

Admissions to, attendance at and absence from Pre-School

1. The Hamlet Charter

In line with The Hamlet Charter, we believe that everyone at The Hamlet should be happy, safe and part of a community where there is respect and value for the unique individual. The Hamlet will ensure that our pre-school 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 keeping children safe and happy.

2. 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 entitlements. Our policy and accompanying procedures ensure we respond to concerns in a proactive and consistent way.

3. Scope of this policy

This policy is intended for:

- the children who attend pre-school;
- the parents/carers and extended families of those children who attend pre-school;
- all pre-school staff;
- external professionals involved with the educational, health and care needs and development of children at pre-school;
- the early years settings that children at pre-school may have already attended before coming to us;
- the early years settings to which they are moving when leaving pre-school.

4. Policy

To ensure that admissions to, attendance at and absence from The Hamlet's Pre-School are subject to an open, fair and non-discriminatory process.

To 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.

5. Implementation 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 calling 01603 766566 during office hours (Monday – Friday 9am – 4.30pm), emailing admin@thehamletcharity.org.uk or visiting the centre.

- Parents /carers will be invited to complete an expression of interest form at this point to register the interest in a childcare place which will be recorded and responded to by a senior member of the Children's Service team.

Funding

- Our setting offers 15 government funded hours for entitled children.
- We will work with parents to ensure that, as far as possible, the hours that can be taken as free provision are convenient for parents' working hours.
- Pre-school is open term time only, and session times are 9.15am - 2.15pm or 9.30am to 2.30pm.
- Sessions are 5 hours in length. (There is no minimum length and sessions are never longer than 10 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).

Allocation of places

- When the group reaches the maximum number of children at each session, details of new applicants will be placed on a waiting list.
- When a space becomes available, the Pre-school Manager/Lead Practitioner will consider the needs of all the children currently at the setting and the needs of the children on the waiting list in determining who will be allocated the place, taking all factors into consideration.
- The Pre-school Manager will prioritise 'Children in Need' as defined by the Children Act 1989 with particular regard to children aged over three whose local mainstream setting is unable to meet their needs.
- An appointment will be made for the child and family to meet with a senior member of Early Years staff. This is the chance to have a look around the setting and discuss their child's needs and places available.
- 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.

We aim to identify all children who may attract any additional funding such as Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Disability Access Funding (DAF), SEND Inclusion Fund and any locally available funding streams with a view to submitting a claim/application to support and improve their outcomes.

Registration Process

This policy is issued to all families as part of the registration process. It is also available via our webpage.

- Parent/carer completes an expression of interest form.
- Once a place is confirmed, the parent/carer must complete / provide the following before their child can access the pre-school:
 - Registration form
 - Permissions / Consent form
 - 'Getting to Know You' booklet
 - Proof of date of birth (birth certificate)

- Any Eligibility letter and funding code regarding local authority funded spaces (2-year-old funding only)
[Note- a copy of the birth certificate will not be retained but may be requested again at a later date].
- A home visit will be arranged to observe the child in their familiar environment and get to know the family better.
- Once all documents and visits have taken place, a letter will be sent to the family to confirm the allocated place.

Settling in Sessions

- Parents/carers may stay with their children as long as necessary for parent and child to feel comfortable. The first session is seen as an induction session and parents stay with their child to enable them to become familiar with the group. At this time, the appropriate paperwork will have been completed and staff begin to build their relationship with the child and become familiar with the child's needs and abilities.
- 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 available for the duration of the session.
- 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.
- If the child has a disability/ complex health need, it will be necessary for a plan to be in place to ensure continuity of care and to ensure that the staff have had time to build up a relationship with the child.
- Parent/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.
- Fees are published in the pre-school prospectus and reviewed on an annual basis. Parents/carers will be given advance notice of any increase.
- Fees are usually payable termly in advance. If this causes the parent/carer any difficulties, they should talk to the Pre-School Manager.

Cancellations and changes

We ask parents to give suitable notice if their child is no longer able to attend the pre-school.

- We require written notice of 1 term for the discontinuation of attendance once a place has been agreed and paperwork signed.
- We require written notice of 6 weeks to request changes to the agreed sessions, i.e. change of days. *Note, we may not be able to accommodate the requests.*
- Fees will be payable or grant claimed by us until the end of the notice period.
- We ask parents/carers to contact us as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend a session. (See 'Fees and Charging' Policy).

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 a funded pre-school place due to holiday or an unauthorised absence, Norfolk County Council will not fund the space and parents/carers of that child will have to pay for those sessions missed. The Hamlet will invoice for these sessions. There may be some circumstances where funding would continue for a prolonged period, e.g.: an 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 are required to inform the child's social 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 Charity Log file.
- If a child is absent from pre-school without notification for two weeks, 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.
- Attendance will be checked by the local authority if a child placed by them is in receipt of a funded nursery place.

6. Link to any accompanying procedures

7. Legal references

- Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (latest version)
- Early years Entitlements: Operational Guidance for Local Authorities and Providers (latest version)

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

Date approved by the Board: September 2020

Date of next review: 2022

Post holder responsible for this policy: Senior Manager Services Manager

Signed by Chair of the Board of Trustees:

