your children are using to develop their learning.**

**Steppingstonespreschoolharrow (please let us know if you do not want your child to be on our website or Instagram. No names are on either.**

***SAFEGUARDING***

**AT STEPPING STONES, ALL SAFEGUARDING PROCEEDURES ARE PUT INTO PLACE AND FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES. PLEASE INFORM US SHOULD YOUR CHILD HAVE ANY MARKS ON THEIR BODIES BEFORE YOU BRING THEM INTO PRE SCHOOL. PLEASE DO NOT GET OFFENDED IF WE SEE A MARK ON YOUR CHILD AND ASK YOU HOW IS WAS CAUSED. ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN!**

**Please be aware that all information shared with staff and myself is confidential.**

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**TERM DATES FOR SS PRESCHOOL**

**Term Dates September 2022 – July 2023**

**2nd September Staff Training (Updates and get ready for new term)**

**5th September New Children Taster Session 10.00am to 10.45am, 11.00am to 11.45am**

 **New Children and parents only**

**Autumn Term 2022**

**Term Begins Tuesday 6TH SEPTEMBER 2022**

**Half Term Monday 24TH to Friday 28th October inclusive**

**Term begins Monday 31st October**

**Last day of Term Friday 16th December 2022 (Pre School closes at 12.15pm)**

**Spring Term 2023**

**Staff Training Tuesday 3rd January 2023**

**Term begins Wednesday 4thJanuary 2023**

**Half Term Monday 13thto Friday 17th February incl.**

**Last day of Term Thursday 30th March (Pre School closes at 12.15 pm)**

**Summer Term**

**Term Begins Tuesday 18th April 2023**

**Half Term Monday 29th May to Monday 5th June incl.**

**PRESCHOOL TRIP WILL BE DURING THIS TERM - DATE TO BE ADVISED ASAP**

**Staff Training Monday 5th June 2023 (Staff to complete and send transition, prepare for summer term)**

**Term Begins Tuesday 6th June 2023**

**During this term you will be advised of dates for our Sports Day and Graduation (for those children who will be leaving Stepping Stones to start Primary School)**

**Last Day of Term FRIDAY 14th July 2023 (Preschool closes at 12.15 PM)**

**Staff training Monday 17th and Tuesday 18th July 2023**

**These dates may be subject to change due to staff courses/meetings. Advanced notice will always be given.**