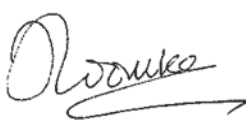


Admissions to, attendance at and absence from Early Explorers Preschool

Services covered by this policy:	Pre-school Children's Service
Post holder(s) responsible for this policy:	Senior Manager Children's Service Early Years Manager
Date approved:	29 May 2024
Approved by:	Sue Coombe (Chair of Trustees)
Signed:	
To be reviewed:	July 2025

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.

We aim to make our Early Explorers Preschool accessible to and inclusive of children and families from all sections of the local community through open and fair procedures.

We are committed to being as inclusive as possible regarding our admissions.

The Hamlet will ensure that our preschool takes account of the individual's needs and circumstances. We understand that good attendance sets good boundaries for the future and plays a big part in supporting children to feel safe and happy.

We also strive to be a provider of funded childcare without it impacting the quality of our provision.

B. Purpose of this policy and why we have it

This policy ensures that families and other professionals understand the importance and value of a consistent, well supported admission into pre-school. We want to meet the expectations of OFSTED and make sure that children do not miss out on their entitlement. Our policy and accompanying procedures ensure that we can respond to concerns in a proactive and consistent way.

This policy also outlines our approach to preschool admissions, our admissions criteria, and our plans for offering funded childcare in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

C. Scope of this policy

- The Hamlet Users – children
- Parents/carers and extended family members of children attending preschool
- All staff
- External professionals involved with the education, health and care needs and development of preschool children.

- Other early years/primary school setting where the child may have previously attended or is moving on to.

D. Policy

The Hamlet's Early Explorers preschool ensures it is accessible to all sections of the community, through open, fair, and clearly communicated procedures.

We ensure that information about our preschool is accessible – in written and spoken form and where appropriate in different languages. Where necessary we will try to provide information through signing or an interpreter.

We promote smooth and stress-free transitions to the setting, ensuring both children and their parents/carers are happy.

We care for children between the ages of 2 and 4 years of age, and the numbers and ages of children admitted to the preschool comply with the legal space requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/early-years-foundation-stage-for-group-and-school-providers.pdf)

When considering admissions, we are mindful of staff to child ratios and the facilities available within the preschool.

The Hamlet is registered with Ofsted to provide up to 40 places at any one time.

We ensure Early Education is offered within the National parameters on flexibility as set out in Section A2 of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities. [Early education and childcare \(applies from 1 April 2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/early-years-foundation-stage-for-group-and-school-providers.pdf)

Our preschool and its practices are described in inclusive terms to make it clear that we welcome both fathers and mothers, other relations, and other carers, including childminders.

We support individuals, regardless of their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, background, religion, ethnicity, or competence in spoken English.

E. Procedures and monitoring

Enquiries

Children can be referred by parents/carers, social care professionals, health care professionals, school/nursery staff or any other professional working with the child and/or their family.

Referrals are made by emailing admin@thehamletcharity.org.uk or by visiting the centre.

Parents /carers are invited to complete an expression of interest form to register their interest in a preschool place. This will be held on file until allocations are made. The Early Years Manager will respond via email to acknowledge receipt of the expression of interest form.

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Allocation of places

We currently offer a maximum of 14 spaces per session from Monday to Friday during term time.

Parents are asked to specify their preferred days. They must book a minimum of 15 hours per week. (We may not be able to accommodate all requests for preferred days).

We allocate places in the Spring/Summer Term of each year for the start of the academic term (September).

When the group is full (based on either total number of children per session or the maximum number of children who can be accommodated due to their identified support needs) details of new applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

Additional and ad hoc sessions, subject to availability can be booked, and this is on a first come, first served basis.

Families are referred to our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policies concerning the SEND support on offer to children and how we support families to choose the right setting for their child with SEND. [SEND 2024.pdf](#)

We do not discriminate against a child or their family, or prevent entry to our setting, on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act (2010. These are: disability, race, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, age; - pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership).

Waiting list

Our waiting list is based on the date we receive the 'expression of interest form' In addition to this, our allocation of places may take in to account the following:

- Individual support needs of the child
- Particular circumstances affecting the family.
- Referrals from outside agencies
- Siblings previously or already attending the preschool
- Preferred dates expressed by parents.
- The needs of the children already attending the sessions.

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When a space becomes available, the Early Years Manager will consider the needs of all the children currently at the setting and the needs of the children on the waiting list before determining who will be allocated the place, taking all factors into consideration.

Any requests to increase sessions for children already attending the preschool will be allocated before any offer of places to new starters.

Registration process.

- A visit will be made for the child and family to meet with the Early Years Manager and/or SENDco. This is to show the prospective family around the setting and discuss their child's needs and places available.
- Once a place is confirmed, the parent/carer must complete/provide the following before their child can access preschool sessions.
 - Registration form
 - Permissions/consent forms
 - Core Assessment
 - Proof of date of birth (birth certificate) This is to confirm the child has reached the eligible age for the funding entitlement.
 - Completed funding forms (if applicable)
 - Any Eligibility letter and funding code regarding local authority 2-year-old funding or 30-hour funding.
 - Health, care, and feeding plans (if applicable)
 - Signed letter of contract between the parents and The Hamlet.

[Note- a copy of the birth certificate will not be retained but may be requested again at a later date]

If appropriate a home visit will be arranged to observe the child in their familiar environment and get to know them better. Once all documents and visits have taken place and The Hamlet is confident, we can meet the needs of the child, a confirmation of place letter/email will be sent to parents. All registration documents will need to be completed before the child starts their preschool sessions.

Our Admissions and Charging Policies are issued to all parents/carers as part of the registration process. They are also available upon request to the Preschool Manager or our Finance Team.

Early Education is offered within the national parameters as set out in Section A2 of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities [Early education and childcare \(applies from 1 April 2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) –

The Hamlet will ensure that:

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- No session is longer than 10 hours
- No minimum session length applies (subject to the requirements of our Ofsted Early Years Registration).
- We will not provide childcare before 6.00am or after 8.00pm
- 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).

The Hamlet offers up to a maximum of 25 funded hours per week.

Funded hours can be claimed –

Day	Maximum hours per day	Times
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

There are up to 14 fully funded places per day for children.

Settling in Sessions

Parents/carers may stay with their children as long as necessary for parent, child, and The Hamlet's staff team to feel comfortable that the child will receive the best possible care. The first session is seen as an induction session and parents stay with their child to enable them to become familiar with the group.

We understand that, for some children, parents/carers staying for sessions may be confusing and prolong the settling in period. In these circumstances we would ask the family to remain onsite (e.g., in The Hive) and be available for the duration of the session. Parents/carers who wish to leave the building are welcome to do so as long as the Pre-school Manager/Lead practitioner agrees, all the required documentation is completed and signed, and they have spoken to their Key Person. A plan must be in place for settling their child into the pre-school.

Each child will be allocated a Key Person. The Key Person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into The Hamlet. They will work with the parent/carer to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care, and learning.

The Hamlet has arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These arrangements include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND.

This means we will –

- Follow the requirements or the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework to provide an inclusive environment for all children and their families, together with the requirements to comply with the Equalities Act and the Special Educational

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Needs and Disability Code of Practice [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25-years)

- Monitor and review children's progress and development in partnership with families. Where a child appears to be behind expected levels of development or where a child's progress gives cause for concern a graduated approach will be adopted with 4 stages of action: Assess, Plan, Do and Review. [fileoutput.asp \(norfolk.gov.uk\)](#).
- Provide information to parents/carers on how their child's development is being supported and in agreement, consent will be sought to apply for additional funding and request support from outside agencies where necessary.
- Utilise the SEND inclusion fund (SENDIF) and Disabilities Access Fund (DAF) to deliver effective support.
- Publish our contribution to the 'SEN Local Offer' in Norfolk. This is available on the Norfolk Community Directory and the Preschool Manager to ensure information is available to parents so they can make choices about the right childcare provision for their child with SEN. [SEND Local Offer - Norfolk County Council](#)

We aim to identify all children that may require the support of additional funding such as Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Disability Access Fund (DAF), SEND Inclusion Fund (SENDIF) and any local available funding streams with a view to submit a claim/application to support and improve their outcomes. This will be in partnership with families and consent will be sought prior to submitting a claim/application.

To ensure a smooth transition into The Hamlet for the child, we will work closely with parents/carers to discuss and agree how a child's overall care will work in practice where an entitlement is split across different providers, and where possible when parents/carers transfer their funding claim to a new setting.

We will work in partnership with parents, carers, childcare providers, the local authority, and other organisations to improve provision and outcomes for children at The Hamlet. 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.

Attendance and Absence

On occasions, children may be too ill to attend our service. It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to contact The Hamlet by telephone before the start of a session on the first day of absence, so the absence can be registered as authorised, and the reasons noted. Parents/carers are requested to update staff regularly throughout a long absence.

Any request for a planned absence (longer than 2 weeks) must be made in writing to the Pre-School Manager. Due to the high demand for childcare places at The Hamlet, we cannot guarantee that a request will be accepted and there is a possibility that the child's place will be reallocated. If a child's place is funded by the local authority, we must inform them of any request of absence. They reserve the right to withdraw funding for this period.

If a child is absent from pre-school without notification or has an unauthorised absence for two weeks or longer, Norfolk County Council may not fund the space and parents/carers of that child will have to pay for those sessions missed. The Hamlet reserves the right to offer the place to another child and a letter will be sent to the parents/carers to this effect.

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The Hamlet will invoice parents/carers directly for these sessions. There may be some circumstances where funding would continue for a prolonged period, e.g.: a prolonged illness. A request for funding to continue would need to be submitted to the council to authorise this long-term absence.

If a child who is monitored and supported by Children's Services (e.g., with a child protection plan) is absent from a session, we will inform the child's social worker, Family Support Worker or Key Worker of their absence and, if known, the given reasons, to comply with our safeguarding policies and procedures.

We record all absences and known reasons for absence on each child's confidential file. Attendance will be checked by the local authority if a child placed by them is in receipt of a funded nursery place.

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

Legal References and Context (latest versions)

Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (latest version [Early education and childcare \(applies from 1 April 2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Early Years Statutory framework (Latest Version) [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

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

Preschool fees and charges policy
Key Person Policy
Safeguarding Children policy
General Data Protection Regulations Policy

Date approved by the Board: 29 May 2024

Date of next review: July 2025

Post holder(s) responsible for this policy: Jayne Buckingham

Signed by Chair of the Board of Trustees:



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