

PRE-KINDERGARTEN FAMILY HANDBOOK 2022-2023



35812 N. 7th St.

Phoenix, AZ 85086

Phone: 623-465-4910

Fax: 623-587-8514

www.steppingstonesacademy.org

MUSTANG STRONG!

Si usted está en necesidad de un intérprete para revisar el manual, por favor póngase en contacto con Dedre Stewart-Alliger al 623-465-4910.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - PARENT COPY	3
WELCOME TO STEPPING STONES ACADEMY PRE-K	4
<i>WHOSE CHILDREN?</i>	4
MISSION STATEMENT	4
BEGINNING THE SCHOOL YEAR	5
Preparing for the First Day of School	5
First Day of School	5
Reminders	5
ATTENDANCE POLICY AND TUITION	6-7
Class Days and Times	6
Tuition Fees	6
Payment Dates	6
Arrival and Departure Times	6
Children Arriving Late or Leaving Early	6
Children Absent from Class	7
Termination of Enrollment	7
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM	7-8
Cognitive Skills	7
Language Skills	7
Motor Skills	8
Social and Emotional Skills	8
Scope and Sequence	8
Character Counts Program	8
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	9-14
Arrival and Departure Procedures	9
Classroom Rules	9
Confidentiality of Children’s School Records	10
Custody of Children	10
Damage to School Property	10
Drug Free and Tobacco Free Campus	11
Enrollment in Stepping Stones Academy Kindergarten Program	11
Field Trips	11
Graduation Ceremony	11
Insurance	11

Licensing and Inspection	11
Lost and Found Area	11
Lunch, Snack, and Water Bottles	11
Non-Discrimination Policy	12
Parties and Birthday Treats	12
Personal Items and Items Not Allowed at School	12
Pets at School	13
Playground Rules	13
School Pictures	13
School Uniform Policy	13
Transportation Services	13
Visiting the Classroom	13
Weapons at School	14
Zero Tolerance Policy	14
SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY	14-16
General Guidelines	14
Pants, Shorts, Skirts	15
Shirts – Polo Style Shirts and T-Shirts	15
Sweatshirts	15
Shoes and Footwear	16
Outdoor Wear – Jackets, Coats, Sweaters	16
Headwear	16
Hair Color and Hair Styles	16
Jewelry and Accessories	16
HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES	16-18
Emergency Card	17
Evacuation and Lock-Down Policies	17
Illnesses and Injuries	17
Immunizations	17
Medications	18
Pesticide Application	18
Reporting Child Abuse	18
Safe Learning Environment	18

Revised July, 2022

PRE-K HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

PARENT COPY – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Student Name: _____

I acknowledge the following:

- I have received a copy of the Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K Family Handbook.
- I have been provided the opportunity to review the Pre-K Handbook and review it with my child.
- This Handbook contains important information about my child's rights and responsibilities as a student at Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K.
- Included in this Handbook is information about Stepping Stones Academy's expectations for student conduct and student discipline, including the circumstances in which Stepping Stones Academy may terminate enrollment of a student in its Pre-K program.
- This Handbook is available on Stepping Stones Academy's website, which may be found at www.steppingstonesacademy.org.
- I may schedule an appointment with the administrator if I have questions about the information contained in this Handbook.

WELCOME TO STEPPING STONES ACADEMY PRE-K!

Parent/Guardian Name Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Printed Name



WELCOME TO STEPPING STONES ACADEMY PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Dear Pre-K Families:

Welcome to Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K and your child’s beginning on this educational adventure of learning! We know finding the best Pre-K program for your child is important, and we are happy you selected Stepping Stones Academy! It is our goal to provide your child with a successful year in a safe and friendly learning environment, and we look forward to working with you to make this happen.

The Pre-K program prepares your child for Kindergarten by focusing on development in the four areas of cognitive skills, social and emotional skills, language skills, and motor skills. The program follows a curriculum applying what research has discovered -- children learn best by doing. With the help of teachers and parents, children participate in fun and interesting educational activities, make new friends, discover talents, and learn valuable life-long skills.

As school leaders we are delighted to have you as part of the Stepping Stones Academy community! We invite you to stop by our offices, send an e-mail to ddsa@ssa.school or tina@ssa.school, give us a call (623-465-4910), or check out the school’s web site at www.steppingstonesacademy.org. Thank you for joining us on this journey and welcome to the Stepping Stones Academy community.

Ms. Stewart-Alliger and Mrs. Panagopoulos
Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K Administrators

WHOSE CHILDREN?

“Whose children are these?” we asked one day seeing little children out to play.
“Mine,” said the parent with a tender smile, “Mine to keep for a little while.
To bathe their hands and comb their hair; to tell them what they are to wear.
To prepare for them their daily food; to train them that they may always be good.”

“Whose children are these?” we asked again as the door opened and someone came.
“Mine,” said the teacher with the same tender smile, “Mine to keep just a little while.
To teach them how to be gentle and kind; to train and direct their curious minds.
To help them live by every rule and do the most they can in school.”

“Whose children are these?” we asked once more just as the little children came through the door.
“Ours,” said the parent and teacher as they smiled, and each one took the hand of a child.
“Ours to love and train together. Ours this wonderful task forever.”



Author Unknown

MISSION STATEMENT

We envision an environment that provides academic, social, and personal skills children need to become confident and responsible citizens. We believe learning should be based on individualized, relevant activities and frequent assessment to monitor student progress and achievement. We promote high student expectations with consideration and respect for all individuals; thereby, developing life-long learners and productive members of society.

BEGINNING THE SCHOOL YEAR

The Pre-K program is designed as a Kindergarten Readiness class and emphasizes development in cognitive, language, motor, and social and emotional skills. Children participate in whole-group lessons, small group projects, and learning centers. The activities provide a multitude of educational experiences, accentuate the children's different learning styles, and better prepare the children for Kindergarten.

PREPARING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Pencils, crayons, and a backpack are just a few of the items each child needs for school! To help children be fully prepared, families are asked to review the following information and contact the School Office (623-465-4910) or Stepping Stones Academy's administrators, Ms. Stewart-Alliger (ddsa@ssa.school) or Mrs. Panagopoulos (tina@ssa.school), with questions.

- 1. School Supplies** – A school supply list is available from the School Office and on the school's web site (www.stepsstonesacademy.org). Items are to be marked in black, permanent marker with the child's first and last name.
- 2. School Uniform** – Children are to follow the school's uniform policy. If a child comes to school not in uniform, the parents are contacted so they may bring the child a change of clothes.
- 3. Lunch** – Children may bring lunch from home or purchase the school-catered lunch. Information about the lunch program is sent home at the beginning of the year. It is recommended an insulated lunch bag be used for food brought from home. Soda/Pop, candy, and gum are not allowed for lunch. (Note – Children attending half day Pre-K do not need lunch.)
- 4. Snacks** – Each day children are to bring two healthy snacks – one for morning and one for afternoon. Examples of healthy snacks are crackers, apple slices, and pretzels. Soda/Pop, candy, and gum are not allowed as snacks items.
- 5. Water Bottle** – Children are to bring a leak-proof, non-breakable water bottle for use during the day. The water bottle is to be marked in black, permanent marker with the child's first and last name. A water fountain is also available and may be used for a drink.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

The first day of school is here and it is time to officially begin the journey on this educational adventure. This may be an emotional time for both children and families but by working together – child, parent, teacher, administrator – the transition from home to school becomes an easier and positive experience for everyone. During the first day of class parents are invited to stay for the first fifteen minutes and help their children meet the teacher along with other Pre-K children. Be assured after parents and children say, "good-bye," the outstanding and highly qualified Pre-K teachers are taking excellent care of each child.

REMINDERS

1. Children are to wear school uniform every day to school. On Fridays children may wear Stepping Stones Academy t-shirts.
2. Each day children need a water bottle, lunch, and two healthy snacks. Soda/Pop, candy, and gum are not allowed. (Note – Children attending Pre-K for half day do not need lunch.)
3. Upon arrival parents are asked to park in the parking area, escort their children inside of the classroom, and sign-in their child with first and last names. At the end of class parents park in the parking area, walk to the classroom, sign-out their child, and escort their child to the vehicle. Children are not allowed to walk in the parking area without adult supervision.
4. Children may only leave with people listed in the Registration Packet or people listed on the Emergency Card. Parents are reminded to keep these names updated throughout the year. To update names parents are asked to contact the School Office.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND TUITION

The Pre-K class is designed to prepare the children for Kindergarten --- academically, socially, physically, emotionally --- which is one reason the program emphasizes and develops the cognitive, language, motor, and social and emotional skills. These skills are re-enforced with interactive class lessons and fun experiences where children practice what they learn. To best operate the program families are asked to review the following information about class days, tuition, and attendance. This allows everyone to then focus on the most important person -- the child. Parents are invited to contact the School Office (623-465-4910) or Stepping Stones Academy's administrators, Ms. Stewart-Alliger (ddsa@ssa.school) or Mrs. Panagopoulos (tina@ssa.school), with questions.

CLASS DAYS AND TIMES

The full day Pre-K class meets five days a week, Monday - Friday, except on designated holidays and vacation days. Class time is from 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. On a few days children are dismissed at 11:30 a.m. due to early dismissal days. Class time on early dismissal days is from 8:00-11:30 a.m.

The half day Pre-K class meets five days a week, Monday - Friday, except on designated holidays and vacation days. Class time is from 8:00-11:30 a.m.

TUITION FEES

Tuition is \$700.00 per month for the full day program and \$500.00 per month for the half day program. There is also a one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 which is paid at the time of enrolling the child in the Pre-K class.

Payment is made monthly in the School Office with cash, check, debit/credit card, or Venmo. All checks are made payable to Stepping Stones Academy. Upon receiving payment, parents are issued a receipt.

Tuition is not pro-rated for months with vacation days. Monthly rates are determined by the annual cost of the program divided evenly between the ten months of classes. Families are not credited days due to the child's absences (ie: illness, family vacation) and money is not refunded if a child withdraws before the end of the month or if a child is asked to leave the program.

PAYMENT DATES

At the beginning of each year parents are given a Fees and Payment Schedule which includes the tuition payment dates for each month. Additional copies of this form are available in the School Office. Payments are due by the first of each month unless the first of the month is on a week-end or holiday. The payment is then due on the first school day following the week-end or holiday.

Late payments result in children unable to attend class until the payment is made in full. The child may also forfeit the spot in the Pre-K class until payment is made in full. For returned checks, there is a \$25.00 fee. The school may request payment be made with cash for returned checks or repeated incidences of returned checks.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

Classes begin and end promptly. Families are asked to assist by dropping-off and picking-up children on time. Class time for full day is 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and class time for half day is 8:00-11:30 a.m. Upon arriving at school children are to report to the Pre-K classroom. Children are to be picked no later than ten minutes after the end of class. If parents are more than ten minutes late an additional fee is charged. Parents are asked to contact the School Office if they are running late so the needed supervision arrangements may be made.

CHILDREN ARRIVING LATE OR LEAVING EARLY

Arriving to school on time and attending the entire session allows children to benefit the most from class, but there may be times when children arrive late or need to leave early. During these times parents are asked to contact the School Office and the School Office will contact the classroom teacher.

CHILDREN ABSENT FROM CLASS

When children are absent from school parents are asked contact the School Office by 8:15 a.m. on the day of the absent. For planned absences and/or extended absences parents are to notify the School Office about the absences as soon as the absence dates are known. Activities and projects may be sent home to complete during the child's absence, so the child continues to practice the skills taught in class.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to discontinue a child's enrollment. This decision is based on the best interest of the child, other children in the class, and the well-being of everyone related with the program. Every effort is made to correct the situation before a final decision is made; however, the school administrators maintain the right to end the enrollment of a child at any time. If a child is requested to permanently leave the program, tuition money is not refunded. Termination of enrollment may be the result of any of the following situations:

- *Abuse of other children, staff, or property by the child or parent
- *Continued violation of Stepping Stones Academy policies by the child or parent
- *Disruptive or dangerous behavior by the child or parent
- *Non-payment of tuition.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Stepping Stones Academy knows young children learn best by doing and children need time to explore, discover, and investigate. The Pre-K program offers children opportunities to do all of these things through intriguing hands-on experiences, captivating lessons, and innovative activities. Children not only increase social skills, practice problem-solving, and build self-confidence, but also learn academic skills needed for Kindergarten. The Pre-K program is designed as a Kindergarten Readiness class and emphasizes four developmental areas:

1. Cognitive Skills
2. Language Skills
3. Motor Skills
4. Social and Emotional Skills.

Each of these areas is taught, practiced, and reviewed through class lessons, art projects, learning centers, stories, and playtime. The activities are completed in a supportive and safe class environment, where children learn valuable concepts, practice new skills, ask inquisitive questions, and share innovative ideas.

COGNITIVE SKILLS

Sorting blocks by colors, shapes, and sizes ... Reciting the days of the week ... Illustrating pictures with crayons and paint ... Naming the months of the year ... Identifying beginning sounds in words ... Learning phone numbers and addresses ... Writing numbers, letters of the alphabet, and names using lined paper

Each day in Pre-K children participate in interactive lessons that teach fundamental skills needed for reading and writing. Children are challenged to apply imagination and creativity to complete each task. After participating in all of the fun-filled educational activities, children leave class each day anxious to return the next class day.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Identifying objects by correct names ... Recognizing letters of the alphabet ... Learning new words and meanings ... Listening to stories and answering questions ... Telling stories with pictures ... Identifying main characters in stories ... Retelling stories in sequence

Children learn these skills as they are taught in specific class lessons as well as within the context of other lessons. The skills are practiced in whole-class circle time, small group activities, learning centers, story time, and one-on-one interactions with the teacher. By the end of the year, children are well-prepared to enter Kindergarten.

MOTOR SKILLS

*Painting pictures ... Jumping on one leg ... Putting together puzzles ... Playing tag ...
Coloring ... Walking in a straight line ... Playing musical chairs ... Playing catch ...
Building a tower with blocks ... Skipping ... Cutting out squares and circles*

Activities such as these provide children with opportunities to develop and improve gross motor and fine motor skills. Children practice gross motor skills by swinging, running at recess, and kicking the ball back and forth with classmates. Children increase fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination with activities such as cutting out shapes, tracing letters and numbers, and playing with blocks. Practicing these skills in this non-threatening environment allows children to be more prepared to enter Kindergarten.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

*Saying "please" and "thank you" ... Showing kindness to classmates ... Following class rules ...
Expressing feelings with words ... Playing appropriately with friends ... Waiting
patiently for a turn to talk ... Helping others ... Following directions*

This is what people see and hear in the Pre-K classroom. They feel the warm and comfortable environment and observe the children actively involved in learning. They watch the children gain confidence as they participate in interesting activities in this encouraging classroom. These experiences help lead children successfully into Kindergarten, so children are provided with many opportunities to practice positive peer relations, increase communication skills, and interact appropriately with others.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

In accordance with Arizona rules and regulations, Stepping Stones Academy implements the following types of activities within the classroom to help meet the children's needs in each of the developmental areas.

Note - This list is an example of activities. It is not designed to be an all-inclusive list of activities.

Language Development

Follow directions
Dictate stories
Sing songs

Cognitive Development

Recognize and say full name
Solve problems
Imitate movement

Motor Development

Hop on one foot
Run and jump
Throw and catch

Creative Expression

Role-play
Move to music
Make models

Emotional Development

Use words to describe feelings
Show concern for others
Share with classmates

Social Development

Practice taking turns
Experience collaborative play
Participate in group activities

Mathematics

Distinguish shapes
Arrange patterns
Count, sort, and match objects

Science

Put objects together
Observe positions of objects
Use senses to identify objects

Social Studies

Explain roles in a family
Describe careers in community
Identify city, state, and country

CHARACTER COUNTS PROGRAM

The Pre-K curriculum includes the nationally-recognized Character Counts program. In this program children learn, practice, and apply the six character traits of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

*** Trustworthiness - Children are to be trustworthy.**

Do not lie, cheat, or steal

Be honest and tell the truth

Be reliable

Do the right thing

Build a good reputation

Support family, friends, and country

*** Respect - Children are to act respectful towards themselves and others.**

Do not hit or hurt anyone

Do not use bad language

Use good manners

Follow the Golden Rule

Consider the feelings of others

Deal peacefully with disagreements

***Responsibility - Children are to act responsibly and accept responsibility for actions.**

*Give 100% effort
Do not blame others*

*Use self-control
Think before acting*

*Do what is supposed to be done
Be accountable for your choices*

***Fairness - Children are to treat others fairly.**

*Play by the rules
Listen to others*

*Treat everyone equally
Be open-minded*

*Take turns and share
Do not take advantage of others*

***Caring - Children are to be caring towards themselves and others.**

*Express gratitude
Help people in need*

*Forgive others
Be kind*

*Be tolerant of differences
Express gratitude*

***Citizenship - Children are to be good citizens.**

*Cooperate with others
Obey laws and rules*

*Respect authority
Be a good neighbor*

*Protect the environment
Help make the community better*

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Children and their families encounter many wonderful and exciting adventures on their educational adventure at Stepping Stones Academy! To help provide the best program and safest experiences, Stepping Stones Academy asks families and children to abide by the following policies and procedures.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Parents are responsible for providing transportation for their children to and from school. To ensure safety in the parking area and on campus, Stepping Stones Academy enforces the following policies.

1. During the school day the speed limit on 7th Street in front of Stepping Stones Academy is 15 m.p.h. Flashing lights and roll-out signs are posted along 7th Street during school hours. At no time are vehicles allowed to park along 7th Street. This includes during non-school hours.
2. Drivers are to be cautious at all times when driving on campus. Drivers are not to exceed the speed of 5 m.p.h. on school grounds.
3. Stepping Stones Academy has two driveways. The north driveway is to enter campus and is marked with an Enter sign. The south driveway is to exit campus and is marked with an Exit sign.
4. When dropping-off and picking-up children parents are to park in one of the parking spaces in the parking lot. Parents may not park in the fire lane or along 7th Street. Only vehicles with designated handicapped tags may park in the handicapped parking spaces.
5. When crossing to and from the parking area and sidewalk individuals are to use the crosswalk and follow the directions of the crossing guard and staff members.
6. When dropping-off children parents are to park in the parking area, walk their child to class, and sign-in the child at the designated location. When picking-up children parents are to park in the parking area, walk to the classroom, sign-out their child from class, and escort their child to the vehicle.
7. Stepping Stones Academy may not release a child to anyone except parents, people listed on the registration form, and/or people listed on the emergency card. Anyone other than parents must show identification before leaving with a child. If a child is to ride home with someone not listed on the registration form or emergency card, parents must provide written permission for the child to leave with the individual. Verbal authorization is not acceptable.

CLASSROOM RULES

The Pre-K program follows classroom rules to help children learn and practice acceptable and appropriate behaviors. The six basic rules for the classroom are:

1. Watching Eyes
2. Listening Ears
3. Friendly Mouth
4. Friendly Hands
5. Friendly Feet
6. Treat Others as You Wish to be Treated

These behaviors are taught and reinforced in a positive and educational manner. Children are continually reminded of the correct behaviors and provided with opportunities to make positive decisions. Praise, one-on-one talks, teaching by example, re-direction to another activity, and time-outs are discipline methods utilized in the classroom. Time-outs last only a few minutes, and the teacher always has the child in full view. Physical punishment is never used in the classroom. If children need repeated reminders about appropriate behavior, the teacher contacts the parents.

If the teacher deems a child's behavior warrants a visit with the administrator, the child is escorted to the School Office and meets with the administrator. When a child meets with the administrator the parents are contacted. The parents may be requested to attend a meeting or may need to immediately pick-up the child from school. Further disciplinary action may follow. If a child continually chooses to not follow the rules, Stepping Stones Academy may terminate the enrollment of the child in the Pre-K program. If a child is requested to permanently leave the program, tuition money is not refunded.

Frequent communication between the teacher and parents is extremely important. This provides children with a more consistent routine, and the teacher and parent are both aware of how the child is doing. If changes occur in a child's life, parents are asked to inform the teacher. These changes, no matter how insignificant to adults, often affect a child in school. When the teacher is aware of these changes, she is better able to work with the child.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHILDREN'S SCHOOL RECORDS

Private information about children and their families is kept confidential. Records may be reviewed by regulatory agencies for information pertinent to a child's safety and well-being. Otherwise, all records are confidential and monitored by the administrator.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN

In cases where custody or visitation orders involve the school, a copy of the court order must be on file in the School Office. If court papers are not on file, equal rights to the child and information relating to the child are granted to both parents. This policy is in accordance with the laws governing the state of AZ.

DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY

The care of Stepping Stones Academy is the responsibility of everyone. Damage to the campus is taken seriously and proper authorities are involved as needed. Parents are responsible for any and all damage their child causes to school property and/or materials belonging to the school. The administrator determines the consequences and/or retribution for damages.

DRUG FREE AND TOBACCO FREE CAMPUS

Stepping Stones Academy is a drug free and tobacco free campus. The possession or use of alcohol, illegal drugs, and/or tobacco products, including vaping products, and/or paraphernalia related to these items on Stepping Stones property is strictly prohibited. No person shall possess or engage in the use of marijuana, including medical marijuana, on the property of Stepping Stones Academy. This policy includes in vehicles when dropping-off or picking-up students, at school activities, or at off-campus school-sponsored events. This policy is in accordance with the Arizona state law and applies to all individuals on school property and attending on and off campus school activities.

ENROLLMENT IN STEPPING STONES ACADEMY KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

For children interested in attending Kindergarten at Stepping Stones Academy, participation in the Pre-K program does not guarantee enrollment in Kindergarten. The Pre-K program is a private operation and is not governed by the same entity as the Stepping Stones Academy charter school (K-8th grades). The Arizona Department of Education has rules for charter school enrollment and Stepping Stones Academy is required by law to adhere to these rules. If parents are interested in enrolling in Stepping Stones Academy Kindergarten class, the Pre-K teachers, Office staff, and/or school administrators will happily assist with this process; however, there is no guarantee for placement in the class. Questions about the enrollment process may be directed to the School Office or school administrators.

FIELD TRIPS

The Pre-K class participates in field trips located on Stepping Stones Academy campus. Children walk for all field trips, such as to the campus Library, Gym, and Multi-Purpose building. Field trips do not include any form of vehicle transportation. Permission forms are sent home prior to field trips and require a parent signature. Verbal authorization is not acceptable.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

Stepping Stones Academy hosts a graduation ceremony at the end of the year for children in the Pre-K class who are going into Kindergarten the following year. During the ceremony, the children present a short program, recognize their parents, and receive their Pre-K diplomas. After the ceremony, a reception is held for the graduates and their guests. All parents, grandparents, siblings, and other relatives and friends are invited to attend this special event and celebrate the Pre-K graduates.

INSURANCE

Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K has liability insurance coverage. Parents are responsible for other insurance coverage, such as medical costs for their child due to an injury. In an emergency, Stepping Stones Academy may call the local medical authorities. Expenses for these services are the responsibility of the parents.

LICENSING AND INSPECTION

The Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K is licensed and regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services (DPS). All inspection reports are available in the School Office.

Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)
150 N. 18th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85007

www.azdhs.gov
Phone 602-542-1025
Fax 602-542-0883

LOST AND FOUND AREA

At times items are misplaced in the classroom. Items found labeled with the child's name are returned to the child or parent. All items found without a name are placed in the Lost and Found area in the classroom. Unclaimed articles are donated to a local charity at the end of each quarter. Parents are asked to report the loss of any item to the teacher immediately. Stepping Stones Academy is not responsible for items lost or damaged at school.

LUNCH, SNACK, AND WATER BOTTLES

Children have lunch and two snack times each day. It is important for children to eat healthy and nutritional snacks and lunch in order to have plenty of energy for day's activities. Though the children simply see this as a time to eat, the teacher sees this as a time to teach and reinforce proper manners and appropriate and positive social skills.

It is suggested children bring an insulated lunch bag for lunch and snacks. Lunch containers should include the child's first and last name written in black, permanent marker. For health and safety reasons, children are not allowed to share food or beverages with one another and food left in the classroom is thrown away at the end of each day.

Lunch – Children bring lunch from home or purchase the school-catered lunch. Lunch items not allowed are pop/soda, candy, and gum. Lunch is not eaten at school on early dismissal days.
(Note – Children attending half day Pre-K do not eat lunch at school.)

Snacks – There are two snack times during the day – morning and afternoon. Children need to bring a healthy snack, such as a sandwich or apple slices. Items not allowed are pop/soda, candy, and gum.

Water Bottles – Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle. Water bottles may contain only plain water and must be leak-proof in non-breakable containers. A water fountain is located on the outside of the Pre-K building, which children may also use with supervision from the teacher.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K welcomes enrollment from all children who are three or four years old on or before August 31st. Children are enrolled on a first come basis. Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K does not discriminate on the basis of gender, religion, national origin, ethnic background, disabling condition, or proficiency in the English language.

Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K is a privately funded program. The school does not provide services as defined under the federal special education rules and regulations, which includes evaluations to determine children's eligibility for special education services. Stepping Stones Academy Pre-K reserves the right to refuse enrollment to children with behaviors found to be dangerous or unsafe to others.

PARTIES AND BIRTHDAY TREATS

Class Parties - Class parties are held during the year. Before party day information about the party is sent home. The teacher may ask for parent assistance in helping at the parties or providing refreshments. Stepping Stones Academy requests pop/soda and gum not be served at parties.

Birthday Treats - Children are invited to bring birthday treats on or near their special day. Children with a summer birthday may bring treats during the school year if they wish. Before bringing treats to school parents are asked to contact the teacher and schedule a time that works best in the class schedule. Children are to bring birthday treats for everyone in the class.

Private Parties Not Hosted by Stepping Stones Academy - During the year there may be a time when a family hosts a private party, such as a birthday party, and wishes to invite Pre-K classmates. Stepping Stones Academy, including the classroom teacher, is not allowed to provide personal information about other children, such as names of parents or addresses. In order to help maintain the school's friendly and positive environment, Stepping Stones Academy abides by the specific policies for distribution of party invitations for private parties. Invitations to private parties may be handed-out at school if all of the children in the class receive invitations. If all of the children do not receive invitations, then party invitations may not be distributed on campus. If all of the children receive invitations, the invitations are given to the teacher to distribute. To avoid disrupting class, children may not distribute party invitations during class.

PERSONAL ITEMS AND ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL

At times during the year the teacher may invite children to bring items from home to use with class activities. Other than these times children are not to bring personal items to school. If a child has personal items at school without permission the teacher removes the item from the child's possession and returns the item to the parent at departure time. Stepping Stones Academy is not responsible for the damage or loss of children's personal items. Children are not allowed at any time to bring real or fake items to school that are considered unsafe, dangerous, and/or illegal.

Items considered to be unsafe and/or disruptive are not allowed in class or on school grounds at any time. If children have one of these items at school, the item is confiscated, turned-in to the administrator, and parents are notified. Parents may pick-up the item from the School Office. The item will not be sent home with the child. Illegal items or items representing or simulating illegal items are not allowed on campus by children or adults. If these types of items are found on campus, the items are confiscated, turned-in to the school administrator, and appropriate action is taken, including the involvement of law enforcement officials if necessary. Items include, but are not limited to:

1. Items Displaying Any Type of Pornography (ie: pictures, magazines)
2. Fake/Simulated and/or Real/Authentic Weapons, Drugs, Tobacco and Vaping, Alcohol, or Products Associated with these Materials (ie: paper gun or sword, squirt gun, pocket knife, cough drops, aspirin, prescription medication)
3. Fake and/or Simulated and/or Real/Authentic Firecrackers, Lighters, Other Explosives, or Products Associated with These Materials (ie: firecrackers, matches, sparklers)

PETS AT SCHOOL

For the safety of the students, pets and other animals may not be brought to school. Pets are not to be removed from vehicles while on campus, including during arrival and departure times.

This policy does not apply to service animals (i.e. dog, miniature horse). Stepping Stones Academy does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities who use service animals if the work or tasks performed by the service animal are directly related to the individual's disability. Individuals with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by their service animal in all areas of Stepping Stones Academy where activities or other people are allowed. A service animal shall be under the control of its handler and have a harness, leash, or other tether. The owner of the service animal is liable for any harm or injury caused by the animal to students, staff, visitors, and/or school property. Stepping Stones Academy is not responsible for the training, feeding, or grooming of any service animal and the administrator must approve any person who is authorized by the owner of the service animal to assist in care and supervision of the service animal while on school property or attending school-sponsored events.

A request for an individual with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal must be submitted to the administrator at least three (3) days prior to bringing the service animal to school or a school-sponsored event. Request Forms are available by contacting the School Office. Service dog requests must provide proof of the following vaccinations: DHLPPC (distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza, parvovirus, coronavirus), bordetella, and rabies. Miniature horse requests must provide proof of the following vaccinations: Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins Test), rabies, encephalomyelitis, tetanus, rhinopneumonitis, influenza, and strangles. All service animals must be spayed or neutered, treated for and kept free of fleas and ticks, and kept groomed to avoid shedding and dander. Owners of the service animals are liable for any harm or injury caused by the animal to students, staff members, visitors, and/or property.

PLAYGROUND RULES

The Pre-K playground is located on the west side of the Pre-K building and is separated from the rest of campus with a fence. The playground area includes all kinds of entertaining and stimulating play equipment such as swing set, slide, basketball hoop, playhouse, sand area, and lots of room to run and play. To ensure the children stay safe while having fun playing, the teacher supervises the children when they are on the playground and enforces the rules. Children choosing to not follow the rules receive consequences, such as a verbal warning, time-out from the activity, or the loss of a class privilege.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Stepping Stones Academy contracts with a professional photography company for student portraits. Families have the option of purchasing picture packages. Individuals, excluding staff members using photographs for educational purposes, are not allowed to videotape or photograph students, staff members, or school grounds without prior permission from the administrator.

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

Children are to wear the school uniform each school day. If children attend school not wearing school uniform parents are contacted and requested to deliver uniform clothing to the School Office so the child may change into uniform attire. Children may not remain in class if not dressed in school uniform. Guidelines explaining the uniform policy are included in the section, "School Uniform Policy"

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Stepping Stones Academy does not provide transportation services for children. Parents are responsible for dropping off and picking up their children.

VISITING THE CLASSROOM

Stepping Stones Academy invites parents to visit the classroom. Parents will see children participating in lessons children describe as exciting and fun, and the teacher describes as important to this age for learning cognitive, language, motor, and social and emotional skills. For the safety of everyone, Stepping Stones

Academy enforces the following policies for visitors in the Pre-K classroom:

1. Individuals wishing to visit the Pre-K classroom are to schedule with the teacher a specific date and time to visit. This helps minimize the disruption of the classroom routine and avoids having too many visitors on one day. All visitors must be 21 years or older.
2. Before going to the classroom visitors are to first stop in the School Office to sign-in and put on the Stepping Stones Academy name tag. Note - For individuals who are dropping-off an item, the individual may stop in the School Office and drop off the item.
3. Visitors are asked to not bring additional children with them.
4. When the visit is completed individuals are to stop in the School Office and sign-out.
5. Anyone considered by the administrator to be in violation of these rules or persons who engage in disorderly conduct of any kind as determined by the administrator shall be instructed to immediately leave the Stepping Stones Academy property and may be subject to additional penalties, including removal and exclusion from Stepping Stones Academy. Failure to obey the instruction may subject the person to criminal proceedings pursuant to A.R.S. 13-2911 and to any other applicable civil or criminal proceedings.

WEAPONS AT SCHOOL

No student is allowed to carry or possess a weapon or simulated weapon on Stepping Stones Academy's premises. No student shall use or threaten to use a weapon or simulated weapon to disrupt any activity of Stepping Stones Academy. Any employee who observes any person in possession of a weapon or simulated weapon on school premises shall immediately report the matter to the administrator. The administrator shall immediately take appropriate safety and disciplinary actions in accordance with Stepping Stones Academy's policies and shall immediately report a violation of this policy to law enforcement officials and/or other legal authorities, pursuant to A.R.S. 15-515, if the weapon is a deadly weapon or the student is a minor in possession of a firearm.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Stepping Stones Academy strictly follows the school's Code of Conduct and enforces a zero-tolerance policy for issues relating to the health, safety, and well-being of children, staff members, and visitors. This means possession or use of weapons or related items is strictly prohibited on campus. This policy is in accordance with the Arizona Department of Education and the laws governing the state of Arizona.

SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY

Stepping Stones Academy's uniform policy is designed to help foster a professional and positive environment in the school and prepare students for the professional world. The uniform policy is also designed to create a safer and more pleasant school environment, encourage and support positive peer relations, avoid inappropriate attire at school, and support the school's philosophy of

"School is the job of the students, and students are expected to dress appropriately for this learning and work environment ... an environment that provides academic, social, and personal skills students need to become life-long learners and responsible and productive citizens."

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The uniform policy is in effect each school day. Students are to wear school uniform to school and school-sponsored activities. Students are notified in advance if the uniform policy is altered for a special event. Students not in proper uniform report to the School Office and families are contacted to bring appropriate uniform attire to school. Students do not return to class until they have appropriate uniform clothing. Students consistently out of school uniform face additional consequences.

Attire that may not be worn at any time includes, but is not limited to:

- *Clothing deemed as disrupting the learning environment
- *Clothing that does not fit correctly, such as too short, too tight, too loose, low-cut, or revealing in any way
- *Clothing with gang-related apparel
- *Clothing with obscene pictures, messages, or logos including or referring to alcoholic beverages, tobacco, vaping, drugs, violence, or weapons.

The administrator has the authority and is responsible for making final decisions about issues relating to the uniform policy, including defining and determining appropriate pictures, messages, or logos and what is deemed distracting or interfering with the learning environment.

PANTS, SHORTS, SKIRTS

- *Pants refer to long pants, capris, shorts, skirts, jumpers, overalls, and similar styles of clothing.
- *Pants must be the tan shade of khaki and must be a plain khaki color.
- *Shorts and skirts may be no more than 4 inches above the knee.
- *Pants must have a sewn hem, fit appropriately, and may not drag on the ground.
- *Pants may not have holes, tears, or show bare skin. Sagging, oversized, or baggy pants are not allowed.
- *Leggings or tights may be worn under khaki shorts or skirts. Leggings and tights may be any color or school-appropriate design. Leggings and tights may not have holes, tears, or show bare skin.

SHIRTS – POLO STYLE SHIRTS AND T-SHIRTS

Polo-Style Shirts

- *The traditional style of polo shirts is required, but shirts do not need to be the Polo brand.
- *Polo style shirts are worn every school day and at school-sponsored activities and events unless another style of shirt is designated by the school administrator.
- *Shirts are to be one color. Any solid color is acceptable.
- *Shirts may include the manufacturer's logo with the logo on the upper left side of the shirt. No other words, logos, or designs may be on the shirt.
- *Shirts must have buttons at the neckline. Shirts may not have snaps or zippers.
- *Shirts are to fit appropriately. The length of the shirt must be long enough so when arms are raised directly above the head, bare skin and/or undergarments do not show.
- *Short-sleeved shirts worn under the polo shirt (i.e. t-shirt) may not show.
- *Long sleeved shirts worn under the polo shirt may have the sleeves showing. If the shirt is longer than the polo shirt the shirt must be tucked in. Long-sleeved shirts may be any color or school-appropriate design.

Stepping Stones Academy T-Shirts

- *The Stepping Stones Academy "Academy" t-shirt is worn for designated campus events.
Note – The Academy shirt is the purple t-shirt with white and yellow logo.
- *Stepping Stones Academy t-shirts may be worn on Fridays, which includes any style of Stepping Stones Academy t-shirt purchased from or provided by Stepping Stones Academy.

SWEATSHIRTS

- *Sweatshirts must be made of traditional sweatshirt material.
- *Any style of sweatshirt (i.e. hoodie, zip up) may be worn.
- *Sweatshirts are to be one solid color. Any solid color is acceptable.

*Sweatshirts may include the manufacturer's logo on the upper left side of the sweatshirt. No other words, logos, or designs may be on the sweatshirt.

*Sweatshirts are to fit appropriately. The sweatshirt may not hang longer than the waist of the student. The length of the sweatshirt must be long enough so when arms are raised directly above the head bare skin and/or undergarments do not show.

SHOES AND FOOTWEAR

*Shoes are required at all times.

*Shoes must have a back or strap across the back.

*Closed-toed shoes are recommended but not required.

OUTDOOR WEAR - JACKETS, COATS, SWEATERS

*Jackets, coats, sweaters, and similar items are defined as outdoor wear.

*Jackets, coats, and sweaters may be worn outside. Jackets, coats, and sweaters may not be worn inside.

*Jackets, coats, and sweaters may be any color.

*Jackets, coats, and sweaters must include school-appropriate words and designs.

HEADWEAR

*Headwear includes items such as caps, hats, hoods, and bandannas.

*Hats, caps, hoodies, and other headwear may be worn outside. The items are to be removed upon entering a building.

*The bill of the cap/hat must face the front. Caps/Hats may not be worn backwards or sideways.

*Headwear may be any color and must include school-appropriate words and designs.

*Sunglasses may be worn outside. Sunglasses are to be removed and put away when entering a building.

HAIR COLOR AND HAIR STYLES

*Hair color must be one "natural" color. Examples of "natural" hair colors are black, red, brown, and blonde.

*Hair may be highlighted a "natural" hair color or dyed one "natural" hair color.

*Hair extensions and other similar hair accessories may not be worn.

*Mohawks, faux hawks, and other similar hair styles are not allowed.

*Words, numbers, and pictures may not be shaved into the hair.

JEWELRY AND ACCESSORIES

*Rings, bracelets, necklaces, and earrings with spikes, sharp points, gauged earrings, earrings with large hoops, or other dangerous objects may not be worn.

*Body piercings (real or fake) except for earrings are not allowed. Students with body piercings excluding pierced ears must conceal the piercings while on campus and attending school-sponsored events.

*Cosmetics are not to be brought to school.

*Tattoos (real or fake) are not allowed. Students with tattoos must conceal tattoos while on campus and attending school-sponsored events.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

The health and safety of children is important to everyone at Stepping Stones Academy. To ensure the well-being of all children, the following policies are enforced.

EMERGENCY CARD

Children must have an emergency card on file in the School Office before attending school. This card provides the school with important information, such as health concerns relating to the child and names of people to contact in case the child becomes ill or is injured. Parents are asked to keep this information current throughout the year. If changes need to be made to this information parents are to contact the School Office.

EVACUATION AND LOCK DOWN POLICIES

In the event of an emergency requiring an evacuation, such as a fire, or the need to secure campus, such as a lock-down, Stepping Stones Academy adheres to guidelines established in accordance with Daisy Mountain Fire Department and Maricopa County Sheriff's Department. An evacuation map is posted in the classroom. Fire drills are held on a monthly basis and campus security drills are held periodically.

ILLNESSES AND INJURIES

It is typical for children to contract common childhood illnesses. To assist with the health of all children, parents are requested to not send children to school if they are ill or displaying any of the following symptoms: fever, constant cough, nasal discharge, sore throat, skin rash, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Parents are contacted if a child becomes ill while at school and will need to pick up their child. Stepping Stones Academy requests parents contact the school if their child contracts chicken pox, pink eye, lice, strep throat, or other contagious illnesses.

All Stepping Stones Academy school personnel are trained in basic First Aid and CPR. If a child becomes ill or is injured at school the child is attended to immediately by the classroom teacher. If needed, the child is taken to the School Office for additional care. In accordance with the Arizona state law, only soap and water are used to clean injuries. Parents are contacted about all illnesses and injuries involving their child and may need to pick-up their child from school. Stepping Stones Academy does not employ a nurse; however, the school has access to local medical authorities. For an emergency or more serious injury or illness, medical authorities are immediately called. Expenses for these services are the responsibility of the parents.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Stepping Stones Academy follows the Arizona state law (A.R.S. 15-872) relating to the rules and regulations for immunization requirements.

1. Children must have all of the required immunizations before attending school. If a child does not have the required immunizations, the child may not attend class.
2. A current immunization form must be on file in the School Office before the child attends school. If a current immunization form is not on file, the child may not attend class. The information on the form needs to include the child's name, birthdate, dates and dosages of the immunizations, and name of the physician/health agency that administered the immunizations.
3. Children are required to have the following immunizations before attending school:
 - *MMR (Mumps, Measles, Rubella) – 1 dose
 - *Polio – 3 doses
 - *DTaP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) – 4 doses
 - *Varicella (Chicken Pox) – 1 dose
 - *Hepatitis A – 2 doses
 - *Hepatitis B – 3 doses
 - *HIB – 3-4 doses
4. Stepping Stones Academy allows for exemptions to the immunization requirements for medical reasons, religious beliefs, and personal beliefs. Any family wishing to be exempted must have on file in the School Office a state approved document explaining the reason. If an immunization cannot be given due to medical reasons, a medical exemption signed by a physician must be on file.

5. As per state law, children with immunization exemptions may not attend school if an outbreak of an illness occurs. Tuition is not pro-rated for absences occurring due to an outbreak of an illness.

MEDICATIONS

Children may not bring any type of medication on campus, including prescription medication and over-the-counter medication such as aspirin, vitamins, and cough. Stepping Stones Academy requests parents give the child needed medication before coming to school.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

A Pesticide Application Notice is posted at least 48 hours in advance in the School Office and Pre-K classroom. The Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are available for review in the School Office.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

As an educational institution, employees of Stepping Stones Academy are required, by law, to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department and/or Department of Children's Services (DPS) in the Department of Economic Services. This includes suspected non-accidental injuries, sexual molestation, abuse, and/or neglect. This is in accordance with the Arizona state law (A.R.S. 13-3620).

SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

It is the policy of Stepping Stones Academy individuals associated with the school conduct themselves at all times to provide an environment free from discrimination, bullying, and harassment, including verbal, physical, and sexual harassment. This includes children, parents, volunteers, staff members, and administrators. Stepping Stones Academy has zero tolerance level for discrimination, bullying, and harassment, and there is not to be any inappropriate verbal or physical contact between children, children and parents or campus volunteers, or children and staff members or administrators. People feeling they experience discrimination, bullying, and/or harassment while on the Stepping Stones Academy campus or at school-sponsored events are to report the situation immediately to the administrator.