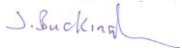


<b>Services covered by this policy:</b>	General Pre-school Children's Service	The Hamlet at Home Adult Services
<b>Post holder(s) responsible for this policy:</b>	Adults Service Operational Manager Children's Service Senior Manager Service Managers	
<b>Date approved:</b>	19/08/2025	
<b>Approved by:</b>	Jayne Buckingham	
<b>Signed:</b>		
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	August 2027	

## 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.

To grow and stay healthy children need to eat a nutritionally well-balanced diet. As an Early Years and childcare setting, we are in a strong position to influence and can contribute significantly to improving the health and well-being of children and young people.

Good nutrition in childhood can help to prevent a variety of health problems, both in the short term and later in life. There is increasing concern that many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre, fruit and vegetables.

The Hamlet is committed to supporting Hamlet Users to be as healthy as possible, which is why we extend this guidance to include our Short Breaks, Out of Hours and Adult Services

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

The Hamlet wants to share information with Hamlet Users and their representative around the content of a healthy packed lunch and the balance of food groups that should be provided in a packed lunch. This in order to positively promote the health and wellbeing of Hamlet User that attends. We want to support children and young people to foster a healthy attitude to food and

improve the nutritional quality of packed lunches in our services and the eating habits of all our Hamlet Users at lunchtime.

We want to develop an awareness in Hamlet Users, their representatives, staff and the wider community that The Hamlet takes a proactive approach to promoting healthy eating.

### **C. Scope of this policy**

- The Hamlet Users
- Hamlet User's representative
- Hamlet staff
- Hamlet Volunteers including Trustee's
- Educational or work placements e.g., Occupational Therapy or Nursing
- Visitors

### **D. Policy**

Whilst we recognise that some Hamlet Users may require a special or alternative diet, most Hamlet Users can develop healthy eating habits with support from staff and their representatives. The Hamlet will support Hamlet Users to develop healthy eating habits by using the NHS Eatwell guidance and following our own procedures to ensure Hamlet Users are encouraged to eat a balanced, healthy diet and are supported to eat safely.

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

#### **Lunchboxes**

Lunchboxes should be packed with foods that are nutritional. Guidance can be found below to aid Hamlet Users and their representatives in choosing items to put in their lunchboxes. Foods should be prepared in a way that supports the Hamlet User's ability to eat and any eating and drinking plans and/or professionals recommendations should be followed. Any Hamlet User requiring a special or alternative diet will have an in depth Eating and Drinking section in their [Support Plan](#).

#### **Allergies, Intolerances and Sensitivities**

The Hamlet takes Allergies, Intolerances and Sensitivities very seriously, please see [Allergies, Intolerances and Sensitivities Policy](#).

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### Storage of Packed Lunches

Hamlet Users and/or their representative are responsible for providing an appropriate packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. They are advised to include an ice pack.

The Hamlet will provide storage areas/facilities for packed lunch bags, in the most convenient and appropriate place possible. However, The Hamlet cannot take legal responsibility for foods prepared at home and then brought into services.

Hamlet Users and/or their representative are reminded to ensure all food containers and bags are labelled with their full name.

### Hot Food

The Hamlet is unable to heat/re-heat home prepared foods for food hygiene purposes. If Hamlet Users want to bring a home prepared meal, they must bring this in a suitable thermos flask or food container.

The Hamlet is able to re-heat shop brought ready meals providing the meal remains in its original packaging with the manufacturers reheating instructions. See [Food Safety and Hygiene Policy](#) for more information.

### Water bottles

Hamlet Users are encouraged to bring a water bottle into the setting for use throughout the day. These bottles can also be used for the purpose of off-site activities. If for any reason a water bottle is lost, or damaged, staff will inform the Hamlet Users and/or their representative as soon as possible in order for them to purchase a replacement bottle. Hamlet Users have access to clean drinking water throughout the day. All Hamlet Users are encouraged to drink water frequently throughout the day and during the lunchtime period.

### Snack time – Preschool Only

The Hamlet provides nutritious food at all snack times, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.

During snack time children and staff discuss being healthy and its compositions reflecting on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) guidance and home lives, this is also carried out into various food activities, story time and where possible offsite learning (visiting shops, market).

The Hamlet recognises that not all children may be ready to engage in these conversations so for them it is about making the most of every opportunity to practice autonomy, supported by a total communication approach.

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Staff model choice making with children and promote opportunity to explore favourite and new foods with them.

At the Hamlet we also recognise some children have severe avoidance of certain food types due to sensory and restrictive disorders relating to food. Staff will support children to progress at their pace when trying or introducing new foods. This will be led by the child and in full partnership with their families to maintain a positive association with food.

### **Lunchtime Facilities**

The Hamlet will provide an appropriate area where Hamlet Users can eat their packed lunch. Staff will support Hamlet Users across the lunchtime period. This will include helping Hamlet Users to think about the order in which they eat their lunch, e.g. choosing their sandwiches first. Hamlet Users will be encouraged to be independent. This will include opening packaging, pouring drinks and putting empty packaging in the bin, collecting their lunch boxes and replacing when finished.

We encourage Hamlet Users to maintain a high level of hygiene before, during and after eating ensuring all Hamlet Users wash their hands and clean their face.

### **Waste and Disposal**

For children - The Hamlet will, within reason, send any uneaten packed lunch food items back home. The rationale for this is that parents can also monitor what their child has consumed during the day and then raise any concerns over their child's food intake. This can be replicated for adults if the Hamlet User or their representative requires it. If their lunch bag is left at The Hamlet, these items will be disposed of due to hygiene reasons.

### **Lunchbox Packing Guidance**

A Hamlet Users packed lunch should be based on the 'Eatwell Plate' model which shows items in the 5 main food groups and can be found here: [The Eatwell Guide - NHS](#)

Using this guide, we have developed some recommendations below to help provide a balanced lunchbox.

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Try	Avoid
<b>Including 2 or more portions of starchy foods such as: Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta</b>  Examples of these could be – Sandwich made with sliced bread, pitta bread, wrap, chapatti or bread roll Pasta, Cous Cous or Rice A bagel A scone or current bun	Fizzy drinks, we will not be able to give these to children due to their high level of sugar and/or sweeteners and other additives  Fruit juices and smoothies as these are high in sugar
<b>Including one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables</b>  Examples of these could be – Carrot/Cucumber sticks, tomatoes, sliced peppers etc Fruit pot or puree An apple, orange, banana or pear	Confectionary such as chocolate, chocolate cover biscuits and cereal bars  Fried food and/or highly processed foods such as sausage rolls, Cornish pasties or chicken nuggets.
<b>Including 1 portion of Milk/dairy food</b>  Examples of these could be – A pot of yogurt, custard or rice pudding A small piece of cheese  2 triangles of spreadable cheese (this could be included in the sandwich)	Sending in nuts or nut containing products due to allergies we may have within the service
<b>Including 1 portion of Meat, Fish, Eggs, Beans or Pulses</b>  Examples of these could be – Slices of cooked meat such as ham or chicken/turkey breast Hard boiled egg Tuna, salmon, mackerel or sardines Hummus	High sugar foods such as sweets, jams, chocolate spread or flavoured popcorn  Whole uncut foods such as grapes, cherries, cherry tomatoes or blueberries. These items should always be cut up lengthways to avoid choking.
<b>General</b>  Using unsaturated oils and fats Providing a water bottle filled with water, milk or sugar free squash Providing baked crisps instead of fried crisps as these are a healthier option	

## **Adult Service and Out of Hours**

We will encourage the same healthy eating habits across all Hamlet Users, however we are aware that adult Hamlet Users have a right to make their own choices and accept the consequences of those choices. We will work with Hamlet Users and their families in order to educate, support and monitor a Hamlet Users eating and provide sessions to support their health and wellbeing as well as learning essential cooking skills to support a balanced diet. We also recognise that there may be occasions where Hamlet User's do not want to or are unable to eat a balanced diet and this will be written in their **Support Plan**. See **Mental Capacity Act Policy** for additional information.

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

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework
- Childcare Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

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