

OXFORD & DISTRICT MENCAP
(AFFILIATED TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED
CHILDREN & ADULTS)

ABOUT OXFORD MENCAP SUMMER HOLIDAYS
WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A CAMPER ON THEM

Hill End Residential Field Study Centre, Eynsham Road, Farmoor, Oxford, OX2 9NJ

Hill End Holidays have been running for 40 years! The idea is to give people a chance to get away, have fun and chill out. The holidays have evolved over the years but there are some key themes to bring out which is what they are all about;

- Volunteers. The people supporting campers are all volunteers, they may not have worked in this environment before. They are given support and training before camp starts and during the camp. We ask them for boundless amounts of energy and enthusiasm combined with a willingness to work together to create the holiday for our campers. It's a formula that works and many of our volunteers return year after year.
- Holidays. Campers love our holidays and what they get to do on them. Games, swimming, films, dressing up, discos, football, theme parks, drama, sailing. Each year we challenge ourselves to think about how we can push forward the activities we introduce – for example, country & western dancing (Yee-Ha!) and our film extravaganza.
- The environment. We are on a basic outdoor camp with few facilities. In the sun, it's fantastic with its open fields, outdoor swimming pool and campfire. In the rain we make the best of it.
- An annual event. Once campers have a place we invite them back each year until they feel they would like to move on. So even if the first year is a bit of a learning curve it's worth it to have something you know and love going forward.

Each year, after camp we receive letters and phone calls from parents and carers letting us know how much they appreciate camp. We believe that's because we create something different from school and home which encourages people to be independent and have fun - but somewhere that is not too far from home.

Please see our website www.oxfordmencap.org for details of this year's holiday dates and contact details.

What to expect

A holiday! There are lots of things to do, things to learn and people around. You will learn on the way, have experiences you did not think you would and hopefully remember it with smiles when you leave. We like to have happy campers by the end of each week and if there's something special you would like to do, let us know.

The level of care is generally 1-to-1, however some people need a bit more assistance and some a bit less so we vary the support given as required. Everyone is encouraged to be as independent as possible during camp, but to understand that they can ask for help when they need it and the information we receive in advance via the application forms and on arrival ensures we can provide this.

Diet. Due to the number of people on camp we cannot guarantee to take dietary requirements into account, but will make every effort to do so. Any needs which must be met should be agreed with us and put on the camper form ahead of camp.

When you arrive, there will be the itinerary for the week on the wall and the menu - check them out.

Each evening there is a volunteer meeting to address any issues from the day and so helpers can let campers know the plan for the next day and get ready for it. Trips to theme parks, punting, discos and barbeques, the 'Hill End World Cup' and swimming are usually included.

Phonecalls. We ask parents and carers to say how often they would like to be called over the week and agree this with the camper's volunteer on arrival. We tend to say as little as possible - perhaps once over the week in order to encourage everyone to make the most of the break. On arrival the leaders and nurse's phone number will be given to parents for use in case of emergency.

Arrival and departure.

Arrival - Arrive within an hour of the time given. Each camper has a volunteer allocated to them at this point - even if it's only to help them find their way round. Campers will be shown to their beds so they can unpack. All campers' carers must meet the nurse when they arrive. Medication is given to the nurse. Any specific things we need to know should be mentioned to the volunteer, nurse or the leaders at this point and written down. The inventory is checked and please let the volunteer needs to know how much spending money has been brought. (c£5- £20 is usually about right)

Departure - The campers leave at 3pm on the Friday afternoon of each week and parents and carers are asked to check very carefully that they have everything with them. We have no facilities for lost property after camp.

How to Apply

In order to apply please email Katie.hollier@yahoo.co.uk including the name, age and sex of the person you would like to attend the holiday. We will then contact you to let you know if we have vacancies and to discuss whether this is the right holiday for you or the person you are caring for. We are over subscribed, however, we usually fit people in within a couple of years.

How to find us!

- By Car: From the A34 get onto the A420 towards Swindon and west. As soon as you're on the A420, get off it onto the B4044. Hill End Field Study Centre is on this road between Botley and Farmoor on the right hand side.
- By Bus: Take the 100 Stagecoach bus going to Eynsham/Witney. They depart from Gloucester Green bus station and also pick up from opposite the Oxford railway complex. They run every 15 to 20 minutes and you have to ask them to put you off at Hill End just before Farmoor
- By Taxi: It should cost no more than £8 from central Oxford.

Please contact me with further questions.

Yours sincerely,

Katie Hollier
Oxford Mencap – Holiday Co-ordinator
07740 630597
katie.hollier@yahoo.co.uk)

Parent referee: Sue Gibbling, Sue's son, Simon has been coming on the holidays for over 5 years and she can give you a parent's view of what the holidays offer. Let Katie know if you would like Sue's number.