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nurtured steps



PROFESSIONAL CHILDCARE

happy. safe. loved

Parent Handbook

2024/25

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Fees

I have a comprehensive '**Fees and Admissions policy**' which is displayed on my notice board and available on the 'Parent Information Page' of my website www.nurturedstepschildcare.com. All parents will receive an updated copy of this via email annually (each September) New parents will also receive a paper copy of this before their contract starts. If you require another copy, or have any questions about the contents of this policy please speak to me.

Concerns and Complaints

I hope that you are happy with the service that I provide, but I appreciate there may be times when you feel I am not offering you and your child the service that you require. I hope that you will feel able to discuss any concerns or issues that you may have with me directly. If you would rather not talk in front of your child then we can arrange a more convenient time, for example in the evening or at the weekend, or you can explain your concerns in writing.

Written complaints will be investigated and a written response will be given within 7 days.

It is a requirement by Ofsted that all complaints are logged along with the outcome and any action taken. These records must be available to show an Ofsted Childcare Inspector if required.

If you feel that you are unable to talk to me or that after talking the matter remains unresolved and you wish to make a formal complaint then you can contact Ofsted via:

Ofsted Complaints and Investigation Unit:

0300 123 1231

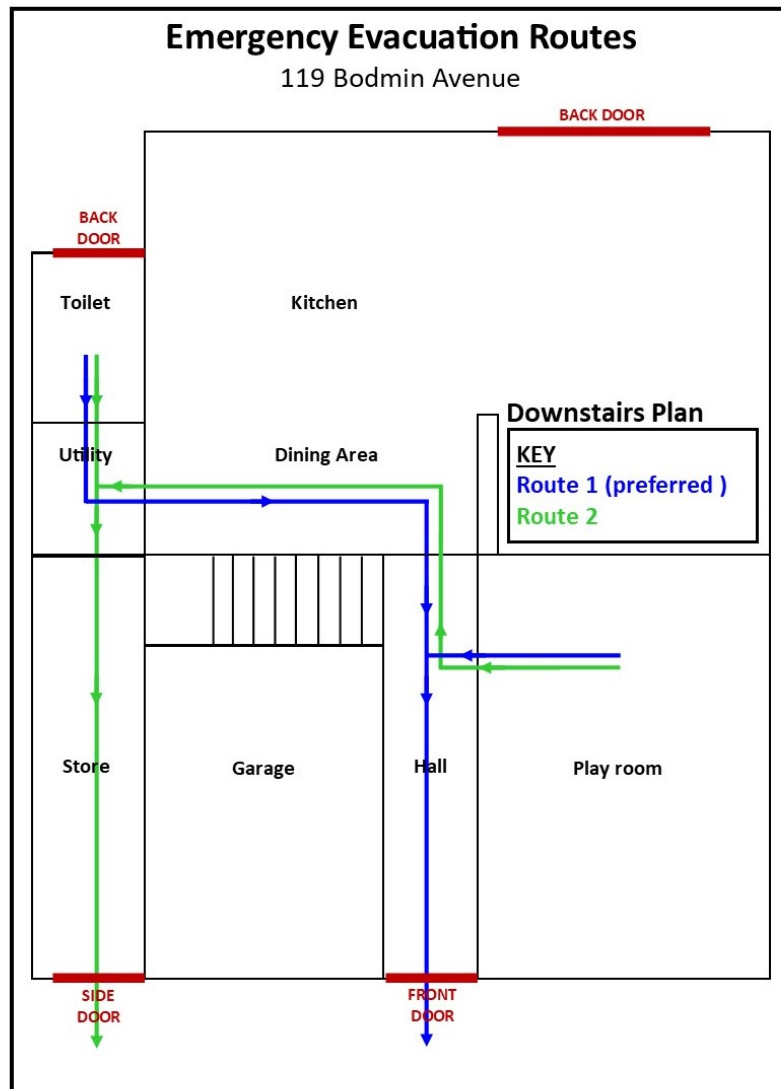
Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

If you have concerns about the way I have handled your data, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) via:

Information Commissioner's Office

0303 123 1113

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>



About Me - the ethos of Nurtured Steps

I am a qualified teacher with 4 years experience working in primary schools, and a further 6 year experience in special schools working with children aged 4 to 16 with a range of learning difficulties and physical needs. I began childminding in 2009 and was awarded Early Years Professional Status in 2013.

I love working with children, and my aim is to provide a safe and welcoming environment where they can develop confidence, learn new skills and most importantly, have fun. I believe that through childminding I am uniquely able to meet each child's needs. Young children are able to form a secure attachment in a 'home-from-home' setting; and research shows that this formation of secure bonds is extremely important in young children for healthy 'all-round' development. I cannot, and will not try to be a parent to your child but I work hard to develop a positive, loving relationship with each child. I do believe they can benefit a great deal from feeling settled and secure in a loving, family-orientated environment when they cannot be with their own family.

I feel it is very important to recognise and work with each child as an individual - taking into account their needs and abilities and allowing them to 'be themselves'. I work hard to ensure that each child feels that they are valued, and knows that their interests and opinions are important.

I encourage children to explore and develop ideas and skills which come naturally to them, and support them in practising and understanding concepts which they find more difficult; so that they can become confident, independent and self-assured learners.

The role of a Childminder

Childminders are trained professionals who, like nurseries and pre-schools must be Ofsted or agency registered, and deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. As well as caring for children in the Early Years age group (0-5) I also look after primary aged children before and after school. I am registered with Ofsted on the Childcare Register and the Early Years Childcare Register.

I will be fulfilling the role of 'Key Worker', helping children to settle in well, developing a close, secure and positive relationship with them, and ensuring that everything they experience here is tailored to meet their individual needs.

I will also act as their 'Designated Safeguarding Person' and will be working with you to ensure their health, wellbeing and protection.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) - a summary

Schools and early years settings have to follow a structure of learning, development and care for children from birth to five years old. This is called the Early Years Foundation Stage and is a hugely important stage as it helps your child get ready for the transition to school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes.

From when your child is born up until the age of 5, their early years experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs.

All nurseries, pre-schools, schools and childminders registered to care for children under 5 must follow and adhere to a legal document called the Early Years

Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework. This exists to support all professionals working in the EYFS to help your child, and to ensure a consistent approach between different settings.

The Early Years Foundation Stage ensures:

- children learn through play
- providers work closely with parents
- you are kept up to date on your child's progress
- the welfare, learning and all-round development of children with different backgrounds and levels of ability, including those with special educational needs and disabilities

The EYFS identifies seven areas of learning and development.

There are three prime areas:

Communication & language; Physical development; and Personal, social & emotional development

and four specific areas:

Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the world; and Expressive arts and design.

Learning is structured around the 'characteristics of learning'. This recognises that children in the EYFS learn by

- *playing and exploring,*
- *being active;* and through
- *creative and critical thinking*

which takes place both indoors and outside.

Prescribed medication

If your child needs to take medication prescribed by a doctor, please discuss this with me. I will need you to sign a permission form. In some cases a child on antibiotics may be asked not to attend for 48 hours in case they react to the medication and to prevent the spread of an infection to others.

I will ensure that all medication given to me will be stored correctly and safely - in the fridge if necessary; and I will check that it is still within its expiry date.

If your child has a self-held medication - eg an inhaler, please obtain an additional one for me to keep in my home to ensure they always have access to it. If your child has acute allergies and carries/needs an EpiPen, please discuss the matter with me.

I may need additional training to administer these forms of medication.

All medicine given to me to administer must be in its original bottle/ container and not decanted. It must be clearly labelled with your child's name. It must have the manufacturers guidelines on it; and if a prescription medication must include the details from the Doctor/pharmacy as well as clear instructions on dosage and times for administration.

I will record all medication administered and require a signature at the end of each day.

Emergency evacuation procedures

- Sound the alarm (this is a whistle)
- Evacuate the children using the safest and nearest exit available - babies and toddlers will be carried to safety as necessary. (see evacuation route plan)
- Take: 1. Attendance record 2. Emergency Contact details 3. Mobile phone
- Assemble across the road from the house.

If children cannot all be evacuated at the same time, I will leave those taken first with a neighbour or other responsible adult. (If there is no other adult available as a last resort children may be strapped in the car in appropriate seats)

- Contact the emergency services as appropriate
- Contact parents to alert them to what has happened
- Arrange safe place for the children to stay until parents can collect them
- Follow the instructions of the Emergency Services
- Remain outside the building until the Emergency Services have declared it safe to return.

Illness

If your child is ill:

I am happy to care for children with minor coughs and colds but will not care for children who are very unwell, infectious or running a high temperature.

Your child should be well enough to take part in all our usual activities and outings without requiring medication.

I follow Public Health England guidance regarding exclusion periods for childhood illnesses. A copy of this is displayed on my noticeboard. In addition to their recommendations I would ask that for cases of conjunctivitis and headlice children have begun receiving treatment for at least 24 hours before attending in order to minimise the risk of passing these on to other children. There are some illnesses which are highly contagious where I will ask you to keep your child at home even though they are not on the exclusion list (e.g. hand, foot and mouth).

Please note that the exclusion period for diarrhoea and/ or vomiting is 48 hours from the last episode. Please do not bring children who have had **any** sickness or diarrhoea within less than 48 hours, as I will be unable to care for them.

If your child becomes ill in my care:

I will make them as comfortable as possible, isolate them from the other children if necessary and reassure them. I will contact you immediately. (If I cannot contact you I will contact the emergency contacts you have given me.) I will continue to care for your child until you arrive.

If a member of my family is ill:

I will contact you if a member of my household is not well, and inform you of the illness/symptoms. This will allow you to make an informed decision as to whether you wish to bring your child that day or not.

Medication

Non-prescription medication

I will not routinely give out Calpol, Nurofen etc. - if you feel that your child needs then to cope with the day then they should not attend. I am happy to give teething gel etc as needed, but only if you have signed a parental permission form for me to do so.

It is vital that you inform me of any medication you may have given your child before they arrive into my care in case I need to seek medical assistance in the day - I will need to know what medicine they have had, and the dose and time/s given.

Day to day routines and activities

As a childminder working with a small number of children I am in a unique position to be able to regularly take the children out and about in the local community. We visit shops, parks, the library and other local attractions. There are also a number of groups which we will visit, allowing the children the opportunity to experience and make friends in a larger social group.

Below is an example of our regular routines and activities, although these are approached with great flexibility in order to:

- make the most of the weather,
- allow young children to follow their existing routines,
- follow up on interests, conversations and activities the children are particularly interested in
- to make the most of special events and other occasions.

Our Routines



Daily		Weekly	
<small>This is a rough guide to the structure of our day. However, I will not stick rigidly to all of these times, especially if children remain engaged in a particular activity. I always respond flexibly to each child's individual needs. For example, a child may sleep in the morning instead if that is their usual routine.</small>		<small>These are the activities which children have the opportunity to access regularly. There are many additional activities which happen on occasion, and we may have a 'stay at home' day or do an alternate activity if children have been to several similar activities in a single week.</small>	
8.30 - 9.00: School Run		Monday	Stafford Childminding Chums @ Wildwood Community Centre
Morning Activities/Outing, including 10.30: Morning snacktime		Tuesday	Bounce & Rhyme @ Rising Brook library
12.00: Lunch		Wednesday	Chestnuts Childminder Group @ Silkmore Centre
Storytime		Thursday	-
1.00: Quiet Time A range of quiet independent activities, including sleep time for those children who require it.		Friday	Acorns playgroup @ Church Lane
3.05 - 3.35: School Run		We also regularly visit Shugborough, Stafford Castle, Sticks & Stones forest school, Wolseley Wildlife Centre, CatchCorner soft play, local parks and libraries, Cannock Chase, Hollybush garden centre	
Child-choice activities, including 4.00: Afternoon snacktime			

Several of the groups we attend during the week are childminder groups. Again, this allows the children an opportunity to form relationships with other children in a larger group, as well as enabling them to become familiar with and build relationships with other childminders who may assist me during emergencies and times of holidays/ illness.

Learning and development opportunities

I will strive to provide an environment that is be caring, fun and stimulating; implementing principles and practices from the Early Years Foundation Stage. I will provide activities that support the 7 areas of learning. These activities may include:

- Dressing up, role play and pretend play (kitchen, tools etc)
- Books and stories
- Music and singing
- Construction (lego, duplo etc) including woodwork
- Water and sand play
- Art and craft activities
- A range of multi-sensory activities
- Cooking
- Large play equipment (indoor and outdoors)
- Outings and play groups

I believe that outdoor experiences are vital to a child's learning and development, and try to ensure that we spend some time outdoors each day. We play outdoors and do gardening at home, and also visit local outdoor facilities such as Wolseley Wildlife centre, Shugborough Estate and local parks.

I adapt all activities to ensure all children are given opportunities and support to reach their full potential. All children are given equal access to all toys, activities and opportunities and I ensure they are not discriminated against in any way.

Parent Partnership

The EYFS framework emphasises the importance of partnership working between practitioners and a child's parents/carers.

Your family experiences, views and opinions play a large part in your child's learning and development. I would encourage you to share with me any successes, new skills etc. that you notice so that I can build on these with your child, as well as sharing any concerns or problems which I can support you in dealing with.

I will feedback verbally to you each day what we have done, and how your child has been. I will also share information about our day, including menus etc via WhatsApp.

For babies, if requested I can also complete a simple diary each day to let you know what has been happening through the day.

In order to avoid children becoming lost while we are out I will take the following precautions:

- Ensuring the children hold my hand or the pushchair whilst we are out, or using reins or wrist-straps as appropriate
 - Avoid going to places that are overcrowded
 - Use high visibility vests/caps in large or open outdoor areas in order to locate children easily
 - I talk to children about the dangers of wandering off and talking to strangers
- I have an identified lost child procedure which I will follow should a child become lost while we are out.

Dealing with an accident/ incident

The safety of your child is paramount and I will take every measure I can to protect your child from harm. I will ensure that my paediatric first aid qualification is up to date, and that the first aid kit is fully stocked and accessible at all times. If something did happen I will comfort the child and reassure them; and carry out any first aid procedures that are necessary as I have been trained to do.

If the incident is a minor one I will inform you at the end of the day on collection.

If the incident is serious, then as soon as the child is settled and safe I will contact you to inform you of the accident and if necessary to ask you to return to care for your child; or call an ambulance and ask you to meet me at the hospital.

If another child is injured and needs medical treatment I may feel it is best to leave your child with another childminder or a responsible adult who is familiar to the child. I will make every effort to inform you before doing this and give you the option of collecting your child instead.

After every accident, I will complete an accident/incident report to add to your child's records, ask you to sign the report and provide you with a copy.

If the incident requires any medical treatment then I will:

- Inform Ofsted
- Inform my Insurance Company
- Contact Staffordshire County Council Early Years & Childcare team for additional advice/support.

It is important that you keep me informed regarding your child's condition following an accident and tell me if you have sought medical advice in order that I may report it to the relevant people.

Risk Assessment

I want your child to be safe and happy while in my care.

At home

I will check the home and garden every morning before the children arrive to ensure that it is a safe environment for the children to play in.

Activities will be planned and organised. I will plan for the unique needs of each child depending on their age and stage of development, allowing children the freedom to play and explore, develop concepts and learn how to predict and avoid dangerous situations.

All the activities we engage in will have some element of risk, and I will endeavour to assess and manage these risks in order to prevent accidents and injuries.

However, it is also important to remember that learning about risk and learning to identify and manage risks is an important part of learning and development.

Therefore, although I will ensure that all risks are managed and children are safe, this does not mean that all risk will be eliminated from activities. I may make risk-to-benefit assessments/ judgements in order that children can experience risk taking in a controlled situation, appropriate to their age and stage of development.

On outings

Each outing undertaken is planned in advance to ensure the safety and welfare of all children involved.

I ensure that I take with me everything I may need including First Aid Kit, nappies and changing bag or travel potty (if required) spare clothes, mobile phone, individual drinks and a healthy snack.

I will carry emergency contact details with me at all times in case I should need them. These will include the child's name, address and date of birth and contact details for parents. These details will also be given to my husband, Dean in case of an emergency which leaves me incapacitated. They will be stored confidentially for emergency use only.

I will ensure that I have the necessary equipment and resources to keep your child safe. These include car seats for all children up to 1.35m tall, pushchairs and harnesses. In all trips in the car I will ensure each child is securely strapped into their car seat and that the maximum number of passengers for the car is never exceeded. I will ensure that the car is properly maintained with a current MOT certificate, Tax and Insurance.

Observation and Assessment

I will keep some written observations, along with pictures and 'work' that your child has produced in a their personal 'Learning Journey' file. This file supports me in identifying their interests and stages of development so that I can make simple plans to help make your child's learning experiences relevant, challenging, and enjoyable. It is also another way I can regularly share their learning & development with you. I will complete the EYFS progress check when they are 2 ***Please let me know when you are invited to their health visitor 2 year check.***

Behaviour Management

In order to provide positive and safe experiences for all I will set reasonable and appropriate limits for all children in my care. Behaviour will be encouraged and supported through the positive reinforcement strategies I use, which will include:

- being a good role model and setting an example of appropriate behaviour
- encouraging self-discipline and respect for others;
- discussing expectations with the children and giving them explanations;
- being consistent with rules and expectations;
- giving praise and attention; and promoting good self-esteem

Children will be asked to follow these simple rules

- Good listening - Good sharing - Look after everyone - Look after our things

Where necessary I will use strategies such as

- distraction or 'ignoring'
- a clear, consistent 'No'
- a warning that there may be a consequence to the behaviour, such as the removal of a toy or the end of an activity
- as a last resort a short, supervised 'time out' may be used

Corporal punishment will **never** be used in any form

How you can help:

Please pass on anything which will help me care for your child appropriately.

You **must** let me know if:

- your child has been poorly
- you have given your child any medication (even if you do not need me to give another dose)
- Your child has begun to exhibit new behaviours which may put themselves or others in danger e.g. biting; hair pulling, running away from you

Safeguarding Policy

I have a comprehensive '***Safeguarding policy***' which is displayed on my notice board and available on the 'Parent Information Page' of my website www.nurturedstepchildcare.com. New parents will receive a paper copy of this before their contract starts. An update will be emailed out every September. If you have any questions about the contents of this policy please speak to me.

Information and records

In order to provide a quality childcare service and comply with legislation, I will need to request, hold and use information about your child and family. This will be done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Details of the information required is contained within the Privacy Notice, which you will be asked to sign when your child begins attending. I am registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

Subject access - Parents/carers and those with parental responsibility have the right to inspect records about their child at any time. Requests can be made verbally. You will be asked to regularly check that the data I hold is correct and update it where necessary.

Storage - All paper-based records about children and their families will be kept in a locked filing box. If I keep records relating to individual children in a digital format, such as on my computer or smartphone, I will obtain parents permission. Devices will be password protected to prevent other people accessing any information.

Information sharing - I am expected to share information with other childcare providers if your child also attends another setting. I am also required to share information with Staffordshire County Council in regards to the Childcare and Early Years Entitlement.

In some cases I may need to share information without parents consent - if there is a child protection concern, criminal or tax investigations, health and safety reports etc.

Ofsted may require access to my records at any time.

Record Keeping - I record all accidents and injuries in a medication folder. I will notify my insurance company of any accidents which may result in an

insurance claim, and provide relevant information. I will inform Ofsted, the local Safeguarding Childrens Board and the Health and Safety Executive of any significant injuries accidents or death as soon as possible.

I will record all significant incidents in an incident file and will share these with parents so that together we can resolve any issues. I will only share information without your prior permission if it is in the a childs best interests to do so. Eg in a medical emergency with medical professionals.

If I am worried about a childs welfare I have a duty of care to follow Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures and make a referral. Where possible I will discuss this with you beforehand.

Safe disposal of data - I am required by law to keep some data for some time after a child has left the setting. When no longer required any data is disposed of appropriately and securely.

Suspected breach - In the event of a suspected breach I will investigate and take action promptly. If data has been accessed unlawfully I will inform the relevant parties immediately and report to the ICO within 72 hours.

Drop off and Collection, including non-collection

Please try to drop off and collect your child at the agreed times. If this is not possible please let me know in advance.

If your child will not be collected by the usual named people please let me know in advance. If the person collecting is not known to me we will need to arrange a password in order for them to collect.

Procedure if a child is not collected

If you are running late to collect your child please contact me before your collection time.

If a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the agreed collection time and I have not been contacted with an explanation, I will try calling the parents' contact numbers.

After a further 15 minutes I will try the emergency contact numbers provided on your contract. I will continue to try the parents' contact numbers and emergency numbers.

If I have heard nothing after **60 minutes** from the original agreed collection time, I have a duty to inform the local authority duty social worker.

I may charge an additional fee for late collection.