



Newsletter August 2021

We are so excited to be opening the doors again on Thursday the 2nd of September and really looking forward to seeing everyone again. If after reading this newsletter you have any further questions, please email preschool1@clipston.northants.sch.uk and we will do our best to answer.

Annual General Meeting

We will be holding our Annual General Meeting on Monday 27th September at 8pm – please save the date, more details to follow.

Bags

Children should bring a bag to Stepping Stones daily, it should contain indoor shoes such as slippers or pumps, a change of clothing including socks, a water bottle and any other personal essentials your child may need during the day. Toys from home should not be included. It is really helpful if all items are labelled with your child's name.

Committee

Our management committee is made up of parent volunteers who undertake a variety of roles including chair, treasurer, secretary, and fundraising. They meet each half term to review the workings of the setting and make key business decisions. The committee raises funds to invest in new equipment and support the setting financially. Some members of the committee will be standing down this summer so if you are interested in getting involved, please speak to Sam or any member of the committee.

COVID-19

We are following the latest government guidance which can be found on the webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

We have updated our risk assessment to include all elements of the guidance to create an inherently safer environment for children and staff where the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced for children and staff. If you would like to view the full risk assessment please visit our website www.steppingstonesclipston.co.uk or request a copy by e-mail preschool1@clipston.northants.sch.uk

The guidance states:

“As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case to identify close contacts. Contacts from a setting will only be traced by NHS Test and Trace where the positive case and/or their parent or carer specifically identifies the individual as being a close contact. This is likely to be a small number of individuals who would be most at risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of the close contact. You may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated.
- they are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Instead they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a PCR test. We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Children who are aged under 5 years old who are identified as close contacts will only be advised to take a PCR test if the positive case is in their own household.

Staff who do not need to self-isolate, and children who usually attend the setting, and have been identified as a close contact, should continue to attend the setting as normal.

Settings will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a substantial increase in the number of positive cases in a setting (see [local outbreaks](#) section for more information) or if central government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a setting to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.”

Drop off / pick up

Parents should only enter the setting if it is essential. Due to restrictions easing parents will no longer be required to wait at the bottom of the path and can now queue up the path to drop off and collect children, please do consider social distance whilst queueing to make the process comfortable for all involved.

Face Masks and PPE

Face masks are not recommended for children under the age of 11. Staff at Stepping Stones can choose to wear a face mask. Staff will wear appropriate PPE including gloves, apron, face mask and visor when appropriate, and if supervising a child with suspected symptoms.

Forest school

Forest school will officially begin on Thursday 23rd September, before that we will be settling the children (new and old) into the setting and preparing them for the new adventure - talking about Forest school, playing with mud, planting and doing practice walks around the village.

There will be a separate parent briefing on Thursday the 16th of September from 9-9.30am at the setting, this will be an opportunity to hear all the information you will need to prepare your child for the experience and to ask any questions.

Funding

All children are eligible for 15 hours funded childcare from the term after their 3rd birthday. We will calculate your hours and prepare your forms ready for your signature when you return.

If you are entitled to 30 hours funding or 2-year-old funding you will need to apply on the Northamptonshire Council website, they will provide you with a reference number to send to us. We will need to receive this reference by Friday 27th August to ensure we can process your funding claim.

If you have already been claiming 30 hours funding, please ensure you update it every 3 months as requested by the HMRC.

Handwashing

We will be continuing with regular supervised handwashing for all children throughout the day, including on arrival, after using the toilet and before and after eating. Hand sanitiser will be available for use under supervision also.

Hygiene

Children will be reminded to catch their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or an elbow. We will continue to promote the "catch it, bin it, kill it" approach.

Opening hours:

We will be open from Monday to Friday from 8.40am-3.10pm, operating a morning session 8.40am-11.40am, lunch from 11.40am-12.10pm and an afternoon session from 12.10pm-3.10pm.

Outdoors

We will continue to make full use of our outdoor space daily. Please ensure your child comes with appropriate shoes and coat to play outdoors in all weathers.

Snack and lunch

Stepping Stones will provide a morning and afternoon snack, this will be fruit and a carbohydrate, for example apple and toast or banana and rice cake with a drink of milk or water. Staff preparing food will wear appropriate PPE.

Children who attend lunch club should bring a packed lunch in a bag or box. Food should be packaged in a way that the child is able to open it themselves where possible.

Social evening

We are hosting a social evening on Thursday 16th September at The Bull's Head, Clipston from 8pm. It is an opportunity for parents and staff to get to know each other in a more relaxed environment, we hope you will join us.

Symptoms

If your child develops Coronavirus symptoms it remains critical that they do not come to preschool and isolate as per government guidance. Any child who develops symptoms at preschool will be isolated and parents will be asked to immediately collect.

Visitors

Visitors to the setting will only be permitted when in the best interest of the children, for example from social services, specialist support or a speech and language therapist.

Contractors coming to do work within the setting will attend during closed hours where possible.

We will review our policy regarding volunteers later in the Autumn term, they have in the past attended Stepping Stones to support our children by offering small group maths, speech and language and cooking, we will endeavour to provide this within the staff team and hope to welcome them back soon.

Looking forward to seeing you very soon....

Term dates

Summer holidays	Wednesday 21 st July – Wednesday 1 st September
Autumn term first half	Thursday 2nd Sept – Friday 22nd Oct 2021
Half term break	Monday 25th Oct – Monday 1st Nov 2021
Autumn term second half	Tuesday 2nd Nov – Friday 17th Dec 2021
Term break	Monday 20th Dec – Tuesday 4th Jan 2022
Spring term first half	Wednesday 5th Jan – Friday 11th Feb 2022
Half term break	Monday 14th Feb - Monday 21st Feb 2022

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