ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

It is our intention to make our Centre accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We aim to ensure that all sections of our community have access to our setting through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

Our admissions policy is inclusive and we welcome children regardless of their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, background, religion, ethnicity, lifestyles and families who have English as their second language. We will liaise fully with parents and professionals to ensure that it would be in the child's best interests to attend the setting.

Policy/Procedure

We welcome and encourage all families in the community with children from the ages of 2 to 11 years.

We will take children when they reach 2 years of age, dependent on the availability of space.

We are flexible about attendance patterns and wherever possible accommodate the needs of individual children and families.

Due to the Admissions Policies of the local schools, where children start school in the Autumn Term following their fourth birthday, most children will start with us during the Autumn term (September to December). We are unable to keep places open or hold places for those children who have a Spring or Summer birthday. However, should places be available they will be offered, although session requested by the parent may be different to those we can allocate due to availability. We will then endeavour to offer the sessions of parental choice in the following Autumn term/academic year.

Children must attend for a minimum of 2 sessions per week, and these sessions are 3 hours long. We recommend that younger children should start with 2 or 3 sessions per week but may increase this to 4 or 5 when parents and staff feel that the child is ready and able to benefit from more sessions, subject to availability of places.

We will require registration of each child via a provisional registration form. This will be available on our website or direct from the setting. As a setting we do not ask for a registration fee. For details of our fees refer to our Fees and Pricing Policy.

On receipt of registration confirmation will be sent to the parent/carer. Within 9 months of the anticipated start date, if September, and no later than 3 months before the anticipated start date if later, we will confirm any placement and sessions available. This is so that we can offer flexible sessions with the aim to meet the needs of each individual child and parent.

When a child is registered, the registration will be dated, and placed in strict order of receipt, if the start date is the first term of the school year (September). Registrations where the anticipated start date does not fall in September will be receipted in anticipated start date, and then date received. Preference may be given to registrations where there is an immediate start date required, over registrations with a later anticipated start date, but not where an offer has already been made.

Registrations with a start date from January to April will be reviewed within the 2 months prior to start date.

It may be likely that children registered to start later in the school year, particularly during the Summer Term, may have to be waitlisted if a place is not available.

Preference will be given to siblings if another sibling is also in setting, where possible, but this will be subject to availability at anticipated start date.

Prior to any offer being given to new registrations for the academic year, existing parents whose children are already in setting, will be asked to confirm any changes they require to their sessions for September first. This will also include any additional funded sessions they may be entitled to for the Autumn term. Existing children who will qualify for funding for Spring and Summer terms will be offered additional sessions, subject to availability, in the term prior to qualification and therefore these cannot always be guaranteed. Stepping Stones cannot be held responsible for not being able to fulfil the total weekly parental entitlement for funded sessions.

Funded places are offered in accordance with the Early Years Entitlements: Operational Guidance for local authorities and providers (DfE) and any local conditions in place at the time. Funding terms are in September, January and April and apply to our morning and afternoon session, term time only. Funding can be used across two childcare providers and across counties, but must be taken over a minimum no of days and both providers have to be claiming funding based on 38 weeks. If a child is to leave our setting, or to change the number of sessions attended, parents are required to give at least 1 months' notice. Fees will be payable (or grant claimed by us), until any leaving date or end of funding term. Due to all children, where families meet the working criteria, being able to access up to 30 hours term time only Stepping Stones can only guarantee the funded hours your child books when they start with us. We offer an opportunity the January before your child moves to Pre-school the following September to increase your child's hours however this is subject to availability.

Universal funding, term after a child turns 3 - Children accessing only universal funding the term after they turn 3 will be offered 15 funded hours, it's a parents choice if they would like to book them.

No more than 70 children in total will attend the setting each session time at our main site and no more than 22 in our yellow room at Bracken Leas. Sessions times are: Breakfast Club 07.45am-9.00am, Morning 09.00am-12.00noon, Afternoon 12.00noon-3.00pm and Afterschool 3.00pm-6.00pm. If attending the yellow room pre-school we open at 8.45am and the afterschool club runs 3.00pm – 5.00pm. For holiday club this will be various sessions between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm.

The setting aims to support the childcare needs of its staff where possible. Therefore staff may enrol their children so long as it does not compromise the effectiveness of the member of staff running the session.

Parents/carers are encouraged to visit with their child shortly before admission is due, and should be prepared to stay with their child if necessary for the first session or two. We operate a flexible admissions procedure and where appropriate a child may attend for brief periods at first; gradually building up to a full session. As part of this process we welcome integral family members important to the child.

Parents who are offered a place, and subsequently defer their start date, will be subject to re-assignment of registration based on the new start date.

Children with SEND

- The manager must seek to determine an accurate assessment of a child's needs when confirmation has been sent to a family confirming their Childs space. If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core budget, then an application for SEN inclusion funding must be made immediately.
- Children with identified SEND must be offered a place when one becomes available as with any other child. However, the start date for children with more complex SEND will be determined by the preparations made to ensure the child's safety, well-being and accessibility in the setting. If a child's needs determine that adjustments need to be made, the manager must outline a realistic timeframe for completion, detailing the nature of adjustments e.g. risk assessment, staff training, health care plan and all other adjustments required. The child's safety at all times is paramount.
- At the time of space confirmation, the manager must check to see if a child's family is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance**,** if so, the manager must ask for evidence to enable them to claim the Disability Access Fund directly from the local authority. If the family is eligible but not in receipt of the allowance, the setting manager will support the family in their application. More information can be found at www.gov.uk/disability-living-

allowance-children/how-to-claim.

- Preparation for admitting a child with SEND must be made in a reasonable amount of time and any delay in the child starting is scrutinised by the setting manager to avoid discrimination and negative impact on the child and family. During the preparation period the family and relevant agencies and the local authority must be regularly updated on the progress of the preparations.

Safeguarding/child protection

If information is provided by the parents/carers that a child who is starting at the setting is currently, or was involved with social care, the designated safeguarding lead will contact the agency to seek further clarification.

Parents/carers are advised on how to access the setting's policies and procedures.