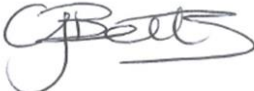


|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Services covered by this policy:</b>            | Children's Services  |
| <b>Post holder(s) responsible for this policy:</b> | Senior Manager Children's Services   |
| <b>Date approved:</b>                              | May 2025   |
| <b>Approved by:</b>                                | Caron Betts (Chair of Trustees)  |
| <b>Signed:</b>                                     |  |
| <b>To be reviewed:</b>                             | July 2026  |

## A. Policy statement

Our belief is that everyone at The Hamlet:

- should be happy and safe
- is unique and valued
- can explore choice and opportunities
- is encouraged to unlock their potential
- can communicate in their own way
- is part of the wider community.

## B. Purpose of this policy and why we have it.

The Preschool is part of The Hamlet, providing accessible childcare at an affordable rate for all children who live in our local community.

The Hamlet is an approved provider of early education and receives early education funding from Norfolk County Council Children's Services for 2, 3 and 4-year-olds. We have a statutory duty to ensure that parents can clearly see from the information we send them that they are receiving their Fully Funded Early Education and Childcare entitlement and can easily understand what is and is not included in those entitlement hours.

We want parents and carers to understand how we set our charges for early education sessions that are not covered by their funded entitlement and how we collect those charges. We want to ensure that charges cover the cost of providing our service and that we are efficient in collecting charges.

## C. Scope of this policy

- Parents/carers/home support staff of Hamlet Users
- The Hamlet staff.

- External professionals involved with the educational, health and care needs and development of the children at preschool.

## D. Policy

### Government Funded Hours

The Hamlet Early Explorers preschool provides Early Education and Childcare for preschool aged children from their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday until the child reaches compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday) who are in receipt of the following early years entitlements:

- The 15 hours entitlement for 2-year-old children
- The universal 15 hours entitlement for all 3- and 4-year-olds
- The additional 15 hours entitlement for eligible working parents of children aged two until they child reaches compulsory school age (from September 2025)

The entitlement of hours is 15 hours of childcare a week over 38 weeks of the year (equivalent to a maximum of 570 hours per year), or for children aged 2 until they reach compulsory school age, up to 30 hours of childcare a week over 38 weeks of the year for qualifying children of working parents (equivalent to a maximum 1,140 hours a year).

| <b>A child born on or between</b>                       | <b>Will become eligible for a funded place from</b>                |
|---|--|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> April and 31 <sup>st</sup> August       | 1 <sup>st</sup> September following their 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> September and 31 <sup>st</sup> December | 1 <sup>st</sup> January following their 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday   |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> January and 31 <sup>st</sup> March      | 1 <sup>st</sup> April following their 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday     |

Visit website for further information. [Early years funding - Norfolk Schools and Learning Providers - Norfolk County Council](#)

The funded hours are determined on the child's individual 'Cycle of Eligibility'. Sometimes a child's attended hours will exceed the maximum number of hours the The Hamlet Early Explorers can claim for. In these circumstances we will invoice the parents/carers for the difference. [EY EE - Parent Carer Booklet.pdf](#)

The government funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver 15 or up to 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare only. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, consumables, additional hours, or additional services.

The Universal entitlement or working parent entitlement is fully funded by the Local Authority. Parents/carers will not be charged a 'top-up' fee to recoup the difference between the amount received from the Local Authority and The

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Hamlet's current, non-funded hourly rate.

The parent/carer claim form must be completed every term to enable The Hamlet to claim funding for each child. The form enables eligibility checks to be completed by the Local Authority for additional funding.

### Working Parent entitlement

Parents of children who are eligible for working parent entitlement must have a valid eligibility code by the end of the month before the new term starts and share this code with The Hamlet.

**It is the parent/s carers responsibility to apply for their working parent entitlement or their Tax-free Childcare through the Government's online Childcare Service. Eligibility for the working parent entitlement is determined by HMRC through this online application. [Sign in to your childcare account - GOV.UK](#)**

Parents must share their eligibility code with The Hamlet, failure to do so may result in The Hamlet charging the parent/carer for their child's allocated sessions.

Parents/carers will need to reconfirm their eligibility for working parent entitlement every 3 months.

Additional hours and services will be charged at the current Hamlet non-funded hourly rate, where hours are not funded as Early Education by the Local Authority.

### Fee Structure

The following fees apply and are valid until end March 2026:

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>2-year-olds Early Education Funding</b>                    | <b>£7.36 per hour</b>            |
| <b>3- and 4-year-old Early Education Funding</b>              | <b>£5.28 Per hour</b>            |
| <b>Additional non-funded sessions/Private funded sessions</b> | <b>£47.25 per 5-hour session</b> |
| <b>Additional hours to extend 5 hour session</b>              | <b>£9.50 per hour</b>            |

Where a time has passed between the point of initial enquiry and their child's start date, parents/carers should check that the information about funding and fees

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remains current so that any applicable changes can be made before the childcare arrangement (contract) is formalised.

The Hamlet offers fully funded places for up to 22 children a day up to a maximum of 25 funded hours per week, per child for 38 weeks per year. These can be claimed across five days a week as detailed below:

| <b>Day</b> | <b>Maximum hours per day</b> | <b>Times</b>  |
|------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Monday     | 5 hours                      | 9:15am-2:15pm |
| Tuesday    | 5 hours                      | 9:15am-2:15pm |
| Wednesday  | 5 hours                      | 9:15am-2:15pm |
| Thursday   | 5 hours                      | 9:15am-2:15pm |
| Friday     | 5 hours                      | 9:15am-2:15pm |

At The Hamlet's pre-school a child is deemed to be of Nursery age from the beginning of the claim period following their 2nd birthday until the end of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday..

| <b>A child born on or between</b>                       | <b>Will no longer be eligible to attend Early Explorers from</b>   |
|---|--|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> April and 31 <sup>st</sup> August       | 1 <sup>st</sup> September following their 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> September and 31 <sup>st</sup> December | 1 <sup>st</sup> January following 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday         |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> January and 31 <sup>st</sup> March      | 1 <sup>st</sup> April following their 5 <sup>th</sup> birthday     |

Places offered under this policy will be available to the child from the date the place is offered until the end of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

Early Explorers accepts 2-year-olds who pay privately or who are eligible for funded places up to a maximum of 4 children per session.

We will work with parents to ensure that, where possible, the hours that can be taken as fully funded Early Education and Childcare provision are convenient for parents' working hours.

Sessions will be delivered at The Hamlet Johnson Place (in exceptional circumstances from community-based provisions and never more than 2 sites in a single day).

Fully-funded entitlements will be delivered consistently so that all children will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for additional hours or services.

It may not always be possible to provide children with their full-funded entitlement.

Parents may use all or part of their Funded entitlement at The Hamlet. Parents can

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share their child's funding entitlement with other nursery, preschool, or childminder provisions, this is written on the funding forms.

All Children must attend for no less than 10 hours per week.

Children who have disabilities and/or complex needs or emerging disability/complex needs may benefit from accessing their full universal entitlement or working parent entitlement up to 25 hours per week with The Hamlet. Staff will discuss this with parents /carers based on the child's individual needs.

### **Privately Funded Places**

For children who do not receive Free Early Education Funding, use all their funding elsewhere or wish to attend more than their funding entitlement we charge £47.25 per 5-hour session. Parents must book for the full five-hour session; unattended hours cannot be reclaimed.

### **E. Procedures and monitoring**

Government funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver up to 30 hours of childcare a week only. We do not charge a 'top up' fee to recoup the difference between the amount received from the Local Authority and our current Hamlet non-funded hourly rate. There is no additional payment for the care of the child from parents/carers who access their full funded entitlement unless they exceed the maximum number of annual hours that The Hamlet can claim for. In these circumstances we will invoice the parents/carers for the difference.

Our charges are set at a level to support the provision of a high-quality Early Education and Childcare that requires specialist resources and highly skilled staff. Fees and charges are reviewed annually in April, and changes made as necessary. Parents will be given at least 6 weeks' notice in writing to inform them of any changes and given the opportunity to discuss their options with the Preschool Manager and Finance Team.

We do not ask parents for a deposit, retainer, or a registration fee to secure their child's government or privately funded place.

All families will be issued an invoice termly in advance. The payment term is within 30 days. The invoice will be itemised to provide clear and transparent information concerning the fees and charges as agreed in the parent contract. This will allow parents/carers to see that the Fully-funded entitlement is received completely free of charge and understand any additional fees/charges that have been applied.

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Invoices are itemised as described:

- The fully funded entitlement hours
- Any additional private paid hours
- Food charges
- Non-food consumable charges
- Activity charges

Accepted current payment methods for invoices are:

- BACS payment made online.
- Standing order
- Sage Pay
- Childcare vouchers/tax free childcare

### **Additional Funding and Support**

The Hamlet Charity's preschool welcomes children, regardless of their background and aims to support them to reach their full potential. We aim to identify all children that may require any additional funding such as Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP's) and/or Special Educational Inclusion Fund (SENDIF) and any locally available funding streams with a view to submit a claim/application to support and improve their outcomes.

### **Refund of Fees**

Parents/carers are required to inform the pre-school of any absences due to sickness or holiday for their child on the morning of their session regardless of whether you pay fees or claim Fully Funded Early Education and Childcare Funding.

Parents/carers who pay privately for sessions cannot claim a refund of fees for the days their child(ren) are unable to attend preschool due to sickness or holidays. Full fees still apply.

Parents/carers of children in receipt of Fully Funded Early Education and Childcare entitlements that take their children out of preschool during term time, may only do so for a maximum of 2 weeks. If your child is absent for longer than 2 weeks, we may be required to reimburse Norfolk County Council for sessions not taken up and therefore in turn may have to charge you for your child's placement at the cost of the current Hamlet non-funded rate to keep your child's place open. Please refer to your Fully Funded Early Education and Childcare agreement for full terms and conditions of claiming Fully Funded Early Education and Childcare.

If parents/carers need to take their child out for a longer period, they will need to inform the Preschool Manager in writing and their reasons for doing. We will share

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these reasons with Norfolk County Council's Early Years Finance team, they will make a decision on payment and claims for this period of absence.

In the event of adverse weather or the disruption of services due to circumstances outside of our control, we will endeavour to open the pre-school as normal. If the preschool is not able to open or must open with reduced hours, full fees will still apply. We are unable to offer any refunds for hours not attended and funding will be claimed. We will inform Parent/carers in writing if funding has been claimed when The Hamlet has been closed.

### **Additional Costs**

The pre-school may offer other services such as entertainers, parties, community trips. These services may incur additional costs for attendance. Parents/carers will be informed of these additional costs in advance and can opt out. If Parents/carers opt out of paying the additional costs for community trips etc.

For children who are unable to participate in optional activities The Hamlet will continue to provide them with high-quality Early Education and Childcare that complies with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework

Children who wish to attend one off sessions, on a day that is not their normal day of attendance will need to pay the full current Hamlet non-funded fee.

This includes children in receipt of Fully Funded Early Education and Childcare entitlements, as the funding only applies for their registered days. Extension of Fully Funded Early Education and Childcare entitlement cannot be applied in this instance.

### **Consumable Fees**

Fully Funded Early Education and Childcare entitlement is intended to cover the cost of delivering 15 hours or up to 25 hours of childcare a week for the 38 weeks we are open. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, snacks, or other consumables.

The Hamlet charges a fee to:

- provide snacks, refreshments consumed by the child.
- Extra optional activities such as events, celebrations,

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This charge (£3 per session) supports the cost of providing a variety of foods as available on the day such as (but not inclusive of):

- Fresh fruit: apples, bananas, exotic fruits, berries and soft fruits.
- Fresh vegetables: carrots, tomatoes, cucumber etc
- Yoghurts
- Bread, breadsticks, rice cakes etc
- Alternative milk: oat, soya or dairy free.
- Baking ingredients: butter, eggs, flour, sugar.

This amount is payable per session, e.g. for children attending 3 sessions per week the cost is £3.00.

This fee is payable per session regardless of whether your child is in receipt of Fully funded Early Education and Childcare Funding, or their sessions are privately funded.

This fee is still charged if your child is absent from a session.

The above charges for snacks, refreshments, baking ingredients, and extra activities are voluntary. Where parents are unable or unwilling to pay these charges parents /carers must provide their child with their own snacks/refreshments and baking ingredients.

For children who are unable to participate in optional activities The Hamlet will continue to provide them with high-quality Early Education and Childcare that complies with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework

Children who are in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium are not expected to contribute to the consumable fee or provide their own snacks/resources. They are expected to provide their child with a packed lunch.

Parents/carers who are unable to pay or unwilling to pay these charges, should speak with the Preschool Manager as soon as possible.

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### Late payments/ Difficulties paying fees

Where a parent suggests that a fee due will be paid by the other parent, the parent is immediately reminded of the contracting parent's agreement. The Hamlet will, of course accept payment from the other parent, but if payment is not made on time, it is the contracting parent whom The Hamlet will turn to, in accordance with this policy.

The Hamlet is happy to meet with parents/carers in genuine financial difficulty to discuss a payment plan. It may be appropriate to pay fees in instalments over a period of time, e.g. 2 instalments per month or a payment each week. This is at the discretion of The Hamlet and will be wholly dependent upon the individual circumstances. All enquiries regarding financial matters will be treated in strictest confidence.

**Step one** – if a payment is late. The Hamlet will contact the parent/carer with a copy invoice to remind them of the outstanding fee. If payment is subsequently received no further action will be taken.

**Step two** – if the outstanding fees are still unpaid 7 days after the due date on the invoice, then a **formal written reminder** will be issued. If payment is then not received within 7 days of receiving the formal written reminder a late payment fee of £20.00 will be applied.

The Hamlet reserves the right to suspend the provision of childcare if a parent/carer has failed to pay any fees due by 14 days after the due date on the invoice. The CEO will be made aware of the situation at this point and appropriate action agreed. The pre-school will notify the parent/carer of:

- The amount owed (including late payment fee) and period of cover.
- The agreed date the amount owed is to be paid by
- Any intention to suspend chargeable childcare and
- The dates that this arrangement would come into effect should the dept remain unpaid.

If payment is subsequently received no further action will be taken. If no payment is received, then we will proceed to step three.

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**Step three** – if the payment of fees is outstanding for more than 21 days after the due date on the invoice The Hamlet may end the agreement between the Early Explorers Preschool and the parent/carer giving 14 days' notice in writing. Upon ending the agreement, the child will not be admitted to pre-school, and the notice shall be regarded as a formal demand for outstanding monies. Following these measures if the debt is still not fully recovered, The Hamlet has the right to begin legal proceedings through the Small Claims Court and may engage the services of a debt collection agency to act on our behalf.

### Late Collection Fees

In the event of a parent or carer arriving late to collect their child (i.e. after 2.15pm), then we reserve the right to charge a late collection fee, and the following procedures will be followed:

- Staff will record the time the parent or carer arrives to collect their child on our registration form.
- Parents/carers will incur a flat fee of £5.00 per each 10-minute period (or part thereof) that they are late.
- Any late collection fees incurred require payment within 7 days of receipt of invoice.

Late payment and late collection fees will be charged unless specific arrangements have been agreed while a childcare contract remains in place.

### Changes to attendance or termination of preschool place

We require written notice of 6 weeks for the discontinuation of attendance once a place has been agreed and paperwork signed.

We require 6 weeks written notice to request changes to the agreed sessions, i.e., change of days. **Note, we may not be able to accommodate the request.**

Parents/carers should contact us as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend a session.

If a child is absent from session for two weeks or more and the parent/carer has failed to notify us of the reasons, we reserve the right to cancel the space and will write to inform the parent/carer of this.

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Parents/carers wishing to terminate their childcare contract must provide 6 weeks' notice in writing to the Preschool Manager. Any funding entitlement claimed beyond the notice period is transferable to your new childcare provider via the local authority where the funding criteria is met.

When a child leaves the setting before the end of the agreed notice period, we will seek authorisation from the local authority to claim any funding applicable to your entitlement up to the end of the notice period, together with any additional fees which formed part of your childcare arrangement (contract).

## Complaints

Where parents/carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving their Fully-Funded Early Education and Childcare entitlement in the correct way (as set out in their funding agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities) a complaint can be submitted directly to the Preschool Manager. Please see our Complaints Procedure for more details. [Complaints 2024.pdf](#)

## Partnership working

The Admissions and Charging Policies are issued to all parents as part of the registration process and are on The Hamlet Pre-School website . They are also available as a hard copy or via email upon request to the preschool manager.

We work with parent and other organisations to ensure continuity of care for children and effective transitional arrangement to support children's learning and wellbeing when children are taking up their Fully funded Early Education and Childcare entitlement at more than one provider or on more than one site.

We work in partnership with parents, carers, childcare providers, the local authority, and other organisations to improve provision and outcomes for children in our setting. Where required we will seek parent/carer consent to collect, share and use your information in accordance with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations.

Our setting has made a Flourish Pledge which means we are working together with the local authority to make Flourish as shared ambition of everyone working to improve the lives of children and young people in Norfolk.

## F. Regulations (Health and Social Care Act) and other legal references

- Early Years Statutory Framework (latest version) [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

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- Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (latest version) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-education-and-childcare--2/early-education-and-childcare-effective-from-1-april-2025>
- Early years Entitlements: Operational Guidance for Local Authorities and Providers (latest version) [Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

**This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant Hamlet policies and accompanying procedures.**

Admission to, attendance at and Absence from Preschool Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Complaints Policy

General Data Protection Regulations Policy

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