

# EMERGENCY CLOSURE AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY POLICY

It is important that Stepping Stones has a simple and well-structured plan to follow in case of emergency situations with the aim of minimal impact to day to day service. Stepping Stones may need to be closed, in an emergency, for a variety of reasons, most of which cannot be foreseen e.g. severe weather, gas leaks, power failures, water leaks, flooding etc. If any of these circumstances happen, it is understood by all parties that an effective communication network would immediately be actioned. {Edited to add closure due to COVID19 outbreak}

Stepping Stones nursery caters for 36 children on site, aged 2 to 5, 50 weeks a year. The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, staff and parents/carers and the continuity of care for the children is maintained effectively with a little disruption as possible.

In the event of an emergency situation the following steps would be followed:

* Nursery manager to initiate emergency situation or closure. If staff and children are not yet on site, the Nursery manager will first contact all staff to inform them of the situation followed shortly by informing all parents of closure.
* Staff and parent numbers are held on the nursery computer, nams, phone and also on hard copy in the event of any electronic failure.
* Should the Nursery require closure, staff and parents/carers will be informed of the reasons why and how long closure is expected to last. Staff should make themselves available in case any tasks can be done remotely to aid the continuity of the service.
* If staff and children are on-site when the situation arises procedures found within the fire and emergency procedures will be followed and phones and registers will be taken from the site. Children and staff will be directed to a safe location (bottom of garden) and any emergency services are contacted if required. All parents will then be contacted to come and collect their children. Staff will remain on site until all children are collected.
* If a situation arises where children and staff cannot wait safely in the safe location, staff will walk all children to the Helensburgh Library/Wetherspoons where they will await collection by their parents/carers.
* In any emergency situation, Stepping Stones manager and staff will keep regular and consistent communication with all parent/carers.
* Full consideration will be given to the situation including travel to and from premises, weather, traffic advice and mode of transport used.
* COVID19 - If there are two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 within 14 days, or an increase in background rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, there may be an outbreak;
* In this circumstance the local health protection team (appendix 1) will be informed and their guidance followed regarding enhanced infection, prevention and control measures, self-isolation and the possible testing of staff and children;
* The Care Inspectorate will be notified of any staff absences due to COVID-19
* Should this guidance result in staff shortages then the emergency closure procedures will be followed

It is important that all staff and parent/carers are aware of this procedure and support staff to follow out the steps as effectively as possible ensuring the safety of all parties at all times.

## Financial Viability

In the event that a concern about the financial viability of Stepping Stones is raised a contingency plan will be implemented to include the following:

* Parents /carers of children registered will be given where possible 3 months’ notice regarding the closure of the nursery, and will be consulted and supported while arranging alternative nursery placements
* All care plans will be kept up to date to ensure as smooth a transition as possible
* Arrangements will be made to notify Argyll and Bute Council and the Care Inspectorate of throughout closure at the earliest opportunity
* Advice and good practice regarding closures will be kept up to date.

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| UNCRC Article | 3 |
| Health and Social Care Standards | 4.12, 4.14 |

As a staff team we are committed to reviewing and updating our policies annually

This policy was last reviewed: 21/12/2022

Signed: Mo King (Manager)