



# Stepping Stones Co-Operative Nursery School

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## PARENT MANUAL

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## **PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

### **Our Philosophy**

At Stepping Stones, we let kids be kids. We know that each child is special and each has unique differences. Given their varying needs, our Registered Early Childhood Educators provide inviting preschool programs with an atmosphere that promotes learning and fun. Children attending Stepping Stones learn tolerance, cooperation, confidence and independence. They can play freely, constructively and creatively.

As a play based program, the children at Stepping Stones are learning through their independent and interactive play. They are provided with many choices and are encouraged to become involved in a variety of activities but ultimately the level of participation is the child's decision.

The Stepping Stones preschool program teaches children to interact and learn respect for their classmates, teachers and adults other than their parents. Their curiosity, creativity, social skills and self-esteem will be stimulated and enhanced. Most importantly, we strive to teach the children appropriate social and developmental skills, preparing them for Kindergarten, the next big stepping stone in life.

### **Program Statement**

We are a licensed Nursery School, governed by the Child Care and Early Years Act and the Ministry of Education.

It is our belief that a child is a child, with unique differences and similarities. Given that all children have varying needs, it is our goal as Registered Early Childhood Educators to provide a program with an inviting atmosphere where children can build on the foundations of learning. Where every child has a sense of belonging, while developing a sense of well-being. Where they can engage and explore the world with body, mind, and their senses. Lastly, where a child is a capable communicator who can express himself in many ways.

At Stepping Stones, we encourage our students to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate. We promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children, while most importantly, striving to provide a program where children can develop appropriate social and developmental skills to move forward to kindergarten, their next "Stepping Stone in life."

The staff at Stepping Stones place a strong emphasis on being a supportive extension of the family unit. We foster the engagement of and on-going communication with parents about the program and their children. We support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents and child care providers. Parent involvement gives an opportunity to help shape, stimulate and enrich our educational environment. They are always encouraged to come in and play, participate and explore our program along with their children.

Stepping Stones is a licensed Nursery School with qualified Registered Early Childhood Educators offering a stimulating and fun program for children ages 2 to 5 years of age.

Stepping Stones is a play-based program. Play based programs are rooted in the belief that children learn best through play. In order to do this, children need stimulating activities and experiences and at Stepping Stones children are provided with many choices and opportunities to develop their learning and are encouraged to become involved in a variety of activities. While at Stepping Stones your child's curiosity, creativity, social skills and self-esteem will be stimulated and enhanced.

## **Hours of Operation**

Monday to Friday mornings, from 9:15 – 11:30 am.

## **School Holidays**

Stepping Stones closed for all statutory holidays as recognized by the Public and Catholic School Boards but do not recognize Professional Development days from either Board.

## **Field Trips/Special Events**

In order to enhance the program, the teachers organize 3-4 field trips per year. Children are transported in parent/guardian vehicles and each child must have an adult caregiver in attendance. Parents/guardians will be notified of field trips in the newsletters as well as via email from the Secretary. Permission forms and fees must be signed and paid prior to the trip. In addition to outside field trips Stepping Stones may invite outside organizations to the school for special events.

Please note:All adults attending field trips MUST have a Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Screening on file at the school dated within 2 years of the current date).

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Staff Members**

Teresa Trocchia – Program Supervisor

Meaghan Sewell – Program Staff / Registered Early Childhood Educator

### **Board of Directors**

Stepping Stones is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors consisting of parents of children currently enrolled in the program.

The Board of Directors meets regularly, (usually monthly), to discuss and make decisions regarding policy and future direction of the school.

Members of the Board of Directors are elected yearly, if you are interested or know anyone who may be interested please let the staff or a current Board member know.

*See Appendix A for the list of Board member contact information.*

### **Daily Routine/Schedule**

*Free Choice Play Room* – table toys, dramatic centre, fine motor toys, floor toys, sand box, cutting, colouring table etc.

*Creative Time* – theme related activities involving painting, gluing, water play, play dough

*Opening Circle* – calendar, weather, letter of the week, story

*Theme Circle* – weekly theme involving songs, rhymes, finger-plays and games

*Snack Time in hallway* – supplied by parents and staff

*Gym time* – large motor equipment and/or organized games in large gym

*Closing Circle* – story, songs

### **Clothing**

It is suggested that your child is dressed in play clothes and rubber soled shoes for Nursery School. Although we use washable paint, markers and glue, we cannot guarantee they will wash out of all fabrics.

Please make sure your child has a complete change of clothing (including underwear and socks) in his/her backpack every day. This will ensure your child's comfort in case of toileting accidents or spills at the snack or water table. Also please ensure your child's backpack is labeled with his/her name on the outside of the bag. This will help the duty parents and staff members if your child needs to be changed.



## **Arrival**

Upon arriving at Nursery School, parents are asked to escort their child into the church and wait with them at the bottom of the small stairs. The teachers will welcome the children at 9:15 am and invite them into the classroom. With the exception of the gradual entry morning, we ask that you please say good-bye at the bottom of the stairs. The teachers will ensure your child finds his/her place in the classroom.

## **Departure**

Parents are requested to wait at the bottom of the stairs for the children to be dismissed from closing circle. Please keep the stairs and gym doors clear and avoid dressing your child on the stairs as this poses a safety hazard.

Children will not be released to anyone other than the designated person. If for any reason the child is to be picked up by anyone other than the parent or person that normally picks up the child, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the Nursery School staff.

## **Late Pick Up Policy**

Pick up time is 11:30 am. Parents who are continuously late picking up their children from school will be charged as follows:

There will be a 5 minute grace period before charges are incurred.

After the 5 minute grace period, \$1 per minute will be charged, starting at \$6.

For example, if you continually pick up your child at 11:36 am, the charge will be \$6. If you pick up your child at 11:45 am, your charge will be \$15.

Late charges will be collected the following school day. Children will only be accepted into the program once the late charges have been received.

## **Parking**

Parking is available in the parking lot between Unity Christian High School and Burton Avenue United Church as well as St. George's Church located across from the high school and on the west side of William St. Please use the crosswalk when crossing from St. George's Church. We are not permitted to park in the few parking spaces in the parking lot directly in front of Burton Avenue United Church. We ask that you respectfully leave the closest parking spots for parents with newborns and expectant mothers.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are celebrated as close as possible to the child's birthday. The birthday child receives a special birthday hat and we sing Happy Birthday during circle time. Summer birthdays are celebrated together in June. In order to prevent illness from food allergies and intolerances we ask that you do not send in birthday snacks.

## **CO-OPERATIVE PARTICIPATION AND MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT**

### **Being a Member of a Co-operative School**

A co-operative preschool is one that is owned and run by its members. As a parent of a child attending the co-operative nursery school, you are agreeing to be a member.

Monthly fees are lower than at other centres, as members are agreeing to contribute their time and efforts to support the operation of the school. Throughout the school year, there will be some decisions about the running of the school that will require a vote from every member.

There will also be mandatory fundraisers and committee job requirements. For those who would like to be even more involved, there is an opportunity to become a Duty parent (see more information on this topic later in the manual). Duty parents also get a break on fees because of their additional time commitment to the school.

All members and their representatives/guests are required to abide the terms of the Co-operative Membership Agreement as stated and signed in the registration package, the Policies and Procedures outlined in this Parent Manual and any other roles and responsibilities as may otherwise be defined and communicated by the Board of Directors.

### **General Meetings**

Stepping Stones holds three general meetings per school year, usually in August, January and May. These meetings are mandatory. Each member family is required to attend or send a representative to all membership and orientation meetings as scheduled. Any decision made by the Board and staff for the betterment of the school is dependent on the vote of the members. Each family is considered to be one member and each member has one vote per motion at the general meetings. A signature is required on each attendance sheet in order to be eligible to receive this portion of the Co-operative Deposit back at the end of the school year (\$15 per meeting).

### **Committees**

As a co-operative school it is imperative that all members work together. All member families are required to sign up for and complete a minimum of 2 Committee jobs: one of which includes a Fundraising Committee job and the other related to general classroom duties including but not limited to laundry, cleaning, or providing supplies for a holiday classroom event. Members are required to attend the committee meetings where necessary and provide information on the work done where applicable. Committee jobs are filled on a first come first serve basis, usually starting during the first week of school. If the committee jobs are not fulfilled on a voluntary basis, jobs will be assigned. If a job is not fulfilled, you may forfeit a portion or all of your Co-op Deposit (\$15 per general committee job and \$40 per fundraiser). Please see the section on Fundraising for more detailed information.

## **Administration**

It is required that all families adhere to the principles of the co-operative incorporation. As such, parents are responsible for reading the Parent Manual and following the policies and procedures set forth. For further information regarding these principles please contact a Board member.

## **Finances**

Payment of fees is as outlined in the Tuition Fees section. Requirements for fundraising activities as described in the Fundraising section.

## **Snack**

**STEPPING STONES IS A NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT!!**

There is time set aside each day for your child to have a snack, should you choose to send one. Parents/guardians that choose to provide their child with a snack from home, must provide a dated, written note explaining the arrangement being made with Stepping Stones to be kept in the child's file at all times. The snack must be NUT FREE, and in clearly labelled containers with the child's first and last name. The Board encourages members to provide snacks from home that follow the "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide". Should a child not bring a snack on a given day, the child will not receive a snack from the school.

Any student's with allergies will have a picture with their name and allergies posted in the snack area so all staff and duty parents can identify the child and ensure they are given the appropriate snack.

Please send your child to school each day with a drink in a non-spill container of your choice (i.e. sippy cup, water bottle etc.) Please ensure the container is clearly labelled with your child's name.

Drinks and snacks that are not appropriately labelled *will not* be distributed.

## **DUTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Being a Duty Parent**

As a co-operative school, Stepping Stones is reliant on the assistance of parents in the classroom. During each school day, there is one duty parent in the classroom to assist the teachers in the smooth operation of the school. Duty parents are assigned to their duty days on a rotating basis.

Duty parents are expected to arrive no later than 9:15 am on their designated duty day and complete ALL their assigned duties prior to leaving for the day. Duty parents are not permitted to bring their other children with them on their duty day.

The number of assigned Duty Days will depend on various factors, including the number of duty parents for each session, number of days your child attends etc. For members enrolled in the 2 day program the number of duty days is usually 1-2 per month. Those attending the 3 day or 5 day programs should expect more duty days per month. There is a main tracking sheet kept by the Duty Scheduler to ensure over the period of the school year that duty days are equal.

If you are unable to meet your Duty Day requirements, you must attempt to find a replacement duty parent. Should you not be able to do so, you must immediately contact a member of the Board. The Board will provide you with the contact information for all duty parents in order to facilitate switches within your group if required. We would strongly advise you to get to know your fellow co-operative parents and try to arrange for switches within your group when it is needed. The Board must also be notified of any changes in the schedule.

We will try to accommodate scheduling requests to the best of our ability, however please remember having your assigned duty day covered if you are unavailable is **your** responsibility. If accommodating schedule requests becomes too complicated you may be requested to change to a non-duty role and non-duty fees.

As a parent it is your responsibility to ensure you are aware of your scheduled duty days.

Please Note: Should you miss a duty day and are unable to find a replacement, you will be charge \$15 from your Co-op Deposit. As the teachers will be required to complete your clean-up duties, the charge will cover their extra time spent at school. Should you miss more than 2 duty days, you will be charged non-duty rates for the month.

### **Duty Parent Responsibilities**

The role of a duty parent is an important one here at Stepping Stones. We encourage all parents to get involved with our program during their time spent in the classroom. By getting “hands on” with the children you will not only gain insight into the development of your own child by watching them interact with peers and educators but you will have fun too!! To help you get a better understanding of you role as a duty parent, we have prepared the following overview. Remember, the more involved you are with the children, the more fun everyone will have.

### *When you first arrive...*

Set up kitchen area: put out hand soap, wash snack tables, clean counters and sink.  
Get daily instructions from teachers.  
Check the cleaning roster for the day's cleaning duty.  
Sort children's artwork and place in their mailboxes.

### *Get ready to join the fun...*

Roll up your sleeves and join the children playing at the sand/water area.  
Get creative at the craft table, assist children with their artwork and putting on smocks.  
Share a book, help build a castle, or assist with a puzzle.  
Help children tidy up as they go.  
Daily cleaning tasks and other tasks required by the teachers.  
Set up tables with snack.

### *Clean up time...*

Tidy up craft area, wash easels, paint brushes etc.  
Put away other craft supplies.  
Vacuum carpet.  
Clean snack tables, sweep/mop snack area so it is ready for the next day.  
Disinfect washroom/put out hand soap/restock paper towels so it is ready for the next day  
Clean up the gymnasium.  
Assist staff with any other clean up required prior to leaving (we do share our space with other groups and need your help to put all of our toys and equipment away after every class).

Be creative and get involved! If you are unsure of what to do, ask a teacher, they will guide you.  
Look for more details on duty parent responsibilities posted at the school.

## **Changing "Duty Parent" Status**

Parents wanting to change their status from being a duty parent to not, or vice versa, must do so by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the switch. This allows sufficient time to inform all parties involved and to stop the cheques for the following month being cashed. The duty parent is also responsible for their duty if already scheduled or to find a replacement. All remaining cheques will be returned and the parent will have to issue new cheques for the appropriate tuition fee.

## **Licensing Requirements for Duty Parents**

Stepping Stones requires that all duty parents to provide a current Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Screening (CRC/VSS) dated within two years of the current date prior to starting duty on premises. The process for getting a CRC/VSS can take anywhere from 2-12 weeks to process, therefore proof of submission (receipt) is accepted with the Registration Package until the actual Reference Check is delivered. You will not be added to the Duty Calendar until the completed CRC/VSS is provided to the school. You will be charged non-duty rates until you have provided the CRC/VSS and are added to the duty calendar. The registration package has further information on how to complete this requirement.

## **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Tuition Rates (monthly)**

2 day with duty	\$135 (\$15.70/day)
2 day without duty	\$165(\$19.19/day)
3 day with duty	\$170 (\$13.18/day)
3 day without duty	\$210 (\$16.28/day)
5 day with duty	\$250 (\$11.63/day)
5 day without duty	\$310 (\$14.42/day)

### **Deposit**

A non-refundable deposit equal to 1 month's tuition is due at the time of registration to hold your child's place in the program. It will be applied to the tuition for June of the current school year. Should you withdraw your child before the end of the school year, you will lose this deposit.

### **Membership/Insurance Fee**

\$60.00 –new students

\$40.00 – returning students

This is to be paid upon registration of each child. This non-refundable fee covers insurance fees, membership to the Parent Cooperative Preschool Corporation (PCPC) and administration costs such as photocopying for each child.

### **Co-op Deposit**

\$100.00 – to be dated September 1<sup>st</sup> to be held in trust. This cheque will be returned to you on your child's last day of school in June provided you have fulfilled all of the requirements of the cooperative program: attendance at all 3 general meetings, completing your committee duty jobs and participating in fundraising events.

The breakdown for the Co-operative deposit are as follows:

- General Meetings (3 per school year) - \$15.00 each
- General Committee job (1 per school year) - \$15.00 each
- Fundraising Committee job (1 per school year) - \$40.00

For each meeting not attended or job unfulfilled throughout the year, the co-op deposit will be reduced, as indicated above. If a partial co-op fee is to be refunded, the original cheque for \$100.00 will be cashed and a reimbursement cheque from the school will be given to you for the remaining balance at the end of the year. For example: if 1 general meeting is missed throughout the year, the \$100.00 cheque provided to us will be cashed and a cheque for \$85 will be reimbursed to you in June.

## **Administration Fee**

\$100 – to be dated August 22<sup>nd</sup>. This fee is non-refundable and covers general maintenance, repairs, cleaning and other miscellaneous costs associated with the running of the school.

## **Income Tax Receipts**

Receipts will be issued in January and again in June for income tax purposes.

## **Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) Cheque Policy**

*See Policies and Procedures for this Policy*

## **FUNDRAISING**

All money raised will go towards requirements for the school, such as toys and books as deemed necessary by the Board. We welcome and encourage your input and opinions about fundraising.

Recently our two major fundraisers have consisted of a Chili Bake Off and Trike-a-thon. These are mandatory fundraisers and require participation by all families. Failure to participate will result in a partial loss of the co-op fee (\$40 per fundraiser). Any other smaller fundraisers held throughout the school year are voluntary. We hope you will participate to help out the school but there is no penalty for opting out of these programs. Further information regarding these fundraising events will be provided as the date approaches.

### **Chili Bake Off**

This event has been held for the last 3 years and has been very successful. We ask that 10-15 member families volunteer to make a chili and enter it into our chili contest. All members are responsible for selling a minimum number of tickets to the event (number to be determined each year) and each attendee gets to vote on their favourite chili. Various draws and prizes are given out. It's a great way to beat the winter blues and get to know more families in the Stepping Stones community.

For members signed up on the fundraising committee for this event, responsibilities (along with the Fundraising Chair) may include but are not limited to, organizing the event, getting donations of supplies and prizes, selling of tickets, set up and clean up the day of the event etc.

### **Trike-a-thon**

Stepping Stones holds its annual trike-a-thon fundraiser in May/June. Children collect pledges from family and friends and ride their trikes or bikes around a track in the church parking lot. Children are encouraged to get in the spirit and decorate their bikes. This fundraiser has been quite successful in the past and it's a great way for the children and their families to get to know each other and celebrate the arrival of warmer weather.

For members signed up on the fundraising committee for this even, responsibilities (along with the Fundraising Chair) may include but are not limited to organizing the event, seeking donations for supplies and prizes, set up, monitoring of activities and clean up the day of the event etc.

### **Scholastic Book Club**

Each month you will receive a flyer from the Scholastic book club. The books in the flyer are generally geared towards preschool aged children. They are excellent quality books at a great price. Stepping Stones receives free books and a percentage of our monthly sales in bonus coupons which can be used to purchase books, teaching aids and equipment for the classroom.



## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Parent/Teacher Communication**

Parent feedback is welcomed and encouraged. Parents may wish to contact staff before or after program to talk with a teacher. The school also has an answering machine and an email address. If you leave a message, a staff member will get back to you as soon as possible. The teachers are always happy to discuss your child's progress with you.

If you have questions or concerns regarding the program and/or your child please approach the teachers first. If you are unsatisfied with the results or are not comfortable with this approach please contact a member of the Board of Directors and your question/concern will be followed up on at the Board's earliest convenience.

### **Board of Directors**

In addition to the teachers, Board members are available for any communication needs. Should you have concerns about the administration and/or operation of the school please contact a Board member. If you are uncertain as to which Board member to contact, please contact the President and he/she will direct you to the most appropriate Board member. All questions/concerns will be dealt with at the Boards earliest convenience (likely the next monthly Board meeting, or earlier should the matter be urgent).

If any issues arise pertaining to teachers, we ask that those enquiries be directed to the HR Chair.

*Please see Appendix A for Board member contact information*

### **Confidentiality**

Throughout the year, communication is necessary between families and staff. The school requests for the purposes of communication regarding duty scheduling, reminders of upcoming events and day to day business that the phone numbers and email addresses of school families be kept in strict confidence. This information is for the sole purpose of Stepping Stones and not for any other solicitation.

All information obtained at/by Stepping Stones regarding children, families and staff is to remain confidential.

### **Parent Bulletin Boards**

The parent bulletin boards are located in the lobby of the school. Parents will find interesting information regarding preschool development and information from various agencies that provide assistance to families with young children. There is also a monthly calendar to keep

you up to date on what's happening at school as well as our weekly program plan and monthly duty schedule. Parents are encouraged to make themselves familiar with this information.

## **Mailboxes**

Each child has a mailbox located just inside the main doors of the lobby. In this mailbox you will receive a monthly calendar of events, your child's artwork, permission forms, fundraising information, scholastic book orders etc. To avoid crowding, please be sure to check your child's mailbox each day before he/she is dismissed from class.

## **Website**

The Stepping Stones website can be found at [www.steppingstonesnurseryschool.org](http://www.steppingstonesnurseryschool.org). You will be able to find information about our school on the website. Please share our website with your family and friends as our best form of advertising is word of mouth.

## **Registration**

Registration for the program takes place on a first come first serve basis, upon receipt of the complete registration package (including appropriate fees). Returning families are given priority in registering their children for the upcoming school year. Notice is given to all returning families when registration begins, with a cut-off date. After this date, registration will take place on a first come first serve basis, with a wait list if required. No children will be admitted to the program after March 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

## **Withdrawal Procedure**

Once registered, should a Member family withdraw their child from Stepping Stones, they will forfeit their registration fee, cleaning/maintenance fee and deposit of one month's tuition. Tuition cheques for months not yet cashed will be returned by mail, along with any or all of the co-operative deposit (depending on whether duties and responsibilities have been met to date).

## **HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION**

### **Illness Policy for Staff and Children**

Children/staff displaying the following symptoms should not come to Stepping Stones: diarrhea, vomiting, fever, red and runny eyes, unexplained or untreated rashes, extreme colds and head lice. Children/staff should not return to school for 48 hours or until the illness is gone (normal temperature etc).

In order to ensure your child's well-being and to enable us to provide the highest standard of health protection reasonably possible, the following list forms the criteria under which a child/staff member ***shall not*** be admitted into Stepping Stones:

- A fever of 100 F (38 C) or greater

- If it has been less than 48 hours since starting a prescribed medication (unless otherwise stated by a health care professional)

- If a child or staff has been free from vomiting or undiagnosed diarrhea for < 48 hours

- If a child or staff has an undiagnosed rash, skin or ear infection or eye discharge

- If a child or staff has a sore throat, watery eyes, frequent sneezing/coughing or constant nasal discharge

- If a child or staff has a communicable condition, disease or infection

The child or staff ***may return*** to Stepping Stones provided that:

- They have been free from a fever for a minimum of 48 hours (without medication)

- They have been free from vomiting or undiagnosed diarrhea for a minimum of 48 hours

- It has been a minimum of 48 hours from the start of a prescribed medication (unless otherwise stated by a health care professional)

- They appear to be capable of participating fully in the program

If your child will be absent due to illness, please call the school at 705-725-1259 and indicate the nature of the illness. Stepping Stones is required to report communicable diseases such as chicken pox, measles, etc.

### **Serious Occurrence Notification**

In the event of a serious occurrence/accident which requires medical attention, the parent will be notified immediately of the accident and depending on the seriousness of the situation will either be instructed by the staff to pick up the child and take him/her to seek medical attention or to meet the child and staff at the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre.

The staff will clearly post the "Serious Occurrence" notification form for all the parents to view for a minimum of 10 business days on the parent bulletin board. When posting a notification form it will not include any identifying information (i.e. staff name, child's name, age or birth date).

Note: Teachers are trained in Standard First Aid and Infant/Child CPR.

## **Absences**

Children registered for a particular program may only attend on the days in which they are registered unless otherwise approved by the school for a particular event. For example, if a student attends Monday and Wednesday but is absent from school one of those days, they are not permitted to attend on the Friday to make up for their absence. When possible, please contact the school at 705-725-1259 and let the staff know if your child will not be attending on a particular day.

## **Medication Policy**

It is our policy that Stepping Stones will not administer any medication. An exception will be made for Epi-pens and asthma inhalers for life threatening situations.

## **Toilet Training**

Stepping Stones Cooperative Nursery School encourages and fosters independence. Although we would like all children to be toilet trained, we understand that some children may take longer than others to learn. Children do not have to be fully toilet trained to attend Stepping Stones. We understand and accept that accidents do occur. It is a requirement for all parents or guardians to provide a complete change of clothes each day your child is attending.

In order to begin morning programming on time, parents are asked to check and change their child's pull up if necessary upon arrival at the school. Children in training should be taken to the washroom by their parent or caregiver before the start of the program and should attend wearing a pull up type training pant. The school works closely with parents to encourage children in using the toilet and to encourage a positive experience. There are many natural "bathroom breaks" when your child may be encouraged to use the washroom. It is paramount that parents place their children in "pull ups" (not diapers) to help facilitate this process. Learning to use the toilet takes time and it is also common for a child to regress.

For sanitary reasons, teachers will be provided with latex gloves and plastic bags for all soiled items. The items will be returned to parents in a tied plastic bag in their child's backpack.

## **SAFETY**

### **Inclement Weather/Emergency Procedures**

Weather closures will be consistent with Simcoe County District School Board Barrie School Closures. Announcements will be made on local radio stations B101 FM and Rock 95 FM regarding the closure of the school due to weather. Stepping Stones is located in the “Central Zone”. **If the SCDSB schools in the central zone are closed, consider Stepping Stones closed.**

Prior to bus route cancellation and school closures announcements, if the Board President (or Designate) and the Program Supervisor determine the weather conditions are too severe, the school will be closed. Should Stepping Stones be closed unrelated to school closures an email will be sent to all member families immediately following this decision.

Unfortunately it is not possible to give rebates for these rare circumstances.

Stepping Stones has given the Board President (or designate) and the Program Supervisor authority to close the school if any emergency arises, which may endanger the health and safety of the children. If the school is declared closed, it will be considered closed for all students and staff. Procedures described in the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures will be followed should an emergency arise during regular program hours.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

It may be necessary in rare or unusual circumstances during an emergency situation to evacuate the school during the day. In this case we would travel to St. George’s Church on Burton Ave. It is located across the street from Stepping Stones. Teachers will contact parents/guardians by phone to arrange safe pick up at this location. Please see the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures for more information.

**APPENDIX A: BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR STEPPING STONES CO-  
OPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL**

**PRESIDENT:** Michelle Pratt, [steppingstonespresident@gmail.com](mailto:steppingstonespresident@gmail.com)

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Position not currently filled

**TREASURER / HR CHAIR:** Laura Flynn-Northcote, [steppingtreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:steppingtreasurer@gmail.com)

**SECRETARY:** Cheryl Desormeax, [steppingsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:steppingsecretary@gmail.com),

**REGISTRAR:** Valeria Iannello, [steppingregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:steppingregistrar@gmail.com)

**FUNDRAISING CHAIR:** Position not currently filled, [steppingfundraiser@gmail.com](mailto:steppingfundraiser@gmail.com)

**COMMITTEE CHAIR:** Karen Coughlin

## **APPENDIX B: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **ANAPHYLACTIC POLICY**

In accordance with *O. Reg. 137/15 Section 39* under the Child Care and Early Years Act and in recognition of *Sabrina's Law 2005*, Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery school has developed and implemented this policy to address the potentially serious consequences of children with allergies and anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life threatening allergic reaction due to exposure to certain foods, chemical, medications or other substances. Exposure does not always require ingestion; the smell or touch of certain allergens (especially food products) can trigger a reaction as well. Peanuts and peanut by-products such as peanut oil and peanut butter are the most common food allergen in children and therefore create the highest risk in a child care setting. Other foods such as cocoa, eggs, strawberries, fish, shellfish, wheat and soy, along with non-food items such as latex and bee stings can result in a life threatening reaction.

#### **1. Strategy to decrease exposure risk**

Stepping Stones staff endeavor to create an environment that reduces the risk to severely allergic or anaphylactic children. This required the co-operation and understanding of all members of Stepping Stones, including staff, parents, volunteers, duty parents and children. Parents are not to send their children with snacks that contain or may contain peanuts or any other type of nuts. If children enrolled in the program are identified with any other severe or anaphylactic allergies, staff, parents, volunteers and children will be made aware if this allergy and be required to avoid sending these items in for snack as well, unless otherwise directed by the parent of the child with the allergy. Should a student bring a snack to Stepping Stones that has been posted as not allowable, the student will not be given their snack on that day and it will be sent home with them, along with a note reiterating this policy.

#### **2. Communication Plan**

It is the responsibility of the parent to inform Stepping Stones that their child has an allergy, a potential allergy or a life threatening/anaphylactic allergy. This information **MUST** be filled out **COMPLETELY** on the registration package and staff will then follow up with parents to discuss and individual action plan for this child.

All staff will be aware of which children enrolled in the program have allergies and each child's picture, along with the list of allergens will be posted by the sink in the snack area for all staff, parents, volunteers, duty parents and children to see. This information will be updated at the start of the school year and then on an as needed basis and as new children are enrolled in the program.

All staff, parents (including duty parents) and volunteers are required to read this policy and sign the appropriate documentation indicating that they have read and understand this policy.

### **3. Individual Plans & Emergency Procedures**

Parents of each child with an allergy or anaphylactic condition are required to fill out an Allergy Information Form. This form includes a description of the child's allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies, signs and symptoms of a reaction, pending reaction or anaphylactic reaction, the action to be taken by staff should a reaction occur or be imminent, and instructions on whom should administer the allergy medication/Epi-pen and current emergency contact information. This plan will be kept in the Allergy/Anaphylactic binder on site and any pertinent information listed on the sign with the child's picture posted in the snack area.

The staff at Stepping Stones are trained in Standard First Aid and Infant & Child CPR, as well as on the use of Epi-pens. Should a child begin to exhibit the signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction an Epi-pen will immediately be used unless otherwise stated in the individual plan. There are no contraindications to using epinephrine for a potentially life threatening allergic reaction. The time of administration will be noted and 1 staff member will stay with the child and administer further first aid as required.

Another adult (staff, duty parent, volunteer) will immediately call 911 and then contact the parent or other emergency contact provided by the parent. If available, a second Epi-pen will be administered after 15-20 minutes if there is no/minimal improvement in the child's symptoms. Regardless of the degree of reaction the child will be taken to the emergency room by ambulance and a staff member will stay with the child until a parent or their designate has arrived.

The incident will be reported to the Ministry of Education via CCLS as a Serious Occurrence and the Serious Occurrence Policy will then be followed.

### **4. Training**

A review of the most common signs and symptoms of allergic and anaphylactic reactions will be reviewed with all Stepping Stones members during the Orientation meeting and then as needed throughout the year as new families enroll. The signs and symptoms of allergic and anaphylactic reaction are also included in this policy for review by staff, parents, volunteers and duty parents. A demonstration of the use of an Epi-pen is done during the first Orientation meeting by a trained demonstrator (usually a staff member) and is shown to individual staff, parents, volunteers, duty parents throughout the year on an as needed basis.



## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

All employees, members of the Board of Directors, members of the co-operative, parent volunteers and children at Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School have the right to be safe and feel safe within our school community. Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School has developed this Code of Conduct to set clear standards of behaviour that applies to all individuals involved in our school community including teachers, board members, co-operative members, parent/guardians, volunteers, children and other community members. These standards apply whether they are on school property or at school sponsored events and activities.

All staff and co-operative members of Stepping Stones are to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of race, creed, sexual orientation, disability, or any other ground protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

All adults in the school community have the responsibility to act as models of good behaviour. As such, inappropriate behaviour or harassment of any kind towards any member of the school community will result in immediate intervention up to and including the family's expulsion from the Nursery School. This type of behaviour includes, but is not limited to harassment or intimidation by written note/email, verbally, gestures and/or body language.

The following WILL NOT be tolerated:

- Foul language (including swearing, name calling and shouting)
- Threats, perceived threats, acts of violence, bullying or intimidation
- Conduct that is injurious to the moral tone of the school
- Conduct that is injurious to the physical, emotional or intellectual well-being of others, inappropriate discussion of other members, peoples or children
- Behaviour that may create a potential safety hazard to children, staff or other members

Failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in:

- Removal from school property/activity
- Permanent banning from school property/activity
- Permanent termination of co-operative membership and as such, expulsion of child
- Contact of other support services where necessary (ie Police, Children's Aid Society etc)

By registering your child in Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School you are agreeing to abide by the Code of Conduct as stated above.

## **COMPLIANCE AND CONTRAVENTION POLICY**

*Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School* is committed to providing a high quality program to our students while keeping them engaged in a safe and nurturing environment.

This policy has been developed in accordance to O. Reg. 137/15 Section 6.1(7) under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA).

It is the expectation of the Board of Directors at *Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School* that all staff and volunteers (including Board members and duty parents) abide by and implement the Policies and Procedures set out in the Policies and Procedures Binder and the Parent Manual.

The Board will ensure that the Policies and Procedures are being met in multiple ways.

All policies will be reviewed with all staff/volunteers as set out in the Implementation and Review Policy. A document of acknowledgement will be signed by all staff/volunteers once these policies have been reviewed.

An executive from the Board of Directors will also make periodic visits to the Nursery School (minimum of 3 per year) to observe the running of the program and to ensure staff are adhering to the policies and procedures of the centre. A checklist will be provided to the member performing the review to complete, date and sign.

Should any contraventions to the current policies and procedures be noted, a verbal discussion will occur between the reviewer and the staff member, along with written documentation describing the contravention, the discussion and a review of the policy. This record will be dated and signed by both the Board member and staff. An appropriate timeline for correcting the contravention will be assigned (based on the severity of the contravention) and if not met may result in the termination of the staff member's contract.

Duty parents will be monitored by the Program Supervisor. Should a duty parent be found in contravention of any policies and procedures of the centre the Supervisor will have a verbal discussion with the duty parent and prepare written documentation to be signed by the Supervisor and duty parent, and submitted to the Board of Directors for review. An appropriate timeline for correcting the contravention (based on the severity of the contravention) will be applied. If no improvement in adherence to the policy is seen, this may result in losing duty parent privileges and paying applicable non duty fees for the remainder of the year or removal as a member of the centre.

NOTE: all records/documents of review will be kept on file for a minimum of 3 years.

## **CRIMINAL REFERENCE CHECK POLICY**

Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery school has developed the following policy in accordance with the Child Care and Early Years Act (Reg 137/15) to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

Stepping Stones requires that all employees must have a current Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Screening (CRC/VSS) dated within two years of the current date of employment. In years in which a CRC/VSS is not obtained an Offence Declaration must be signed no later than 15 days after the anniversary date of the previous CRC/VSS. For new employees, the CRC/VSS must be dated no more than 6 months prior to the start date of their employment or a new CRC/VSS is required. If it has been more than 6 months but less than five years since the last dated CRC/VSS, signed Offence Declaration is required until the updated CRC/VSS is submitted. Should a circumstance arise where an employee must commence employment prior to submission of their CRC/VSS, a receipt of application will be required and the employee will not be granted sole access to children or be left unsupervised with children at any time until the CRC/VSS is received.

Stepping Stones requires that all duty parents, students and volunteers, including all adults attending field trips, must have a current CRC/VSS dated within two years of the current date prior to starting duty on premises. In years in which a CRC/VSS is not obtained an Offence Declaration must be signed no later than 15 days after the anniversary date of the previous CRC/VSS.

The process for getting a CRC/VSS can take anywhere from 2-12 weeks to process. You will not be added to the Duty Calendar or permitted to attend field trips until the completed CRC/VSS is provided to the school. Duty parents will be charged non-duty rates until you have provided the CRC/VSS and are added to the duty calendar. The registration package has further information on how to complete this requirement.

Information revealed on a CRC/VSS or OD will be seen only by the Board of Directors and Program Supervisor and is used to ensure the suitability of an employee/duty parent to be interacting with children enrolled in the program.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

1. A volunteer application is provided in the registration package to be detached and take to the records counter at the Barrie Police Department at 29 Sperling Dr., Barrie, ON (Hours of operation are Monday-Sunday 7am-10pm).
2. If you use the volunteer application provided there is no cost to you for the CRC/VSS; otherwise there is a \$40 fee.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY & PROCEDURES**

The following is our off-site meeting place in case of **evacuation**: the parking lot adjacent to Unity Christian High School (beside Burton Ave United Church).

Should **alternative shelter** be required: proceed to St. George Anglican Church located at 9 Granville St. (across the street).

**Procedures**

<p><b>Roles and Responsibilities of Staff During an Emergency</b></p>	<p>The staff member/volunteer who becomes aware of the threat must inform all other staff/duty parent of the emergency as quickly and safely as possible.</p> <p>Should the emergency be such that evacuation is required, the evacuation procedures as detailed in the Fire/Evacuation Procedures should be followed.</p> <p>Should the emergency be such that evacuation is not necessary or is unsafe all staff/volunteers/children should remain in the classroom or gymnasium, whichever is more appropriate.</p> <p>Staff members should remain calm. The Program Supervisor is responsible for retrieving the Emergency Binder, First Aid Kit and Phone. Attendance will be checked by the Program Supervisor and Program staff member or duty parent will call 911 or other appropriate emergency services as necessary.</p>
<p><b>Providing Additional Support for any Child or Adult who Needs it in Case of an Emergency</b> (including the consideration of special medical needs)</p>	<p>For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.</p>
<p><b>Ensuring Children's Safety</b></p>	

<b>and Maintaining Appropriate Levels of Supervision During an Emergency</b>	All staff members and children will remain together at all times. The Program Supervisor will perform frequent head counts of all children and staff members throughout the duration of the emergency.
<b>Communication with Parents</b>	Once all staff, volunteers and students are deemed safe, the Program Supervisor will notify parents by phone of the situation and make arrangements for safe pick up.
<b>Contacting Appropriate Emergency Response Agencies</b>	The Program staff or duty parent will call 911 and other appropriate emergency response agencies as directed.
<b>Addressing Recovery from an Emergency</b>	<p>The Board of Directors will be notified by the Program Supervisor of the emergency as soon as reasonably possible to do so but no more than 24 hours after the event.</p> <p>Should the emergency be considered a Serious Occurrence the Serious Occurrence Procedures will be implemented.</p> <p>All staff, children and their families will follow the directions of the Emergency Response Team at all times.</p> <p>The Board of Directors in cooperation with the Program Supervisor will contact all necessary agencies (MEDU, County of Simcoe, insurance company etc.) as soon as reasonably possible to do so.</p>
<b>Debriefing Staff, Children and Parents After an Emergency</b>	An email will be sent within 24 hours to all parents/guardians by the Program Supervisor or Board President detailing the emergency and any further information deemed necessary (such as resuming normal operations, available supports for individuals potentially distressed by the situation etc).
<b>Resuming Normal Operations of the Child Care Centre</b>	In cooperation with Emergency Personnel, the Ministry of Education and the County of Simcoe, and any other bodies deemed necessary, the Program Supervisor or Board President will email all parents/guardians with the details of how and when the normal operations of Stepping Stones will resume.
<b>Supporting Children and Staff Who May Have Experienced</b>	The Board of Directors and Program Supervisor, in

<b>Distress During an Emergency</b>	cooperation with other governing bodies will provide staff, children and their families with resources should extra support be required.
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## **FIRE /EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

### **Location of Fire Alarms:**

1. Beside the double doors in the classroom
2. In the gym beside the wall by the emergency exit
3. Beside the door in the coat room

### **Location of Extinguishers:**

1. In the snack area across from the sink
2. In the classroom beside the office door
3. In the church kitchen beside the door

The fire extinguisher is only to be used if the fire is small and easily containable. Use after all children are safely out of the building.

### **Evacuation Procedure:**

If a fire or other emergency (such as flood, gas leak, carbon monoxide etc) is suspected or observed, Program Staff and the duty parent will immediately remove children from the area of the fire/emergency and the Program Supervisor will retrieve the Emergency Binder, First Aid Kit and Phone. All staff, volunteers and children will then exit the building immediately, following the evacuation procedure below.

All persons exiting the building from Stepping Stones will meet in the parking lot across from the Unity Christian High School. Attendance will be checked by the Program Supervisor and Program staff member or duty parent will call 911 or other appropriate emergency services as necessary.

**EVACUATION PLAN #1:** Exit through the emergency door at the back of the classroom to the parking lot adjacent to the Unity Christian High School.

**EVACUATION PLAN #2:** Exit through the coat room and up the stairs to the parking lot adjacent to the Unity Christian High School.

**EVACUATION PLAN #3:** Exit through the coat room OR the alternative door at the back of the gym. Walk around the church to the parking lot adjacent to the Unity Christian High School.

**EMERGENCY SHELTER:** If emergency shelter is necessary, all individuals will proceed to St. George Anglican Church located at 9 Grandville St. 705-726-8121 (the church across the street).

**COMMUNICATION PLAN:** Once all staff, volunteers and students are deemed safe, the Program Supervisor will notify parents by phone of the situation and make arrangements for safe pick up. A follow up email will be sent within 24 hours to all parents/guardians by the Program Supervisor or Board President detailing the emergency and any further information deemed necessary (such as resuming normal operations, available supports for individuals potentially distressed by the situation etc).

### **IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW POLICY:**

#### **Policies, Procedures and Individualized Support Plans**

The implementation and review of the policies, procedures and individualized support plans (ISP) of children at Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School is an integral component of ensuring the centre's success. This policy has been developed in accordance with O. Reg. 137/15 under the Child Care and Early Years Act to ensure the integrity and quality of the program and the safety and well-being of all involved at this centre.

Board members of Stepping Stones will review all policies and procedures annually to ensure all legislative requirements are being met and then each time an amendment or update is made. For Stepping Stones staff, the policies and procedures will be reviewed prior to commencing employment and then at minimum annually, or whenever amendments or updates occur to each policy.

For Stepping Stones duty parents and other volunteers, the policies and procedures will be reviewed prior to commencement of program participation and then at minimum annually, or whenever amendments or updates occur to each policy.

At each review of the policies and procedures a record will be kept with the date and signature of each person reviewing the information and the person conducting the review.

Following is a list of the policies and procedures to be reviewed by the above stated persons:

- a. Anaphylactic Policy
- b. Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Screening Policy
- c. Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures
- d. Medication Policy
- e. Program Statement and Implementation Policy (including Prohibited Practices Policy)
- f. Sanitary Policy
- g. Serious Occurrence Policy
- h. Staff Training and Development Policy
- i. Supervision of Staff and Volunteers Policy

The following list of policies and procedures will reviewed by the Board of Directors and staff on an annual basis to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and the by-laws of the centre:

- a. Inclusion Policy
- b. Non-Sufficient Funds Policy
- c. Snack Policy
- d. Standard First Aid Policy
- e. Wait List Policy

**Individualized Support Plans (ISPs)**, will be made as needed with collaboration between the Program Supervisor and staff, individual families, the Resource teacher and any other outside programs as required. Once the ISP is complete all relevant parties including the Program Supervisor, Program staff, parents, RT, other support workers and Board of Directors designate (if deemed necessary) will sign off on all required documentation and then as required throughout the year based on the needs of the child. Should this child continue in the program for more than 1 year the ISP will be amended and reviewed prior to the child commencing placement in the program. Each time the ISP is amended a review will occur with all relevant parties and a record of the review will be dated and signed by each of the above persons.



## **INCLUSION POLICY**

At Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School we recognize that all children are special with unique differences and are entitled to equal opportunity to grow and develop in a safe and inclusive environment. At Stepping Stones we strive to teach each individual child the skills they require to learn and grow to their full potential.

Stepping Stones provides a warm and nurturing environment to all children regardless of their developmental stage. We support their emotional, physical and educational growth by teaching tolerance and independence through collaboration with staff, Board members, families and community partners.

Stepping Stones endeavors to provide each child in our program with the support and encouragement they need to set and achieve developmentally appropriate goals with the assistance of the Resource program provided through our contract with the County of Simcoe. The programming offered at Stepping Stones will reflect the abilities of a range of ages and skill levels and will be adapted to suit the needs of children enrolled in the program at any given time.

All staff, Board members and volunteers (including duty parents) must review this policy at the start of their employment/term and annually thereafter or at the time of each revision. A record of this review will be kept on site, dated and signed by both the staff/Board member/volunteer/duty parent and the reviewer.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors to ensure it meets current legislative standards (or more frequently where necessary). The policy will be accessible to all parents (current and potential) in hard copy at the school or in the Parent Manual available on the website.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

It is the general policy of Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School that medication will not be administered during program hours, excluding Epi-pens and inhalers for life threatening situations.

Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Board of Directors and in consultation with the Program Staff should a student with significant medical needs be accepted into the program. Should this exception arise, the policy will be amended in the students Individual Support Plan and will be in accordance with O. Reg. 137/15, Sections 39 and 40, under the Child Care and Early Years Act.

## **NON SUFFICIENT FUNDS (NSF) CHEQUE POLICY**

### **Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that proper payment of tuition fees is received when due. Any fees incurred by the school for a payment returned by the bank will be recovered from the person(s) issuing a “non-sufficient funds” (NSF) cheque.

### **Policy Statement**

It shall be the policy of Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School that tuition fees for the school year are to be paid by the first date of school in the way of post-dated cheques, dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month for the tuition fees of the following month. There will be a fee charged to anyone submitting a cheque that is returned from our financial institution due to non-sufficient funds, which is to be paid in a timely manner.

### **General**

Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School will recover bank charges and administrative fees incurred from depositing a member’s tuition cheque that is returned as NSF. Should a tuition cheque be returned from Stepping Stones’ financial institution due to NSF, an administrative recovery fee of \$15.00 will be charged to the person replacing the cheque, in addition to the replacement tuition fee. The administrative fee and replacement tuition fee will be given to a teacher in trust or the treasurer directly within 1 week of the person being notified. In general, a bank deposit is only done once per month. Following two subsequent NSF tuition cheques and delay in replacing these returned payments, a formal letter will be issued by the Treasurer of the school asking the member to provide tuition fees in cash before the 20<sup>th</sup> of every month for the remainder of the school year or withdraw their child from the program. This policy also extends to all other cheques made payable to Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School, including co-op deposits, and cheques issued as part of fundraising events.

## **Parent Issues and Concerns Policy**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in their child(s) experience at Stepping Stones and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing within the program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by the Program Supervisor, Staff and Board of Directors. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

## **Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

## **Conduct**

Our Centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or Board of Directors.

Please see the Code of Conduct Policy for more information.

## **General Concerns**

Concerns regarding programming, facilities and equipment should initially be brought to the attention of the Program Supervisor or Staff. Concerns regarding staff can be directed to the individual staff member or the Board of Directors. All other concerns related to the general operation of Stepping Stones, including policies and procedures, fees, or volunteers should be directed to the Board of Directors.

The Program Supervisor/Board of Directors will acknowledge receipt of the concern via email within 24 hours. As Stepping Stones is run by a volunteer Board of Directors and thus need time to convene and discuss the concern, a response will be provided within a maximum of 5 business days. This response may be verbal via a meeting with the Program Supervisor/Board of Directors or in writing via email. Ongoing communication between the necessary parties will continue until a resolution is agreed upon by all parties involved. All communication will be documented by the Program Supervisor and/or Board of Directors including but not limited to the date and time the concern was received, the name(s) of the persons making and receiving the concern, the details of the concern and the outcome/resolution of the concern.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act., 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

## **Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child**

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society \(CAS\)](#) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

## **PROGRAM STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING POLICY**

*Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School* is committed to providing a high quality program to our students while keeping them engaged in a safe and nurturing environment.

This policy has been developed in accordance to O. Reg. 137/15 Section 49, 50 & 51 under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA).

It is the expectation of the Board of Directors at *Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School* that all staff and volunteer(s) abide by and implement the Program Statement by providing a warm, safe and nurturing environment where children are allowed to explore and use their imagination to further their physical, emotional and educational capabilities.

The Board will ensure that the Program Statement values are being met in multiple ways.

All policies including the Program Statement will be reviewed with all staff/volunteers prior to the commencement of employment/volunteering and then annually or more frequently whenever any policy is revised or updated. A document of acknowledgement will be signed by all staff/volunteers once these policies have been reviewed.

An executive from the Board of Directors will also make periodic visits to the Nursery School to observe the running of the program and the practices being used to facilitate reflection and discussion regarding the Program Statement with the intention of continual improvement.

An annual survey will be circulated to all members (parents) of the program evaluating their satisfaction with the program and whether their experience is in line with the Program Statement. The information gathered from this survey will help the Nursery School to revise and improve its implementation of the Program Statement.

## **PROHIBITED PRACTICE POLICY**

Children are disciplined in a positive manner at a level appropriate to their actions and ages in order to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety, respect the rights of other and maintain equipment.

All staff and volunteers MUST comply with the regulations in the Child Care and Early Years Act, O. Reg. 137/15 Section 48.

The following forms of discipline will NOT be used:

- a. *Corporal punishment of the child*
- b. *Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing the child from hurting him/herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent*
- c. *Locking the exits of the child care centre of home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement is occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures*
- d. *Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth*
- e. *Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding*
- f. *Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will*

All staff and volunteers will abide by the Prohibited Practices Policy at all times. This policy will be reviewed prior to commencement of employment with all staff, on or before a volunteer (ie duty parent) begins their first duty day and then annually, or more frequently when the policy is reviewed and revised. A dated and signed record will be kept in each staff/volunteer's file whenever this policy is reviewed.

The Supervisor will monitor the behaviour management of staff, duty parents and other volunteers through discussion of sound practices and by observing and recording practices when necessary.

The Supervisor will be monitored by an executive of the Board of Directors periodically throughout the year but never less than annually.

Should the Board find that a prohibited practice has been or is being used it will immediately remove that staff/volunteer from the program until further investigation has been completed. Upon investigation, if a staff/volunteer is found guilty of contravening the Prohibited Practices Policy they will be removed from the program permanently.

## **SANITARY POLICY**

In accordance with O. Reg. 137/15 under the Child Care and Early Years Act Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery school has developed and implemented this policy to address the hygiene, sanitation and infection prevention procedures within the child care centre. This policy is in place to ensure the health, safety and well-being of its students, staff and volunteers.

This policy will be reviewed with staff and volunteers once a year and then as needed. Specific cleaning instructions and routines will be posted at the appropriate areas.

The following procedures have been taken from the Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit website and the full printed version of each heading can be found at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or as Appendices following this document.

### **General Hygiene**

The staff and volunteers (duty parents) will make every effort to ensure your child is kept clean and safe during his/her time at the child care centre. Please ensure that your child is sent to Nursery school each day with a full change of clothing in case of an accident/emergency. All items sent with your child should be labelled with their name (ie backpack, clothing, food containers etc). If there is an outbreak of illness or disease within the Nursery school parents will be made aware as soon as possible via email and appropriate precautions will be taken by the school to limit the spread.

### **Hand Washing**

Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs and infection to one another. Staff and volunteers will model appropriate hand washing techniques to the students as well as assist them in thoroughly washing their hands. Instructions for proper hand washing for both staff and students is posted at all hand washing sinks in the centre.

**Instructions are as follows:** *wet hands with water and add soap, rub vigorously to a lather for a minimum of 15 seconds ensuring hands, wrists, and under fingernails are clean, rinse under water and dry with disposable paper towel.*

### **Cleaning and Disinfection**



Toys and other equipment found in the Centre are vital to a child's learning and development, however are also one of the most common routes for spreading germs and infections. Proper cleaning and disinfection of these items, along with tables, chairs and other surfaces are done by staff and/or duty parents on a regular basis, usually weekly, or more frequently as needed. A bleach solution (*5 mL Bleach: 1 L water*) is used to disinfect these items/areas and left to air dry. This solution is tested for chemical strength using test strips and changed accordingly. In the event that the clean-up of bodily fluids is required (ie stool, vomit, blood etc.), a stronger bleach solution is used (100 mL bleach: 1 L water) with a contact time of 10 minutes. Staff and/or volunteers are required to wear disposable gloves and then wash their hands as above following the cleaning of bodily fluids. Food surfaces are cleaned as per the Ontario Food Premises Regulation R.R.O. 562/90. NOTE: Sensory play activities (such as a water table, sand box, rice table) will not be used during an outbreak of illness or disease.

## **Diapering and Toileting Procedures**

All diapering and toileting is to occur on the changing table provided in the Centre's washroom and is to be done by a staff member only.

Hands are to be washed both before and after diapering. The child's hands are to be washed following diapering or toileting as well.

Gloves should be used when diapering or assisting with toileting. Pre moistened wipes are used to clean the child and are discarded along with the soiled diaper in the provided garbage bin. Soiled clothing is placed in a double plastic bag (also provided in cupboard above change table), without washing or rinsing, to send home with parents for cleaning.

Skin care products will only be used if they are provided by parents in a container labelled with the child's name and will only be used on that designated child.

Once the child is changed and he/she has washed their hands and returned to the program the staff member will then clean the changing table and all other equipment/surfaces that they are the child may have contacted using a solution appropriate for cleaning bodily fluids.

The staff member will then dispose of all cleaning materials and wash their hands as described above prior to returning to the program.

## **Outbreak Reporting and Response**

As a child care centre, Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School is responsible for reporting any enteric and/or respiratory outbreaks to the Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit Communicable -Disease team at 705-721-7520 ext. 8809.

An outbreak is considered to have occurred when there are a greater than the usually expected number of ill children or staff with the same symptoms within a 48 hour period.

There are two distinct types of outbreaks.

1. *Enteric Outbreak* – illness that affects the human intestines and results in symptoms such as nausea, fever, loss of appetite, vomiting and/or diarrhea.
2. *Respiratory Outbreak* – illness that affects the human respiratory system and result in symptoms such as sore throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, and fever.

If staff identify an increase in the number of children with similar signs and symptoms throughout the Centre using the daily observation log, attendance sheets, communication with parents etc., it will be reported to the Communicable Disease team at the above number. The Program Supervisor will then advise the Board of Directors of the outbreak via email or phone. Once the outbreak is reported, Stepping Stones is required to follow all local Health Unit recommendations/requirements, assist the investigator and report changes/update information with respect to the outbreak on a daily basis. The health unit may conduct site inspections, make recommendations on exclusion of staff and children, provide helpful literature and arrange for sample testing/pick up as needed.

All information regarding the outbreak will be communicated to parents/members as soon as possible via email and posted in the entrance hallway to the classroom. This information will include the type of outbreak, signs and symptoms and exclusion protocol.

The length of exclusion for ill children/staff will be dependent on the germ and/or type of outbreak being experienced and will be based on the health unit's recommendations. Generally for enteric outbreaks children/staff are excluded for 48 hours after the last symptom has ceased. Respiratory outbreaks will be dependent on the circumstances and health unit will advise the Centre on a case by case basis.

## **Communicable Disease Reporting**

Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School is required to report suspected or confirmed diseases to the local Medical Office of Health. The list of Reportable Disease's is posted in the staff office and can be found on the Simcoe Muskoka Healthy Unit's website.

## **SERIOUS OCCURRENCE REPORTING POLICY**

Serious occurrence reporting ensures that regulations intended to promote the health, safety and well-being of children enrolled in a Centre are being met. It allows communication with the Ministry of Education should issues surrounding the health and safety of the children arise.

**Stepping Stones Nursery School** has developed and implemented a Serious Occurrence policy in accordance with reg. 137/15 under the Child Care and Early Years Act and the guidelines set out in the *Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures for Service Providers* revised in August, 2009 and the revised requirements in November, 2011.

### **Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures**

The following emergency scenarios are to be reported to the Ministry of Education via CCLS and the “ONE-key system” and the County of Simcoe via Heather St. Germain at [heather.stgermain@simoce.ca](mailto:heather.stgermain@simoce.ca) (705-722-3132 ext. 1141) within 24 hours of the occurrence. The twenty-four hour period commences at the time the service provider’s staff member(s) first become aware of the incident. It must also be reported to the President of the Board of Director’s and/or his/her designate.

Serious Occurrences to be reported by the service provider to the Ministry are identified as follows:

1. Any **death** of a child, which occurs while participating in the Nursery school program, whether it occurs on or off the premises.
2. Any **abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect** of a child, which occurs while participating in the Nursery school program.
3. A **life threatening injury to or a life threatening illness of** a child who is participating in the Nursery school program.
4. Any situation where a **child is missing or is temporarily unsupervised**. In a Nursery school setting the reporting of a missing child must be immediate and teachers must advise the Ministry once the child has returned regardless of the date/time, via telephone or email.
5. An **unplanned disruption** of the normal operations of the Nursery school **posing a risk to the health, safety or well-being** of children participating in the program.

## Responding to a Serious Occurrence

When an incident occurs that is deemed to be a Serious Occurrence, staff will first address any immediate health and safety needs of the child involved while ensuring the health and safety of all the children in the program. Any other agency will be contacted at this time (for example, fire/police/paramedics/CAS) as needed.

All persons having knowledge of the occurrence shall remain on the premises until the Supervisor or designate has interviewed them. As soon as possible, staff will contact the child's parent(s)/caregiver(s) to notify them of the incident.

Staff will then report the Serious Occurrence to the Supervisor if he/she is not already aware of the incident and the Supervisor will contact the President or their designate. An internal investigation into the cause of the occurrence will be conducted in order to ensure procedures are modified to minimize the risk of a similar occurrence in the future.

## Reporting a Serious Occurrence

A Serious Occurrence is to be reported within 24 hours to the Ministry via CCLS using the ONE-key system by the Supervisor, President or their designate. If CCLS is not accessible the Serious Occurrence will be reported to the Program Advisor at MEDU, Daena Braun, via email ([Daena.Braun@ontario.ca](mailto:Daena.Braun@ontario.ca)) or by phone (705-727-5603) within 24 hours of becoming aware of the Serious Occurrence and then complete a report in CCLS as soon as the system becomes available.

Serious Occurrence Categories are as follows:

1. Death of a child
2. Allegation of Abuse and/or Neglect
3. Life-threatening Injury or Illness
  - a. Injury
  - b. Illness
4. Missing or Unsupervised Child(ren)
  - a. Child was found
  - b. Child is still missing
5. Unplanned Disruption of Normal Operations
  - a. Fire
  - b. Flood
  - c. Gas Leak
  - d. Detection of Carbon Monoxide
  - e. Outbreak
  - f. Lockdown
  - g. Other Emergency Relocation or Temporary Closure

Follow up will occur as the Ministry requests it.

In the event of the death of a child, 911 will be called immediately. If there is reason to suspect a child has been abused and/or is in need of protection the teachers at Stepping Stones Nursery School are legally obligated to report their concerns to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) or the police.

While discussing the child/children and staff involved in the incident they are to be identified by their first and last initials only.

## **Serious Occurrence Notification Reporting**

As of November 1, 2011, a Serious Occurrence Notification Report **must** be completed within 24 hours and posted in a visible place (beside the school's license) to provide greater transparency for parents and increase the safety and well-being of children within the program, including any allegation of abuse or neglect. This form must be updated as additional actions or investigations are completed. The form is to remain posted for a minimum of 10 business days after the most recent update. The Serious Occurrence Notification Forms are to be kept for a minimum of three years from the date of occurrence and are to be made available upon request to current and prospective parents, and licensing and municipal children's services staff.

To protect the privacy of those involved in the Serious Occurrence no child or staff names, initials, age or birth dates are to be used on the Serious Occurrence Notification Form.

## **Enhanced Serious Occurrences**

An '**Enhanced Serious Occurrence**' and the associated reporting will be followed when emergency services (i.e., police, fire and/or ambulance) are used in response to a SIGNIFICANT incident involving a child of the Ministry of Community and Social Services or the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and/or the incident is likely to result in significant public or media attention.

In these circumstances, the Service Provider's Designated Authority will ensure that the Ministry's alert system is notified **within 3 hours** of becoming aware of the incident. As the school does not have a fax machine, it may be reported by calling the Ministry at 1-877-669-6658. Once this protocol has been completed the above Serious Occurrence procedures will be followed.

Enhanced Serious Occurrences may be indicated if:

1. Any **death** of a child, which occurs while participating at the Nursery School could be perceived to have **suspicious** or **negligent** circumstances.
2. Any **serious injury** to a child which occurs while participating in the nursery school program is currently **life-threatening** or could be perceived to have **suspicious** or **negligent** circumstances.
3. Any **alleged abuse** or mistreatment of a child, which occurs while participating at the school, is an allegation of sexual or physical abuse against staff where the **media** has become involved.

4. Any situation where a child is **missing** and a crime is suspected or an **amber alert of similar public awareness tactic** is planned.
5. Any **disaster** on premises that interferes with daily routines, such as an **outbreak of a serious contagious disease** (e.g. C difficile, SARS), **lockdown** in your location or major **damage causing significant disruption** to services.
6. Any complaint concerning the **operational, physical or safety standards** of the service that is considered to be of a serious nature, where there has been **media contact**, is a topic often covered in the media or a **staff member has been arrested**.
7. Any **complaint** made by a parent or about a child involving serious **criminal activity**.
8. Any use of **physical restraint** resulting in a life-threatening injury. **The use of physical restraints is not permitted in programs covered by the Child Care and Early Years Act.**

## **Serious Occurrence Annual Analysis**

An annual analysis will be conducted to identify issues, trends and actions taken and will be kept on file at the child care centre. Annual analyses will be done for the previous calendar year and will be available to licensing ministry staff during licensing renewal inspections.

The Serious Occurrence Annual Summary and Analysis Report template provided by the MEDU will be used to track these occurrences.

## **STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

*Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School* recognizes the value that continuing education has in providing the most relevant practices when working with preschool aged children. For this reason and in accordance with O. Reg 137/15 Section 58, this policy has been developed to ensure that the children enrolled in the Nursery school are receiving programming consistent with MEDU's How Does Learning Happen? and the CCEYA.

Staff at *Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School* are expected to be involved in continuing education and development throughout their employment to better their knowledge and skills and to benefit the program.

Staff may attend continuing education workshops/seminars during regular scheduled programming by requesting approval from the Board of Directors with a minimum of 2 weeks advance notice. The Board may approve this request with pay, without pay or decline the request based on how the Board sees the opportunity benefitting the Nursery school.

Staff may also request funding for continuing education outside of the regular scheduled programming and the Board will consider the school's financial situation when determining funding approval.

### **Other Considerations**

New staff will undergo an Orientation with the Supervisor and an Executive Board representative prior to commencing employment. A probation period may be applied at the Board's discretion.

Staff are expected to maintain their registration with the College of Early Childhood Educator's in good standing and may be reimbursed this fee at the end of the year should their contract be fulfilled and at the discretion of the Board.

Staff are expected to maintain up to date qualifications in Standard First Aid and Infant/Child CPR and may be reimbursed this fee at the discretion of the Board.

## **STANDARD FIRST AID POLICY**

Pursuant to Ontario Regulation 137/15 Section 58 (2) under the Child Care and Early Years Act every employee, including on call supply staff of ***Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery School*** will have a valid certification in Standard First Aid including Infant and Child CPR.

Our current regular employees are up to date on the above certification. No employee (regular staff or supply staff) will be permitted to work in our Centre as a part of the required ratio after September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 until proof of this certification is received.

Although we do not use this option at this time, this policy also extends to duty parents should the requirement for 2 duty parents to replace one paid staff member be needed in the Centre. Should this requirement arise, duty parents will be required to provide proof of certification in Standard First Aid including Infant and Child CPR.

## **SUPERVISION POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS**

At Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery school we recognize the important role that our duty parents and volunteers play in the successful running of the school. As such, Stepping Stones is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children. It is the responsibility of the Nursery school to ensure that all non-staff members such as parents, volunteers and students that have regular interactions with the children in the program adhere to the policies, screening and supervision that are expected of its employees.

Stepping Stones Nursery Co-operative Nursery School will ensure that:

- No child is supervised by a person less than 18 years of age.
- No child is supervised solely by a person not employed by the school.
- Ministry mandated ratios are met at all times (as per Ministry Director Approval – 2 duty parents may replace one paid unqualified staff member if required).
- All volunteers/duty parents provide a current CRCVS prior to interacting with children.
- At no time will a volunteer/student be left alone with any child.
- All volunteers/duty parents will be supervised by an employee at all times when children are present.
- All volunteers/duty parents will review the Program Statement including Prohibited Practices, the Anaphylactic Policy and any individual plans for children with anaphylaxis/emergency medical conditions (if applicable) at the commencement of their participation in the program and annually thereafter.

All volunteers/duty parents will undergo a group or individual orientation, including review of all program policies and procedures with an employee and/or Board member prior to the commencement of their participation in the program and then as required based on staff or Board members recommendations. A record of this orientation will be kept, dated and signed by both the volunteer/duty parent and the reviewer.

Roles and responsibilities of volunteers/duty parents are to participate in the classroom setting by interacting with the children, helping with set/clean-up of activities, while ensuring a warm, safe and positive environment for all children and adhering to the policies and procedures of the Nursery School.

The Program Supervisor and Program staff are responsible for ensuring duty parents/volunteers comply with all of the centre's policies and follow the Compliance and Contravention Policy should any concerns arise.

Staff and Board members may evaluate volunteers/duty parent's performance and make appropriate recommendations as needed in accordance with the Program Statement and Implementation Policies.

**NOTE:** should 2 duty parents replace a staff member both are required to have Standard First Aid and Infant/Child CPR as stated in the First Aid Policy.



## WAIT-LIST POLICY

Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery school accepts children into its program on a “first come – first serve” basis by receipt of complete registration packages. A registration package is considered to be complete when all applicable pages are filled out in full and are accompanied by the required fees.

Priority is given (for the following year) to currently enrolled students for 1 month prior to the public release of the registration package on the website (usually for the month of March). Should enrollment become full, a waiting list is kept based on the date you have requested to have your information placed on the waiting list. The information required to be put on the waiting list includes a first and last name, phone number, email address and birthdate of child(ren) looking to be enrolled. There is **no fee** to be placed on the waiting list.

Families will be contacted in the order they are listed on the waiting list by date, with consideration being given to the age of the child and maintaining the ratios of adults to children mandated by the Ministry of Education and the Child Care and Early Years Act.

Once a family has been contacted and offered a space in the program there will be a 1 week grace period to complete and deliver the registration package (arrangements for this will be made with the Registrar). Should Stepping Stones’ Registrar not receive the complete registration package within the week the spot in the program will be offered to the next family on the waiting list.

There may be circumstances where a placement becomes available throughout the school year, should this happen the wait list will be managed throughout the year as stated above. Please contact a Board member with questions regarding this policy.