Stepping Stones Pre-School

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**NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2023 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 Tuesday 4th September for their taster sessions. A special welcome to all of you who are Maya, Rajveer, Natalia, Olivia, Charlotte, Amrutha, Navya and Verenya.

We would also like to welcome back our lovely children from our Summer Term, on Wednesday 6th September, Amelia, Lily, Eliana, Cian, Theo, Harry, Emma, Nathan, Robyn and Ethan.

Please let me know if you would like to add/change days your child attends.

We hope you will enjoy all the “learning through play” 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 all 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,” We will also be learning about “Shapes and Colours”. Our learning will be based around our daily focus activities and your child’s interests. We relate 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, each child will have a “key Buddy” who is another member of staff who will support your child if their key person is not available, however all other staff will 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 back in their bags for safe keeping. 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.

Should your child need to be absent for any reason, please message me in the morning of them being absent, to let me know, then every three days after, should they still be off.

We are delighted to have you and your family at our setting! With thanks Donna and Staff

**Dropping and Collecting your Child**

**Children will come into Pre School via the double gates (By our cars). Please do not let your child/children play around the parked cars. We like to encourage children to be dropped off at the gate where they will be welcomed by a staff member.**

**Children have to be signed in and out daily by whomever is dropping or collecting them.**

**At the morning drop of, we will sign whoever has dropped your child to Pre School. We will move the entrance bell to the gate next to the school, so please use this entrance after 9.00am to 1.00pm. At collection time we will open the double gates at 1,00pm, you are welcome to come into the setting to collect your child. The register will be on a table in the porch entrance, to sign your child out.**

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. 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. Staff will be following the same rules should they test positive at any time.

**Stepping Stones Committee**

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 (previous child’s Mother), Secretary – Margaret Walls (Harry’s mum), Treasurer – Glenda Dunne (Nathan’s Mum)

Meetings are held termly TBA. We value your support. We will advise you of 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/sausages 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. Please make sure your child has their name on their water bottle and 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.** If payments are going to be later than the due date please speak to Donna. All information is confidential.

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

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

NON- FUNDED CHILDREN @ £27.00 PER SESSION

Funded Children- 15 hours (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 £12.00 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. We Also Charge A £15.00 A Term Fee to All Children for A Contribution Towards Their Snacks.

**Parent/Carer Table** Please take time to read/look through our Policy/Procedure Folder and our Parent/carer folder/Screen, 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.

**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 £27 will be made for the additional session.**

**UNIFORM**

**Uniforms Are Compulsory at Stepping Stones.**

**Children May Wear Red T- Shirts, Polo Shirts, Sweatshirts, with no logos! These Can Be Purchased at A Reasonable Price at Marks and Spencer.**

**We Have Got Some Plain Polo Shirts Available for You to Purchase at A Cost Of £4 Each**

**We Are Awaiting Sew on Badges with Our Preschool Name for You to Purchase and Sew onto Your Child’s Uniform.**

**However, We Have Currently Got A Small Number of New Uniform, With Our Preschool Name on For You to Purchase.**

**Jumpers £10.00, Polo Shirts £9.00, T-Shirts £8.00**

**Children May Wear Their Own Choice of Bottoms. Please Make Sure Your Child Is Comfortable and Bottoms Are Easy for Them to Take Down When Using the Toilet.**

**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 @£7.00 per morning or 8.30am to 8.55am @£4.00 per morning. We will also take children from our neighbouring school**

**St Anselm’s if needed @ £7.00 per morning. Children attending St Anselm’s will be dropped into school at 8.35am 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, we never put the children’s name on either site.**

**SAFEGUARDING- Always Treated Confidential**

**At stepping stones, all safeguarding procedures 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 it was caused. accidents do happen! we take safeguarding seriously at our setting and will always follow procedures in our policy.**

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**TERM DATES SEPTEMBER 2023 – JULY 2024**

**MONDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER STAFF TRAINING (UPDATES AND GET READY FOR NEW TERM)**

**TUESDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER New Children Taster Sessions (New Children and parents/carers only)**

**Autumn Term 2023**

**Term Begins WEDNESDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Half Term MONDAY 23TH TO FRIDAY 27TH OCTOBER INCLUSIVE**

**Term begins MONDAY 30th OCTOBER**

**We are planning to arrange a Christmas Pantomime trip during December TBC**

**Last day of Term TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2023 (PRE SCHOOL CLOSES AT 12.15PM)**

**Spring Term 2024**

**Staff Training FRIDAY 5TH JANUARY 2024 training updates**

**Term begins MONDAY 8TH JANUARY 2024**

**Half Term MONDAY 12THTO FRIDAY 16TH FEBRUARY INCL.**

**Term begins MONDAY 19TH FEBRUARY**

**Last day of Term WEDNESDAY 27TH MARCH (PRE SCHOOL CLOSES AT 12.15 PM)**

**Summer Term**

**STAFF TRAINING MONDAY 15th April 2024 Training updates**

**Term Begins TUESDAY 16TH APRIL 2024**

**Half Term MONDAY 27TH MAY TO MONDAY 3RD JUNE INCL.**

**Preschool Trip Will Be During This Term - Date TBC**

**Staff Training MONDAY 3RD JUNE 2024 (STAFF TO COMPLETE AND SEND TRANSITION, PREPARE FOR SUMMER TERM)**

**Term Begins TUESDAY 4TH JUNE 2024**

**Last Day of Term FRIDAY 19TH JULY 2024 (Preschool closes at 12.15 PM)**

**STAFF TRAINING MONDAY 22ND JULY 2024**

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