



moving forward one step at a time
turning stumbling blocks into stepping stones

Admission Policy 2024

Stepping Stone is a Special Education School offering placements to learners with a range of Special Educational Needs.

This policy intends to guide admissions to Stepping Stone. Learners considered for placement at Stepping Stone are those with neurodivergences including:

- Learning impediment
- Specific learning disability
- Sensory/multi-sensory difficulties
- Behavioral difficulties
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Language and communication difficulties
- Social and Emotional Difficulties
- One or more interrelated impairments

This policy may be revised from time to time and is ratified at the discretion of the School Board.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stepping Stone provides educational opportunities for learners with:

1.1.1 Severe or complex learning difficulties

1.1.2 Moderate learning difficulties

1.1.3 Sensory deficits that are affecting their ability to work effectively in a mainstream setting

1.2 Stepping Stone considers learners for admission, irrespective of their gender, race, disability or special educational needs, provided that:

1.2.1 There are reasonable prospects of meeting the learner's needs without unduly prejudicing the education and the welfare of other learners;

1.2.2 Stepping Stone has adequate resources available to ensure that the curriculum can be delivered;

1.2.3 The admission of the learner supports the vision and strategy of Stepping Stone.

1.3 Applications are received throughout the year and will be considered at the time of submission, rather than at set times of the year.

1.4 Enquiries may be directed and visits to Stepping Stone can be arranged by contacting Stepping Stone on +264 (0)81 143 3896 or info.steppingstone.namibia@gmail.com

2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that fair and consistent criteria is used when deciding on individual applications for admittance to Stepping Stone.
- 2.2 It further aims to ensure:
- 2.2.1 Stepping Stone is able to meet the needs of the applying learner.
 - 2.2.2 Admission of new learners does not adversely affect the learning of current learners.
 - 2.2.3 An inclusive education approach is followed.
 - 2.2.4 Admission of a new learner is aligned to the school's ethos and vision for learning.

3 DEFINITIONS

Complex Needs	Learners who need a specialized classroom and school environment and specialized teaching due to their learning, medical or neurodivergent needs. A specialized and adapted curriculum
HOD	Head of Department for the different departments of the school
Inclusive education	All learners attend and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute, and participate in all aspects of the life at the school
Learning Support	Learners who need a remedial teaching approach in small class groups with relevant support due to their neurodivergent needs. An adapted mainstream curriculum
Principal	Principal of Stepping Stone Special Education School
Prospective learner	a learner who is in the process of applying for admission at Stepping Stone or who may in theory be eligible for admission to Stepping Stone
Parent	Biological parents, adoptive parents and/or legal guardian
SSDE	Stepping Stone Distance Education
Stepping Stone	Stepping Stone Special Education School
Stepping Stone Board	Management meeting to represent the interests of Stepping Stone Special Education School Trust Number T32/16
Finance Committee	A committee of the Stepping Stone School board, representing the financial interest of the school Trust
Suspending condition	Unconditional qualifying criteria for admission to Stepping Stone

4 RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, FORMS, GUIDELINES, AND OTHER RESOURCES

This Policy should be interpreted in alignment with other Stepping Stone Policies and procedures as applicable.

5 SCHOOL STREAMS / DEPARTMENTS

Stepping Stone Special Education school have 2 streams.

5.1 Complex needs Stream:

- 5.1.1 Pre-primary for learners 6 years and under, who have delayed developmental milestones.
- 5.1.2 Primary School: Learners who are not able to attend the learning support classes due to: Behaviour difficulties including patterns of behaviour; Learning delay; and/or Pervasive developmental disorders.
 - 5.1.2.1 Junior primary class(es) for learners 7 to 9.
 - 5.1.2.2 Senior primary class(es) for learners 10 to 13.
- 5.1.3 High school for learners 14 to 16. Learners who are not able to attend any other school due to; Behaviour difficulties including patterns of behaviour; Learning delay and/or Pervasive developmental disorders.

5.2 Learning Support stream:

- 5.2.1 Junior primary class(es) for learners' grade 1 to 4. Learners who are not able to attend a mainstream school for any determined reason but is able to work at a grade 1 to 4 level.
- 5.2.2 Senior primary class(es) for learners' grade 5 to 7. Learners who are not able to attend a mainstream school for any determined reason but is able to work at a grade 5 to 7 level.

5.3 The Stepping Stone School Board employs a the following Head of Departments (HOD):

- 5.3.1 Complex needs Primary school including:
 - 5.3.1.1 Complex needs Pre-Primary
 - 5.3.1.2 Complex needs Jnr Primary
 - 5.3.1.3 Complex needs Snr Primary
- 5.3.2 Complex needs High school
- 5.3.3 Learning Support Junior Primary
- 5.3.4 Learning Support Senior Primary

6 POLICY FOR ADMISSION

6.1 Applicability:

This Policy is applicable to all applications for admission of learners to Stepping Stone Special Education School.

6.2 Sources of Admission

Enquiries for admission may derive from various sources including:

- 6.2.1 Recommendation by education institutions, usually in conjunction with the parents/guardians of the prospective learner.
- 6.2.2 Recommendation by therapists or other professionals, usually in conjunction with the parents/guardians of the prospective learner.
- 6.2.3 Parents/guardians contacting Stepping Stone independently.

6.3 Interview and Observation

- 6.3.1 An interview with parents/guardians and the prospective learner may be required and arranged prior to the admission process, as per the discretion of the Principal or HOD.
- 6.3.2 An observation period of the prospective learner and/or his/her parents/guardians may be required and arranged prior to the admission process, as per the discretion of the Principal or HOD.

6.3.3 Such interview and/or observation period will not necessarily result in the admission of a prospective learner to Stepping Stone, but may serve as a tool to consider the admission of such potential learner

6.4 Admission Criteria

- 6.4.1 The HOD is competent to determine whether the level of support and the special education needs, or the sensory needs of the prospective learner can be addressed by the curriculum, infrastructure and resources available at Stepping Stone.
- 6.4.2 Admission of a new learner is recommended to the principal for approval of an application for admission to Stepping Stone.
- 6.4.3 The Stepping Stone Board retains the final authority regarding admissions and may reject any recommendation for admission by the principal, in terms of the Stepping Stone Board Terms of Reference.
- 6.4.4 Specific information that may be considered as part of the application process include:
- 6.4.4.1 Information provided by professional reports;
 - 6.4.4.2 Information provided by parents;
 - 6.4.4.3 Observation of the prospective learner;
 - 6.4.4.4 Additional information from professionals currently involved with the prospective learner, e.g. an occupational therapist.
 - 6.4.4.5 It may be necessary to undertake an extended period of assessment for particularly complex prospective learners. This may include evaluation and recommendation by medical professionals in areas of therapy and psychology. Postponement of admission based on such extended period of assessment is within the discretion of the principal.
- 6.4.5 Since Stepping Stone is a private institution, ability to make 100% on-time payment of school fees (either by parents or sponsors) is a **suspending condition for admission** to Stepping Stone.
- 6.4.6 Factors playing a role in admission of a prospective learner include:
- 6.4.6.1 The number of places and their availability across the whole department of existing learners.
 - 6.4.6.2 The prospective learner profile and compatibility with existing learners in the relevant department.
 - 6.4.6.3 The complexity of the needs of the prospective learner (including the age of the prospective learner) and the suitability of any alternative provision that could be considered.
 - 6.4.6.4 Reasonable daily travelling distance between Stepping Stone and the prospective learner's place of residence.
 - 6.4.6.5 Whether the admission can be accommodated within the efficient use of available resources of the school, in terms of support, facilities/infrastructure, learner to teacher ratio, etc.

6.5 Administration

The following is required as part of the application process for admission to Stepping Stone:

- 6.5.1 Application form [Attached as Annexure B] completed and signed by the prospective learner's parents/guardians. (A new form must be completed each calendar year.)
- 6.5.2 Medical & Indemnity form [Attached as Annexure C] completed and signed by the prospective learner's parents/guardians. A new form must be completed each calendar year.
- 6.5.3 A certified copy of the learner's full birth certificate. (Only first year of admission)
- 6.5.4 A certified copy of the learner's passport where applicable. (Only first year of admission)
- 6.5.5 A certified copy of an immunization chart (only first year of admission unless not up to date). The chart must indicate that the learner has been immunized against the following communicable diseases:

- 6.5.5.1 Polio
- 6.5.5.2 Mumps/Measles/Rubella
- 6.5.5.3 Tuberculosis
- 6.5.5.4 Diphtheria
- 6.5.5.5 Tetanus
- 6.5.5.6 Hepatitis B

If proof of immunization cannot be provided, parents must seek guidance from the school on how to arrange for immunization. Once proof of immunization is obtained and submitted to Stepping Stone, the application for admission in question will be considered and processed.

- 6.5.6 For learners older than 5 years, the latest original report card (or equivalent document) issued by the previous school.
- 6.5.7 Copies of the following if available:
 - 6.5.7.1 Any medical diagnosis relevant to special education needs of the prospective learner.
 - 6.5.7.2 Any reports from therapists.
 - 6.5.7.3 Any remedial reports relevant to the prospective learner.
 - 6.5.7.4 Proof of the residential address(es) of the learner and parents/guardians e.g., copy of utility bill not older than three months. (Only first year of admission)
- 5.6.6.5 Parent's ID card and/or proof of guardianship (Only first year of admission)

Please note that it is an offence to provide false information regarding the age of a child. Stepping Stone reserves its rights to verify all information and documentation regarding a prospective learner for admission and reserves its rights to take legal action against any applicant who intentionally provides false information and documentation.

7 SCHOOL FEES

School fees for 2024 is N\$ 4 200 per child per month for 12 months.

7.1 Fees

- 7.1.1 Stepping Stone can only afford expert special education if the appropriate resources are available to learners enrolled at Stepping Stone. Non-payment of the full monthly school fee affects all learners since school fees are directly applied to maintain the necessary teacher: learner ratio.
- 7.1.2 Sponsorship(s) and the sourcing and maintenance thereof is the sole responsibility of the parents/guardians of the prospective learner.
- 7.1.3 School fees are determined by the Stepping Stone Finance committee based on reasonable maintenance and provision of the expert special education provided by Stepping Stone.
- 7.1.4 School fees are payable for 12 months of the year notwithstanding periods where the school is closed on account of school holidays, public holidays, long weekends, mid-term breaks and/or when the school is closed due to circumstances beyond the control of the school, parents are liable to pay the full months school tuition.
- 7.1.5 If a learner attends school for the months of July to November, parents/guardians are not allowed to withdraw the child from school before December. Parents/guardians are liable to pay school fees for the month of December if the child is at school during the months of July to November
- 7.1.6 Any school fee queries can be addressed to the Stepping Stone Finance committee in writing.
- 7.1.7 Parents/guardians should note that transport to- and from Stepping Stone is not included in the school fee and will require separate additional payment and/or sponsorship.

- 7.1.8 Should after-school or holiday care services be available, parents/guardians should note that the cost of such care services is not included in the school fee and will require separate additional payment and/or sponsorship
- 7.1.9 Should extra-mural activities, e.g. swimming or music lessons be available at a fee, parents/guardians should note that the cost of such activities is not included in the school fee and will require separate additional payment and/or sponsorship.
- 7.1.10 Parents/guardians may incur cost for miscellaneous items from time to time including:
 - 7.1.10.1 Specific stationary relevant for their own child.
 - 7.1.10.2 Swimming gear if the learner participates in swimming lessons.
 - 7.1.10.3 Items of clothing e.g. sun hat, spare clothes, etc.
 - 7.1.10.4 Toiletries, including sunscreen, tissues, hand wipes, toilet paper, liquid hand soap, etc.
- 7.1.11 Learners are required to provide their own lunch, snacks and drinks in sealable containers.
- 7.1.12 Learners are required to attend school with a backpack with their daily lunch box, snacks and drinks, their personal stationary if relevant and/or an additional set of clean clothing or additional toiletries if relevant.

7.2 Application for reduction of school fees

- 7.2.1 Parents may wish to apply for reduction of school fees. The policy is as follows:
 - 7.2.1.1 Parents may apply for the reduction of school fees on the prescribed form (on request).
 - 7.2.1.2 Proof of income of both parents must be attached.
- 7.2.2 Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- 7.2.3 The reduction of school fees, is at the discretion of the Stepping Stone Finance committee, and may be granted according to the following criteria:
 - 7.2.3.1 Fees for a second or third child may be reduced.
 - 7.2.3.2 A certain percentage of the total fees may be cancelled
 - 7.2.3.3 Income, lifestyle and/or possessions will be taken into consideration
 - 7.2.3.4 Parents must be willing to pay in kind during school events.
- 7.2.4 School Board may phone applicants to discuss their applications.
- 7.2.5 Application for the reduction of school fees will be granted for one school year only. If the parents' financial situation has not improved within the year, such parents may submit another application to the Stepping Stone Finance Committee the following year.
- 7.2.6 Applications are to be submitted to the Stepping Stone Finance Committee not later than 31 December of the previous year. Later applications will be considered under special circumstances only.

7.3 Outstanding school fees

- 7.3.1 Payments made later than 7th of each month will result in a penalty of N\$100 for the month.
- 7.3.2 If school fees are outstanding over 2 months, the learner will not be allowed a termly report or access to school until outstanding fees are paid.

8 SCHOOL HOURS AND CALENDAR

- 8.1 The school premises are open from 7:00am to 13:00pm for all learners and 13:00 – 17:00 to learners registered for afterschool care.
- 8.2 Teaching hours are from 8:00am till 12:30pm
- 8.3 The school follow an adapted school calendar (not the standard calendar provided by the Ministry of Education.) Our number of school days correlate with the department of Education

in Namibia. Our holidays are usually shorter than other local schools but are more regular to support the needs of our learners. Please request the Stepping Stone School calendar for the year.

9 AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Stepping Stone offers afterschool to learners enrolled at the school.

9.1 Opening hours:

13:00 till 14:00 – packed lunch and rest or free play.

14:00 – 16:00 – activities and work

9.2 Lunch:

Lunch must be in the form of a packed lunch for each child. We have a fridge, microwave, and toaster at school to store and warm children's lunch.

9.3 Fees:

13:00 – 14:00: N\$ 150.00 per month payable in advance along with school fees

13:00 – 17:00: N\$ 600.00 per month payable in advance along with school fees

9.4 Registration:

To register your child for afterschool care, please complete the relevant form (on request) and return it to school. No children will be allowed to stay at school after 13:00 without the registration form

9.5 About the Afterschool Care:

The Afterschool Staff provides on-site childcare and tutoring to Stepping Stone pupils from 1.00pm to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday (School term only).

At the Afterschool Care, we provide a fun and safe environment for the children, supervised by a team of dedicated, experienced staff.

9.6 Different optional activities:

Additional seasonal activities will be provided for the children in addition to afterschool care. This may include a variety of classes, sports development lessons, musical classes, Floortime Therapy. Information for these classes / sessions will be communicated clearly to parents to sign up for these classes seasonally. Each class will have an additional cost that will be specified as class is announced.

10 STEPPING STONE DISTANCE EDUCATION PACKAGE

10.1 A specialised home-based program is designed to facilitate the needs of learners who are not able to attend school physically for any of the following reasons:

10.1.1 Parents choose to home-school.

10.1.2 The family live outside of Swakopmund and is unable to attend school daily

10.1.3 The family is unable to pay full school fees for the child to attend school

- 10.2 The program dictates that the parent work with the child at home or that the family use a facilitator to work with the child at home. The parent/facilitator will work with the SSDE coordinator from the school.
- 10.3 Fees for SSDE program is N\$2 000 per month.
- 10.4 More detailed information and application for this program will be forwarded to the SSDE coordinator.

11 WAITING LIST

At Stepping Stone no formal waiting list is maintained as it may not be in the best interests of the prospective learner’s educational needs to make a commitment if a school place cannot be made within a reasonable time scale. A waiting list may be formulated in the latter part of the calendar year, reliant on physical space required.

12 APPROVAL ON BEHALF OF STEPPING STONE SCHOOL BOARD

Delegated Signatory:



Almarie Mostert
Stepping Stone Principal

BANK DETAILS
STEPPING STONE TRUST
Bank Windhoek
Swakopmund Branch
Branch code: 481 772
Acc No: 8005504399

Guidelines for Parents and Guardians

- School fee Payments are made on time as agreed in Application form below
- **Prompt Arrival and Afterschool Pickup:**
Classes starts at **8:00** strictly. It is expected of parents to have their children at school before 8:00am except if they have another appointment such as Occupational Therapy. Children are allowed into school from **7:05am** every day. No child may be left unattended before 7:05 outside the school. School ends at **13:00** and Staff supervision ends at the same time for children who are not included in afterschool care. Late pick-ups will be subject to an N\$80 fine per day unless pre-arrangements have been made. If parents are making use of taxis, the responsibility still falls with the parent and they will be held liable if the taxi does not pick up the child on time or drop them off too early.
- For some groups, the school will supply home-school communication books. These books serve as a tool for parents and teachers to communicate to each other on a regular basis regarding the individual learner. Parents must review and sign the books daily.
- HODs will set up WhatsApp communication groups in the respective divisions / class groups. It is important for parents to be part of the communication and if you are unable to access WhatsApp, please communicate this clearly with the HOD.
- Parents are requested not to accompany their child to the classrooms at arrival but rather say goodbye at the gate. At pick-up time they should collect their child from the school gate.
- Children who are picked up from school may ONLY be released to those persons designated in their home-school books or on direct communication with the child's HOD.
- If using a taxi - information about the taxi, including drivers license or ID of taxi driver needs to be submitted to the HOD.
- Parents are not permitted to meet teachers during school hours. In special cases, parents may be allowed to meet the teacher with prior permission from the principal.
- Arrangements must be made with the HOD to discuss the child's progress or any challenges that arise.
- Parents are requested to send their children to school neat and clean.
- If your child is not potty trained, a pack of nappies and wipes must be sent in and kept at school rather than sending in nappies for the day.
- Parents are requested to inform the school if there is any change in address, telephone numbers or other details on the Registration form.
- Parents are requested to inform the school if there is any change or commencement of a chronic medication.
- Regular attendance is important for learners to be successful learners. When a learner is absent, they miss out on the sequence of instruction.
- As a partnership we are all aware of the importance of good working relationships and all recognise the importance of these relationships to equip our children with the necessary skills for their education. For these reasons we will continue to welcome and encourage parents and guardians to participate fully in the life of our school.
- We are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner, through an open and positive dialogue. However, we understand that everyday misunderstandings can cause frustrations and have a negative impact on our relationships. Where issues arise or misconceptions take place, please contact your child's HOD or the Principal, who will be available to meet with you and go through the issue and hopefully resolve it amicably.
- The number of school days coincide with the Department of Education Arts and Culture, yet Stepping Stone School Board determine the school calendar independent of other school calendars. A new school calendar will be available from 1 November 2023.

Tear off and keep the above pages

Complete and return the following pages

Registration for 2024

Name and Surname (of the child): _____

Date of birth: _____ Child's home language: _____

Parents names and Surnames: Mother _____

Father _____

Address: _____

Contact - **Mother:** Email: _____

Home tel _____ Mobile tel _____ Work tel _____

Contact - **Father:** Email: _____

Home tel _____ Mobile tel _____ Work tel _____

Does the child have any developmental diagnosis such as autism or Down's syndrome? Specify.

Does the child have any learning difficulty? Specify.

Current or previous school attended

The non-refundable registration fee of N\$2 000 is included with this application.

The non-refundable registration fee of N\$2 000 will be paid electronically before admission.

I have read and agreed to the conditions set out in the School Admissions Policy.

I have read and agreed to the Guidelines for Parents and Guardians (Annexure A)

I will ensure school tuition of N\$4200 is paid before or on the 7th of every month.

I understand a N\$100 late fees will be charged.

I agree to give a one-month notice if I decide to withdraw my child from Stepping Stone School

Parent signature _____

Date _____

HOD signature _____

Date _____

Principal signature _____

Date _____

Medical Information and Indemnity

Child's Name and surname: _____ M F

Any known medical condition (e.g. epilepsy or diabetes) _____

Any known allergies: _____

Medication (name and doses): _____

Emergency Contact in the event that parents could not be reached:

Name and surname: _____

Relation to child: _____ Phone number: _____

GP's surname: _____ Phone number: _____

Medical Aid name: _____ Medical Aid number: _____

Liability waiver:

I hereby acknowledge that I am either the parent or legal guardian of the learner.

Signature _____ Date _____

I do hereby grant permission for my child to participate in all school activities which form part of the daily routine.

Signature _____ Date _____

I intend that there shall be no personal liability by the staff of Stepping Stone School for any claims, obligations, or demands of any kind or nature whatever.

Signature _____ Date _____

I declare that I shall not hold Stepping Stone School or any of its staff members liable or responsible for any injury to my child or any damage, loss or theft of his/her belongings, or for any other unfortunate event that may occur while in the care of Stepping Stone School unless deliberate negligence are confirmed.

Signature _____ Date _____

I shall not hold the school responsible for my child's safety outside the school hours that I have registered and paid for.

Signature _____ Date _____

In the event of my child requiring prescribed medicine, I undertake to authorise the class staff to administer medication sent in from home as prescribed on the label, with professional specifications for my child

Signature _____ Date _____

I authorise my child to receive basic First Aid care from a registered First Aider in the event that they get hurt or injured while in the care of school:

Signature _____ Date _____

In case of emergency, I understand that the child will be transported at my expense. It is my understanding that in some medical situations, the staff will need to contact the local emergency resource before the parents, the child's GP, and/or other adults acting on the parent's behalf.

Signature _____ Date _____

I give consent to my child being taken out of the premises on outings or excursions, after being informed.

Signature _____ Date _____

Stepping Stone is not responsible for any personal items brought into the facility.

Signature _____ Date _____

I authorize Stepping Stone to retain the right to use photographs or video recordings of my child for internal evaluation and assessment purposes.

Signature _____ Date _____

I authorize Stepping Stone to retain the right to use appropriate photographs or video of my child for information and relevant publicity of the school such as the school's Facebook page, Website and Newsletter

Signature _____ Date _____

I give consent for my child to take part in swimming lessons during the coming year, under teacher supervision.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please attach:

- A certified copy of full birth certificate.
- A certified copy of the learner's passport where applicable.
- A certified copy of an immunization chart
- The latest original report card (or equivalent document) issued by the previous school.
- Copies of the following if available:
 - o Medical diagnosis or any remedial reports relevant to the prospective learner
 - o Reports from therapists.
- Proof of the residential address(es) of the learner and parents/guardians e.g. copy of utility bill not older than three months.
- Parent's ID card and/or proof of guardianship

Parent signature _____ Date _____

HOD signature _____ Date _____

Principal signature _____ Date _____