**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Aims**

At Steps Ahead our aim is to give ‘*the best possible start in life’* to our children. Steps Ahead aims to work together in partnership with parents and carers, to promote the learning and development of all the children in our care and to ensure that they are ready for school.

Each child is valued and treated as an individual. Their safety and wellbeing underpin all our activities. We recognise that a child who is relaxed and secure in their surroundings is a self-motivated learner and we aim to support each individual child through their exciting voyage of discovery, at their own rate of development. Learning through play is important to everyone at Steps Ahead.

Our aim is to provide a secure and safe environment for which the children can develop to their full potential. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum enabling each child to develop physically, personally, socially and emotionally, to develop their literacy, to understand the world around them, and to be able to use expressive arts and design to their full potential.

Steps Ahead incorporates the Early Years Foundation Stage, with the seven areas of learning and development, which has the three prime areas and the four specific areas, in its Curriculum. The Early Learning Goals establish the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. The EYFS curriculum is integrated throughout the nursery from birth to five years old. All planning for which the learning and development outcomes are applicable to, are appropriate for each child’s age and stage of development.

Children are observed on a regular basis to assess their achievements against the learning and development requirements. The observations are recorded in each child’s learning journal (on EYLOG), together with photographs and their work. The learning and development requirements help staff to plan a learning environment for the children, to plan activities, to arrange activities for children to experience new things and to provide a framework for the Early Years Foundation Curriculum. One experience may provide a child with opportunities to develop several competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

Steps Ahead acknowledges that if a child attends more than one setting then that child does not necessarily need to meet all the learning and development requirements at Steps Ahead. If a child attends Steps Ahead the most, then Steps Ahead will work together with other settings to deliver a full and comprehensive learning experience for that child.

**Introduction to the EYFS**

*‘’The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early year’s providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.’’*

*‘’The Early Years Foundation Stage framework is mandatory for all early year’s providers from 1st September 2012. The learning and development requirements are given legal force by an order made under Section 39(1)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006. The safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulations made under Section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006.’’*

**The EYFS seeks to provide:**

* **Quality and Consistency** in all early year’s settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
* **A Secure Foundation** through learning and development opportunities that are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and revised regularly.
* **Partnership Working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
* **Equality of Opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The EYFS specifies requirements for Learning and Development and for Safeguarding Children and Promoting Their Welfare.

**The Learning and Development Requirements**

***The Seven Areas of Learning and Development*** *that* mustshape the ***Educational Programmes***in the early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and are inter-connected. Three Areas are particularly crucial for children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building children’s capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These Three Areas are called the ‘**The *Prime Areas’***, they are;

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Practitioners working with the youngest children are to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas, birth to 24 months. Then the balance is expected to shift on all areas of learning 24 months to 5 years.

Providers must also Support Children in Four Specific Areas, through which the Three Prime Areas are strengthened and applied. ‘***The Specific Areas*** ‘are;

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

None of The Prime Areas or The Specific Areas of Learning and Development can be delivered in isolation from the other areas. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to children’s development. All the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others.

***The Early Learning Goals*** are that what providers must help children work towards, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year. The Early Learning Goals are also broken down into its own sub areas, which are:

**The Prime Areas:**

1. Communication and Language: Listening and Attention, Understanding, Speaking.
2. Physical Development: Moving and Handling, Health and Self-Care.
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness, Managing Feelings and Behaviour, Making Relationships.

**The Specific Areas:**

1. Literacy: Reading, Writing.
2. Mathematics: Numbers, Shape, Space and Measures.
3. Understanding the World: People and Communities, The World, Technology.
4. Expressive Arts and Design: Exploring and Using Media and Materials. Being Imaginative.

***Assessment Arrangements*** ‘’*for measuring progress and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers. When and how practitioners must assess children’s achievements and when and how they should discuss children’s progress with parents and/or carers.’’*

 *‘’Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children’s progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support.’’*

Ongoing assessment is also known as Formative Assessment and it is about the child’s **learning and development process**. It involves helping children to keep moving forward and needs to be done on an ongoing basis, mainly through observation of the child.

The staff at Steps Ahead will observe their key children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations will then shape and reflect in the planning of the activities in their room. Parents and carers can help to shape the planning for their child by keeping the staff informed of what their child has achieved or experienced at home, through conversation with the staff or by recording it on EY-log, explaining what they have done.

Steps Ahead aims to provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum and we acknowledge that this can only be delivered with the help of careful assessment, planning based on observation and accurate record keeping. Record keeping in the nursery includes keeping an individual E-folder of the children’s work, which is called their Learning Journal. The nursery uses the EY-log system for recording and sharing with parents. It is a fully secured system which ensures the on-line safety of children and information. Learning Journals will contain a range of the child’s drawings, photos and other pieces of work, plus observations made by staff. The drawings, photographic evidence, individual or group made observations will be the basis of working towards the EYFS profile for each child.

Parents and carers are kept up-to-date on their child’s progress and development through day-to-day contact and conversation with their child’s key worker or other staff present in the room, and through the direct access the parent has to EY-Log via a secure APP on their smartphones. Parents and carers can also attend drop-in-sessions with their child’s key worker. This is a set time for key workers and parents to have together and discuss their key child/child’s development or to just have a set time to talk. We listen carefully to Parent’s views and concerns and are pleased to work with them on any aspect of their child’s development. Parents and carers are welcomed into the nursery to see and be involved with activities.

***Two Year Check***

When children at Steps Ahead are between the age of 2 years 7 months and 2 years 9 months old, the staff will review their key child’s individual progress and provide the parents or carers with a short-written summary of their child’s development in the prime areas.

The Two-Year Check will identify the children’s strengths, reflecting the development level and needs of the individual child. It will highlight any areas where the child is progressing in and areas where the child’s progress is less than expected. The areas where the child is not progressing in they may need additional support in, as the child could have a developmental delay.

If the key worker has identified a developmental delay, which the Two-Year Check has highlighted, the child’s key worker will speak to the nursery SENCO about their concerns. The parents or carers will be informed of any concern that the nursery has about their child’s development. The nursery SENCO, the child’s key worker and the parents and carers together will develop an individual education plan (IEP) to support the child’s future learning and development. With the parents or carers permission, outside agencies will be brought in to assist in the child’s individual educational plan, if the nursery SENCO thinks that the child needs that additional support, i.e. health visitor. The nursery will not share information about their child to other professionals without the parents or carers permission.

The Two-Year Check will describe the activities and strategies that the nursery will use to help the child to address any issues or concerns that the nursery has with the child’s development.

When the summary of development has been carried out the staff will discuss with the parents or carers how the summary can be used to support learning at home.

***The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements***

*‘’Children learn best when that are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.’’*

At Steps Ahead Day Nursery we understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. We are committed to:

* Promoting the welfare of the children.
* Taking all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.
* Safeguarding the children, to have a designated person to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children at the nursery. To have someone who the staff can go to, to talk to about any child protection concerns they may have about their children in their care.
* Ensuring that the practitioners have the correct training in child protection/safeguarding children.
* To be able to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity. These may include: significant changes in children’s behaviour, deterioration in children’s general well-being, unexpected bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect, comments from children that give cause for concern, reason to suspect neglect or abuse outside the nursery, inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with the children.
* The designated person is responsible for liaising with local authority agencies. To provide support, advice and guidance to any staff on any specific safeguarding issue.
* Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
* Ensuring all adults who look after the children or who have contact with the children are suitable to do so.
* Managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
* Maintaining records, policies and procedures required for a safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of all the children.
* Ensuring that the practitioners stay alert to any issues for concern in the child’s life at home or elsewhere.
* Ensuring that every member of staff or adult over the age of 16 years, who has contact with the children, have an Enhanced CRB check carried out by the nursery.
* Ensuring that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for the purpose.
* Ensuring that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to their individual needs.
* ***For specific reference to Safeguarding Children please see the Safeguarding Children Policy***

***Overreaching Principles***

There are **Four Guiding Principles** that shape practice in early years settings, these are:

1. Every child is a **Unique Child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **Positive Relationships**;
3. Children learn and develop well in **Enabling Environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
4. **Children Develop and Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special needs and disabilities.

**Key Worker**

It is essential that children have an adult they can depend upon that they feel especially close to. Daily care routines for babies and young children are crucial to maintaining their Health and Safety. They are also the best way to help the children learn life skills by promoting language, social awareness and self-confidence.

Key workers are responsible for small groups of children, their aim being to form a strong bond with the children when they first come to Steps Ahead and to look after them during their settling in time and to provide support while at the nursery.

The key worker’s role is explained to the parents or carers when they are shown around the nursery.

When a new child starts at Steps Ahead the parents are introduced to their child’s Key Worker on their settling in session or their first day at the nursery.

The key worker will be responsible for their key child’s learning and care and will tailor to their key child’s individual needs.

The key worker will help parents or carers to support their development at home. This could be by giving advice to the parents or carers or informing the parents or carers of the next stage for their child’s development which needs to be met.

Through observing their key child’s development, if a key worker feels that their key child is not developing as they should, the key worker will inform the parents or carers of their concern. The nursery SENCO will also be informed and will carry out observations on the child. After the observations are carried out and the nursery still feels there is a concern they will inform the parents or carers. The key worker, with the nursery SENCO, will help the family with contacting specialist support for their child.

* **For specific reference to the Key Worker please see the Key Worker Policy**

***Qualified Staff***

*‘’A well-qualified, skilled staff strongly increases the potential of any individual setting to deliver the best possible outcomes for children.’’*

The principal purpose of all training and staff development, at Steps Ahead, is to make the nursery more effective at all levels, by enabling its staff to work to their full potential and in the best ways possible.

All staff have an in-depth induction to Steps Ahead, which starts from their first day. New staff are given job descriptions that explain their roles and responsibilities within the nursery. The induction training is staggered over three days and some information is given during week one and week three from their start date. As part of their induction training, information is given about: emergency evacuation procedures, fire exits and positions of fire extinguishers, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Equality Policy and Health and Safety Procedures.

Staff at Steps Ahead regularly attend training sessions to update and enhance their understanding of developments in Early Years Foundation Stage, safeguarding and child protection.

The level and quality of provision of training and staff development is a reflection of the value placed on staff, and also affects general morale within the nursery.

Training and staff development, therefore, has high priority. Steps Ahead will ensure all members of staff are offered high quality training and development to assist them to achieve their full potential and encourage them to take up training opportunities offered.

* **For specific qualifications please see the Staff Qualification List**
* For specific training see the Staff Training and Staff Development Policy

***Admissions, Starting and Settling In***

We believe that the relationship between Steps Ahead Day Nursery Ltd (Steps Ahead) and the family starts from the first enquiry. We aim to provide a high standard of childcare in a fun, safe and stimulating environment.

Steps Ahead provides care for children between the ages of 3 months and 5 years and is registered for 104 children.

We try to ensure that the admission of children to Steps Ahead is fair to all applicants.

After an initial enquiry is made, we will provide the parent/s/ carer with a copy of the Nursery’s brochure. Parents can then arrange to visit and have a guided tour of the nursery by a senior member of staff.

Steps Ahead does not discriminate against admitting any child on the grounds of sex, race, religion, creed or disability.

In the event of Steps Ahead being unable to offer the required place a waiting list will be compiled.

* **For specific details please see the Settling-In and Transition Policy, Admissions Policy**

***Staffing and Organisation***

The nursery is divided into two areas, the Toddler Wing and the Pre-school Wing. Within Steps Ahead Day Nursery the staff are deployed in the rooms in one of the wings. Each room has a Room Leader or a senior member of staff.

The Room Leaders or senior member of staff have at least a full and relevant level three qualification or higher and are responsible for the staff in their rooms.

The Room Leaders report to the, Duty Manager’s and Principal of the nursery.

*We use the following: Adult to Child Ratios:*

* Children under 2 years of age 1 adult : 3 children
* Children aged 2 years of age 1 adult : 4 children
* Children aged 3-5 years of age 1 adult : 8 children
* **For specific staff deployment details please see the Staff Deployment List**
* **Please see Staff Structure Chart**

***Special Educational Needs and Equal Opportunities***

*‘’If a child’s progress in any Prime Areas gives cause for concern’’*, Steps Ahead will discuss this with the child’s parents or carers and agree on how to support that child. Steps Ahead will help the parents or carers to access specialist educational help for their child through the appropriate agencies.

Depending on the children’s individual needs, particularly some younger children or children with learning difficulties and disabilities or those learning English as an additional language. They will be working towards more of the Early Years Foundation Stage than other children.

This does not mean that all children will necessarily have identical provision as, for example, those children with Special Needs or English as an Additional Language may receive additional support or have separate programmes of work i.e. Individual Educational Plan (IEP). However, all children will receive an educational provision that is equally suited to their needs.

Children whose home language is not English will have additional support in their rooms from the activities that are labelled with familiar words describing different areas in their home language. Books and music will be made available for all the children to learn and to help the children with English as an additional language, to learn English alongside their own language. Parents or carers will be asked to help their child to follow the rooms routine by providing a list of basic words in their own language to help their child to understand the activities and routine of the room, i.e. food, toilet, wash hands etc.

As in all aspects of nursery life, the children will be treated always with the requirements of equal opportunities in mind. No child will be disadvantaged by reason of race, class, gender or ability.

* **For specific reference to Special Educational Needs please see the Special Educational Needs Policy**
* **For specific reference to equal opportunities please see the Equal Opportunities Policy**

***Monitoring and Review***

It is the responsibility of all the EYFS practitioners to follow the principals stated in this policy.

The Room Leaders have the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the management team on a day-to-day basis or during the room leader meetings, where feedback can be given, or activities can be reviewed.

The weekly planning is monitored by the duty manager’s to ensure the planning is correct and is being carried out.

Parents and carers can access more information about the EYFS via the DfE website.

For more information, please refer to these Specific Policies or Folders:

* Administration of Medicines Policy and Folder
* Food and Drink Policy
* Accident and First Aid Policy and Folder
* Behaviour Management Policy
* Health and Safety Management System
* Smoking Policy
* Risk Assessment Policy and risk Assessment Folder.
* Outings Policy
* Complaints Policy and Folder