

## **MISSING CAMPER POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

**Over The Wall recognises the potential for campers going 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: June 2018

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Status: LIVE

Adopted: JULY 2018

Next Review: June 2020

## **Policy brief & purpose**

Over The Wall recognises the potential for campers going 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 Management 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 that is in attendance at an Over The Wall residential camp.

## **Definitions**

'Camper' is any family member in attendance at an Over The Wall Camp; so will include family members in attendance at family camps.

## **Procedures**

### **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.

### **Minimising Risk**

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

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

When a camper is found to be missing, the following procedures will be applied and, where appropriate, adapted according to each camp location.

- The person identifying the occurrence should contact a member of the OTW Staff Team immediately.
- 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.
- If the camper is not found at this stage the Missing Camper Incident Manager will call “the green folder has gone missing” over the radio.
- Missing Camper Incident Manager will notify the site facilities team.
- Team Leaders will switch to radio channel two and be advised of the identity of the missing camper so they can immediately check the area where they are located.
- Each Team leader will be asked to allocate volunteers from their group who will receive instruction and form the Search Team. These volunteers will be sent to either the Camp Office or the incident response ‘hub’ (details of the specific location will be given over the radio)
- The missing camper’s Team Leader will discretely ascertain from the Team if there had been any indication of where the missing camper may have gone.
- Remaining volunteers will continue activities, where appropriate and safe to do so, and keep campers engaged.
- The Search Team, where possible, will be issued with radios, a torch and sitemaps and will be assigned actions by the Missing Camper Incident Manager which will include the following immediate tasks:
  - Two members will be despatched to each pre-identified area of risk with specific instructions. These instructions will be site dependent and identified in the site risk assessment prepared pre camp. Facilities staff will lead and coordinate the search at any waterfront location.
  - Two members will be sent in a vehicle to check the immediate and pre-identified road routes.
  - Two members will, if appropriate, be sent to where the missing camper was last seen and will wait there.
  - Two members of the Search team will carry out a search of the camper’s room, adjoining rooms and toilets.
  - The remaining search team, and those returning from allocated tasks, will carry out a systematic search as allocated by the Missing Camper Incident Manager.

*Important notes for searchers -*

- Stay calm so as not to upset or scare the other campers
- When searching look up, down, in, behind, and under (360 open door search).
- Ensure you are clear and precise with communications on the radio
- Make sure you do not put yourself in any position of risk when searching which could itself become an incident.
- Ensure that the 2 Adult Policy is adhered to at all times when competing the search of allocated areas.

A member of the OTW Staff Team will act as a Log Keeper and will record the names of the volunteer pairs, the time and the area they are assigned and all information being relayed about the incident.

Once an area is searched thoroughly, the Search Team members will return to the Camp Office or the mobile incident response 'hub' to await further instructions.

Communications for the incident will be managed on a dedicated radio channel in order that messages can be relayed without the remaining campers being aware at this juncture.

If the missing camper is found the person who finds him/her should call "the green folder has been found" over the radio making sure to indicate their location. All Search Teams will return to the Camp Office or elsewhere as directed. The Missing Camper Incident Manager and the Beach Patrol Team Leader will make their way to the location to provide support as necessary.

### **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 and the police will be contacted for their direct involvement.

When the police are contacted it must be made clear that there is a significant risk of harm to the 'subject' or 'the public', and that this risk has been clearly assessed and can be explained. The police's response will be 'graded' according to this assessment of risk. See Appendix B for the assessment levels of risk and the likely action the police would take based on the assessment.

Photographs of the missing camper should be printed off and made available for the Police prior to their arrival.

Enquiry should also be made to ascertain if the missing camper has access to any mobile phone and if so the number and provider should be obtained and passed to the Police.

At any point before this if there is any suspicious element to the incident the police must be notified immediately.

**AS SOON AS THE POLICE ARE NOTIFIED THIS OCCURRENCE BECOMES A CRITICAL INCIDENT AND THE PROCEDURES OUTLINED IN THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY SHOULD BE FOLLOWED.**

At this juncture, every effort will be made to keep the missing camper's family informed. In the first conversation they should be asked for details of any telephony the missing child may have that the camp team are not aware of, including the make, model and provider. This will confirm/assist GPS search capability.

### **Post Search**

The Missing Camper 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 they need to explain what led to this situation. The Missing Camper Incident Manager - in conjunction with the Beach Patrol Team Leader- will decide what further action is required.

The Missing Camper Incident Manager will contact the campers parents/guardians to inform them of the situation and any further actions that might be required.

### **Recording Missing Camper Incidents**

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

In the event of a critical incident a detailed log should be maintained as described in the Critical Incident Management policy and procedures. See Appendix C for a tool to record actions completed during Missing Camper incident.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed biannually for currency and accuracy by the Director of Services, or whomever the Director of Services delegates to this task. This does not prevent any changes taking place to this policy at any other time due to changes in practice or legislation.

Zoe Grant  
Director of Volunteering  
June 2018

## **APPENDIX 'A'**

### **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 make contact with 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.

#### **Camper reception**

A photograph of each child will be taken upon arrival at each camp and retained by the staff team. 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 All Camp 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.

Knowledge is checked and verified rather than being assumed.

### **Team Rules**

When campers arrive at camp they are placed in teams based on age and gender. On opening night the whole Camp group gets together for a welcome and introduction to the Camp session. During this time, OTW's 'Camp Rules' are reiterated to the whole group. One of the first activities carried out by individual teams is for them to 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 whilst they are at camp.

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

OTW operate a staff and volunteer Two Adult Policy, and make it clear in training and practices that volunteers accompany campers at all times with at least two adults. 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 aware 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**

There are a number of daily meetings 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 'B'**

**Action police are likely to take based on Risk Assessment provided in initial reporting of missing camper.**

### **No apparent risk (absent)**

There is no apparent risk of harm to either the subject or the public.

Actions to locate the subject and/or gather further information should be agreed with the informant and a latest review time set to reassess the risk.

### **Low risk**

The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal.

Proportionate enquiries should be carried out to ensure that the individual has not come to harm.

### **Medium risk**

The risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious.

This category requires an active and measured response by the police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting.

### **High risk**

The risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely.

This category almost always requires the immediate deployment of police resources – action may be delayed in exceptional circumstances, such as searching water or forested areas during hours of darkness. A member of the senior management team must be involved in the examination of initial lines of enquiry and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an investigating officer (IO) and possibly an SIO, and a police search adviser (PoISA). There should be a press/media strategy and/or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place where appropriate. The MPB should be notified of the case without undue delay. Children's services must also be notified immediately if the person is under 18.

**APPENDIX 'C'**

**CHECKLIST FOR SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF MANAGING MISSING CAMPER INCIDENT**

Date	Time	Camp	Location of 'incident office' at camp

<b>WAS A CRITICAL INCIDENT CALLED (If yes, please continue on the Critical Incident Appendix B form)</b>	
<b>TIME</b>	<b>WHO</b>

<b>Details of Missing Camper Incident</b>	
Exact time of initial 'report' of incident (start of the Golden Hour)	
Who made the initial report	
Description of initial report	
Who was involved in initial report (detailing exact names of those involved)	
Was the Green Folder is missing called?	
What time was the code called?	
Who called the code?	
Independent Safeguarding Advisor informed?	
What time did the Incident end?	
Who made the decision for the incident to 'end'	
How was the ending communicated to camp?	
When was the ending communicated to camp?	
Who else has been informed that the incident is over?	
What time were they informed?	

Who informed them?			
Roles to allocate			
Role	Person allocated	Time role allocated	Any other information
Missing Camper Incident Manager			
Camper/ Volunteer Supervision			
Medical Lead			
Log Keeper			
Telecoms			
Media Spokesperson			
Set up of Incident office, Emergency bag etc			

Questions to ask/ information to gather	
What is the Camper wearing?	
When was the camper last seen?	
Where was the camper last seen?	
Who was the last person with the camper?	
Who was the last person to see the camper?	
Has the camper got any favourite places they may go?	
Had the camper mentioned going anywhere? (Home. To an activity area etc)	
Had the camper been upset by anything?	
Does the camper have siblings at camp?	
If yes, are they with that team?	
Does the site have CCTV? Can this be reviewed	

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<b>Information in preparation for the police</b>	
A photo of the camper	YES/ NO
Description of the camper	
Date of birth and age of Camper	
Medical history of the camper	
Medication requirements	
Family NOK details	
Known mobile devices (Retrieve any mobile devices that may have been handed in at check in)	
Identified Risk Level	HIGH/ MEDIUM/ LOW
Justification for the risk level	
Beach patrol records collated	YES/ NO

<b>Who has been informed</b>	
<b>CEO</b> (subsequent communications recorded by the log keeper)	
What time was CEO informed of incident?	
Who informed the CEO	
Brief description of information shared	
<b>Police</b> (subsequent communications recorded by the log keeper)	
What time were the police called?	
Who informed the Police	
Who was spoken to, and a brief description of information shared	
<b>Ambulance</b> (subsequent communications recorded by the log keeper)	
What time was the ambulance called?	
Who informed the ambulance?	
Who was spoken to, and a brief description of information shared	
<b>Fire</b> (subsequent communications recorded by the log keeper)	
What time were the fire brigade called?	
Who informed the Fire Brigade	
Who was spoken to, and a brief description of information shared	
<b>Social Care</b> (subsequent communications recorded by the log keeper)	
What time were social care called?	
Who informed social care?	
Who was spoken to, and a brief description of information shared	
<b>Site/ Facility that is hosting camp</b> (subsequent communications recorded by log keeper)	
What time were the site notified?	
Who informed the site?	
Who was spoken to, and a brief description of information shared	
<b>Family members</b> (subsequent communications recorded by log keeper)	
What time were the family notified?	
Who informed the family?	



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<b>ADDITIONAL NOTES</b>		
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**HOT DEBRIEF NOTES (POST MISSING CAMPER INCIDENT)**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION OF DEBRIEF</b>	<b>PRESENT FOR DEBRIEF</b>

**HOT DEBRIEF NOTES**

Large empty rectangular area for taking notes.

**HOT DEBRIEF NOTES CONTINUED**

