


Mobile Phones and Portable Electronic Devices

Services covered by this policy:	General Pre-school Children's Service	The Hamlet at Home Adult Services
Post holder(s) responsible for this policy:	CEO	
Date approved:	22 nd September 2021	
Approved by:	CEO – Pauline Morgan	
Signed:		
To be reviewed:	September 2022	

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 and is part of the wider community.

The Hamlet is aware that use of mobile phones and other portable and wearable technology are part of everyday life and tools for communication, learning and supporting health and fitness. At the same time, we have to ensure that the safety of Hamlet Users is paramount. This policy is in place to reduce the risk of mobile technology being used in a way that compromises the right of everyone at The Hamlet to be happy and safe. All references to “mobile phones” in this policy include any personal mobile phone or electronic device capable of remote communication, such as a smart phone.

B. Purpose of this policy and why we have it

There is the possibility that staff engaging in phone calls, texting, web surfing, accessing social media or taking photos whilst at work could compromise the health and safety of Hamlet Users.

The Hamlet acknowledges that there are benefits of wearable technology to support health and fitness and use of watch / stopwatch facility.

The Hamlet will use this policy to:

- ensure the safety of everyone at The Hamlet through the promotion of safe and appropriate practice by establishing clear and robust guidelines for staff
- ensure that Hamlet Users are safe from being recorded without having given consent
- define acceptable use of mobile devices that is understood and adhered to without exception
- promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust guidelines

- balance potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones and other electronic recording devices are effective communication tools.

C. Scope of this policy

- The Hamlet Users – children
- The Hamlet Users – adults
- Parents/carers/home support staff of Hamlet Users
- The Hamlet staff
- The Hamlet Volunteers
- Educational or work placements e.g. Occupational Therapy or Nursing
- Visitors

D. Policy

Our policy is to prohibit the use of their own personal mobile devices for all staff, volunteers, parents/carers, and visiting professionals while at The Hamlet, for the protection of Hamlet Users. This includes taking photographs or videos. Failure to comply with this will be a disciplinary issue for staff.

E. Procedures and monitoring

Unacceptable use of devices by anyone should be reported to the manager in charge at the earliest opportunity.

Managers will follow The Hamlet disciplinary procedure if the breach relates to a staff member.

Staff and Volunteers

Mobile devices belonging to staff/volunteers working in or visiting Hamlet premises should be put in a secure place (away from Hamlet Users, in secure lockers) before the start of each shift. Messages or missed calls can then be retrieved during breaks.

When working offsite for the for The Hamlet, personal mobile devices can be carried on the person, but must be turned off and stored in a secure place e.g. bag.

Staff and volunteers are permitted to use their mobile devices during breaks/periods when they are in a separate place to Hamlet Users.

Staff and volunteers are permitted to give out The Hamlet's main telephone lines or the Out of Hours Club main mobile number as an emergency contact number should they need to. Staff who have a Hamlet mobile may give the number of the work phone.

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Where an employee is provided with a Hamlet mobile telephone for work purposes, the use of such a telephone, for business purposes only, is permitted. If the device has a camera this must only be used for work purposes. Any other use is prohibited. Personal calls are not permitted on these telephones except for the Out of Hours Club mobile phone in an emergency.

This policy is explained to staff and volunteers at induction, is on the staff portal on The Hamlet website.

Hamlet Users, parents/carers, visiting professionals, other visitors

Hamlet Users should only use their mobile devices for personal use and with guidance from staff.

All visitors to The Hamlet sites will be asked to only use their mobile device in case of emergency and away from Hamlet Users. A notice is in the reception at all sites alerting people to this effect.

Professionals visiting The Hamlet for work purposes may use their device in relation to this work but only after consultation with the manager in charge at the time of the visit. Guest wi-fi must be used for this purpose.

Holidays

Staff will accompany Hamlet Users on holidays which involves being with them 24 hours a day.

It will be accepted practice for staff to have their own devices with them, but these should be turned off.

Staff are permitted to give out The Hamlet's main telephone lines or the Out of Hours Club main mobile number as an emergency contact number should they need to.

Usage should be limited to break times and times away from Hamlet Users.

In the event of a member of staff having to share accommodation with a Hamlet User, it is accepted that there may be times when personal use of the phone is allowed. This does not extend to the taking of images / videos.

Monitoring

The use and effectiveness of the policy will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis and may be subject to change.

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

Data Protection Act 2018

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

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