**COVID-19**

**Policy Statement**

Due to the recent worldwide pandemic of Coronavirus, Stepping Stones is introducing a policy and procedures to ensure that all staff and children are protected while in the setting, to reduce the risk of spreading the infection, ensure everyone follows the infection guidance should someone become unwell and the need for a physical change in the structure of the classroom, while adhering to social distancing measures.

**Procedures**

**Coronavirus symptoms and what happens if someone becomes ill.**

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

* a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
* a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
* a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
* No one with symptoms should attend Stepping Stones Preschool Playgroup for any reason.
* Families should notify the preschool as normal if their child is unable to attend
* It is very important that individuals with symptoms that may be due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and their household members stay at home. Staying at home will help control the spread of the virus to friends, the wider community, and particularly the most vulnerable.
* If you live with others and you or one of them have symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus (COVID-19), then household members must stay at home and not leave your house for 14 days
* If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in an education or childcare setting, they must be sent home and advised to follow the COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance.
* If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age of the child and with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.
* If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.
* PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).
* In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.
* If a member of staff has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves (and in which case, a test is available) or the child subsequently tests positive (see ‘What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?’ below). They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with normal household disinfectant after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
* Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their class or group within their childcare or education setting should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days

**Social Distancing Measures.**

There is an acknowledgement that social distancing for young children will be difficult or impossible, but staff are putting in to place some procedures to keep children within a safe distance when possible. We cannot guarantee that children will be socially distanced from each other at all times.

* Parents and children are to stand 2 meters apart from each other when standing at the gate. No parents are to come into preschool.
* Children will be collected from the gate in the morning and bought into the setting one at a time. The same will happen when it comes to collecting, one by one children will be taken to the gate to go to their parents. Please do not be late picking your children up.
* Only one parent is to attend drop off and pick up times.
* We will encourage the children to play outside as much as possible as there is less of a risk when outside in the fresh air.
* Parents will need to apply sun cream to their children before they come into preschool as we are unable to do it.
* The DfE guidance states that bubbles are no longer required in Early Years Settings. This means that providers can return to normal group sizes in line with the EYFS ratio.
* The DfEguidance remains that children should only be attending one setting where possible.

**Changes to the setting.**

Due to the coronavirus being highly infectious, changes are being made to the layout and running of the setting following government guidance to reduce the spread of infection. The classroom will be differently set up and so will look different to the children when they come back to preschool.

* No toys are allowed to be brought in from home. No Dummies, blankets, comforters or soft toys etc.
* Should anything need to be brought into the setting i.e. for a change of clothes, please ensure that these are clean, and bags disinfected before coming into the setting.
* All children are to bring their own drink in a named bottle.
* We will not be enforcing the indoor shoe policy for the time being as many children need help putting them on.
* Children will be encouraged to go to the toilet independently and to wash their hands and wipe noses etc by themselves.
* Children will need to wash their hands with soap as soon as they come into the setting and before they go home (plus throughout the day).
* Hand sanitiser is to be used when the children are outside.
* Some of our equipment and resources will not be made available for the children to play with in the setting, mainly all toys that are intricate and cannot be cleaned easily such as soft furnishings, soft toys etc. All rugs will be removed from the setting and replaced with wipeable mats.

**Enhanced Cleaning Program**

Stepping Stones will be introducing an enhanced cleaning program to be done daily to reduce the risk and spread of infection on surfaces that are touched regularly. We will be buying a supply of cleaning products to use such as bleach, disinfectant, toilet cleaner and Milton as well as an antibacterial washing up liquid.

* The toys will be cleaned at the end of the session with either Milton or a disinfectant and then left to dry overnight as we don’t have to put away.
* Toilets will need to be cleaned after use to decrease the spread of germs. This will be with either a toilet cleaner or bleach and a disinfectant on the seats, toilet handles and taps and well as doors if they are touched.
* Tables will need to be wiped down and so will chairs at the end of the day.
* Door handles will need to be cleaned after every use.
* The kitchen will be cleaned before and after use.
* Outside toys will be cleaned between uses.
* Shared materials and surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently
* Floors will be hoovered, swept and mopped regularly