



Room Booking Policy

Arrangements for Review:

Pat Bacon is responsible for the implementation of this policy and conducting regular reviews. This policy was adopted in July 2010 and will be reviewed in **March 2011**

For room hire arrangements relating to Supervised Contact, please see our separate policy on Supervised Contact.

Policy Context:

At Seashells we are committed to using our facilities to the full and making the most of our accommodation. We will always give priority to our own and core offer activities when deciding how best to use our rooms, but there will be occasions when we agree to hire out rooms within the centre to external organisations, providing their activities are in line with our ethos and objectives. In some cases we will charge for the hire of rooms, as a means of supplementing the funds we have available to run children's centre activities: this information is set out in full below.

We will not allow our premises to be used by other agencies for commercial, business or trade purposes other than the provision of childcare or directly related activities connected to the purpose of children's centres, nor will we allow them to be used for political activities.

Anyone who wishes to hire a room(s) at the Seashells should complete the application form attached at Appendix 1 and sign their agreement to follow our terms and conditions of hire (Appendix 2).

Definition: An outside organisation is a body whose activities do not come under the control of the children's centre.

Aims:

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that priority for room use is given to centre activities and services that will be of most benefit to children and families in the local area, and that centre facilities are not used for inappropriate purposes;
- Set out the terms and conditions under which we will hire out room(s) within the centre both for partners' use and for private hire, including the process for booking rooms, our charging arrangements, insurance, and our expectations of hirers to comply with the centre's other policies;
- And safeguard all those using the centre by ensuring that anyone hiring a room(s) follow our health and safety, fire, child protection, confidentiality and hygiene policies and other related protocols

a) PRIVATE HIRE:

Applying for temporary room hire at Seashells

- Anyone wishing to hire a room(s) at Seashells should complete the booking form attached an Appendix 1 and hand it in to reception. This applies whether the proposed booking is for daytime or evening use, and regardless of whether a charge will be made. Standard charges for hire are set out in the following table, but the Centre Manager reserves the right to waive the charges for hire in certain cases.

- The Centre Manager will decide whether to accept the booking based on the proposed use of the room(s), whether it is consistent with the ethos of the centre, whether sufficient space is available for the activity to take place without disturbing other planned centre activities, and whether the booking would pose any risk to other users in the building at the same time.
- If the booking is accepted by the Centre Manager, the hirer should be sent a copy of the Terms and Conditions of Hire (Appendix 2), and return a signed copy with payment where applicable. This will be taken as acceptance of the hire conditions and will confirm the booking.
- Hirers **must** arrange their own **Public Liability Insurance** to cover themselves against claims for personal injury or damage to/loss of property arising out of any negligent act by persons running the activity whilst on the premises.
- It is the responsibility of the centre manager to ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for any *activity* proposed by external staff hiring rooms, and to review this with the agency involved where there are concerns. External staff members **themselves** who are using the centre should be covered by their own agency's Employers' Liability policy.
- **Commercial organisations** (i.e. profit-making organisations) must make their own arrangements for this and the centre manager must see evidence of cover from the hirer's insurers or insurance brokers before allowing access to the centre.

Temporary hire arrangements

Facilities are normally available at least ten minutes before the hire period commences and ten minutes after the hire period ends. This should allow sufficient time for preparation, changes to room layout etc. If a hirer needs longer than this, he/she will need to increase the booking times so there is time for setting up the room and clearing away afterwards.

Short term/on-going use of rooms:

Short term/on-going use of rooms should only be arranged where there is either a connection with the operation of the children's centre, associated activities or a requirement by wider Children's Services (e.g. for supervised contact sessions).

Public entertainment licence:

Where any form of entertainment is proposed the organisation arranging the event need to check the need for a public entertainment licence with the local district council.

b) HIRE BY PARTNER AGENCIES

- As for private hire bookings, it will be at the discretion of the Centre Manager to accept bookings from other Partners. Standard charges for hire are set out in the following table, but the Centre Manager reserves the right to waive the charges for hire in certain cases.
- All partner agencies should complete the booking form in the same way as for a private hire request. Where short-term / on-going use is required (for example to host supervised contact sessions with families), the agency involved should contact the Centre Manager directly to discuss the requirements and determine whether it will be possible to make a block booking of the facilities. It is up to the agency booking the rooms to specify when booking whether there are any particular requirements of the room / venue, and to make clear the scope of the proposed activity so that the Centre Manager can assess any risks involved.
- It is the responsibility of the centre manager to ensure that there is adequate insurance cover for any *activity* proposed by external staff hiring rooms, and to review this with the agency involved where there are concerns. External staff members **themselves** who are using the centre should be covered by their own agency's Employers' Liability policy.
- All partner agencies who wish to use the centre facilities should ensure that their staff members have up to date Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosures that demonstrate their suitability to be left unsupervised with children.
- All partner agencies should follow the policies implemented by the centre e.g. Health and Safety, Hygiene, Behaviour, Medication, First Aid, Missing Children etc. These policies are available at reception and on our website
- *KCC partners have signed up to the Kent and Medway Three Tier Model for Information Sharing, available at: www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Policy/ig_home.cfm. All partners using the centre facilities should follow these protocols.*
- When staff from other agencies who are working at the centre uncover concerns about children or families that they meet at the centre, they should where possible inform the Centre Manager, by completing a green Concerns Form, as well as informing their own agency to ensure that a joined-up response can be made across services.

c) Charging Policy:

Charges for room hire at Seashells will ultimately be at the discretion of the Centre Manager. There is no charge for organisations delivering services as part of the Children's Centre core offer requirement and discretionary rates are available for Other voluntary, community, not for profit or charitable organisations & Children's Services. The table below gives an indication of our standard charges for room hire for 2009-10. Charges will be reviewed annually.

Standard Charges For Room Hire:

Room	Hourly Charge Monday-Friday 8am – 7pm	Hourly Charge Monday-Friday 7pm onwards and Weekends
Dolphin & Turtle	£25	£35
Turtle	£15	£25
Dolphin	£15	£25
Octopus	£7.50	£17.50
Mermaid	£5	£15
Mermaid (with obs)	£7.50	£17.50
Seahorse	£5	£15

Charges are invoiced to the Hirer and fees should be paid within 30 days of the date of the invoice.

d) Cancelling a hire agreement

Seashells reserves the right to cancel any hire without notice. However, every effort should be made to give reasonable notice of cancellation to a hire and wherever possible, alternative facilities should be offered. We will aim to give four weeks' notice, subject to exceptional circumstances.

We will decide whether a cancellation fee is due when a hirer cancels a hire. Disputes are best avoided by making expectations clear in the conditions of hire issued at the time of booking. The following cancellation charges are applied:

Cancellation Charges

10 working days written notification – 25% of hire charge

5 working days written notification – 50% of hire charge

2 working days written notification – 100% of hire charge

The Centre Manager has the discretion to waive this charge in exceptional circumstances

e) Health and safety

- **Risk Assessments:** Children's centre managers will need to conduct an appropriate risk assessment to ensure the safety of children and persons undertaking activities at the centre that is based on:

- their knowledge of the premises
- those who will be using them
- the purpose of use

The Centre Manager will need to decide whether or not any hirer is suitable, and this may include checking whether they are appropriately CRB checked and trained, and who will be responsible for any children who may be involved.

- **Access:** Areas of the building to which access is not required, should be secured but the impact of this on fire evacuation routes needs to be considered. Particular care needs to be taken when building works are being carried out in any part of the premises. Where possible, a member of staff should be available to ensure the security of the premises and avoid the need to issue keys.
- **Community kitchen**
- The Community Kitchen may be used by the hirer if agreed in advance as part of the booking. Hirers should be given a copy of the centre's Health and Safety and Hygiene policies and ensure that they follow all guidelines re. preparation and storage of food / bottles, and that they leave the facilities clean and tidy. Centre staff reserve the right to supervise food preparation to ensure hirers comply with food safety guidelines.
- If parents/carers/ families are using the kitchens to prepare food, for example as part of Healthy Eating / Cooking workshops, then they should be supervised by staff members with appropriate Food Hygiene qualifications at all times to ensure they follow good practice in food handling and hygiene.
- The centre should advise the hirer at the time of booking whether they will need to supply their own utensils for the kitchen or whether they will be available to use from the kitchen. Food products and equipment belonging to the centre should be stored separately in secure cupboard(s) / fridges wherever possible.
- No children are allowed in the kitchen facilities unsupervised at any time.
- **Bathroom facilities:** Hirers should follow the guidelines set out in the centre's Hygiene policy regarding personal hygiene, ensuring that all clinical waste (e.g. nappies) are disposed of in the correct bins, and that all children / adults wash hands after using the facilities. If there are any problems with the bathroom facilities the hirer should advise a member of staff.

Policy Implementation:

- All staff are made aware of this policy as part of their induction, reviews, and training.
- Parents / carers and partner agencies are made aware of this policy and know how to access it.
- This policy is linked to the centre's other policies including: Health and Safety, Risk Management, First Aid, Emergency Closure, Healthy Eating, Sickness, and Parental Partnership policies.

Arrangements for complaint:

These are defined in our Complaints Policy.

Appendix 2: Terms and Conditions of Hire

1. Acceptance of conditions

The hiring of accommodation/facilities/premises is permitted only on the conditions outlined in the following regulations. Acceptance of the hire agreement is deemed to be acceptance of these conditions.

2. Compliance with conditions

The Hirer (the person or body to whom the hire is granted) shall be responsible for compliance with these conditions.

3. Applications

Applications for the hire of premises should normally be made at least three weeks in advance.

4. The Hirer shall satisfy himself that the facilities to be hired are suitable for the purposes. When confirming the booking the hirer must provide a room set up and approximate numbers of people attending. If a room plan is not provided then a default plan will be used. Please ensure that we are notified of all additional requirements such as projector, flipchart, TV etc at least 7 days before the booking.

5. The use of the premises must not interfere with the proper working of Seashells or impair its efficiency. In particular the Hirer acknowledges that he/she will not have exclusive use of the site.

6. Fabric and fittings

The fabric and fittings (including electrical installations) and contents of the premises shall not be interfered with in any way. The hirer shall, at the end of the hire period, leave the accommodation in a tidy condition, all equipment being returned to the correct place of storage. Any equipment used in the community kitchen should be appropriately cleaned or washed up and then put away.

7. The Hirer is responsible for the safe guarding and safe keeping of all items belonging to the Hirer, its guests/delegates or third parties engaged by it. The children's centre accepts no responsibility for such items.

8. No hot drinks will be available in any room where there are children present.

9. Children should not have access to the community kitchen at any time unless as part of an age appropriate cookery session for children.

10. The Hirer is responsible for ensuring that all members of the group are aware of the emergency exits, cooperating with fire drills and not moving or tampering with fire safety equipment.

11. Storage

Storage facilities cannot usually be provided. When Hirers are permitted to leave equipment on the premises, they do so entirely at their own risk.

12. Hirer's property

Furniture and apparatus required may be brought on to the premises at the Hirer's own risk. Hirers shall not bring on to the premises, without the prior consent of the Centre Manager, any article of an inflammable or explosive nature, nor any article producing an offensive smell, nor any other substance, apparatus, or article of a dangerous nature.

13. The Hirer shall indemnify Sheerness Children & Families Centre Ltd against all claims for damages, compensation and/or costs in respect of:

- (i) bodily injury or illness to Third Parties, and/or
- (ii) damage to Third Party property caused by or arising out of or being incidental to the Hirer's use of the premises.

14. The Hirer shall be responsible for loss or damage to the premises and its contents that are the property of Sheerness Children & Families Centre Ltd

15. The Hirer shall arrange adequate public liability insurance cover.

16. Refusal of hire

The Centre Manager may refuse an application to hire the premises if:

- a) The premises are required by Sheerness Children & Families Centre Ltd.
- b) There has been any damage to the property, or breach of these conditions during previous use of the premises by the hirer.
- c) For any other reason the Centre Manager deems it necessary or expedient to refuse the application.

17. Cancellation by management

Seashells reserves the right to cancel any hire without notice. However, we will aim to give at least 4 weeks notice to the hirer, should it become necessary to cancel or postpone a letting, subject to exceptional circumstances.

18. Cancellation by the Hirer

The Hirer must give at least four weeks' notice of cancellation to the Centre Manager. If any shorter period of notice is given, the following cancellation charges apply:

- 10 working days written notification – 25% of hire charge
- 5 working days written notification – 50% of hire charge
- 2 working days written notification – 100% of hire charge

19. Payment of charges

All hire charges must be paid in advance. The children's centre manager reserves the right, on proper notification, to invoice the hirer for any charges arising from excessive cleaning time incurred as a result of the hirer failing to leave the accommodation in a reasonable condition, or for repair of the premises or equipment damaged by the hirer, or resulting from the hirer failing to vacate the premises by the time stipulated in the hire form. The hirer shall, if so demanded, pay at the time of booking a refundable deposit to be held by the children's centre against costs unavoidably incurred as the result of insufficient notice of the cancellation of a booking, any damage caused by the hirer, or additional cleaning required as a result of the premises not being left in a reasonably tidy condition. The proportion of the deposit to be retained will be decided by the children's centre manager and their decision will be final.

20. Statutory requirements

(i) All statutory requirements, including those relating to health and safety and public entertainments, must be strictly fulfilled by the Hirer. Film, music, dancing, indoor sporting events and stage events may be considered to be regulated entertainment and, as such, are licensable activities which require authorisation from the local licensing authority. For all regulated entertainment, it is the Hirer's responsibility to inform the local Licensing Authority and obtain the appropriate licence. This applies if tickets are to be sold at the door or advertised to the public, but also if tickets are offered to friends and neighbours or even if admission is free and open to all.

21. Attendance and behaviour

The Hirer shall ensure that the number of persons using the premises does not exceed that for which the application was made and approved.