

## NORTH STAR NURSERY AND HOLIDAY CLUB RATIO MAINTENANCE POLICY

### **1. Staff to Children Ratios**

This policy has been written in response to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2014 which states in Section 3 that the minimum staffing ratios are:

- 1:3 children under 2 years**
- 1:4 children aged 2 years**
- 1:8 children aged 3-7 years**
- 1:8 children aged 8 years and above.**

- 1:3 Nursery children on outings and off-site.**
- 1:8 Holiday Club children on outings and off-site**
- 1:6 Holiday Club children travelling on public transport**

When on outings and off-site, children will be closely supervised at all times, with regard to risks and hazards, in particular road safety and stranger danger.

The Nursery has a minimum of two adults on duty at any time in any age group. Arrivals are checked on a daily basis by a senior member of staff to ensure that staff to children ratios are maintained from the time of opening.

These ratios include any children of staff or volunteers. Regular volunteers can be taken into account in the normal staffing ratios but students on short term placements are not.

Trainees under 17 years of age are supervised at all times and are not counted in staffing ratios; where the registered person is satisfied that trainees of 17 years or over are competent and responsible, they may be included in the staffing ratios.

Students who are primarily in the setting on a short term basis may not be counted in the staffing ratios. However, students placed for longer periods, e.g. a year, may be counted in staffing ratios if considered competent. When determining supervision needs of students, a DBS clearance will be required, references and evidence of their level of competence and experience.

Staff ratios may be achieved by:

- Employing additional staff to do work such as cleaning and administration
- Carrying out cleaning and maintenance tasks when children are not on the premises
- Making the manager or person in charge supernumerary
- Employing qualified staff through employment agencies
- Employing nursery bank staff

Points to consider:

- Security
- Size and layout of venue where activities are taking place
- Location of facilities such as toilets and nappy change areas
- Age and ability of the children, including babies and individual needs and stage of development
- Qualifications and experience of the staff and volunteers
- Activities being offered
- Structure of the day and children's patterns of attendance
- Characters and individual needs of the children in our care.

- Outings and off-site activities

At the end of the day, two members of staff will remain on the premises until the last child has been collected.

## **2. Contingency arrangements**

Contingency arrangements are in place for staff absences and emergencies. Where there is an emergency which threatens staff ratios, North Star Nursery will need to demonstrate to Ofsted how we assessed and dealt with the risk. Measures include:

- Drawing on a pool of suitable staff (we recruit our own bank staff)
- Drawing on qualified staff available through employment agencies
- Managing numbers of incoming children
- Contacting parents to take children home

Where staff take breaks, overall required ratios are maintained by measures such as:

- Re-grouping children
- Reorganising rooms and activities
- Re-deploying other suitable staff
- Making sure sufficient staff remain on the premises.

The care of children aged 8-14 does not adversely affect the care provided for children under 8 years old.

The adult to children ratios relate to staff time available to work directly with children. Additional staff and management resources may be required to undertake management tasks, prepare meals, for domestic tasks and to maintain premises and equipment.

Staffing levels are maintained during outings but, according to circumstances, it may be necessary to exceed them.

## **3. Current North Star Nursery procedure for staff absence at short notice**

- Check shift coverage.
- Check numbers of expected children.
- Ask part time staff to work extra hours.
- Ask other suitable staff, e.g. manager, cook, office administrator to support childcare (this may require changing the menu for an easier dinner).
- Depending on time of year it may be possible to utilise students who have been known to us via work experience or placement to support ratios.
- Contact all agencies for availability of staff.
- Cancel any meetings or diary appointments where possible to ensure all staff are engaged in hands on childcare.
- Review room planning; offer low risk activities, plenty of large group activities, join age groups where appropriate.
- Inform parents and committee via e-mail and/or text message of the situation requesting that communication is kept to a minimum to allow maximum childcare support rather than administration.
- A notice will be placed on the main door and parents arriving later in the day will be informed verbally of the situation as it develops.
- The committee would also be contacted for support as they are all DBS cleared as part of their position within the North Star Nursery Management Committee.
- Parents would have the option to collect their children if they were concerned about their well-being.
- If we are able to foresee a large staff absence, so that even if agency staff were available there would be little continuity for the children and families, in consultation with the committee, we would offer a shorter day of care.

- As a last resort and in order to ensure the safety of all children and staff, the nursery manager, in consultation with the nursery committee and Polaris House site manager would consider closure of the building.

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| This policy links to: | Health and Safety Policy<br>Risk Assessment Policy<br>Security Policy<br>Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy<br>Unexplained Absence, Arrival and Departure Procedure<br>Communications Policy<br>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy<br>Walks, Outings and Off-Site Procedures<br>Business Continuity and Incident Management Plan<br>Parent Partnership<br>Staff Induction<br>Staff Training<br>Staff Handbook<br>Code of Conduct<br>Complaints Procedure |
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| <b>Policy Review History</b> |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| October 2014                 | v.1   |
| October 2015                 | v.1.1 |
| November 2015                | v.2   |
| December 2016                | v.3   |
| December 2017                | v.4   |
| January 2019                 | v.5   |
| January 2020                 | v.6   |
| February 2021                | v.7   |
| February 2022                | v.8   |

**This policy will be reviewed in February 2022 unless a review of events, legislation or guidance from health professionals or Ofsted indicates that a review should take place sooner.**

**Signed .....** **Dated .....**

**Print .....** **Nursery Manager**

**Signed .....** **Dated .....**

**Print .....** **Reviewing Committee Member**