



Student/Parent Handbook

The Arc of Essex County's
Stepping Stones School
6 Kingsbridge Rd Unit 3
Fairfield, NJ 07004
Phone: 862-210-8781
Fax: 862-210-8791

www.steppingstonesschoolnj.com

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A. Mission and Vision

THE ARC OF ESSEX COUNTY'S STEPPING STONES SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The Arc of Essex County provides advocacy and services empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to realize a lifetime of personal achievement and full partnership in the community.

VISION STATEMENT

The Arc of Essex County, the leader in creating and delivering supports and services, is the premier choice of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and the community.

B. Stepping Stones School Staff

PRINCIPAL:

Kassie Pierinelli

kpierinelli@arcessex.org

(862) 210-8781 ext. 3266

(973) 558-4261

DIRECTOR:

Robin Moses

rmoses@arcessex.org

(862) 210-8781 ext. 3416 (917)

204-0594

OPERATION COORDINATOR:

Melissa Agugliaro

magugliaro@arcessex.org

SOCIAL WORKER:

Emily Fernandez

efernandez@arcessex.org

(862) 210-8781 ext. 3588

NURSES:

Kathy Hart

ssnurse@arcessex.org

(862) 210-8781 ext. 3393

PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN:

Karen Tensfeldt- Teacher

ktensfeldt@arcessex.org

TRANSITIONAL

KINDERGARTEN:

Julia Hutcherson- Teacher

jhutcherson@arcessex.org

PRIMARY:

Christine Bridge- Teacher

cbridge@arcessex.org

PRIMARY PLUS:

Megan Dixon- Teacher

mdixon@arcessex.org

TEACHER:

Janeen Burke – Teacher

jburke@arcessex.org

THERAPISTS:

Alexis Soled, OT

asoled@arcessex.org

Katalyna Lorick, OT

klorick@arcessex.org

Dora Csogor, PT

dcsozor@arcessex.org

Sandy Pease, ST

spease@arcessex.org

Marisa Gasman, ST

mgasman@arcessex.org

CONTACTING OUR STAFF

Stepping Stones staff members value the relationships they have developed with parents and will return emails as soon as possible however this may take up to 24 hours. Therapists utilize a communication software called REMIND to update individual parents regarding therapy sessions in a timely manner.

For matters which need same day attention, such as a change in pickup, please call Melissa in the front office at (862) 210-8781. She will take a message and arrange for the classroom teacher to respond.

Additionally email our principal at chealy@arcessex.org or text her at 973-941-6320 as needed.

C. Arrival, Dismissal, Attendance Policy and Emergency Closings

STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The September through June school day is from 8:50am to 2:40pm except on early dismissal days (1:00 p.m.) as noted on the school calendar. The Extended School Year (ESY) school day is from 8:30am to 12:30pm.

Paraprofessionals ensure students safely disembark from buses in the morning, escort students directly to their classrooms and assist with a safe, orderly return to buses at the close of the school day. At dismissal, students wait in the classrooms with the instructional staff until their buses/private vehicles are called.

Parents/Bus Drivers arriving after 9:00 a.m. must call the main office from their vehicle to notify of student arrival. An instructional staff member will meet the parent/driver at the drop off line and will escort the student into the building to his/her respective classroom.

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School maintains attendance in accordance with N.J.S.A 6A:32-8.1. Student attendance shall be recorded in the school register during school hours on each day school is in session. A school day shall consist of no less than four hours as per N.J.S.A 6A:32-8.3.

For planned early departures, parents must call the main office or send a message via email to our Operations Coordinator, Melissa. magugliaro@arcessex.org. For non-planned early departures from school, parents must call the main office and/or text the principal's cellphone. A staff member will bring your child to meet you at the pickup line.

In order to ensure the safety of our students, no student is allowed to leave the school with an unknown person unless she/he is identified by the parents in writing. The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School reserves the right to ask for identification. The student must have an appropriate car seat/booster secured in the departure vehicle.

Any changes in transportation to and from the school will require approval from the sending district and your case manager. All changes must be reported to the Stepping Stones School main office.

The following guidelines describe our expectations for our students' conduct on buses:

- Students will be seated immediately upon entering the bus in the seats assigned by the driver.
- Seat belts and/or approved car seat restraints will be used and properly secured.
- Seat belts and/or approved car seat restraints will remain secured until the bus has arrived at its destination and is in the parked position.
- Students will talk softly and will be polite and respectful.
- Students will leave doors/windows closed unless they have permission from the bus driver to open.

According to N.J.S.A 18A:25-2, the principal may exclude a pupil from the bus for disciplinary reasons and his/her parents may provide transportation to and from school during the period of such exclusion.

Parents will be notified of discipline problems occurring on the bus.

ABSENCE

Notification of unplanned absences is to be made to the main office number, 862-210-8781 or by email to our Operations Coordinator magugliaro@arcessex.org and/or your classroom teacher by 8:00am and include the reason for the absence and expected date of return.

For the continued health and safety of your child, it is important to always inform the school nurse whenever your child has an illness, injury, surgery or medical procedure.

The following conditions must be met in order to return to the program after an illness or injury:

- A child must be free from fever, vomiting, diarrhea (without symptoms or administration of medication to control these symptoms) for a **FULL 24 HOURS.**

- Any child prescribed an antibiotic for a current bacterial infection must take the prescription for a **FULL 24 HOUR** course before returning to school.
- A child must be able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- The child must be free of open, oozing skin conditions unless: 1) a health care provider signs a note stating that the condition is not contagious and 2) the involved area(s) can be covered by a bandage without seepage of drainage through the bandage.
- A child excluded because of lice, scabies or other infestation may return 24 hours after treatment has begun with a note from a doctor stating the child is larvae or nit-free.
- If a child was excluded because of a reportable contagious illness, a doctor's note stating that the child is no longer contagious is required prior to re-admission.
- **A doctor's note is required if the child is absent for three (3) consecutive days or more.**
- Children with immunization exemptions may return to school when the risk posed by the vaccine preventable disease outbreak has passed.

If your child has had surgery, a medical procedure, or an illness/injury that may impact their ability to safely and comfortably participate in school activities, including therapies, a medical clearance from your doctor is *required* in order for your child to return to school.

Please note that:

- The doctor should state *in writing* the date the child may return to school and the date the child may resume their therapies (please note these dates may not be the same). If necessary, the doctor can specify on the medical clearance any activities or movements the child should not do following the surgery, medical procedure or injury.
- If your child undergoes surgery/medical procedure, please ask the nurse for our Medical Clearance form.

The final decision whether to exclude a child from the program is made by the **school administrator.**

ATTENDANCE

Good attendance is important to school success. Under New Jersey State Law, the only legal reasons for school absence are as follows:

1. Personal Illness
2. Quarantine
3. Death in the family
4. Religious holiday (previously arranged)

As per DOE requirements, any absence of five or more consecutive days or habitual tardiness must be reported to your sending school district.

EARLY DISMISSAL AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

When it has been determined that school will be closed, or there is a delayed opening, due to inclement weather or an emergency condition; you and your bus company will receive a phone call from ONE CALL, our automated voice system as early as possible. The school closing information will also be posted on our website: steppingstonesschoolnj.com

Sometimes weather conditions change suddenly and we must end the school day early. The automated voice system, **ONE CALL**, will be activated to alert families and bus companies. Please be sure to have a contingency plan if you are not at home and watch for changing weather conditions.

Please be sure to keep all telephone numbers and emails current with the school office. Also, please have cell phones turned on for easier access.

D. Student Health

It is school policy that the Stepping Stones School Nurse share appropriate health information with the school staff and the professionals who are designated as having “legitimate health interest” within the school, as well as other individuals who provide direct school health and education services to students.

We ask that you check your child for any early signs of illness. Please keep your child home from school if he/she shows signs of an infection or illness.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION DURING SCHOOL HOURS

If it is necessary for a student to take medication during school hours, only the school nurse, an assigned nurse, or trained Stepping Stones staff member, as per an IEP, will administer the medication in compliance with the following rules:

From the parent/medical professional:

- A written statement from the prescribing physician stating the medication, dosage, time and purpose of the medication AND
- The prescription and non-prescription medication must be labeled, be in the original bottle from the pharmacy and be in a sealed envelope AND
- The sealed envelope containing the prescription(s) and medication(s) will be given to the nurse either by the parent or put in the child’s backpack to be given to the nurse upon arrival to school.

At the school:

- All medications are stored in a locked cabinet and are administered by the school nurse, assigned nurse or trained Stepping Stones staff member.
- Students may not have medication with them in school.
- Empty medication bottles will be sent home with the student in his/her school bag in a sealed envelope.

IMMUNIZATION AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

The State of NJ DOE requires families to provide medical information for students. **The following are required in order for students to attend school:**

- Proof of DOE required immunizations
- Current Emergency Medical Treatment Release Form
- Medical Information Form
- Over the Counter Medication Form
- Student Immunization and Examination Form
- Health Contract

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

When emergency medical treatment is necessary, a sick or injured student will be transported to a hospital by the parents (if available) or by local ambulance squad or police emergency unit. **A current HIPAA Form and Emergency Medical Treatment/Release Form must be completed and returned to the school nurse.**

EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATION OF EPINEPHRINE FOR FIRST-TIME ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Epinephrine may be administered to any student without a known history of anaphylaxis when the school nurse, or trained designee, in good faith believes that the student is having an anaphylactic reaction. The school nurse, or trained designee, shall be permitted to administer epinephrine via a pre-filled auto-injector mechanism to any student without a known history of anaphylaxis. This includes students whose parent(s)/guardian(s) have not submitted prior written permission or obtained prescribed medication as indicated in the rules under Emergency Administration of Epinephrine.

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School shall maintain a supply of epinephrine auto-injectors that is prescribed under a standing protocol from a licensed physician or an advanced practice nurse in a secure but unlocked and easily accessible location in the nurse's office. The supply of epinephrine auto-injectors shall be accessible to the school nurse and trained designees for administration to a student having an anaphylactic reaction.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Twice during the school year, the nurse conducts screenings for blood pressure, height and weight. Parents are notified of the screening and the results.

E. Stepping Stones School Policies

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Stepping Stones School is committed to meet all the requirements and obligations of each student's Individualized Education Plan as required by state statute. Key highlights are provided as follows:

- Academics/Required Courses: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education/Health.
- Goals and objectives correlate with NJ State Student Learning Standards.
- Instruction is individualized and based on each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- A wide variety of materials are available and instruction is presented in ways that are sensitive to varying student learning styles.

Through a team of highly skilled therapeutic staff, the students at Stepping Stones are provided with an array of therapies that provide each child with the opportunity to learn and grow in significant areas of development. Most students are provided with the minimum of the following related services: two individual and one group speech therapy sessions per week; one individual and one group occupational therapy sessions per week; 1 individual and two group physical therapy sessions per week.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE

Students are expected to wear clothing that is comfortable, appropriate for their needs, activities and therapies.

- Attire is neat, clean, and modest
 - Wear clothing that is suitable for the season and weather conditions
 - If wearing skirts, shorts or leggings should be worn underneath skirts
 - Do not wear revealing clothing
 - No inappropriate, suggestive or provocative language can be displayed on clothing
 - Wear shoes that fit appropriately and can be worn for all therapies.
- PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IN FLIP FLOPS**

All students should have two emergency changes of clothing which are appropriate for the season/weather conditions.

Please have all clothing and other personal items labeled with your child's first and last names. Please send in clean clothing as soon as possible to replace any clothes sent home.

HOLIDAYS

Instructional activities involving holidays emphasize the historic, cultural and seasonal aspects of the holiday. Presentations are appropriate for the various ages of the students.

Lessons are balanced, unbiased and sensitive to religious diversity. We will focus on family activities and traditions such as decorations, music and crafts. At parents' request, students are not required to participate in holiday activities.

Similarly, with prior notice, students will be excused from any event/activity that is considered by parents to be counter to their religious teaching. Information about students' anticipated absence for religious observance should be directed to the principal.

We invite all families to share your cultural celebrations with us. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher regarding a classroom visit.

FACILITATED RECESS

Facilitated recess is provided daily for all students. During inclement weather, students may have facilitated recess indoors. Weather permitting, students will have recess outdoors in assigned areas. Students will be supervised at all times. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for all weather conditions.

VISITORS

We invite parents and or family members to visit throughout the year.

Parents/Guardians are welcome as visitors during the school day, however, interruption of instruction should be considered. For planned/unplanned visits, contact the Principal via email at chealy@arcessex.org or phone at 862-210-8781.

The school doors are locked at all times for security purposes. Doors cannot be left open and no one should hold the door for anyone not previously authorized to visit the school. Upon arrival, please ring the doorbell on the left side of the entry doors and a school representative will let you in. All visitors are to sign the Visitor Log upon entering the building and must sign out in the Visitor log upon departure.

LUNCH

Lunch is NOT provided at the school. All students must bring with them each day a prepared lunch that is nutritious and within the limitations of the student's feeding needs. Lunch should be in a sealed storage container. Your child's teacher will provide the therapeutic feeding schedule.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Please be sure that all personal property is labeled with your child's name. Stepping Stones School cannot be responsible for lost items, or items not returned, such as toys, iPads, cell phones or other electronics. If your child brings such items to school, they should be given to the classroom teacher for safekeeping.

F. - Positive Behavior System

BEHAVIOR

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School implements a student discipline policy to establish standards, policies, and procedures for positive student development and behavioral expectations on school grounds, and, as appropriate, for conduct away from school grounds. Every student enrolled at The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School shall observe the rules and regulations and the discipline imposed for infraction of those rules.

This policy will be reviewed, and updated as needed, annually with faculty/staff. Annual dissemination (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(a)4) of the Student Code of Conduct will occur via e-mail to parents. Hard copies will be made available upon request. The school district will submit an annual report on student conduct to N.J.D.O.E, if any incidents occurred.

Each student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan) shall be implemented in accordance with the components of the applicable plans for students with disabilities, as per N.J.A.C. 6A:7.1 (a)6. A student's disability and the role it plays in student misconduct must always be taken into consideration prior to disciplining a student. Student discipline will be enforced with equity and will be applied without regard for race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, nationality, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other of the applicable plans. (N.J.S.A 10:5)

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School approves the use of comprehensive behavioral supports that promote positive student development and the students' abilities to fulfill the school's behavioral expectations. Behavioral supports include, but are not limited to, positive reinforcement, Total communication strategies and other multisensory strategies. Supports are put into place to ensure appropriate behavior and academic success.

The Social Worker is available to consult with teachers regarding weekly social emotional goals and to develop strategies to move students toward achievement of these goals. Our Social Worker meets with students in small social skills groups consistently, with individual students as needed, and holds sessions required by the Individual Education Plans.

All staff have been trained on the laws of the State of New Jersey mandate (N.J.S.A 18A:6-1) that no person shall inflict corporal punishment upon a pupil. The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School will not permit or condone physical or verbal abuse of its pupils by any member of the staff.

When serious disciplinary actions must be taken, as per N.J.A.C 6A:16-6.2(b)3, the parents and Child Study Team case managers shall be notified by telephone and in writing. The Arc of Essex County complies with statutes and laws that guarantee due process in these disciplinary matters. The administration and case managers will review this with the parent/guardians, if necessary.

N.J.S.A 18A:37-2. When staff recommends termination of a student's placement at The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School because the school can no longer meet the student's academic or behavioral needs, or the current continued placement is deemed unduly disruptive and unsafe to other students or staff, The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School will comply with all due process procedures and statutes, as per 6A:14-2.8. These will be reviewed with the case manager, parent(s)/guardian(s) and students if the need arises. As per N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8(b), district board of education personnel may consider, on a case-by-case basis, any unique circumstances when determining whether or not to impose a disciplinary sanction or order a change of placement for a student with a disability who violates a district board of education code of conduct.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT SYSTEM

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School utilizes a school-wide plan (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(b)), based on positive behavior support strategies. This behavior program provides reinforcement to target behaviors through positive reinforcement of desired behaviors.

G. Student and Parental Rights and Responsibilities

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

As per N.J.A.C 6A:32-8, 12.1, 13.1, all students are expected to fulfill these expectations:

- Attend school and be appropriately dressed
- Come to school prepared to learn
- Demonstrate respect for people and property
- Take responsibility for their own behavior
- Use time and resources responsibly
- Participate actively in our positive behavior management system
- Follow school bus safety procedures

STUDENT ENRICHMENT

Community based instruction, such as trips, are planned by the classroom teachers; both individually or collaboratively when appropriate, to supplement the student's educational experiences as well as an integration into the town's community. Parental permission to participate is obtained. Parents must notify school of any medical conditions that would preclude participation in any type of field trip. Classes are transported on a bus with a licensed bus driver. Additionally, special programs and a variety of assemblies and guest speakers are frequently incorporated in the curriculum.

ROLE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

Stepping Stones School believes that the education of children is the shared responsibility of the school, the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the sending district. To ensure the best possible educational results for each child, there must be effective communication between the home and school. We recognize the crucial role that parent(s)/guardian(s) have in shaping the character and values of their children.

By law, parents are entitled to be included in the development of their child's educational plan. Your involvement in our school is always welcome.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are also responsible for their child's punctuality, attendance, cleanliness and dress.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Families have an important role in their student's success in school. We encourage frequent contact with parents through attendance at Back-to-School Night, conferences and a daily exchange with teachers and therapists through email and our REMIND communication system. We also welcome phone calls from parents. Please note that teaching and therapy staff are only able to return communications before or after school hours.

Parents will receive information regarding school events and how to get involved in school activities. Parent participation is welcomed and needed. Please call Stepping Stones School directly to obtain information about how to participate.

Parents are their children's first teacher and they play an influential role in their education. Here are some ways we suggest to be involved and enhance your child's school experience:

- Make sure your child gets enough rest and sleep.
- Establish a morning routine that includes a healthy breakfast. Allow for a calm start to the day and on-time bus pick-up.
- Monitor social networking sites your child may visit. Monitor for appropriate language and content.
- Practice social skills.
- When possible, attend school meetings and events.
- Take time to talk with your child each day about things that have happened.
- Monitor the time your child spends on electronic devices, i.e., iPads, iPhones, etc.
- Plan to spend time reading to or with your child regularly.
- Accentuate the positive!
- Become involved with the Candle Lighters, an organization that supports Stepping Stones School and Camp Hope (www.thecandlelighters.org).

PRISE

New Jersey Administrative Code for special education (N.J.A.C. 6A:14) and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) are laws that ensure children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. An important part of these laws provides parents with the right to participate in their children's education. You and representatives of your school district are team members who are responsible for developing an appropriate educational program for your child. The PRISE (Parental Rights in Special Education) document describes the state and federal laws affecting the provision of special education to help you understand your rights in the special education process. With this knowledge, you will be prepared to take an active role in your child's education. This document has been developed for you by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, in an effort to provide the most comprehensive and up to date information. The document is periodically revised to reflect changes in the law, provide additional information that would be of use to you, and to provide the information in a more clear and concise manner. If you need additional help in understanding your rights, contact information for the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), Disability Rights New Jersey (DRNJ), the County Offices of the New Jersey Department of Education and your local school district. To view the document in its entirety, please visit: <https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/parents/ParentalRightsinSpecialEducation2023.pdf>

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Some tenants of FERPA are as follows:

- Parents have certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."
- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great

distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school will correct the record which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for, or on behalf of, the school
 - Accrediting organizations
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.
- Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.
- Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

H. HIB Policy and Other Information

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School is a highly unique educational setting specializing in programs to meet the needs of students with specific special needs. Our school is comprised of students with multiple disabilities, including but not limited to, learning disabilities, cognitive disabilities, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, and/or delays in language and speech impairments.

There may be cases in which a behavior/action by a student appears to be an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying, however, the core root of the behavior is the student's documented disability. The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School will decide as to whether they believe the student's reported behavior/actions are directly the result of their disability, before invoking the processes detailed in the HIB policy.

When a written harassment, intimidation or bullying complaint is lodged and received by the Superintendent of The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School, he/she will convene a meeting with the Anti-Bullying Coordinator (Social Worker), school-based Anti-Bullying Specialist (Assistant Principal), the school-based School Safety Team, the Principal and the person making the complaint, to determine whether the student's disability is the cause of the reported action/behavior. If the outcome of this meeting is that the student's disability caused the action/behavior, the building-based School Safety Team will develop a behavior plan to address the behavior. If the team deems that the action/behavior is not the result of the student's handicapping condition, this policy will be adhered to and all the appropriate steps will be followed. If the team determines this is not the case of harassment, intimidation or bullying, the parents will be notified of this determination.

For more on The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying policy, please contact the Assistant Principal.

REPORTING MISSING AND ABUSED CHILDREN

It is the policy of The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School to report children missing from school without explanation promptly to parents, the sending school district, the police and the State Department of Education. Absences of more than five days, or habitual tardiness, are reported to your sending school district. If a child is missing while in school, the teacher shall immediately notify the administration, which will, in turn, notify the local police, the parents and your child's case manager.

The State of New Jersey requires that school personnel report to the local police and Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect. Stepping Stones School's policy complies with this responsibility. Any staff member may notify DCP&P and DCP&P will investigate the reported problem. The sending school district will also be notified so that coordinated interventions on behalf of helping the child can begin promptly if found necessary. The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School provides staff with in-service training on the identification of signs of child abuse or neglect, reporting procedures and their responsibilities with regard to reporting.

SUBSTANCE USE/ABUSE

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School provides a drug-free environment and has adopted policies and procedures to protect the welfare of all students, recognizing that the misuse of substances by students or staff impedes education.

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School prohibits the use, possession, and/or distribution of drugs, alcohol, tobacco or controlled substances at school, or on school property, or at a school event.

Stepping Stones School enforces New Jersey's no-smoking code at school, on school premises, on school trips, and at activities. Neither students nor staff may have any smoking paraphernalia in their possession at school, on school trips and after-school activities.

WEAPONS

As per N.J.S.A. 6A:16-5.5, 5.6, 5.7, any object deemed by Stepping Stones School staff to be a weapon will be immediately confiscated by the administration. Parents, Child Study Teams and, if necessary, the police will be notified, with disciplinary action taken. The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School fosters a safe school environment and will conduct investigations of any physical or verbal threats made to staff or students.

J. School Calendar



Stepping Stones School
 6 Kingsbridge Rd., Unit 3 - Fairfield, NJ 07004
 862-210-8781

Final
 7/24/24

JULY 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29	30	31			

AUGUST 2024						
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER 2024						
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29	30					

OCTOBER 2024						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER 2024						
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER 2024						
	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2024-2025
 School Hours: 8:50a-2:40p Early Dismissal: 1:00p
 ESY (July and August) 8:30 am—12:30 pm

- July 1** Mon.: First Day of ESY
- July 4 & 5** Independence Day Break—School Closed
- Aug. 13** Tue.: Last Day of ESY
- Sept. 2** Mon.: Labor Day—School Closed
- Sept. 3** Tues.: Staff Development—School Closed
- Sept. 4** Wed.: Staff Development—School Closed
- Sept. 5** Thurs.: First Day for Students
- Sept. 26** Back to School Night
- Oct. 14** Columbus Day—School Closed
- Oct. 23** Staff Development (1pm Dismissal)
- Nov. 5** Staff Development—School Closed
- Nov. 7 & 8** Conferences (1pm Dismissal) Students Only
- Nov. 27** Thanksgiving Break (1pm Dismissal) Students Only
- Nov. 28 & 29** Thanksgiving—School Closed
- Dec. 12** Holiday Party/Santa (1pm Dismissal) Students Only—Staff Luncheon
- Dec. 20** Winter Break (1pm Dismissal)
- Dec. 23-31** Winter Break—School Closed
- Jan. 1** New Year's Day Observed—School Closed
- Jan. 2** Thursday: School Reopens
- Jan. 20** Monday-MLK Day Observed—School Closed
- Feb. 5** Staff Development (1pm Dismissal)
- Feb. 14** 1pm Dismissal
- Feb. 17-18** President's Day Break -School Closed
- Mar. 19** Staff Development (1pm Dismissal)
- Apr. 18** Good Friday— School Closed
- Apr. 21—25** Spring Break
- May 14** Staff Development (1pm Dismissal)
- May 26** Memorial Day-School Closed
- June 4** Staff Development (1pm Dismissal) Students Only
- June 17 & 18** 1pm Dismissal for Students
- June 19** Last Day of School/Graduation 1pm Dismissal for Students
- June 20-30** School Closed

Number of School Days:
 July 21 January 21
 August 9 February 18
 September 18 March 20
 October 22 April 16
 November 18 May 21
 December 15 June 14

*This calendar provides 213 days of school and allows for 3 snow days. Additional snow days will be made up by reducing spring break starting with the Monday of break. In the event snow days are unused they will be returned.

	Closed
	1:00 Dismissal
	Staff Orientation—School Closed
	Staff Development/1:00 Dismissal Students Only

JANUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MAY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					