



# **OVER THE WALL**

**a seriousfun camp**

## **MISSING CAMPER POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

**Over The Wall recognises the potential for campers to go missing whilst in our care and the potential danger they could be in should this occur.**

**We will take all preventative measures to minimise such an occurrence and will act swiftly and decisively when a camper is reported missing to help ensure they are found safe and well.**

Policy date: February 2023  
Author: Kelly Campbell – Camp Director  
Status: Active  
Reviewed: Kelly Campbell – Operation Manager  
Next Review: February 2025

## **Policy brief & purpose**

Over The Wall (OTW) recognises the potential for campers to go missing whilst in our care and the potential danger they could be in should this occur. This policy outlines the preventative measures we take to minimise that risk and the direct actions we will apply in the event of such an incident.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Campers and Critical Incident at Camp policies and procedures.

To achieve the highest level of safety and wellbeing for our campers we work closely with the facility managers where we operate our Camp programmes.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to any camper in attendance at an Over The Wall residential camp.

## **Definitions**

'Camper' is any person (not a volunteer or member of staff) in attendance at an Over The Wall Camp; this includes family members in attendance at family camps.

## **Staff duties**

Staff and volunteers will comply fully with our Safeguarding Campers policy, practices and procedures as the basis for protecting the safety and well-being of our campers.

## **Communication**

OTW staff and volunteers will be briefed on this policy and its procedures at each camp location. There will be one exercise at each camp during volunteer training to test our response and this will be recorded in the Camp Incident Log.

In the event of a missing camper occurrence falling within the definition of a 'critical incident' the procedures as outlined in the Critical Incident Management policy and procedures will be followed.

### **1. Mitigation measures**

The proactive measures outlined in **Appendix 1** describe the measures we put in place to minimise the risk of campers going missing.

### **2. Preparation and planning**

Each site is visited annually, and the risk assessment is updated. OTW holds up to date maps of all sites. Search areas are identified on maps to be used in the event of a Missing Camper Search; these areas are identified as 'A' areas (high risk) and 'B' areas (medium/low risk).

On arrival, camp staff and volunteers undertake a comprehensive site tour, with particular attention paid to high risk or remote areas and areas with road access or a point of access. Along with a practice drill, training to familiarise staff and volunteers with the Missing Camper Procedure is conducted prior to camper arrival. **Appendix 2 outlines the pre camper preparation.**

Volunteers who will take the role of Search Team in the event of a Missing Camper will be identified on the team list with a \*. The number of searchers will be dependent on the number of high-risk areas.

There is a Missing Camper box, which contains equipment and information which may be needed during a Missing Camper scenario. **Appendix 3** outlines Missing Camper box contents.

### **3. When a camper is found to be missing**

When a camper is found to be missing, the person identifying the occurrence should immediately contact the Camp Coordinator.

- A member of the Support team will be identified as the Missing Camper Incident Manager. This is most likely to be the most senior member of staff in the Support Team.
- Ascertain where the camper was last seen and quickly retrace the steps of the camper and the group.
- Immediate liaison with Beach Patrol to ascertain any potential clinical issues.
- Ask all groups to perform a head count and report back when radioed, to double check the camper has not mistakenly joined another group.
- If the camper is not found at this stage the Missing Camper Procedure (**Appendix 4**) will be followed

### **4. Search teams**

- Search teams will be provided with radios and if necessary, torches. They will receive a map with an identified search area and search instructions pertaining to this area.
- Searchers are requested to conduct a 360-degree open door search.
- Searchers are advised to be mindful of their own personal safety and not to put themselves in any position of risk when searching which could itself become an incident.
- Whilst in an ideal situation, searchers will search in pairs, the size of the site may mean that they need to search individually. At all times, finding the camper promptly and maintaining their safety is the highest priority.
- A member of the OTW Staff Team will record the names of the searchers, the time and the area they are assigned, and all information is relayed about the incident.
- Communications for the incident will be managed on a dedicated radio channel to relay messages without the remaining campers being aware of the situation.

### **5. Contacting the police**

If the missing camper has not been located after the initial searches have been carried out, as outlined above, a Critical Incident will be called. If the camper has not been found after 20 minutes then Police should be called. Photographs of the missing camper should be printed off and made available for the Police before their arrival. It should also be ascertained if the missing camper has access to a mobile phone and if so, the

number and provider should be obtained and passed to the Police. ***Before this, if there is any suspicious element to the incident, the Police must be notified immediately.***

## **6. Post Search**

The Incident Manager will work closely with the camper and the camper's team to identify the root cause of the camper leaving the group. The camper will be given the support and time needed to explain what led to this situation. In conjunction with the medical and psychosocial team, the Incident Manager will decide what further action is required, including whether it is safe for the camper to remain at camp.

A member of staff will contact the camper's parents/guardians to inform them of the situation and any further actions that might be required.

## **7. Recording Keeping**

All missing camper related incidents, including practice drills, will be recorded in the Incident Log for that camp.

In the event of a Missing Camper incident, a detailed log should be maintained as described in the Critical Incident Management policy and procedures. **See Appendix 5 for the Missing Camper Event Log.**

Ofsted must be notified of any camper who goes missing.

## **8. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed biannually for currency and accuracy by the Operations manager or who the Operations Manager delegates the task to. This does not prevent any changes taking place to this policy at any other time due to changes in practice or legislation.

## APPENDIX 1

### STEPS TAKEN TO MINIMISE RISK

#### **Camper Application Forms and Screening**

The application form for those wishing to attend camp is comprehensive and seeks to actively identify any psychosocial or behavioural issues which may impact on a child or young person's ability to participate within the camp environment. This includes, but is not restricted to, the identification of known disorders or diagnoses which may impact upon a child or young person's well-being and safety whilst at camp.

OTW clinical and operations staff examine all applications and contact parents or health and social care professionals to clarify and discuss any psychosocial or behavioural issues being experienced by a child or young person. One outcome from this is that we can identify children and young people who may be at risk and unsuited to the services we provide.

#### **Pre Camp Information**

Successful applicants receive an information pack prior to attending their allocated Camp session. The information pack contains important details that aim to set the child or young person up for a positive and successful experience at Camp. Parents/guardians are asked to review the 'Camp Rules', 'Behavioural Challenges', and 'Safeguarding Guidelines' with their child so they are aware of expectations and responsibilities while at Camp.

#### **Liaison with local services**

Over The Wall will notify the local police force, hospital and social care provider that it will be operating in the area, 1-2 weeks prior to camp.

#### **Camper reception**

A photograph of each child will be uploaded to their CampSite profile before the start of camp. This can and should be made available to searchers.

#### **Staff and Volunteer Training**

All staff and volunteers are provided with training on a range of issues including the procedures outlined in this policy and our Safeguarding Campers Policy and Procedures. A Missing Camper 'drill' will be completed as part of the training that volunteers receive prior to every camp.

On arrival at every site, and before the volunteers and campers arrive, the staff team will do a walk round of the whole site. Identifying high risk areas, any changes of note, check that maps are up to date and relevant and consider the missing camper procedure in the context of the environment they are in.

#### **Team Rules**

When campers arrive at camp, they are placed in teams based on age and gender. On opening night, the whole camp gets together to welcome and introduce the Camp session. OTW's 'Camp Rules' are reiterated to the whole group during this time. One of the first activities carried out by individual teams is to sit down sit down with their Team Leader and Teammates and identify their (the camper's) 'Team Rules'. Team Rules are written down and are the camper's definition of what is and is not acceptable behaviour at camp.

## **Camper Supervision and Two Adult Policy**

OTW operate across camp a ratio of 1:1 for adults and campers. In any situation where a camper may have to be on their own away from other campers, there will be at least two adult volunteers and/or staff present. In this way, OTW provides safeguards for volunteers, staff and campers ensuring our volunteers and staff are always on hand to identify any developing or escalating problem.

Staff and volunteers carry two-way radios to enable quick and efficient communications, particularly in emergency situations.

Team Leaders and Team Mates are responsible for carrying out routine 'nose counts' to ensure each member of their team is present. Important times for this are -

- During activities
- Transitions from one activity to another
- Meal Times
- Beach Hut transitions
- Once programming has finished at the end of the day
- When it has been identified that a camper is missing. Team Leaders should ensure that a nose count of campers AND volunteers takes place- as this will help identify whether the camper is potentially not 'missing' but with 2 volunteers elsewhere.

### **Pre-Camp Site Visits**

A member of the Camp Operations team will visit each camp location in advance of camp taking place and in conjunction with the site facilities manager will identify risk areas in the immediate vicinity including water hazards, steep gullies, nearby building works etc. These will be recorded in the Site Health and Safety Assessment.

### **General Awareness & Reporting**

Staff, volunteers and campers are briefed and made aware of the need to be constantly vigilant of any unusual interest from or presence on-site by persons not associated with the camp.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to politely enquire with such individuals who they are and what they are doing and report anything suspicious to the Camp Coordinator and/or the Senior staff member who in turn will actively consider the need to alert the police.

### **Daily Meetings**

Several daily meetings are held during Camp sessions to ensure any information regarding behavioural, medical or safeguarding issues is available to relevant staff and volunteers. Issues are recorded, monitored and addressed accordingly.

## APPENDIX 2

### MISSING CAMPER PROCEDURE PRE-CAMPER ARRIVAL PREPARATION

When?	What?
<b>On arrival at site</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Prepare missing camper plan</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Review the risk assessment for the site Review maps and number of search areas (Whilst ideally volunteers will search in pairs, the size of the site may mean that they need to search individually. At all times, finding the camper promptly and maintaining their safety is the highest priority)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Identify an appropriate number of volunteers for the search based on the above and whether they will search in pairs or individually</p> <p style="text-align: center;">By marking their name with * on the team list, select volunteers who will assist in a missing camper search</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ensure search maps are arranged with all those requiring car transport to the location are placed consecutively in A areas pile; ensure all are marked with a car symbol and an instruction to meet the staff driver immediately</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Identify All Camp location:</b> and place Board Games Bonanza box there</p>
<b>On volunteer arrival</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Conduct missing camper drill</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Conduct full drill based on a real-life scenario (e.g. using the same <b>number of search teams</b> as there would be in real scenario, with the searchers identified with * leading those teams)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On completion, facilitate debrief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How quickly did we find the child? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the process efficient?</li> <li>• How could it have been better?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Were there any areas of high risk that should have been highlighted?</li> </ul>
<b>On volunteer arrival</b>	<b>Update plan as necessary</b>

## APPENDIX 3 MISSING CAMPER BOX CONTENTS

High vis vest purple COMMS	1	Ensure present																	
Spare high vis vest yellow	2	Ensure present																	
Clipboard: PEOPLE	1	Ensure clipboard has 2 x event log, 2 nose count sheets and a pen																	
Clipboard: SAFETY	1	Ensure clipboard has 2 copies of the Area Allocation log, a master site map <u>for the correct site</u> and a pen. Highlight <u>A areas</u> and cross out B areas																	
Clipboard: COMMS	1	Ensure clipboard has 2 copies of Area Allocation log, master site map <u>for the correct site</u> and a pen. Highlight <u>B areas</u> and cross out A areas																	
Clipboard: MEDICAL	1	Ensure clipboard has master site map <u>for the correct site</u> , 2 x event log sheets and a pen																	
Clipboard: COMMAND	1	Ensure clipboard has master site map, missing camper procedure, camper photo document, 2 x event log sheet and a pen																	
Camper photo document (on COMMAND clipboard)	1	Ensure a photo document with a photo of every camper, arranged by team, is present (camper arrival day). Responsible: Media team																	



## APPENDIX 4

### MISSING CAMPER PROCEDURE

#### LIVE INCIDENT

<b>PHASE 1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A camper may be missing</b></p> <p>The team have identified that the camper is not with the group and will have searched their surrounding area. They radio the support team.</p> <p>Senior leader informed by Team Member making the call <b>“We have a Gretel at LOCATION”</b></p>
<b>PHASE 2</b>	<p><b>Assemble Support Team and prepare for critical incident</b></p> <p>Senior leader asks Support team to assemble at a sensible location depending on weather, access etc and gives short briefing</p> <p>The vehicles, mobile emergency box and medical emergency equipment are requested</p> <p>Radios are prepared and camper photo obtained from Missing Camper box (Command clipboard).</p> <p>Team Leaders asked via radio for nose count of all campers and volunteers.</p> <p>One member of staff is allocated to distribute A search areas One member of staff is allocated to distribute B search areas A log keeper is assigned</p> <p>A driver is assigned (to drive volunteers to distant locations once instructed by the staff distributing A areas)</p> <p>A member of staff assigned remind Search team to collect radios to change to channel 3, and to show Search Teams the camper photo</p> <p>One member of staff to go immediately to camper’s accommodation and search there</p> <p><i>NURSING COORDINATOR MUST REMAIN AT SEARCH HQ</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AT LEAST ONE RADIO AT SEARCH HQ MUST REMAIN ON CHANNEL 1 IN CASE OF A SECOND EMERGENCY</li> </ul>
<b>PHASE 3</b>	<p><b>Mobilise search parties and distribute search areas</b></p> <p>All staff and identified volunteers make their way to the agreed location.</p> <p><b>AT LEAST ONE MEMBER OF BEACH PATROL MUST REMAIN AT SEARCH HQ</b></p> <p>Hand out search maps: one person distributes A areas, one person B (A are the highest priority). Once A has handed out all car areas instruct the Driver to leave with volunteers</p> <p>Inform A areas to search, radio findings and REMAIN. B areas to search, radio update and return to Search HQ.</p> <p>Ensure Search Team collect radio if needed and all Search Team radios are on channel 3; tell Search Team camper’s name and show them the photo of the camper from the camper photo document in the red box (on Command clipboard)</p> <p>Programme team to coordinate all teams moving to All Camp Location on channel 1</p>
<b>PHASE 4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Communicate with wider services</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact Site</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Call Police- non urgent number at this point</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact OTW Headquarters</p>

<p><b>PHASE 5</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Camper is found</b></p> <p>Dispatch Nursing Coordinator and Beach Patrol with emergency bags and photo of camper to confirm ID and examine Once ID confirmed, Nursing Coordinator radios senior leader</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Camper is not found in 20 minutes</b></p> <p>Call 999 if police are not already in attendance. Command of the incident is handed over to Police on their arrival Call CEO</p>
<p><b>PHASE 6</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stand down</b></p> <p>When camper is found, senior leader calls "Gretel is back: stand down. All return to channel 1." x 3 <u>on both channel 3 and channel 1.</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.</p> <p>Inform site, emergency services, and OTW HQ Liaise with CEO regarding statutory notifications eg Ofsted Inform camper's NOK Resume normal programme ALL return to channel 1 Debrief Reset all emergency equipment</p>

## APPENDIX 5

### MISSING CAMPER EVENT LOG

#### MISSING CAMPER: EVENT LOG

COMMAND	
MEDICAL	
SAFETY	
OPS	
PERSONNEL	
COMMS	
PROGRAMME	

KEY EVENTS	Time
Staff alerted	
Green folder called	
Critical incident called	
First search party arrived	
Last A search parties allocated	
Last B search parties allocated	

KEY EVENTS	Time
Police informed	
Site informed	
CEO/HQ informed	
Parents/carers informed	
Camper found	
Medical team dispatched	
Stand down	

#### RECORD OF EVENTS

Time