

# stepping Stones Pre-school/



**Stepping Stones Pre-school**

Avonway Community Centre

Fordingbridge

Hampshire

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**Flexible Open Hours:** Monday to Friday 09.00 to 16.00 including lunch club  
(subject to demand)

We are registered with Ofsted and are an accredited member of the  
Pre-School Learning Alliance

## **Introduction:**

Stepping Stones Pre-school is a committee run pre-school on the edge of the New Forest. Our aim is to deliver a high standard of childcare, and to be accessible to all children between the ages of 2.5 and 5 years, through a variety of means to cover all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Stepping Stones is situated in the heart of Fordingbridge. The setting is based in the Annexe of the Avonway Community Centre and is within easy walking distance of the town centre, central car park and bus stops.

It is a registered charity and run by a committee, the members of which are elected by the parents of the pre-school children.

At Stepping Stones we are very proud of our pre-school because it is a happy and caring place for all children, parents and staff. We hope this will give you all the answers to the many questions that you may have, but please feel free to contact us if you have any queries. We also invite parents and children to look around the pre-school and to see us in action. This is the best way for you to get a feel for how we do things and to see the other children, happy at their play. Once you have decided that we are the right place for you and your child, please complete the registration forms at the back and return them to us. We can then discuss your child's requirements in more depth.

## **Safeguarding:**

Keeping the children safe and happy while in our care is our primary concern and all staff take this responsibility very seriously. We ensure that all the required checks are carried out when any new staff join (such as DBS checks) and our classroom staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and paediatric first aid training. Our playground is very secure with a high fence and a locked gate. Visitors ring the bell and are accompanied in by a member of staff. All visitors to the preschool are asked to sign the Visitor book so we know who is in the building at all times.

## **Settling In:**

Initially your child and you will be invited to come and spend an hour or so 'settling in'. This is usually arranged for later on in the morning when all the other children have arrived and settled in. This is an ideal opportunity for us to observe your child at play and for you to see the staff and children in action too. A second settling in session is then arranged where you are able to leave your child once they are happy and playing and come back in an hour or so. Parents often find these sessions helpful and it makes the separation process a bit easier, for parents just as much as the children! These sessions are free of charge.

You will be given an 'All about me' profile to complete where you will have the opportunity to tell us about anything special to your child. For example, what they like to play with and any special words they might use. This helps us to get to know your child before they start. The more we know, the better, so staff can build on their interests to help with their learning.

### **Keyworker:**

Your child will be allocated a keyworker. This is a member of staff who will help your child settle in. She will also play with your child, write your child's report and in the communication book if required. The keyworker will have overall responsibility for your child's online learning journal (see section about Tapestry). We have an open door policy where you can meet with your child's keyworker to discuss any issues at any time. We also hold parents evenings where keyworkers are available to meet with you as well as other staff and sometimes staff from the local infant schools.

### **Tapestry:**

Tapestry is an interactive, stand-alone application which was designed and created by teachers and early years practitioners. It is accessed through our own web address and has full management functions to control access and communications between parents and staff. You will only be able to see your own child's journal and a password is needed to access it, making it secure. An email address is also required but if you do not have one we can make alternative arrangements. When your child comes to leave Stepping Stones, we can provide a copy of the journal on a disc.

### **Communication:**

Communication between preschool and parents is so important. All children are issued with a book bag when they join. Please bring this in every session and leave in the grey box. All notices, information and your child's work will be put in the bag. If you have any notes for us, they can also be put in the bag. We are also keen to use email to update parents/ carers with newsletters etc. as it is much quicker and saves on paper so please ensure we have your email address if you are happy for us to contact you this way.

### **Our Daily Routine:**

#### **Sessions**

Our session times are detailed below however, we are very flexible and offer hours that suit you and your child so if you would like your child to start or finish at a different time, then that is absolutely fine with us. All we ask is that your child does a minimum of 2 hours within a session.

**Morning-09.00 to 12.00-** Children and parents are greeted at the gate. Please come in with your child and help them to identify their name on the name board, place their book bag in the box and hang up their coat. If your child is staying for lunch they can drop off their lunch box which will then be transferred to the fridge in the kitchen. You are welcome to stay and settle them into an activity before you go or chat with your child's key worker about anything you would like to share or are concerned about.

The morning session starts with a time for the children to gather together on the mat to sing the welcome song and talk about the morning ahead and a reminder of the 'Golden Rules'. Children then have free flow access from the inside to the outside playground and we encourage them to play outside whatever the weather as long as they have the appropriate clothing.

We have a self-select snack bar which is open throughout the morning. Children are encouraged to select their own snack and wash their own plate and dry it when they have finished. We also like to involve children in shopping for and preparing the snack as much as possible.

Please inform staff of any allergies your child has. There is a place on the registration form to do this.

Planning takes into account the children's needs, what their next steps are and their interests. Many activities are child led.

We have a new theme each week to which activities are linked. These are flexible, repeating or continuing if popular with the children. Newsletters contain a list advising parents of intended themes for the weeks ahead.

At the end of the morning session all children are encouraged to help tidy away all the toys. We then sit on the mat for songs and share stories or news. Children are able to bring in things from home to talk about which helps develop their confidence. Those children staying for lunch get ready and those leaving for the day wait for parents/ carers to come and meet them.

**Lunch Club-12.00 to 13.00.** All children are welcome to stay for lunch and it is great for their independence. Please bring in a packed lunch but bear in mind that we try to promote healthy eating. Please do not send in sweets, chocolate or fizzy drinks. Also, we ask that you do not send in anything containing nuts in case of allergies and we ask that grapes are cut in half to avoid risk of choking. It is a very sociable time and children are asked to sit nicely while they are eating and are encouraged to eat all their lunch. Once they have finished,

they pack away and are able to go and get a book and sit quietly while the other children finish eating.

**Afternoon-13.00 to 16.00** The afternoon session is run along the same lines as the morning, with free flow access inside and out and snack time. The afternoon sessions are traditionally quieter than mornings and we try to use this time for some smaller group work, particularly in preparation for those children who will be starting school the following September.

### **Activities:**

We run events throughout the year which parents and children look forward to. For example, a summer trip, sports day, sponsored obstacle course, Easter bonnet parade, Christmas party, Chinese New Year and Diwali celebrations. Please keep an eye out for newsletters and on the notice boards for more information.

We also take the children on regular outings into the community, such as a visit to the library or museum, or the CO-OP to choose their own healthy snack. We are also fortunate to be in close proximity for Marl Lane which is great for nature walks and seeing the changes in seasons. The children enjoy looking at and collecting things. The experience can then be shared when they get back to preschool.

### **Visitors:**

We receive regular visitors throughout the year. For example, the local fire brigade, police, school crossing man and Animal Voice. Animal's Voice brings in small animals such as rabbits, squirrels, hedgehogs or owls etc. Again, if your child has any allergies please make sure this is written on your child's registration form. Staff from the children's centre and the library sometimes come and read stories to the children. We are also invited to take the children to the story session held at the library. We like to get involved within our local community too, for example at Harvest time and Christmas time we take the children across to the main Avonway Community building to sing to the elderly people.

### **Notice Boards:**

Please keep an eye on our notice boards for information on themes, special events and other things happening in the area that may be of interest to you and your family.

### **Music:**

We are very lucky that the children have the opportunity to enjoy listening to and making their own music with Paula, our music teacher who comes in once a week. This is a very relaxed and informal session and children are free to join in as they wish. She also leads our special sessions such as the 'Leavers Assembly' and the Christmas singing for parents.

**Parent help:**

If you have any particular talents (music, drama, art, reading stories etc) that you can share with the children or an interesting job or an unusual pet we would be very pleased to welcome you in one of our sessions. Alternatively, we are always very grateful for any help during the sessions. This can be either reading to the children, helping prepare snack, helping on the craft table or just playing with the children. It is very rewarding and gives you further insight into your child's day. If you are interested, please talk to a member of staff or look out for the parent rotas. We understand that you may prefer not to help in your child's early days as it may upset their settling in.

**Treasure Basket:**

We always have a treasure basket as children often want to bring in something from home. This can be something that is relevant to our weekly theme or something that they are interested in. They are encouraged to talk about it during the circle time if they are comfortable with this. Please do not send anything too valuable or sentimental!

**Mobile phones:**

We ask all parents not to use their mobile phones while in the pre-school building. This is to protect you and your child as most phones these days contain cameras. All staff and visitors to the pre-school are asked to leave their mobiles in the admin office where they will be safe.

**Clothing:**

Please send children in older clothes that you don't mind getting dirty! Although we supply aprons there is no guarantee that paint and glue won't get on their clothing. We would hate to ruin their best clothes. Alternatively, Stepping Stones polo-shirts are available for children at a cost of £8.00 each. Please complete an order form if you would like one for your child.

**Outdoor clothing:**

Children are encouraged to play outside whatever the weather so please come prepared! Please can you ensure that all the children's removable clothes, i.e. coats, hats, scarves, gloves etc. are labelled. If we have snow, please bring in wellington boots as the children love playing in the snow and learning from the experience.

If appropriate, please apply suncream to your child before preschool. If they are staying all day, you will be asked to sign a permission form for staff to reapply their suncream for the afternoon session. Please provide a sun hat for your child in summer.

**Policies:**

All our policies are available on the table by the registration board for parents to read. Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries.

**Hourly rate:**

£4.15 per hour. (A discount is available for twins).

When you register your child, we ask that you pay a £20.00 deposit which will hold your child's place and will be refundable at the point of your first invoice (if applicable).

We send invoices out twice termly but if you prefer, you can pay weekly. This can be by cash, cheque or by electronic transfer.

All children are eligible for 15 hours a week free childcare from the start of the term after their third birthday. This is claimed through us, from the local authority.

**Birth Certificate:**

In order for us to claim funding on your behalf, we are required by law to see sight of your child's birth certificate. If you bring it up to the office, we can process this and return the certificate to you straight away.

**Sickness/ absence:**

If your child has an upset tummy or sickness bug we ask that you please keep them away from preschool for 48 hours after the last bout before returning. Please can you inform us if your child will not be in, whether it is due to sickness, a holiday or a family day out. Please let us know the reason as the funding team (Hampshire County Council) may want to know if the absence lasts more than a week. Sometimes we may require a letter for the file to cover a long absence.

**Well Being:**

It is important that you inform us of any medical needs or any allergies that your child may have. All our staff are trained in paediatric first aid but if they feel that an injury needs more professional attention we will contact you straight away. Please ensure that we have an up-to-date contact number which we can use in an emergency. If necessary, we would take your child to the doctor's surgery. If your child receives an injury or bump but it is not deemed an emergency we will write it in the accident book and ask you to view this and sign on collection.

**Head lice:**

This is a common problem but with your help we can help eliminate it. Please treat your child immediately. If you can inform us we can put a note up advising other parents but of

course we do not mention any names. Staff can offer tips on removal and checking if you would like.

**Parking:**

Please use the public car park when dropping off and picking up children. We are not able to use the limited car park at the Avonway and pulling up onto the curb outside the gate makes it difficult for other families dropping off. Thank you.

**Personal scooters, bikes etc:**

Our playground and storage areas are not particularly large and we ask that children do not leave their own scooters, bikes etc. This is for your child's safety and to avoid any 'problems' with sharing etc. Thank you for your co-operation.