

Safeguarding Policy

Updated May 2020

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Sally McGreevy 0799 169 988

Deputy Safeguarding Officer: Sharon Kirichia 0702 691 522

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1. Statement and Aims

- 1.1** At Stepping Stones Kindergarten, we work with parents to support children in every possible way. We recognize our professional duty to promote children's safety and welfare and protect them from actual or likely harm. In all circumstances the child's welfare is paramount. We acknowledge that if we suspect or know that a child is at risk of being abused, physically, emotionally or sexually, or appears to be suffering from neglect, we are responsible for following these procedures.
- 1.2** This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy aims to make clear the expectations of all staff and parents to protect children at all times. It is broad, and includes information on behavioral expectations of children, anti-bullying, definitions of abuse, and the organization of staff and site.

2. Definitions/Glossary

2.1 Child Protection

This is the protection of children from any harm. It generally refers to the response to nagging doubts, raised concerns or disclosures made.

2.2 Safeguarding

This covers all measures put in place to protect children.

2.3 Disclosure

Anything that a child says about their safety and/or protection that raises concern is a disclosure.

2.4 Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

This is the member of staff that receives, records and manages all safeguarding and child protection concerns. In the event that a disclosure is made or a concern is raised about the DSO, one must contact the Deputy (DDSO).

The DSO is Mrs Sally McGreevy
Contactable on 0799 169 988

The DDSO is Sharon Kirichia
Contactable on 0702 691 522

3. Child Protection

3.1 World Health Organization – Definitions of Abuse

3.1.1 General Definition

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

3.1.2 Physical abuse

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of an interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

3.1.3 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells. There may also be acts towards the child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

3.1.4 Neglect and Negligent Treatment

Neglect is the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

3.1.5 Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to:

- i. The exploitative use of child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices.
- ii. The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity.

iii. The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

3.1.6 **Exploitation**

Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labour and child prostitution. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, or spiritual, moral or social-emotional development.

pp. 13-17, Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention, Geneva, 29-31 March 1999, World Health Organization, Social Change and Mental Health, Violence and Injury Prevention.

3.2 **Common Signs of Abuse**

At Stepping Stones, we know our children very well. We use caution and good sense in identifying child abuse - every parent/carer makes errors in judgement and action on occasion, but when it becomes clear that it is a pattern or is becoming one, then it is time for help. Significant changes in a child's behaviour can be indicative of abuse or something being unusual.

- 3.2.1 Repeated injuries: bruises, welts, burns, reluctance to undress; parents seem unconcerned, deny anything is wrong; the child is evasive, or unable to say how the injuries have happened; the child flinches.
- 3.2.2 Neglected appearance: badly nourished, hungry, smelly, inadequately clothed; the child seems tired – fails to thrive.
- 3.2.3 Disruptive behaviour: aggressive, negative – a cry for help; the child may seem needy, attention seeking.
- 3.2.4 Passive withdrawn behaviour: the child is shy and friendless – tearful, not wanting to be touched; she/he may be nervous or exhibit marked swings in mood.
- 3.2.5 Inappropriate sexual behaviour : the child may talk about “secret” acts, suffer from urinary infections, or bruising, or show a change in response to parents/carers. S/he might also engage in role play of a sexual nature.
- 3.2.6 Irregular attendance: unexplained absences, family either giving unlikely reasons or perhaps none at all.
- 3.2.7 Isolated families: don't share in school or community; resent friendly contact and help; unreliable collection of children.

3.3 Procedure: What staff will do if there are concerns/a disclosure

3.3.1 Receive

- i. Listen to the child. If you are shocked by what they tell you, try not to show it. Take what they say seriously. Children rarely lie about abuse and to be disbelieved adds to the traumatic nature of disclosing. Children may retract what they have said if they meet revulsion or disbelief.
- ii. Accept what the child says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking “Why didn’t you tell me before.”

3.3.2 Reassure

- i. Stay calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you. It’s essential to be honest with the child, so don’t make promises you may not be able to keep, like “I’ll stay with you” or “Everything will be all right now.”

3.3.3 Don’t promise confidentiality

- i. You have a duty to refer a child who is at risk.
- ii. Try to alleviate any feelings of guilt that the child displays. For example, you could say: “You’re not alone; you have done the right things in sharing this”.

3.3.4 React

- i. Do not interrogate the child
- ii. Do not ask “leading” questions such as “What did he do next?” (This assumed that he did!) or “Did he touch your private parts?”
- iii. Instead ask open questions like “Anything else to tell me?”, “Yes?” “And...?”
- iv. Do not criticize the person who hurt them: the child may love him/her and reconciliations may be possible.
- v. Do not ask the child to repeat everything to another member of staff.
- vi. As soon as possible, without rushing the child and what they are sharing, begin to record what you have heard and report to the DSO immediately.

3.3.5 Record

- i. Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible.
- ii. Do not destroy your original notes. Hand them to the DSO on reporting.
- iii. Record the date, time, place, any noticeable non verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. If the child uses their family’s own private sexual words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into “proper” words
- iv. Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising, marks or cuts.
- v. Be objective in your recording – include statements and observations – not assumptions or opinions.
- vi. Give all of this to the DSO immediately so they are able to take the next course of action.

3.3.6 Support

- i. Make sure that you continue to support the child, providing time and a safe space.
- ii. Get some support for yourself, without disclosing confidential information about the child to colleagues.

3.3.7 What happens next?

- i. The DSO is responsible for communicating with the appropriate authorities. If these are not available, the police will be contacted.

Vulnerable Children's Officer (VCO), Karen Grace Kananu Kalawa 0725164885	Police Surgeon Dr. Kizzie Shako 0721 351 819
Karen Ward Administrator officer Irene Wanjunga Ndanga 0720701800 irenendanga@gmail.com	Langata Sub County Area Administrator Ngunjiri Ndungu 0724360680 ndungungujiri@gmail.com

- ii. Ideally, referrals will be made with the consent of the child and parents – If through gaining this consent, the risk of the children coming to harm is increased, referral can continue without consent, at the DSO's discretion.
- iii. Staff have the authority to contact the authorities directly in the eventuality that neither the DSO or DDSO is available or central to the concern of the referral.
- iv. If a disclosure is made to a member of staff, it must only be shared with the DSO and class team. It is only shared on a need-to-know basis.

3.4 Whistleblowing

- 3.4.1 On the occasion that a member of staff or parent has a concern about another member of staff or parent, they must record this and report it to the DSO in the same fashion as a child making a disclosure. **It is integral to every member of staff's duty of care towards the children to report concerns, regardless of professional and personal relationships and dynamics.** The consequences of Whistleblowing are always more valuable than concerns developing into incidents.

4. Safeguarding

Safeguarding includes all procedures and practice that maintains a safe and positive environment for children.

4.1 Teaching Children about keeping themselves safe.

- 4.1.1 In reacting to incidents in school we talk about appropriate behaviour and encourage children to empathise with others. They are also told what to do if someone is doing something to them they do not like – tell that person to stop and if they don't, get an adult to help. The children are told to come and tell an adult if they see an incident they think is unfair.
- 4.1.2 We have high expectations of children and the way they behave. Children are taught to speak against others behaving inappropriately towards them. They are reminded to talk to adults if they need help resolving conflict. In teaching children this, they develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour in regards to what they receive and the way they are towards others. It also supports them in speaking against abuse if it were to ever occur.
- 4.1.3 Bullying is not tolerated at Stepping Stones. Children are encouraged to speak up against any behaviour that is inappropriate, including behaviour that targets them, makes them feel negatively about themselves, and/or continues over period of time. Staff do all they can on a case by case basis to ensure this type of behaviour is stopped immediately, and that it is turned around to ensure that all children involved are able to continue in school as they should.

4.2 E-Safety and WhatsApp groups

- 4.2.1 The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever developing variety of devices including PCs, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, webcams etc. place an additional risk on our children.
- 4.2.2 At Stepping Stones, we use iPads as a valuable learning resource. The use of them is monitored and regulated, so that children are not exposed for too long, and are encouraged to explore the rest of the school and all the environment has to offer. Learning that is conducted using the iPads and other technology is only ever conducted as part of a wider learning journey and as part of the curriculum.
- 4.2.3 WhatsApp groups are in use across the school as a means of communicating with parents and staff, sharing the day's learning and information that is helpful for all involved to know. We have a trust between individuals within these groups to use them for their intended purposes, which are to share the learning journeys of the children in school. They are not for the furthering of personal agendas, or any incriminating or inappropriate behaviour. Members of school WhatsApp group who are in receipt of photos are not permitted to post photos of other children on any social media including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

4.2.4 Parents and other individuals in these groups are reminded of these guidelines periodically. **We have a zero-tolerance approach to any abuse of this trust.** The DSO reserves the right to remove individuals from the group. Further action is at the discretion of the DSO.

4.3 Security

4.3.1 We have a large area in our grounds which provides fantastic opportunities for children to explore and learn. The parameters are secured with fencing and the main entrance is secured with KK Security. James and Boniface guard the main gate, and Elizabeth maintains one of the small gates that joins the car park to the kindergarten. There are two small gates that act as pedestrian access points to the kindergarten. The gate furthest from the main gate is locked at 9:15 and remains locked. In addition to Elizabeth attending the gate closest to the main entrance, there is also a member of teaching staff in attendance at collection times (12:30pm – 1:15pm and 3:00pm – 3:30pm). In addition to KK Security and their practices and protocols, Masai patrol the site at all times, including all of the perimeters and grounds that surround the main learning areas.

Gates

All gates leading to the premises must be kept shut at all times. Security staff supervises access and egress at all times and only permits registered families, drivers and relatives on the premises. Visitors who have made an appointment have their ID taken from them at the gate, their registration details recorded and a call is made to the office that their visitors have arrived. All gates leading to and from the main school must closed at all times. Polite signs remind visitors, families and employees to secure the gates at all times. Employees are asked to reiterate this procedure to all employees, visitors and parents as a reminder if they are observed leaving the gates open.

Authorized collections

All parents are requested to leave two car registrations with the school, and provide three named adults to be responsible for the collection of the child or children. Vehicles that regularly collect children should display the Stepping Stones identification car sticker. If a visitor, member of staff or parent arrives at the site by taxi, the taxi will be asked to pull over, the gate locked behind them and the office will be called to verify the arrival of the taxi. In the event that any person not in the authorised list provided by parents comes to pick or even drops a child to school, a written consent from the parents is required to allow the person to pick or drop the child.

Early collection gate pass

When a student is picked up earlier than the normal regular time, a gate pass is issued at the reception office. The gate pass should be presented to the guard at the gate to allow the parent/ authorised person to leave with the child

4.3.2 All adults on site wear lanyards whilst on site. Staff wears lanyards that identify their name and role within school. Parents visiting the school for a tour of the site must remain with the member of staff for the duration of their visit. If visitors are on site for other reasons, they must wear a red Visitor lanyard. This includes all Ayahs.

4.4 Prevention of Terror/Organized Crime

- 4.4.1 Stepping Stones is a secure site and an environment where children feel safe and happy. As a school, we are aware of risks to safety and actively safeguard the premise against these. In the unlikely event of a threat, we have **Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)**.
- 4.4.2 In accordance with Child Protection and Whistleblowing procedures, staff are to report any concerns they have regarding comments made by children and staff, things they might create (e.g. drawing alarming pictures), unusual or inappropriate behaviour and role play that may indicate an exposure to elements of Terrorism, Gang-Related Ideas and other Criminal Activity.
- 4.4.3 For more information on daily practices regarding the security of the premises, see **Security**.

4.5 Classroom Ratios

- 4.5.1 Stepping Stones is a well-staffed setting that prioritizes the safety of children as well as ensuring that all children have high-quality adult interaction. Below is a list of all classes within the setting and the allocated ratios of staffing to children.
- 4.5.2 Support Teachers (otherwise known as one-to-one support or learning support) are allocated on a child-specific basis in consultation with the Headteacher. These are not included in the class ratio. See **Inclusion/SEND** for more information.

Class	Adult Allocation
Dudus	1 Teacher 3 Assistants This ratio pertains to children with no ayah
Busy Bees / Grasshoppers	2 Teachers 2 Assistants
Ladybirds / Dragonflies / Geckos	3 Teachers 3 Assistants
Fireflies / Crickets	2 Teacher 2 Assistant
Butterflies	1 Teacher 1Assistant

4.6 Swimming

4.6.1 We adhere to a strict set of rules regarding swimming pool safety.

- i. The pool is only used when the swimming coach is present.
- ii. The swimming pool gate must only be unlocked and locked by the swimming coach before and after their session. The coach is only permitted to unlock the gate when the class teacher and at least one teaching assistant is present.
- iii. A maximum of 10 children are allowed in the pool area at any one time.
- iv. Children get changed in the classrooms, never by the pool.
- v. Children who are not toilet trained must wear plastic swim pants.
- vi. Running and diving are strictly prohibited in the pool area.

4.6.2 Our qualified swimming coach is trained in Aqua First Aid which is renewed annually.

4.7 Changing Children

4.7.1 We value and instill the children's independence in all areas of learning. When children are being changed due to a toileting accident or they are changing clothes for an activity (e.g. swimming), they are encouraged to do as much as they can independently. In particular, they are to wipe and dry their intimate areas with as much independence as possible. This includes towel-drying after swimming.

4.8 Inclusion/SEND

4.8.1 Stepping Stones is an inclusive environment where all pupils can flourish and explore their potential. This includes children with additional needs, Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

4.8.2 All children are welcome and additional support and considerations are discussed and arranged in consultation with the Headteacher. This is to ensure that all children have their individual needs met, and feel safe and supported.

4.8.3 Any agreed additional support is funded by parents and Stepping Stones will work with families to actualise the optimum arrangement of support within class. Additional support adults are not included in class ratios – this is to ensure that they are able to provide the child they are allocated to with the highest quality of support and provision.

4.9 Accessibility

4.9.1 Our kindergarten is an open and inviting environment that is safe and secure for all. Classrooms and learning spaces are wheelchair-user friendly and the banda classrooms are open, cool, naturally lit and well-kept. The learning environment is maintained with children's work and learning prompts,

but is not excessive – with this practice, children are not bombarded with information, but encouraged to produce work that will be used to decorate their own classrooms.

4.10 Human Resources

4.10.1 All staff are hard-working and committed practitioners with an incredibly high regard for children's safety and learning. All staff meet on a weekly basis to share issues and positive aspects of the week. The headteacher stresses the sharing of information and is pragmatic in ensuring issues raised are dealt with.

4.10.2 HR Procedures

i. Appraisal

The headteacher conducts walk-throughs and observations of teaching and learning, and is proactive in supporting staff improve their practice, whilst encouraging their existing work. This is to ensure the delivery of high-quality provision.

ii. Capability

If there are any concerns raised regarding the practice, conduct or professionalism of staff members, the headteacher manages this, providing opportunities for practitioners to reflect and improve any practice that does not meet the expectations of Stepping Stones.

iii. Disciplinary

In the event that concerns are raised around a member of staff's conduct, practice and professionalism and capability procedures have not had their intended impact, the headteacher will conduct appropriate disciplinary action. This may lead to the member of staff in question having their employment terminated.

4.10.3 The Headteacher, Sally McGreevy has a Certificate of Good Conduct from the Kenyan Police Service. This is renewed on a biannual basis.

4.11 External Practitioners

4.11.1 As part of a wider curriculum, Stepping Stones employs external practitioners to teach children a variety of skills and provide a breadth of learning opportunities. All of these members of staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable, maintaining regular schedules that allow children to make progress week-by-week. These members of staff are also required to adhere to this policy.

4.11.2 All external practitioners are accompanied by a member of Stepping Stone staff during teaching sessions.

4.12 First Aid

4.12.1 All members of staff receive annual certified first aid training by external examiners. In doing this, all staff are prepared to see to children's needs in the event that they are hurt during school hours. It also allows staff to support children with ongoing pain and /or injury.

4.12.2 All medical supplies are kept in the office and are out of the reach of children.

4.12.3 Alice Chumo is our First Aid Lead. She is based in Ladybirds Class.

4.13 Hygiene

4.13.1 Children are required to wash their hands before eating. They are also taught to wash their hands independently, so they are able to in any situation. Hygiene is of paramount importance within the setting – this being said, children are encouraged to play with a safe approach within the setting, and are not discouraged from outdoor play that may result in becoming dirty.

4.13.2 When cleaning bodily fluids, all staff are to use the allocated **green bowl** and **plastic gloves** in order to prevent cross-contamination and spread of further infection.

4.14 Toilet Designation

4.14.1 Throughout the school are designated toilets in order to keep children and adults safe. All bathrooms are labeled. The children are to use the toilet block in the central part of the setting, between the Busy Bees and the Office. Male staff and visitors are to use the toilet block behind the Busy Bees Classrooms. Female staff and visitors are to use the toilet block at the north end of the site, to the right of the Butterflies class.

5. Phone Numbers

Designated Safeguarding Officer

Sally McGreevy

0799 169 988

Deputy Safeguarding Officer

Sharon Kirichia

0702 691 522

Vulnerable Children's Officer (VCO), Karen

Grace Kananu Kalawa

0725164885

The Police Surgeon

Dr. Kizzie Shako

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The fulfillment of these principles and guidelines by all adults, whether staff, visitor or parents is essential in the safeguarding of children's safety, their learning and development. Protecting children's health, safety and emotional well-being are fundamental in the development of happy and well-rounded children.