**INCIDENT RESPONSE AND COMMUNICATION PLAN**

This document is intended to guide the Directors, staff, and members of the Board of Directors of Stepping Stones Inc. (the “Center”) on response communication during significant incidents that may disrupt normal operations, potentially impact the safety and well-being of children, or parents, and staff members, or affect the reputation of the Center.

Examples of such incidents may include:

* Staff members misconduct or unprofessional behavior;
* Safety concerns involving children, such as: injuries, illnesses, or allegations of abuse or neglect;
* Facility-related issues, such as: power outages, hazards, structural damage, or inclement weather hazards;
* Security threats, such as: threats of physical harm, harassment, or presence of unauthorized individuals on the premises;
* Interpersonal conflicts between staff members or with families that require additional support and could escalate; or
* Any issue which may impact the safety of children, staff, families, or the Center

The following procedures provide a structured approach to communication within the Center and externally to parents and families:

1. Ensure immediate safety of children and or staff by moving children and/ or staff out of the area. If there is a concern about safety and security, staff should dial 911 or designate someone to dial 911.
2. If an immediate 911 call is not necessary, then staff should notify the lead teacher of the incident within a reasonable amount of time, and the lead teacher should notify the Directors of the incident.
3. Center Directors should gather information and evaluate the severity/risk of the situation.
4. If Center Directors determine it is a high-risk situation, they will call 911 then assign someone to ensure all doors are locked and notify all staff of necessary information regarding the incident. When possible, after child and staff welfare are ensured, then the Directors should notify the Board of Directors of the incident via text. The Board of Directors must be mindful that the Directors are handling an emergency situation and information may be one-way initially. Directors will notify parents via Brightwheel to the extent it is feasible and after the safety of all children and staff is secured. Directors will seek input from the Board on parent communications as needed.
5. If The Center directors determine the situation to be medium risk and 911 does not need to be called, they will assign someone to ensure all doors are locked, notify staff in center of necessary information, and notify the Board of Directors via text. In this situation, the Board must also be mindful that the Directors are is handling a situation and information may again be one-way. Directors will draft parent communication and seek input from the Board as needed.
6. If The Director determines the situation to be low risk, they will notify parents via Brightwheel (if relevant/appropriate) and document the incident.

In the absence of the Directors, the senior-most lead teacher in the building at the time will assume responsibility. In this instance, the senior-most lead teacher in the building will follow the same procedures as above and as soon as possible notify the Director and Board of Directors via text.