

**NORTH STAR NURSERY AND HOLIDAY CLUB**

**NURSERY CLOSURE AND FEE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

**1. Planned Closures**

1.1 North Star Nursery, hereafter referred to as ‘the nursery’, is open 51 weeks of the year.

1.2 The nursery is based on the Polaris House campus, run by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The nursery can only open when UKRI is open and are able to operate the site, (e.g., managing the parking barriers and providing an on-site security team etc).

1.3 UKRI, and therefore the nursery, are closed on the following days each year:

* Between Christmas and New Year.
* All bank holidays.
* Privilege days for UKRI, e.g:
	+ Maundy Thursday
	+ The Queen’s birthday (the Tuesday after the second bank holiday in May)
	+ Christmas eve.

1.4 Sessions that would normally take place on these days will be invoiced.

**2. Unplanned Closures – short term**

2.1 On rare occasions, the nursery may be unable to open due to a short-term (i.e., lasting five working days or less), unplanned event. This may include, but is not limited to:

* Polaris House site closure due to adverse weather conditions (e.g., heavy snowfall).
* Polaris House site closure due to terrorist activity (e.g., a bomb threat at the train station).
* A power outage, particularly during the winter months, lasting an hour or more.
* Public Health England advising the nursery to close in the short-term due to an outbreak of an illness in those attending the nursery.

2.2 Whilst every effort will be made to keep the nursery open - utilising the nursery’s business continuity plans - sessions (either full days or half days) that would normally take place at the time when the nursery is forced to close will be invoiced. An exception will be any closures which are covered by the nursery’s insurance, e.g.

* A break-in/ vandalism at the nursery making the setting unsafe for children to attend.
* Minor damage from a flood or fire.

2.3 Insurance covered closures will not be invoiced/ refunds will be offered where fees have already been paid in advance.

**3. Unplanned Closures – longer term**

3.1 On other occasions, the nursery may be unable to open due to longer-term (i.e., lasting more than five working days) events. This may include, but is not limited to:

* Government imposed national or local lockdowns to stop the spread of a contagion (e.g., Covid-19).
* Extensive fire or flood damage to the nursery building.
* Public Health England advising the nursery to close in the longer-term due to an outbreak of an illness in those attending the nursery.

3.2 In accordance with the advice from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), sessions (either full days or half days) that would normally take place during the time the nursery is closed will not be invoiced/ refunds will be offered where fees have already been paid in advance.

3.3. However, when an unplanned closure is for a long duration (e.g., for a month or more), and there is no funding from the Government or Council to cover essential costs (e.g., a furlough scheme to cover staff salaries), then it may become necessary for the nursery to charge part-fees. Any such charges will be less than normal fees and will be to cover essential running costs only.

**4. Absences from nursery**

4.1 On occasion, the nursery will be open as usual, but a child may be unable to attend. This may be because, but is not limited to:

* A child is unwell, and their parent(s)/ guardian(s) have decided to keep them at home.
* A child has been sent home from nursery because they have become unwell during their session.
* A child is away on holiday.

4.2 Sessions that have been missed due to absences will be invoiced.

**References and links:**

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040671/Actions_for_early_years_and_childcare_providers_during_the_COVID-19_pandemic.pdf)

[CMA open letter to the early years sector (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904194/Open_letter_to_Nursery_and_Early_Years__settings.pdf)

[Nursery and early years sector: COVID-19 restrictions and consumer law advice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nursery-and-early-years-sector-covid-19-restrictions-and-consumer-law/nursery-and-early-years-sector-covid-19-restrictions-and-consumer-law-advice)

[Statement on coronavirus (COVID-19), consumer contracts, cancellation and refunds - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cma-to-investigate-concerns-about-cancellation-policies-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-consumer-contracts-cancellation-and-refunds)

Links to Nursery Business Continuity Plan for severe weather: [BusinessContinuityPlanAnnexA.pdf (northstarnursery.co.uk)](http://www.northstarnursery.co.uk/policies_forms/BusinessContinuityPlanAnnexA.pdf)