

Volunteer FAQs

1. Who can Volunteer at Camp?

To be able to apply to volunteer in 2019 you have to be 18 or over on the 1st January 2019.

Please note: former Over The Wall campers applying to volunteer with us for the first time must be aged 21 or over by 1st January 2019 before they can apply to volunteer.

We welcome and encourage a rich variety of age, gender and experience in our volunteers as we want to make ensure we reflect and can support the diversity of our campers.

2. Do I need to have previous experience of working with children to Volunteer?

We are looking for volunteers with a range of different experience and backgrounds- if you have worked with children before that's great, but if you haven't please don't let it stop you from applying. We value enthusiasm, a sense of fun and most importantly a genuinely desire to help empower children with serious health challenges – if this is why you want to volunteer with Over The Wall, then we want to hear from you!

3. Can I pick which Camp I Volunteer at?

When you apply online you will be able to choose multiple camp dates and tell us your order of preference. We will try to accommodate your preferred choice as much as possible, but camp allocations depend on availability, so we recommend submitting your application early!

4. Do I have to attend an entire Camp or can I just come for a few days?

Over the course of a camp, volunteers form a close unit within their team, and they will establish the most amazing relationships with their campers. Not only do we need volunteers to remain throughout an entire camp session to ensure the correct volunteer to camper ratio for safety purposes, it is also vital for our campers that they are able to build solid, trusting relationships with their volunteers who will support them throughout their entire Over The Wall journey. We therefore ask that volunteers commit to an entire camp session. This includes the vital volunteer training which happens before the campers arrive. We have a new role for 'Day' Volunteers. These volunteers come to camp from 9am-6pm, for every day of camp- so will need to commit to the full week.

5. I was a Camper last year but I'm too old to come back this year- can I Volunteer instead?

We think it's great that you have had such a good time as a camper that you'd like to come back! That being said, volunteers have a very different role to campers at Over The Wall, and our volunteers go through a very careful selection process to ensure they are capable of caring for our campers in all the ways we need them to.

Former campers have become volunteers with Over The Wall in the past, however they have to go through the same rigorous selection process as all of our other volunteers do, and they have to be physically and emotionally capable of giving the experience to campers that they themselves received. We also ask that former campers wait until they are 21 years old before they apply to volunteer with Over The Wall. This is to give enough time to think about the transition from camper to volunteer, and how camp will be a different experience if they were to return in such a different role. It also gives former campers the chance to gain experience outside of Over The Wall before they come to volunteer with us.

As part of the support we give to volunteers who came to camp as campers, we will check in with you pre camp, during camp and post camp to support you with the transition.

6. What happens after I submit an application?

After you've submitted a volunteer application we will review it. If we need additional information- for example more detail about any health conditions you have provided- we will get in touch straight away and guide you through this process. Following this stage, you will be invited to attend a group orientation, which take place across the UK. These are fun, informal sessions which give you a chance to get to know about life at camp whilst we get to know you. We will send you an invite to select the date and location that suits you once we have reviewed your application. If you have any questions just let us know using our contact details below.

Subject to attending an orientation, a satisfactory DBS or PVG police check, receipt of at least two adequate references, confirmation of your MMR, and our Volunteer Recruitment Team assessing any medical information you have provided, we will then offer you a place to volunteer with us at camp!

7. Why do I have to be vaccinated against MMR to come along to Camp?

Many of our Campers or their siblings have compromised immune systems which means they are at a high risk of contracting many illnesses, which could prove to be life-threatening. For this reason we are requesting that all of our Volunteers are vaccinated against Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR.) If there is a medical reason why you have not/ cannot have the MMR, please let us know.

8. Do I need money at Camp?

All food and accommodation is provided when you volunteer, and there is so much food you'll never go hungry! There is a small charge of £3 per water bottle for volunteers, which you can buy when you arrive at camp and use during the week. There isn't therefore any desperate need to have lots of money with you at camp. We do sell a selection of Over The Wall merchandise at camp however, so if you fancy getting a cozy new hoodie then a bit of money might come in handy! There are also opportunities for volunteers to leave site if they need to pop to the nearest supermarket on their time off for example, so please ensure you bring enough money for such eventualities.

9. How do I get to Camp/ get home?

Volunteers are responsible for making their own way to and from camp, however we do provide a pick-up service from the train station closest to camp on volunteer arrival day, and volunteers will be dropped off at that station again on departure day. After you are allocated a camp we will send through information about the volunteer pick-up service.

10. Would I receive any training?

Indeed you would! There is some eLearning that you will be sent before you come to camp, which will cover the basics to give you as much confidence as possible before you arrive. You do need to complete this. Volunteers arrive the day before campers for full training. Training covers elements such as what to do in an emergency, Camper Behaviour Support and Safeguarding training, and it also includes information on all of our policies and how we use Therapeutic Recreation at Camp. You will also be sent a Volunteer Handbook before you arrive that has all the information you need to prepare for Volunteering with Over The Wall!

11. What kind of activities are there at Camp?

Activities at Camp vary depending on the Camp location, however there will be sessions in Music, Drama, Arts & Crafts and Games at each Camp which are led by our wonderful Volunteers! Extra activities could include Climbing, Kayaking, Swimming and Zip Wire. We also offer 'free choice' sessions which are led by volunteers – these sessions could be anything, from Highland Dancing to FBI Training! Needless to say, activities at Camp are varied (and huge amounts of fun!)

12. Would I take part in activities?

As a volunteer you would be present at camp activities helping to engage and support your Campers. The focus is on the Campers' participation in, and experience of, the activity, so volunteers shouldn't come to Camp expecting to have a go on the Climbing Wall or Zipwire! That being said, there may be times when you will be asked to participate in an activity to support a Camper (i.e accompanying them up the Climbing Wall, or going in the swimming pool with your team of Campers.) However, you will never be made to do anything you are not comfortable with.

13. Where do I keep my own medicine?

Volunteer medication (which includes both prescription and over the counter medication) must be locked away at all times during Camp. If you have medication that needs to be kept in the fridge, this cannot be kept in the fridges in the accommodation areas. You must also have informed us of any medications you are taking (this information would be on your application form, but if there are any changes after you submitted your application, please let us know.)

14. When can I use my phone/ laptop?

We ask that Campers do not bring their laptops or mobile phones with them to camp so that they can be fully immersed in what we call the 'Camp Bubble.' Whilst volunteers can bring their phones and computers with them to camp, in order to role model to campers, they are only to be used in areas where no campers will be present, and only at appropriate times (i.e when the campers have gone to bed in the evening, or when you are on your daily session off.)

15. Is there Wifi at Camp?

Although the camp sites we visit do have Wifi, signal is often weak or we do not have access to it. Therefore, please come prepared for the fact there may not be Wifi available at Camp. (You'll be too busy having fun to need it anyway!)

16. Can I take pictures at Camp?

We have a strict Media Policy at camp and require photo permission from both campers and Volunteers before we can take pictures of them. As a result, we have to be very careful about controlling the pictures which are taken at camp. We have specific 'Camp Recorder' Volunteers who are the only people able to take photos of campers during their time at Over The Wall. We understand that Volunteers will want to share their Over The Wall experience however, so Volunteers can take pictures of themselves and other Volunteers (with their permission, obviously!) away from the Campers, say for example in the evening after the Campers have gone to bed, or during your break time in the day.

17. Where do I buy food at Camp?

At Camp we may have Campers and Volunteers with severe food allergies. To protect against allergic reactions, we have a list of foods which Volunteers are able to bring to Camp. This list of food is for volunteers only, and meant as a guide of what you can bring to Camp for your own consumption. It is not a list of food to share with the Campers. There will also be designated areas where you can eat this food to minimize risk to our Campers. You will be sent this food list in advance of coming to Camp.

Please DO NOT bring any food items with you that are not on the Food list. All meals are provided for you whilst you are at Camp (and believe us, there is a LOT of food, so it's unlikely you'll go hungry!)

Some sites we use may have a shop where you can purchase snacks during your time off, but most people do not need to use these facilities as the items may not be on the volunteer food list. (and we have to be aware of where this food is consumed)

There are opportunities to go off site during your time off and purchase things from the local supermarket too.

18. What will my team be like?

After you have been allocated a Camp, about 6 weeks before you arrive at Camp you will also be assigned a Camp team. Our Campers are divided into colour groups; Orange, Purple, Green and Blue. Colour groups will be made up of mixed gender campers of a similar age. Your team will be made up of around 8 Campers and 6 Volunteers. There will usually be two teams in each colour group. You will become an amazingly close unit throughout your time at Camp, helping your team of Campers with activities, sharing a common area and sitting together at mealtimes. For activities, you will be joined by the other group of your colour (so, for example, both Purple teams would join together for Games.)

Each team also has a Team Leader (an experienced Volunteer) who will support you throughout your time at Camp. You will also have a team theme, which could be anything from 'Monsters' to 'Under The Sea' to 'Dinosaurs'- the more inventive the better! You will be put in touch with your team before Camp so you will have the chance to say hello before you arrive!

Your Team Leader will contact you in the weeks leading up to Camp so that you can get to know each other, ask any questions, share ideas and come up with your Team Theme.

19. Where would I sleep?

All of our Camps are residential, so you will be sleeping on site throughout Camp in the same accommodation block as your Campers. It is likely you will be required to share a room with some of your fellow Volunteers (of the same gender.) Day Volunteers are able to leave camp at 6pm and sleep at home, and then return the next day for more fun!

Oh, and rest assured; although we call them Camps, you won't be sleeping in tents!

20. What will a typical day involve?

There isn't really such a thing as a 'typical' day at Camp- every day is different, and the only thing that's guaranteed is that it's going to be fun! That being said, there is a rough daily schedule at Camp. You can see an example below:



7.30am: Wake-up

8.15am: Any trips to the Beach Hut for medication etc (our Medical Area at Camp)

8.45am: Morning Sing-Song

9am: Breakfast

9.45am- 12.45pm: Two different Activity Sessions (e.g Zipwire and Arts & Crafts)

12.45: Any trips to the Beach Hut for medication etc

1pm: LUNCH!

1.45pm- 2.45pm: Rest hour for Campers (Campers have the chance to chill out for an hour before the fun continues!)

2.45pm- 5.30pm: Two Activity Sessions

5.30: Any trips to the Beach Hut for medication etc

5.45pm: DINNER!

6.45pm: Chillax time

7.30pm - 8.30pm: Evening Programme (This could be anything from Disco to Talent Night!)

8.30pm: Any trips to the Beach Hut for medication etc

8.45- 9.30pm: Cabin Chat (The chance for you and your team to get into pjs, drink some hot chocolate and reflect on all of the amazing things you've done that day.)

9.45pm: Lights out for Campers (theoretically!) and Volunteer Team Meetings.

... and then we do it all again the next day!

21. Will I be responsible for a Camper's medical care?

At Camp, you will be joined by a fantastic group of Clinical Volunteers. These are trained Doctors and Nurses who come along to Camp as our 'Beach Patrol' team. They have a designated 'Beach Hut' at Camp where Campers will go to get their medication if necessary. Therefore unless you are a Clinical Volunteer, you will not be responsible for helping Campers with their medical needs. As a Volunteer you are however responsible for the general wellbeing of Campers and their overall safety. You may need to carry your Campers' emergency medication, but you will rarely be expected to administer it- and if you are, you will receive full training in advance.

22. Shall I talk to the Camper about their condition, the condition of their siblings or my own illness?

At Over The Wall we want the focus to be the Camper as an individual, not the illness that affects their lives. As such, as a Volunteer you will not be told details about a Camper's medical condition and will only be given enough information about their medical history to keep that Camper safe whilst they are with Over The Wall.

If the Camper chooses to talk to you about their condition, or the condition of their sibling, that's fine- but a vital part of the Volunteer role is to help a Camper realise that they are not defined by their illness, and that they are capable of going beyond their self-perceived limitations, having fun and achieving amazing things- so if the Camper doesn't talk about their condition, that's absolutely fine too.

We also appreciate that as a Volunteer, you may have first-hand experience of a Health Condition. We would expect you not to share this information with your Campers.

23. Who supports Volunteers at Camp?

On site at each Camp there will always be a team of Over The Wall staff who are known as the Support Team. You won't be able to miss them- they walk around in navy blue OTW t-shirts! The Support Team is there to ensure Camp runs smoothly and everyone has an amazing time, so if you have any questions, or if you need any help, the Support Team will be there for you.

You will also be surrounded by a team of fantastic returning volunteers who are not only very friendly, but they also have huge amounts of Over The Wall experience. Basically, you will always have support at Camp

24. What clothing should I bring with me?

Camp life is active and full of both indoor and outdoor activities, so you should pack clothes for every eventuality! Think rain coats (in case we have a typical rainy British summer!), closed toe shoes, and generally clothes you don't mind getting a bit dirty.

From the Arrival Day of the Campers, Volunteers are expected to wear their team's Over The Wall t-shirt which will be provided when you arrive at Camp. Washing and drying facilities are on site so you can wash team t-shirts throughout the week.

It is important that our Volunteers are Role Models at Camp. We do not allow Campers to wear short or revealing clothing so we must ensure that we are wearing appropriate clothing too.

You will be sent a full suggested packing list in the Volunteer Handbook you receive before you arrive at Camp and this will be covered in the training.

25. Do I get any time off at Camp?

Each day at Camp you are able to have one activity block off a day, which you will decide with your Team Leader and Team in advance. This is your free time at Camp to rest and have some time away from the packed Camp schedule. It is important that no matter what, volunteers use their time off. Self-care at Camp is very important. If you think you need more time off on a certain day, you can discuss this with your Team Leader or the Support Team.

26. Are there any Over The Wall policies I should be aware of?

Over The Wall have a number of policies that are in place to protect our Campers, but also our Volunteers. These include our Volunteer policy, our Safeguarding Campers and the Two Adult Policy. We go through our policies in great detail during volunteer training and in the Volunteer Handbook which Volunteers are sent in advance of arriving at Camp.

27. What is personal care at Camp, and how do I do it?

Some Campers may need help with certain aspects of personal care, such as washing, showering, dressing, brushing their teeth and going to the toilet. No Volunteer will ever be left alone to help a Camper with their personal care; in line with our Two Adult Policy you will always have someone with you. We understand some people can potentially be nervous about how to correctly assist with personal care, but you will be given information before you arrive at Camp and ongoing support whilst at Camp too. You can always talk to a member of your team, the Support Team, or Beach Patrol (our Clinical Team) if you do not feel comfortable or confident with personal care and they will be able to assist you.

28. I feel unwell, can I still come to Camp?

Many of our Campers will have lowered immune systems, or will be coming into close contact with those who do, and so we cannot risk the possible spread of infection at Camp. If you are feeling in any way unwell in the run up to Camp, it is vital you contact us so that we can assess whether you are well enough to attend. This includes symptoms of the flu, diarrhea, vomiting, a temperature, rash, sore throat, cough and cold sores etc.

In our assessment we will ask you questions such as whether you have coughed up phlegm (and if so, what colour) and whether you have had a headache, fever, rash, sore throat, cough, muscle aches diarrhea, vomiting or a runny nose in the last 48 hours. If you have had any of these symptoms, the likelihood is we would not allow you to come to camp due to the risk of infection to our campers.

We understand it would be disappointing not to be able to come along to Camp at the last minute, but we hope Volunteers understand the safety of our Campers must be a priority.

29. I still have questions, who do I contact?

If you still have any questions or if you'd like to know more, we'd love to hear from you here at OTW HQ! Contact the volunteering team by e-mailing or by calling **02392 477 110.** volunteering@otw.org.uk

VOLUNTEERING AS A NURSE, DOCTOR OR PARAMEDIC



Who are we?

Over The Wall is a UK charity, and part of the SeriousFun Children's Network. Paul Newman started the first camp in the Association of Hole in the Wall Camps in Connecticut, USA in 1988. Over the years, he expanded that vision by helping to establish camps in all over the world. To date, these camps have served over 100,000 children with chronic and life-threatening illness from 31 countries, and Paul Newman's vision lives on in the SeriousFun Children's Network. Over The Wall provides these children and their families with an empowering, renewing experience completely free of charge, at sites in England and Scotland. There are weeklong programs in the summer for children age 8-17 years, as well as weekend camps for the entire family.

Having a dynamic, experienced team of medical professionals at camp provides peace of mind to the campers and families who attend so they can enjoy the experience to the fullest.

Who do we need?

We need the help of nurses (child, adult and learning disabilities) and doctors (paediatricians, GPs, A&E) and paramedics who are registered to practice with the relevant professional body, and have indemnity insurance. You do not need to be an expert in a particular medical condition to participate.

Who are our campers?

We accept children aged 8 to 17, with a huge range of serious illnesses; from diabetes to cancer, from epilepsy to arthritis. To date, we have served campers with over 100 diagnoses.

What is my role?

Camp could not happen without the generosity of nurses and doctors giving up their time to be on the 'Beach Patrol', our camp medical team. The Beach Patrol's role is giving 'home away from home' care which normally involves giving medications, overnight NG/PEG feeds, dressing changes, blood sugar monitoring etc. (You don't need to know how to do all of these things before you come...we will teach you!) And when we aren't busy with that, we can join our group for activities like swimming, kayaking, fishing, climbing, drama... Some of our campers may never have had the chance to do these things because of their illness.

Who will I be working with?

Each team will include a combination of returning Beach Patrol volunteers, and first timers. For Serious Illness camp, we usually have a team of 10 (generally 4 doctors and 6 nurses) for 50-60 campers. For Sibling camp, we have 3 Beach Patrol volunteers for around 60 children. The OTW Nursing Director or Nursing Co-ordinator will attend camp to provide leadership and guidance.

“The single most rewarding experience of my life.”

-a doctor talking about his first camp

What is the commitment?

Serious Illness camp lasts 7 days, Sibling camp lasts 6 days and Family camp lasts 3 days. In order to give continuity to our campers and ensure there is enough time to prepare for campers arriving, we ask that you commit to a full session and we cannot accept late arrivals.

Is there an orientation?

For summer sessions, nurses and doctors arrival 2 days before campers for orientation. You will also receive a handbook via email 6 weeks prior to your session.

How do I get to camp?

We will reimburse reasonable public transport expenses or mileage (at public transport rate) by prior negotiation. Unfortunately we cannot pay for taxis.

What do I wear?

Comfortable/casual clothes and footwear! You will be provided with Over The Wall t-shirts, which you will need to wear at all times.

Where will I sleep at camp? What about meals?

Beach Patrol volunteers usually have their own room or share with other Beach Patrol volunteers in dormitory style accommodation. All meals are provided. There are vegetarian options available at each meal, and we can cater for special diets by prior arrangement.