

Stepping Stones Preschool
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Inspiring today's children for tomorrow's world

26 August 2020

To Parent/Carers

Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to you for your tremendous support that we have received from you over the last few months, it has been an incredibly challenging time for everyone. The kindness and care for our community that has been shown in so many ways has been really special and has brought great comfort. We have all really enjoyed hearing about and seeing photographs of the learning and fun that you have had at home together via Tapestry.

We would like to thank you for your patience in waiting for our response to the Department of Education's guidance for schools that was released at the end of the summer term, for the return to settings in September. As you can imagine we have all been working really hard to plan for the full opening of the preschool on **Thursday 3rd September 2020**.

You can refer to the government's current guidance for parents and carers at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-in-the-autumn-term> but this could be subject to change at any point.

There is a lot of information to convey in this letter so we suggest that you read the following very carefully.

INFORMATION FOR SEPTEMBER

We are all very excited to welcome you back to Stepping Stones in September. There are several changes that are in place when we reopen in September and it may feel slightly different. All of the changes are to help keep children, families and staff as safe as possible. We are aiming to make things as safe as possible because we want to ensure you, our families to feel safe when you come to Stepping Stones.

Below are some of the routines that we will be following:

- Children and the Early Years Team will be kept as part of the **Stepping Stones bubble**
- Hygiene and cleaning routines will continue to be part of everyday practises and a high priority
- Parents / carers will not be allowed into the building except for exceptional circumstances or for a pre-planned meeting that cannot take place over the phone or via video-call.

- Any communication will need to take place over the phone, via Tapestry or by email in the first instance.
- Please consider minimising the number of settings that you use to help stop the spread of infection. If you are going to be using more than one setting, please advise us of this ASAP. (see funding information below). Ideally families will only use one setting as this minimises the risk for both staff, children and wider families.

Here are some things that you need to know:

New Children

Due to current restrictions we have been unable to hold the settling in sessions as we would have done and induction arrangements have had to be different this year. Due to this, we are very aware that our youngest children may take longer to settle into preschool in the Autumn Term. Please rest assured, that at Stepping Stones we have a very experienced Early Years Team that will care for your children. We are also very excited this year to welcome some new members of staff to our team. Your children will be able to meet them when they start back with us but also head to our website

www.elburtonschool.com/web/stepping_stones_pre_school_/305981, where you can see pictures of the team that will be with your children. If your child finds the first few sessions difficult to manage, we would be more than happy to discuss your child staying for shorter periods of time so that they can gently ease into Preschool life.

Please help to prepare your child for their start to Stepping Stones by:

- looking at the website to see what fun learning experiences the children have had before;
- walk to Stepping Stones together talk about what they might do when they are there;
- always plan what you are going to do together once you have picked up your child;
- share the story 'The Invisible String - by Patrice Karst. A fantastic story about the unbreakable connection between loved ones.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO2LBBBtAI ;
- show your child photographs of the staff at preschool (via the website).



Timings for the Day

Breakfast Club	07:45 to	08:30
Morning session	08:30 to	11:30
Lunch	11:30 to	12:30
Afternoon session	12:30 to	15:30

What do I do if my child is showing Covid 19 Symptoms?

Do not, under any circumstances, bring your child in to preschool if any member of your family is showing symptoms of Covid 19. Main symptoms are: **High temperature, new persistent cough, loss of taste/smell.**

If you have any concerns, ring NHS direct for advice, and get tested if advised.

What happens when I drop my child at Stepping Stones for their session?

Due to current Government guidance and our risks assessments

NO parents are allowed into the preschool building.

We appreciate that this is hard, but it is necessary to avoid possible contamination. Parents dropping off in the morning are to access the patio area at the side of the preschool on their arrival. To adhere to social distancing, there must be only one adult dropping off and they must stand 2 metres apart. Adults dropping off their children must wait at the front of the building on the grass area, allowing the path to remain clear so that leaving parents can pass by safely. As one parent leaves the patio area, another can access the patio area. No congregations of parents, please leave as swiftly as possible, we know it is great to catch up with other parents but not near the pre-school. Children are to be collected in the same way at the end of the day.

Children being dropped off or collected at lunchtime, can come to the front door. They must once again remain distanced from others. The children that are coming in for lunchtime, must arrive on time 11:30 and be ready to be taken down to the school for their lunch accompanied by members of the Early Years team.

Our Stepping Stones children will be in their bubble and kept separate from other classes in the school building at lunchtime, so that they remain in our bubble of children. The school has put measures in place to make everything safe. Information will be coming out to you on how you can order either a hot meal, or specify that they will be bringing a packed lunch from home.

What should my child wear to Stepping Stones?

Parents can order Stepping Stones uniform direct from Trutex. You can make an appointment via telephone 01752 491353. They are based at Sugar Mill in Plymstock. You will be able to order t-shirts and sweatshirts with the Stepping Stones EPS logo on. **Uniform is not compulsory**, and children can wear any play clothes as long as their shoulders are covered, and sensible shoes (no flip flops). Children's clothes **will** get dirty during play, so please be mindful of this. We cannot be held responsible for children's clothing.

Book bags can be purchased from Trutex. You can also put a change of clothes and anything else your child may need in them i.e. nappies, pacifiers. The book bags will be blue EPS ones.

Can my child bring things in from home?

It is advisable that your child **does not bring in any toys from home**. All our equipment has to be washed and sanitised daily, and toys from home can easily get lost, be broken or not be appropriate for preschool.

We will allow pacifiers to settle children. Everything brought in from home **must be clearly named**, including all lunch containers, drinks bottles, coats, spare clothes, nappies, etc. Special note relating to water bottles: They need to be brought in each day, then taken home and thoroughly washed by parents. We are not allowed to rinse/wash them out for children to reuse if they have been left at preschool overnight. This is for health and safety reasons. Please make sure that their names are always clear on them, and rename them if the names wear off. Often children have similar bottles so it is vital that they are visibly named at all times.

How do I pay for sessions, order lunches and receive information?

We will be sending you your activation letter for Parentpay. This needs to be actioned as soon as you receive it, Parentpay is our school system that is used throughout Elburton School and Stepping Stones. It will enable you to settle your bills, order lunches and other activities, and it is also a means of communication, sending out letters by email. When you activate your Parentpay account, it is important that you use your main email account that you check regularly, so that you will be able to pick up any letters/updates from us quickly.

How will I access my child's learning?

All children at Stepping Stones have access to a personal online learning journal called Tapestry. If your child is a new starter then details of this will follow soon.

Do Stepping Stones have the right contact details for me?

Please make sure that there are at least two contact numbers on your registration form. It is vital that we are able to contact you, especially in these uncertain times. If anyone else has to collect your child from preschool they must be named on the registration form and it is also a good idea to give us a Password for them to use.

How do I apply for the Government Funding?

We will be sending out the government funding forms for you to complete. Funding starts the term after your child's 3rd birthday.

Please read the accompanying notes that will come out with it, carefully before you fill it in. If you have any questions regarding your form, please email us or call the office and we will happily give you guidance. It is important that the forms are completed quickly and returned to the office so that they can be processed in time for headcount week. If you have shared funding then please apply for the funding in the same way although please be mindful with the number of settings that your child attends as to minimise the risk of contamination (ideally only one setting). Please make sure if you are claiming 30 hrs funding (15 universal plus additional hours up to the total of 30), you must include their 30 hour code. **IMPORTANT** - If you are claiming 30 hours funding for the first time, please be aware that your funding must be applied for online for eligibility to be confirmed. There are criteria that you have to meet. **You have to apply before the end of August for it to be in place for the start of the term.** If you leave it until September to apply, you will not be eligible until the next Spring Term. If you are only having the normal 15 hours of universal funding, you don't need to apply on-line. We can automatically claim that for you. Please also let the office know if you are eligible for ME2 funding and show proof of either email or letter.

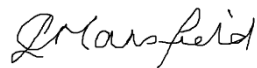
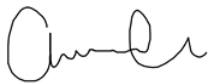
Any further Questions?

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to email us;

steppingstones@elburton.plymouth.sch.uk or cchurchill@elburton.plymouth.sch.uk

We hope you enjoy the last few days of the summer holidays and we look forward to welcoming new and old faces back to Stepping Stones on Thursday 3rd September.

Yours Sincerely,



Mrs C Churchill

Leslie Mansfield

and the Stepping Stones Early Years Team

EYFS Leader

Preschool Leader