



Questions & Answers – 1 June

Dear Parents,
We hope you and your families are all in good health.

Firstly, we understand it is a difficult decision on whether to send your child/ children back to Nursery during these uncertain circumstances. We want to reassure you as a team we are and will be doing all we can to ensure your child is safe within our Nursery. We would like to stress that social distancing with such a young age group will be near enough impossible. We would also like to add it is very important you **do not** bring your child to nursery if they have a temperature or a continuous cough – if your child is unwell please call us and let us know. Similarly, if anyone within your household has any symptoms of Coronavirus then everyone should isolate until the required period or the test results come back negative. This is in the best interests of families, all the children we are caring for and our staff who are caring for children.

We would also like to thank you for filling in our return to Nursery survey. We have gathered information and it has come to our attention that some parents still had questions about our measure and procedures. Therefore, we have put together a list of frequently asked questions to give you more clarity over our procedures. We have also put together a short video which is available to watch on our website.

Thank you,
Stepping Stones Management

Please could you tell us what additional measures you will take to ensure the safety of the young children during these times.

We are interested to know what measures are being taken to mitigate risks towards staff and children.

Safety and well-being are always our priority, and below are some of the measures and controls to help reduce the risk:

- Social distancing methods on arrival at the nursery for drop off and pick-ups – 2 metre markings are in place on the floor for parents to wait. Drop off and pick-ups will be made outside the nursery.
- Encouraging staff and children to work and play in smaller groups and in different areas of the room or outdoors.
- Monitoring symptoms and undertaking temperature checks of children, staff, and visitors on arrival and whilst at the nursery to ensure that those displaying symptoms of COVID-19 do not attend. Anyone with a temperature of 37.5 degrees C or more will be asked to stay away from the setting.
- Removal of some resources and sessions which may include shared resources. We will be removing soft toys from rooms. Other toys and resources may be minimal to ensure we are able to clean current resources more frequently.
- Messy play activities such as sand, water, oats etc will be excluded.
- Continuing with our excellent personal hygiene practices with regular handwashing for everyone throughout the day.
- Continuing robust cleaning practices and taking measures internally to ensure good hygiene standards and infection control. A cleaning rota will be put in place to clean resources throughout the day.
- Our staff have also completed courses on 'Infection prevention' and 'Control and prevent COVID-19'.
- Children and staff will be removing shoes before entering the nursery and will not wear them indoors. We kindly ask you bring an extra pair or ensure your child wears socks.
- Reducing the number of visitors that we allow in the nursery.

We would appreciate your patience with the above measures. We kindly also ask that you do not bring children's belongings such as soft toys or blankets into the nursery. We have plenty of exciting toys for children to play with. If your child uses a dummy, however, please supply at least two so one can be kept on hand.



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**Can we understand what procedures the nursery will be taking on social distancing?
Will my child get to play with many other kids or will it be isolated play?**

We ask all families to respect social distancing when arriving at Nursery for drop off and collection, this is of particular importance when awaiting temperature taking. Social distancing within the setting is not practical with children of such a young age and the guidance appreciates this as well. We will be monitoring our occupancy and children will be playing within smaller groups along with an adult whilst still complying with the required ratios. Your child may still be playing alongside others with the supervision of an adult.

Taking into account any government measures for playrooms/areas and what are your estimated class sizes going to be?

We are unable to put a cap on the class sizes as we understand parents require childcare due to the working situations. Although the number of children returning in June is much smaller than our normal daily intake. We have benefitted from the extra space from the extension which will allow groups of children to be further away from each other whilst maintaining a safe, secure and stimulating environment for children.

If my child falls or is distressed will someone comfort him?

Of course, children will still be comforted by staff members and it is our instinct to cuddle children. Social distancing has to be carefully balanced with the emotional well-being of each child. No child will be left crying because of social distancing.

How will children in the Baby room be stopped from putting things in their mouth?

Children attending Stepping Stones have varied ages. Children will be supervised during play by adults and all toys will be cleaned if children put toys in their mouth.

What kind of activities will children be doing once back? Will the children have arts and craft? Soft play access?

All malleable play will be excluded from the Nursery to help reduce the risks. There will also be fewer resources within the room to enable us to clean all resources throughout the day. More adult led activities will take place where adults handle resources and children do not share them. The soft play area will be closed or we will be removing all the balls.

**If a child is sent home ill, will they have to stay at home for 2 weeks instead of the usual 48 hours?
We would like to understand a plan if anyone contracts COVID-19 at the Nursery? If anyone contracts it at the nursery, will you be shutting down the Nursery? What steps will you take to ensure it is contained?**

Please do not bring your child to Nursery if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Do not give your child Calpol before bringing them to nursery. If a child is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 they will be immediately sent home and you will be asked to collect them as soon as possible. A staff member will take your children to an excluded area of the nursery with PPE and await your arrival. If a child is sent home, you will be asked to get your child tested. If the test comes back positive your family will have to isolate for 14 days. You will have to notify the Nursery immediately and we will be forced to close so that all children, families, and staff can self-isolate for 14 days. We will maintain confidentiality of all involved. This policy will take precedence of any existing policies before COVID-19 to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone.



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Could you advise on the actions that will be taken if staff or children show symptoms of Covid-19? Aside from being asked not to attend - will staff be asked to go for tests and after how long would staff or children be allowed to come back?

If staff are showing symptoms of COVID-19 they will be sent home and required to get tested. Since testing was made available for key workers, which covers our staff, any staff member wishing to access a test can do so. If their test is negative, they will be allowed to return to work. If their test is positive the nursery will have to close and everyone who attended will have to self-isolate for 14 days.

Will staff be wearing face masks or coverings?

The evidence to support the use of masks, or not, is limited. Staff taking temperatures at our entrance will wear a face mask. Staff within rooms with children will not wear face masks (consistent with government guidance). This will ensure a more familiar environment for the children who can be reassured by familiar faces and friendly smiles - very much needed at this time of continued uncertainty.

As outlined in your letter, drop off and pickups will be outside of your nursery, is there any photos or videos you can provide to see what the current layout and building works will look like prior to opening?

Will the opening of the nursery be impacted the building work that was ongoing prior to lockdown?

We are extremely excited to announce our extension has been completed. Our downstairs room is now triple the size of the original. This means there is much more room for children to be able to play within small groups and away from others. As parents are not able to enter the Nursery, we will be producing a video made available on our website, which will allow you to see the extension work.

Will children have garden access? as before lockdown I understand they did not due to the building work.

Prior to our closure during building work an outdoor area was still accessible at the front of the Nursery as we constructed a temporary outdoor play area. Now that all building work is complete, children will be able to access the normal garden which has also had changes. More outdoor activities in groups will be encouraged.

Will I be charged for not sending my child until August/ September?

We have told parents we are flexible with sessions during the month of June. We then expect children to return with normal sessions unless you have stated otherwise. At the moment, we ourselves are very unsure about children starting later. It is an exceedingly difficult decision to make now as we have to balance between demand, security and sustainability. I am sure everyone will appreciate that our policies have been fair, and we have prioritised parental situations more than our own and the business itself. We will be waiting to evaluate the situation within the upcoming weeks and will let parents know on our decision.

At the end of June please let us know how successful your measures have been over the course of June?

We will of course let you all know how the measures within the nursery is going. We have been working hard to make the setting as safe as possible for staff and children.

Lastly, we thank parents for their kind words and messages which has helped us get through this period. We have had to ensure flexibility from government guidance but are responding rapidly to unfamiliar situations. Please bear with us during this time. Our team will be waiting to greet you when you arrive, and we wish you a happy and safe reunion.