



Oundle Mencap Holidays LTD

Statement of Purpose

Oundle Mencap Holidays LTD is a registered charity that runs annual residential holidays for children and young adults with learning disabilities. The holidays are staffed by volunteers and are reliant on charitable funding for their continued existence.

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Registered Charity # 1108908. Registered Company # 5393382





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This document is in accordance with:

- *The Residential Holidays for Disabled Children (England) Regulations (2013);*
- *relevant sections of The Care Standards Act (2000);*
- *the Residential holiday schemes for disabled children: National Minimum Standards (Department for Education, 2013)*

This document has been approved by the OMH Board of Trustees



1. Terminology and abbreviations

Adult – individual aged 18 years or older. Our *Camps* are for adult holiday makers only.

Camp – a holiday for adults with learning disabilities which may sometimes involve camping in tents or accommodation in a youth hotel or similar premises. These normally last 2 - 4 nights.

Child – for brevity this term is used to encompass both children and adolescents up to the age of 19 years. This is the full age range catered for by our holidays for children.

Helper – an able young person or adult who volunteers on one of our holidays. Helpers can be categorised more specifically according to their level of experience and more information on this is provided in section 9. Also referred to as *volunteers* or *staff*.

Holiday – normally refers to a holiday for children (including adolescents). These usually take place in a permanent building and last 7 nights.

Holiday maker – an individual with a learning (and sometimes physical) disability, of any age, who attends one of our holidays.

Learning disabilities – this term is used to refer to developmental delays, reduced intellectual ability and difficulties in everyday living skills. These may result from a genetic, neurological or neurodevelopmental disorder such as Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, or autism.

NMS – the national minimum standards for Residential Holidays for Disabled Children, published by the Department for Education¹.

Original holiday – the summer holiday hosted at Oundle School which was the first holiday run by OMH, and for many years the only one. As described in section 2 below, this holiday provides the template, or reference point, for all others.

OMH – Oundle Mencap Holidays LTD, the provider of all holiday schemes described in this document. Also referred to as *the organisation* and *the charity*.

2. About this document

This document aims to summarise the goals of OMH in providing residential holidays for children and camps for adults with learning disabilities. We provide background about the organisation, detail of its current activities, and reference key policies and procedures. Associated policy documents are collected in a *Handbook* which is referenced throughout. This is available on our website, and individual copies of the latest versions of every policy document are available at each holiday site. Other key documents which underpin the work of OMH are our Memorandum and Articles of Association and our Operations Manual, both of which are also available online / on request.

For many years OMH operated a single holiday annually in Oundle, Northamptonshire. All of our policies and procedures, and our other holidays, evolved from this model. Therefore in each section of this document we consistently first describe the way in which this original holiday operates and subsequently flag any ways in which our other holidays deviate from this model.

This document was developed as part of the process of registration with Ofsted in 2014. Thus we additionally reference the national minimum standards [[like this](#)] to show how our organisation takes account of these requirements. Although our Camps do not fall within the remit of this inspection service, because they cater only to adult holiday makers, we include details of these here. This is in order that this Statement of Purpose provides a comprehensive account of the activities of OMH.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/residential-holiday-schemes-for-disabled-children>



3. A short history of Oundle Mencap Holidays LTD (OMH)

Oundle School Mencap Holidays was founded in 1983 as a flagship activity of the school's community service programme. The school was already active in the local Gateway Society where contact between Pat Crowley, the local area Mencap officer, and Richard Andrews, the head of the community service produced the idea that volunteers from the school, using a school boarding house, should provide a week's holiday for local children with learning disabilities. Thus, from the outset, the project had the double aim of providing a service to the community and an educational opportunity.

Pat Crowley found a volunteer, Christine Singleton, to oversee the recruitment of the children whom she thought could benefit from the week and not put unsafe strain on the volunteers; Christine continued to do this and take responsibility for all child care issues during the weeks for the next nine years. The Headmaster of Oundle School, Dr B.M.W. Trapnell immediately agreed to provide a boarding house at no cost and the food at the price of its cost and preparation only. Richard Andrews recruited the volunteers, the boys mostly from Oundle School and the girls from other local schools.

The project attracted people and especially volunteers of goodwill and talent from the outset, and there were always volunteers who were more than ready to return year after year to stiffen the structure of supervision with their experience. With time those experienced volunteers included individuals with professional qualifications in teaching and caring for children with learning disabilities, one of whom, Kate Taylor, took over from Christine Singleton, and continues to run the project to the present day. With the benefit of professional expertise there has been an ongoing exponential improvement in all aspects of caring for the children and giving them an enjoyable, engaging, and above all safe experience.

The original complement of the week of 18 children and the same number of volunteers swiftly grew to 24 children and approaching twice the number of volunteers. Over the past twelve years the holiday has expanded so that it is now hosted in two boarding houses, each accommodating 20 children with 30 volunteers, overseen by a senior team of some 20 with a range of professional skills and experience grown on preceding weeks. Organisationally the project has become a limited company and registered charity with trustees, enriched by close links with Royal Mencap Society and Oundle School. The other change is that since Oundle School became co-educational the majority of volunteers of both sexes is recruited from the one school, though the principle has always been held and observed of welcoming volunteers from other schools and other countries, to date France, Germany, Spain, the USA, Canada and Australia.

The principle of being a body of unpaid volunteers has been observed until recently, as a result of the expansion into creating a similar holiday scheme at St. John's School, Leatherhead, and camps for an older client group. Now administrative complexity and legislative obligations has necessitated some departure from our original practice, such that people who volunteer on a holiday or camp may be partially remunerated for their work through the year. At the same time highly successful fund-raising and generous support largely from volunteers, their families, and the School's pupils and former pupils has enabled us to maintain the practice of running these high-value holidays at well below cost and within the range of children's families, with the added proviso from the outset that free places are made available wherever there is need.

The Chairman of the Royal Mencap Society visited us in our thirtieth year and described what he saw as both inspiring and humbling. Largely as a result of that visit Kate Taylor was given an award for outstanding achievement by the Royal Mencap Society, recognising the standard to which she had brought the entire project. The present and foreseen developments are entirely the result of the energies, expertise, and dedication of our large and expanding team to the cause of children with learning disabilities and their parents and the broad and profound educational benefits of providing volunteering opportunities in that cause.

After the 2018 AGM members voted to remove the name 'School' from the charity to become Oundle Mencap Holidays LTD.(OMH). OMH continues to run Oundle School Mencap Holiday – our original summer holiday.



Statement of the Overall Aims of OMH

The goal of Oundle Mencap Holidays (OMH) is to provide excellent holiday schemes for children and young people with learning (and sometimes also physical) disabilities. At a minimum, the people in our care should be:

- Safe
- Happy
- Respected
- Given new opportunities

In particular, we aim to achieve a convivial environment in which holiday makers feel surrounded by peers and friends [NMS 1, 2, 3, 4].

The focus of our organisation is not just on the children and young adults who attend our holiday schemes. We also aim to have an impact on three groups of individuals, as described below.

Families and friends of holiday makers:

- by offering respite that they can rely on year after year
- by offering high quality care at an affordable rate
- by tailoring care to the individual needs (communication, activity, physical, medical, dietary) and preferences of their son or daughter

Volunteers

- by breaking down their assumptions about people with additional support needs
- by teaching kindness, patience and acceptance as well as imparting valuable employment skills
- by providing a framework in which to give back to society while maintaining a demanding career / education experience

Members of the public

- by challenging perceptions of the capabilities of both people with disabilities and our young volunteers
- by providing a model of what an engaged, dedicated volunteer team can achieve.

In order to achieve these goals, while meeting the highest standards in the care of and experience of holiday makers, our holidays are structured around a large and reliable volunteer body. The recruitment of our volunteers and their well-being while contributing to the scheme (and as they move on) is therefore paramount to our success and longevity.

4. OMH underlying ethos [NMS 1-7]

OMH is founded on five principles;

Quality

Offering highest quality care and experiences to our holiday makers, such that they and their families feel they are having a wholeheartedly positive experience while on their holiday or camp [NMS 2]. This is partly achieved through the continuity provided by the scheme, such that holiday makers can rely on their annual holiday with us, as can their family members. Furthermore, our volunteer system allows us to provide highly tailored care which meets the individual needs and preferences of each holiday maker.



Accessibility

Providing opportunities for respite for all families, and opportunities for personal growth for all young people. This latter includes the new experiences offered to holiday makers but also the learning and development of our young helpers. These people regularly move into caring professions and almost all report back to us how this relatively early experience of care and volunteering has shaped their lives.

Our volunteer model allows us to charge extremely low fees and to offer discounted or free places on a case by case basis. We also offer support to families who wish to apply for third party funding for the holiday schemes. We charge for the holiday schemes for two main reasons. The first is to reduce the burden on volunteers, who not only staff them, but also raise approximately two thirds of the annual costs of the charity (both by making applications to trusts and grant-making organisations, and via sponsored activities). The second is to ensure that our scheme is valued by those who participate.

Our flexible, personalised care system also means we can cater to complex medical, physical and dietary needs and regularly provide holidays to children who have not previously been able to find suitable respite care [NMS 5].

Participation

Equal participation of holiday makers and volunteers is core to the structure of all of our holiday schemes [NMS 1]. Holiday makers are consistently offered choices to ensure self-determination, and daily activities promote creative expression. We endorse a social model of disability in which we believe that provision of the appropriate infrastructure and personal support can allow anyone to achieve their goals. Another aspect of this principle is the adoption of a low-tech approach. Our holiday activities take place in outdoor spaces, and are awash with physical activity, traditional games and opportunities which are replicable with minimal resources in almost any setting [NMS 5].

Community

Communal experience is essential to our holiday scheme. We aim that holiday makers should feel among friends, not staff; everyone on the holiday or camp is involved in activities as equal participants. The communal experience is created through small group shared identities (on holidays for children) and at whole-holiday activities such as communal mealtimes and the evening sing-song [NMS 3, 4].

Holiday maker input is sought daily during the holiday schemes and at formal feedback sessions [NMS 1]. We closely monitor participation and preference and provide alternative activities as needed, while also encouraging holiday makers to try new things and / or join in with their peers.

Personalisation

Our systems allow us to provide bespoke care for every individual, drawing on the strengths of a large, energetic and committed volunteer body. Our 'bedtime helper' system (see section 9) means that during the holiday, children have the benefits of a continuous relationship with a single helper at key points in their daily routine [NMS 3]. During the day, our generous helper to holiday maker ratios allow us to provide one-to-one care, or greater, whenever it is needed and create flexibility to cater to the needs and preferences of the holiday maker.

Many young people come to our holiday scheme whose needs and preferences cannot be catered to elsewhere. Holiday makers return to the scheme year after year, so that many now have long-standing friendships with OMH volunteers. This is particularly apparent on the camps for adults which now welcomes thirty-year-olds who first attended an OMH holiday at the age of eight years old.

5. Statement of the facilities and services provided to holiday makers [NMS 7]



OMH provides residential holidays for children / young people and camps for young adults with learning disabilities. Holidays can vary in length from two days / nights to seven days / nights. Facilities and services on our original holiday include:

- Appropriately trained and disclosure-checked staff at a ratio of a minimum of 1:1 staff to holiday makers, but up to 2:1 depending on need. [NMS 2, 3, 4, 10]
- Properly-prepared meals and snacks, which are nutritious and varied. This includes catering to reasonable dietary requirements, and preparing and serving parent-provided foods where these are required within a tightly restricted diet. [NMS 5]
- Overnight accommodation in suitable premises, which are clean, well-maintained, safe and secure. [NMS 6]
- Dignified, thorough and appropriate personal care or supervision of self-care as needed, in hygienic facilities. [NMS 3]
- Safe storage and administration of holiday makers' normal medications and associated management of any chronic conditions, e.g. diabetes, as agreed with parents/carers. [NMS 5]
- Support for communication, including appropriately calibrated and presented information for holiday makers, opportunities for them to provide feedback [NMS 1-3] and close monitoring of well-being and preferences. [NMS 15]
- On-site and community activities in indoor and outdoor settings, including sport, art, games, and social activities. [NMS 6]
- Transport for all trips within the holiday, which is wheelchair-accessible where necessary. [NMS 6]
- Opportunities for new experiences to promote personal growth and development, in a supported and friendly environment. [NMS 5]
- Opportunities for self-expression and self-determination in choice of activities, especially artistic expression. [NMS 1]

Other holiday schemes and camps may deviate from this model as follows:

- Where holiday makers are older, more able and / or very well known to the helper team ratios of 2:1 (holiday maker to staff) are considered adequate. This is usual practice on some camps for adults but never on holidays for children.
- Camps for adults may take place at an approved campsite with high-quality tents rather than in residential accommodation. [NMS 6]

A summary of the key characteristics of the children's holidays and camps for adults is provided in Table 1, on the next page.



Table 1: A summary of the key characteristics of the children’s holidays and camps for adults

	Holidays for Children	Camps for Young Adults
Total staff ratio	2 staff:1 holiday maker	2 staff :3 holiday makers
Working staff ratio	1:1	1:2
Setting	Independent school boarding houses	Camp sites, youth hostels
Staff groups <i>(for details see section 9)</i>	New helpers, experienced helpers, group leaders, senior team and managers	New and (highly) experienced helpers, the latter drawn from among senior team and group leaders on holidays for children
Age-range	8 – 19 years	18+
Genders	Normally 50:50	Normally 50:50
Cost in 2018	£295(OSMH) £150 (SJCJ) £200 (HR) for one week	£300 for four days

6. Names and addresses of registered provider, responsible individual and registered manager

<i>Registered provider:</i>	<i>Responsible individual:</i>	<i>Registered manager:</i>
OMH, Mrs Catherine Taylor	Mr Robin Banerjee	Mrs Catherine Taylor
58 Glapthorn Road	8 Pridmore Close	58 Glapthorn Road
Oundle	Woodnewton	Oundle
PE8 4PT	PE8 5EY	PE8 4PT

7. Experience and qualifications of registered provider and registered manager [NMS 8-12, 14]

Registered Provider

OMH is the registered provider and has been running residential holidays for children and young people with learning disabilities since July 1983. In that time the organisation has held over 35 holidays catering to approximately 200 holiday makers. OMH is a registered charity (number 1108908) and company (number 5393382). The principal governing document of OMH is our Memorandum and Articles of Association² which lays out our over-arching aims as an affiliate of Mencap. Details of our current trustees, managers, house leaders and senior team can be found online³ and in the Handbook.

OMH is closely connected with four other organisations who support our work:

- The Royal Mencap Society (known as Mencap) is a national charity which supports people with a learning disability to live their lives as they choose. OMH is affiliated to Mencap as one of their Local Groups. Mencap provides OMH with a number of services including: guidance

² <http://www.oundlemencap.co.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Mems-Arts.pdf>

³ <http://www.oundlemencap.co.uk/homepage/volunteers/>



- on best practice; access to a specialist insurance scheme; oversight of our activities; and support for our DBS checking process.
- Oundle School is an independent co-educational boarding school in Oundle, Northamptonshire. The school provides a venue for our original summer holiday, which runs for a week in late July / early August. The large majority of our volunteers on this holiday are drawn from among the pupils at the school.
 - St John's School is an independent co-educational boarding school in Leatherhead, Surrey. The school provides a venue for an additional summer holiday, which runs for a week in August. The large majority of the volunteers on the relevant children's holiday are drawn from among the pupils at the school.
 - Highfield School is an independent prep school in Liphook, Hampshire. The school provides a venue for an additional summer holiday in 2018, which runs for a week in August. The volunteers are from local secondary schools, many of whom attended Highfield School as pupils. This holiday is additionally staffed by a lead team from OSMH and staff from Explore Learning.
 - The Oundle Guides Company are kind enough to share their camping equipment with us for the Mencap Outdoors holiday for young adults.

Responsible Individual

Mr Robin Banerjee is a trustee and company director of OMH and is the responsible individual who represents OMH for the purposes of inspection. Robin is a teacher of Psychology and Mathematics with a British Psychology Society accredited BSc in Psychology, BSc in Computer Science and a MEd in Psychology and Education. He is currently studying towards a PhD on the topic of Executive Function and Self-Regulated Learning at the University of Cambridge.

Robin is currently employed by Oundle School where he teaches Psychology at A level and Mathematics from Years 9 to 12. Robin is a qualified teacher having completed the Graduate Training Programme in Mathematics for Key Stages 3 and 4. Robin is a designated Child Protection Officer for Oundle School and has Safeguarding Children Designated Officer Level 3 training. Robin has additional qualifications in Safe Moving & Handling, Health & Safety at Work, Safer Recruitment Training, Fire Warden training and is also a Community First Responder for East Midlands Ambulance Service. Robin has volunteered on the OSMH holidays since 1998, taking part in 20 holidays.

Registered Manager

Mrs Catherine Taylor (Kate), is a trustee and company director of OMH and is the registered manager of the holiday scheme. Kate is a teacher with 30 years' experience, specialising in additional support needs, especially working with children with moderate to severe learning disabilities. She has worked in mainstream, special and residential school settings, including as the Deputy Head of the Redway School and as Head of School at The Shires at Stretton. She has also been a case manager for a respite provider, New Horizons Care. Kate's professional qualifications include a BEd honours degree, and specialist training in the use of the TEACCH educational system, First Aid, Safeguarding and Child Protection, PEG Management and Medication Management. She has specific communication support skills including British Sign Language level 1 and Makaton Level 8. Kate is also a qualified trainer in the *Management of Actual and Potential Aggression* (MAPA, provided by CPI). Finally, Kate holds a Guide Camp Licence. Kate has volunteered with OSMH since 1984 and has managed the main summer holiday since 1991, as well as founding the Mencap Outdoors adult camp in 2012.



8. Employee details: number, experience and qualifications [NMS 4-12, 14]

OMH has no employees. Instead we are staffed by volunteers and pay a limited number of individuals for professional consultancy relating to the preparation and administration of the holiday scheme. Our (volunteer and consultant) staff can be organised into ten categories.

All numbers provided here relate to the original holiday – other holiday schemes run on similar proportions but absolute figures will vary from those provided here. In the case of each individual holiday scheme, staffing numbers and required expertise is carefully monitored by the registered manager in consultation with managers, house leaders and trustees, and relative to the needs of the holiday makers and the planned activities and setting. [NMS 10]

Movement of individuals between categories happens on an annual basis and is described further in section 10 below. In addition, staff may be members of more than one category at the same time.

Recruitment for the holidays for children is managed by OMH staff who are also teachers at the schools from which most helpers are drawn. All new staff require two references of which one is normally a personal recommendation provided by a member of current OMH staff or their school (if applicable) and the other is an external reference known to the applicant on a personal, professional, educational or similar capacity. References for each applicant will be verified. Verification will be attempted through verbal means in the first instance or a follow up email if the former is not possible. All staff are comprehensively checked using the UK Disclosure Barring Service. Further details can be found in the *Handbook, Volunteer Recruitment Policy*. [NMS 3, 9]

a. New Helpers

New helpers are normally aged 17 – 18 years old (never less than 17 years). They normally number 24 individuals (or about one quarter of the total holiday staff) and are equally balanced between males and females. New helpers are largely recruited from the school which hosts the holiday scheme. New helpers have GCSE or equivalent qualifications and usually come with a reference from school staff and a personal recommendation.

Through the year preceding the holiday, the large majority of new helpers receive an initial introduction to the scheme as part of a school assembly, a written guide to what to expect, a half-day of training in key skills provided by the registered manager, a *Best Practice Booklet for Helpers*, and another half-day of training immediately prior to the start of the holiday itself.

New helpers are managed alongside experienced helpers, in groups of four or five, by a group leader (see section 9c below). During the day, each group of helpers supports a group of four holiday makers, with each helper in designated one-to-one care of a single holiday maker. [NMS 4] Overnight, new helpers may also be responsible for the care and supervision of one holiday maker. [NMS 4] This role is known as a ‘bedtime helper’.

Group leaders and the senior team ensure that new helpers are matched appropriately to holiday makers, and supported at all times. [NMS 2] New helpers have one full day and five evenings (approx. 9pm-11pm) off per week of residential care, with their group. All helpers are encouraged to take regular rest breaks throughout the day and this is carefully managed by group leaders to ensure maintenance at all times of 1:1 care.

b. Experienced Helpers

Experienced helpers are normally aged 18 – 21 years old. They number about 28 individuals and are equally balanced between males and females. Experienced helpers have between 1 and 3 years experience on an OMH holiday and usually have A-level or equivalent qualifications. They repeat the half-day training session immediately prior to the holiday, alongside new helpers and receive the latest *Best Practice Booklet for Helpers*.

Experienced helpers are managed alongside new helpers, in groups of four or five, by a group leader (see section 9c below). During the day, each group of helpers supports a group of four holiday makers, with each helper in designated one-to-one care of a single holiday maker. [NMS 4] Overnight, experienced helpers may also be responsible for the care and supervision of one



holiday maker. [NMS 4] This role is known as a 'bedtime helper'.

Group leaders and the senior team ensure that experienced helpers are matched appropriately to holiday makers, and encouraged to develop their skills and increase their independence, while being supervised and supported. [NMS 2] Experienced helpers have one full day and five evenings (approx. 9pm-11pm) off per week of residential care, with their group, as well as rest breaks as required.

c. Group Leaders

Group leaders are normally aged 20 – 25 years old. They number 12 individuals and are approximately equally balanced between males and females. Group leaders have three to four years of experience as helpers on OMH holidays. Group leaders normally stay in this role for three to four further years.

Group leaders manage a group of new and experienced helpers, as described above. Group leader training is provided by more experienced group leaders and often members of the senior team in an annual one-day session. Group leaders are additionally issued with a *Best Practice booklet for Group Leaders*. Further on-going training and monitoring is delivered by House Leaders and the Registered Manager on a daily basis during the holiday itself. This takes place in meetings every evening. [NMS 2] In addition, group leaders meet daily with their helper group before bedtime, to review the completed day and prepare for the next. At this meeting they review care plans for the holiday makers they will be working with the following day.

Group leaders are expected to be familiar with all risk assessments and procedures on the holiday and are responsible for disseminating this information to their helper group as and when it is needed. Group leaders have one full day and five evenings (approx. 9pm-11pm) off per week of residential care, with their group.

d. Senior helpers

Senior helpers (known also as the senior team) are former helpers and group leaders, normally aged from 23 years and with a minimum of six years of experience with OMH. Accelerated progression may happen when individuals have relevant professional skills. The senior team usually numbers between 18 and 24 staff with an approximately equal balance of males and females.

Within the senior team, dependent on professional skills, qualifications (e.g. first aid training) and OMH experience, specific duties are assigned to individuals. Examples include: administration of medications; co-ordination of on-site activities; logistics for off-site activities; and managing special diets.

In addition, all senior team members are responsible on an on-going basis for the support and supervision of group leaders and helpers, especially new helpers. On day trips and during on-site activities senior helpers are often assigned to shadow a group leader, providing an extra pair of hands to fetch and carry, helping to support any children with challenging behavioural profiles or complex needs, and modelling ideal helper behaviour at all times. Senior helpers also set-up and clear away activities and ensure that the infrastructure of the holiday is secure and functional.

It is also worth noting that senior team members contribute significantly to OMH year-round by taking responsibility for duties as diverse as formulating holiday timetables and booking activities; maintaining and preparing resources such as symbol timetables; compiling accounts and managing budgets; and organising training events.

Senior team members are expected to be familiar with all the children and young people who attend the holiday scheme, and their personal risk assessments. They are apprised of all activity and setting risk assessments, policies and procedures. Many senior team members are also trained in-house in the MAPA techniques for avoiding and, if necessary, responding safely to risk behaviour.

During the holiday, the senior team meets every morning to assign duties for the day ahead and



share updates on individual holiday maker care plans and activity-based risks. The senior team normally have about three evenings off per week. [NMS 2]

e. Medical Team

The medical team is compiled from members of the senior team based on experience and professional qualifications. Together they take responsibility for meeting the medical needs of the holiday makers including: administering first aid and PRN / as-needed medications; booking in and administering both prescription and emergency medications; managing on-going health conditions.

f. House Leaders

House Leaders are experienced senior helpers with relevant professional expertise, who support the registered manager during the holiday week. They have responsibility for monitoring the well-being of the holiday makers and also volunteers. The main forum for this is a nightly meeting with group leaders in which they report concerns and successes with holiday makers and also discuss how their helper group are getting on. The child experts also attend these meetings, where they provide advice on managing risk behaviour [NMS 2] or (more commonly) ways to ensure holiday makers get the most benefit from their week. These strategies are agreed at this meeting and then disseminated to helpers by group leaders, and to the senior team at the regular morning meeting.

g. Care Manager

The care manager is responsible for supporting the registered manager to: (a) liaise with families where there are complex medical needs (b) Monitor the recording of accidents, first aid and medication. (c) Ensure policies relating to care of holiday makers are up to date and relevant.

h. Trustees & Company Directors

Trustees (who are usually also company directors) do not hold a special role during the holiday week, though many attend in senior helper roles. Trustees perform the usual functions as outlined by the Charity Commission including monitoring of the registered manager, creation of annual reports and submission to governing bodies, annual policy reviews and updates, and monitoring of finances.

i. Consultants

In exceptional circumstances, the extent – both in quantity and quality – of activities carried out by a volunteer associated with OMH may reach a threshold where it no longer seems reasonable to accept this as a voluntary contribution. In these cases, individuals may be offered a consultant role, to be reviewed on an annual basis, in which they are reimbursed for their time or a specific task. However reimbursement is never offered for time contributed during a holiday, in which situations all staff are present on a voluntary basis. In addition the trustees carefully monitor this system to ensure that such payments remain below a reasonable percentage of annual expenditure.

j. Venue staff

Our children's holiday venues may provide staff to support the holiday, whose duties include catering, cleaning and maintenance. These staff are employed by the venue owner on our behalf. The staff are never in one-to-one care or supervision of a holiday maker.



Exceptions on new holidays:

In recent years OMH has begun to expand its operations with the inauguration of a new holiday for children, hosted by St John's School, Leatherhead, in August 2014. This holiday was smaller than the original holiday in Oundle, hosting 20 holiday makers, with staffing numbers in proportion to this. In addition, while OMH provided an experienced team of group leaders and senior helpers, all of the helpers in that first year were by necessity 'new'. To account for this lower level of experience among helpers, the holiday makers who attended the holiday were assessed to ensure that the level of support they required was within the capacity of the helpers to deliver.

In 2018 OMH consulted on the establishment of a new holiday – Highreach based at Highfield School, Liphook. Highreach are continuing with their Ofsted registration but as this is still ongoing OMH have taken responsibility for this holiday. A team of senior staff from OMH will lead the holiday, supported by staff from Explore Learning. The remainder of the helpers are by necessity 'new'. To account for this lower level of experience, only 15 children have been accepted and the level of support they require has been assessed.

Exceptions on camps:

The staffing model for our camps for adults is slightly different and less formally structured than that of the holidays for children. This is because the holiday makers are older and generally more able, as well as being very familiar to most of the staff (often having previously attended one of our children's holidays). As a result, on camps, the staff team operates as a large group incorporating different levels of experience, under the supervision of the registered manager.

Staff on these schemes may be new helpers or will have considerable experience from one of the children's holidays. A majority will be at senior helper level (i.e. six years' experience or more). On our camps, new helpers are normally older and often have professional experience of relevance to the scheme and / or a personal connection to the charity. During a camp, new helpers are usually in a small minority (about 10% of staff). There is no group leaders role on camps. Rather than being managed by a group leader, new helpers are supported by the whole team to develop their skills 'on the job'.

As on the children's holidays, staff on camps take on specific responsibilities such as administration of medication according to their professional expertise and personal experience. Specific duties associated with camping such as preparing meals, chopping firewood, cleaning toilets and washing facilities and keeping the campsite tidy and safe are shared by both staff and holiday makers, though overseen by staff. [\[NMS 5\]](#)

Note on National Minimum Standards Guidelines on Age of Employees [\[NMS 10\]](#)

The NMS suggests that all employees should be aged 18 years or over. Our holiday schemes rely on contributions from volunteer staff aged under 18 years old (but never less than 17 years). We feel this is necessary in order to achieve our aims (outlined in section 4) for the following reasons:

- We believe that one of the main strengths of our scheme is the experience from the holiday maker perspective of being among peers. They often comment on this in their feedback, and the youth of the helpers is undoubtedly a crucial contributing factor in breaking down the delineation between "service-user" and "staff". [\[NMS 2\]](#)
- Working with young volunteers provides them with a unique experience at a formative time of life. We feel that the impact on our volunteers is more profoundly felt because of their younger age when they start to work with us.
- Our holiday scheme is heavily dependent on a large intake of new volunteers each year,



recruited from our host schools. Sustained recruitment is secured through word of mouth as former OMH helpers go back to school for a final year and discuss their experience with their peers. The success of this model has allowed us to run for over 30 years on an entirely volunteer basis, keeping the cost of a week of residential care very low (around £300 in 2018) and therefore accessible to the majority of families.

In addition, we note here that to account for the relative youth of these new helpers we have created a supportive structure of experienced volunteers, group leaders, and senior team members. Our total staff numbers 80 people for a holiday with 40 children and young people.

Further details on staff recruitment can be found in our *Volunteer Recruitment Policy* and more about our management structure can be found in the *Governance Policy* both of which are in the *OMH Handbook*.

9. Arrangements for the development, supervision and training of employees [NMS 8, 11, 12]

Helper Supervision and Training

Our *Standard Agendas* document (see *Handbook*) describes the usual training sessions held for different staff groups throughout the year. These are an opportunity for experienced helpers to refresh skills and for new helpers to be introduced to the core skills required. They are supplemented by training documents such as the *Helper Best Practice Booklet* and the *Group Leader Best Practice Booklet*. [NMS 3, 6, 12]

Most importantly, the holidays themselves are training environments in which less experienced volunteers are constantly guided and supported by their peers and senior team members. [NMS 11] This training is delivered on a rolling basis through modelling of best practice, explicit helper instruction, and at daily meetings. For example, the usual schedule of meetings during a single day of the original holiday incorporates:

- Meeting for senior team members: half hour meeting to review activities for the day, discuss risks, and update on strategies to support individual holiday makers
- Meeting for group leaders with their house leaders and child experts: one hour in which each group leader reviews their day in terms of both helper and holiday maker successes and challenges, 'passing on' their group of holiday makers to the group leader who will be working with that group on the next day. In addition, this meeting specifies logistics for the following day.
- Meeting for helper groups: each group leader meets with his or her group of helpers for about 15 – 20 minutes. They review the holiday makers' individual care plan (risk assessments / kids sheets) and discuss the following day both in terms of supporting the children and planning logistically

Finally, throughout the day the senior team and group leaders are in constant contact by radio.

Professional Skills and Formal Training

We take care to capitalize on the professional skills brought to the scheme by senior volunteers, such as teachers, nurses and doctors. However in the interests of sustainability we are also keen to ensure that the organisation does not also become dependent on having volunteers with a very specific skill set. For this reason we also rely on community services such as the local GP surgery, to provide support when needed. [NMS 5]

In addition, the organisation is committed to sponsoring helpers, especially those on the senior team (who usually volunteer on successive holidays over the years) to receive training in order to contribute to the scheme. [NMS 11] Such training may include first aid skills or lifting and handling skills. [NMS 5] In particular, the registered manager qualified as a registered trainer in



the MAPA (*Managing Actual and Potential Aggression*⁴) system, allowing us to train staff at a low cost within the organisation. As a result, we now have a significant proportion of the senior team and group leaders on all holidays who are trained in MAPA skills. [NMS 2]

Staff Development

All helpers, but especially new helpers, are monitored closely by group leaders and the senior team during the holidays to ensure their well-being during the holiday and that of the children in their care. Provided they achieve the minimum standards expected in safety, care and respect, all helpers are welcome to return to one of holidays for a second year if they wish. As far as possible, we also provide an opportunity to come back for a third year for those who apply.

Thereafter, progression to group leader and, from there, after about three years, to senior team member, is dictated by the house leaders, managers and in consultation with the senior team. This decision is based on a range of factors including individual characteristics and competence alongside current senior team membership and need for a balance of skills, genders and roles.

Throughout their association with OMH staff have access to all of our governance, policy and procedural documents and are invited to discuss and comment on these with the managers, or trustees. [NMS 12] Group leaders and senior team particularly are expected to be familiar with our procedures and to disseminate this information to helpers as required.

The registered manager is overseen by the board of trustees. [NMS 10] He or she reports to the board, including submitting reports at the end of each holiday or camp, making recommendations for policy changes, training requirements and the development of each holiday. Trustees will review the registered manager to ensure their continued suitability to the role.

Differences on Camps

As noted in section 9 above, the staff team on the camps for adults operates with a flatter structure. Volunteers are welcome to continue to volunteer on one of these schemes indefinitely. If and when a volunteer moves on we will actively recruit via our current and former volunteer pool for a replacement with a suitable skill set. As above, staffing for these schemes is based on individual characteristics and competence as well as the requirement of balance on the team. In addition, we are moving over time towards having increased separation of different schemes so that we have minimal numbers of volunteers contributing to multiple schemes. This is to provide maximum opportunities to potential volunteers and to ensure the long-term security of our holidays.

⁴ <http://www.crisisprevention.com/en-uk/Specialties/MAPA-Management-of-Actual-or-Potential-Aggressio>



10. Holiday maker details: number, age-range, sex and needs

Approximate demographic details for the holiday makers who attend our schemes are as follows:

	Number	Age-range (years)	Gender (% male)	Sample needs
Oundle children's holiday	40	8-18	50%	Down syndrome; Autism; ADHD; Spina Bifida; Cerebral Palsy; global developmental delay
St John's children's holiday	20	8-18	50%	
Highreach Holiday	15	8-18	75%	
Oundle adult outdoor camp	20 (x2)	18 +	50%	Down syndrome; autism; moderate learning disabilities

11. Health and Welfare of Holiday makers [NMS 1-6, 14]

Health and welfare of holiday makers is ensured through the application of a range of policies and procedures. These are designed to maintain the highest standards in the delivery of care and conduct of activities and are briefly listed below. Each policy can be found in its full form in the *Handbook*.

- a. Application Form: each holiday maker submits a form, normally completed by and always endorsed by their parent or guardian. This provides essential information such as emergency contact details and medical conditions, dietary requirements and care needs. Parents also provide information on likes and dislikes, and areas where support may be required. [NMS 6]
- b. Individual risk assessment / care plan (aka Kid's Sheet) [NMS 2, 5]: drawing on information from the application form, direct discussion with parents or guardians, and experience during the holiday, each child has a personal record which details their preferences and needs. Sections include: My Personal Care Needs; How I Communicate; About Me. This document is updated daily and accessible to all volunteers on the holiday, while being securely held by the day's relevant group leader. It may also be supplemented by additional information where a holiday maker has a particularly complex medical, dietary or behavioural plan.
- c. Medications Policy and Procedure [NMS 5]: this provides for the safe receipt, storage and administration of all medications including basic first aid, emergency medications and regular medications. The Medications Policy and Procedure is enacted by named staff who are fit to do so, with specialist training provided in-house or externally as required (e.g. correct administration of emergency medications for epilepsy). This policy is backed up with standardised records for: recording medications administered and by whom; recording first aid; checking emergency medications in and out of the holiday site; recording medical incidents, especially epileptic seizures.
- d. Health and safety [NMS 6] for the holiday makers and for the scheme as a whole are overseen by a named health and safety officer with relevant training. Our H&S policy specifies procedures for maximising safe conduct in all holiday activities. It is backed-up by an activity-based risk assessment and fire evacuation procedure [see section 17]. In addition we adhere to the H&S policies of our host organisation, such as Oundle School, St John's School, Highfield School or Wadenhoe Campsite.



If any event arises to which OMH staff feel unable to respond themselves, local services (e.g. GP surgery, dental surgery, emergency services) will always be referred to for advice or support as needed.

Behaviour Management [NMS 2]

OMH adopts a preventative approach to behaviour management, with all staff working hard to help maintain well-being in holiday makers and thus minimise risk behaviour. When risk behaviour does occur, key staff will employ a range of agreed behaviour management techniques. In addition, a suitable percentage of senior staff are trained in the use of MAPA⁵ techniques to minimize negative outcomes, reduce the likelihood of having to use physical intervention, and to use safe physical intervention if absolutely necessary. This is detailed in our Behaviour Management Policy and Procedure with is also accompanied by a Risk Behaviour Record system to allow monitoring of incidents and suitable adjustments to procedure if needed. Ultimately, due to the fact that we are a volunteer organisation reliant on non-professional staff, we may consider removing a holiday maker from the scheme if their behaviour is outside our ability to respond.

Safeguarding and Anti-bullying [NMS 3, 13]

Procedures for Safeguarding are laid out in the Safeguarding policy and Anti-Bullying Policy. These incorporate aspects such as whistleblowing [NMS 9], and procedures to be followed in the event of a concern being raised. Safeguarding is overseen by a named Safeguarding Officer and a named deputy, both of whom have suitable specialist training and are familiar with local Safeguarding services. The policy is supported by Safeguarding Record Forms which permit thorough and appropriate collection of relevant information in the event of a concern. In addition, our Volunteer Recruitment Policy specifies appropriate recruitment, background checking and monitoring of staff. [NMS 8, 9, 15] All new volunteers are subject to DBS checks and references are required and vetted. Senior staff are asked to provide references every three years. All volunteers are asked to update their employment history annually.

12. Missing Children [NMS 4]

The high level of staffing across all of our schemes, and attention paid to ensuring the well-being of every holiday maker, means that we have never had a child go missing from our schemes. Our Missing Children Policy outlines our predicted response in the event that such an incident occurs.

13. Surveillance [NMS 3]

The OSMH scheme does not use any surveillance. Holiday makers are supported at all times, at a 1:1 ratio on the schemes for children. Holiday makers are only alone when in their bedrooms at night or if conducting self-care. In these situations, holiday staff are always present on duty outside the bedrooms / bathrooms. There are also four senior team members (including both male and female and members of the medical team) 'on call' every night should additional assistance be required.

It is considered appropriate to the needs of the children who attend our holidays that they should share a bedroom with a helper of the same sex: their 'bedtime helper'. This approach has a number of strengths which include:

- volunteer on hand in the event of medical emergency (in particular, many children experience epileptic seizures at night)
- available support for personal care (i.e. toilet trips) in the middle of the night
- a comforting presence for the holiday maker, in an otherwise unfamiliar bedroom

⁵ <http://www.crisisprevention.com/en-uk/Specialties/MAPA-Management-of-Actual-or-Potential-Aggressio>



- immediate support in the event of a fire evacuation
- familiar routine at bedtime and in the mornings from the same helper all week, providing a supportive and secure structure for the holiday makers
- supervision of holiday makers to prevent absconding

Our holidays use dormitory-style accommodation, with two holiday makers plus two helpers per room, but a minority sleep overnight in a room with a single volunteer. This is considered appropriate to preserve the dignity of holiday makers and in light of the detailed background checks applied to helpers. Parents have been asked to submit a signed statement agreeing to this, explaining the need for this level of supervision to occur for their child.

On the adult camps, daytime support is normally 1 helper to 2 holiday makers. Holiday makers sleep in four-man tents or dormitories in which one individual out of four is normally a helper.

OMH collects and, if appropriate, retains certain information about both volunteers and holiday makers. A complete account of this is described in our [Data Storage Policy and Data Protection Policy](#). [NMS 15]

14. Emergency Procedures and Fire Evacuation [NMS 6]

OMH adopt the fire safety measures and procedures of the organisations which host their holidays. A fire evacuation is always held within the first 24 hours of a holiday. Staff are clear on their duties and responsibilities, and named staff are assigned to support holiday makers whose physical difficulties or behavioural responses to the alarm bells make it hard for them to vacate the premises promptly. Detailed procedures are described in our [Fire Evacuation Policy](#).

15. Contact between Children and their Families [NMS 1]

It has been our experience that contact with parents, guardians or other family members can be disruptive and cause homesickness. We therefore work to encourage holiday makers to be fully immersed in the holiday, without needing to contact home. However for those children who wish to make contact, phone calls or emails are supported by the registered manager and senior team. Volunteers are encouraged to report whenever they feel a child is unhappy, and children are monitored directly by the senior team, leaders and manager so that we can provide contact with home when it is needed and likely to be helpful. [NMS 1] Parents and caregivers are fully aware of this arrangement.

Mobile phones and other devices for holiday makers are not banned from the holiday but they are discouraged. This is for the reasons outlined above, and because we cannot guarantee their safety from damage or, conceivably, theft.

Children are all encouraged to write a postcard home mid-week. In addition, they keep a daily diary to record what they have been doing and their feelings. The diary is then taken home at the end of the holiday, to help give parents insight into their child's holiday experience and act as a memory prompt for holiday makers. During the week, diary time is also valued as a chance for creative expression, as a re-cap of the day, and a quiet post-dinner activity. [NMS 1]

16. Complaints [NMS1, 14]

The [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#) outlines procedures for responding to both informal commentary on our work, and formal complaints. Our goal is always to deal with concerns at the moment they arise through direct and open discussion with those involved. Where it is not possible to address an issue at the time, our senior team hand out Support cards which provide our contact details and are also designed to reassure the public that we are well-placed to deal



with the varying behaviours and needs of our holiday makers.

17. Holiday Accommodation [NMS 6]

Our normal holiday accommodation is briefly described below.

	Accommodation description	Specific services
Oundle children's holiday	Two purpose-built boarding houses, each sleeping approx. 60 people	Shared single-sex dormitories; male and female bathrooms; communal dining and social spaces; courtyard garden; accessible toilet.
St John's children's holiday	Partial use of two boarding houses	
Highreach Holiday	Use of single boarding house. One floor.	
Oundle adult outdoor camp	Tents and marquees. Portable toilets	Male and female changing areas. Outdoor cooking facilities. Communal spaces (marquees) for dining and activities.

At St John's , Highfield and Oundle Schools we also have access to school facilities such as indoor swimming pools, social spaces, gardens and sports pitches.

18. Contact Details at Holiday Sites

<i>Oundle Children's Holiday: also known by volunteers as Oundle Mencap or OSMH Wyatt House Pavilion Drive</i>	<i>St John's Children's Holiday: also known by volunteers as St John's School Community Holiday or SJSCH</i>	<i>Highreach Holiday</i>	<i>Mencap Outdoors: (adult outdoor camp): Wadenhoe Campsite</i>
Oundle Northants PE8 4JJ	Epsom Road Leatherhead Surrey KT22 8SP	Highfield School Highfield Lane Liphook Hampshire GU30 7LQ	Wadenhoe Nr Oundle

During the holidays the volunteers and holiday makers are regularly off-site. When on site, the group is very active and often out of doors. Therefore the best way to contact the staff at each scheme is by mobile telephone. Please note that these are personal numbers and not provided by the organisation. Details for key contacts, and the holidays at which they are usually present, are given overleaf.



Name	Role	Phone Number	Usually present at...
Kate Taylor	Registered manager	07801 187 103	Oundle children's holiday St John's children's holiday Oundle adult outdoor camp
Robin Banerjee	Responsible Individual House Leader	07891 139 435	Oundle children's holiday
Ed Barker	House Leader	07971 800 940	Oundle children's holiday Oundle adult outdoor camp
Andrew Blythman	Senior Team Representative Trustee	07785 607889	Oundle children's holiday
Alex Joyce	Care Manager	07944 973 227	Oundle children's holiday Oundle adult outdoor camp
Neil Whitmore	Holiday Leader	07746 025210	St John's children's holiday
Vivienne Lidell	Holiday Leader	07919 852720	Highreach Holiday