

HOLIDAY CLUB – ADMISSIONS POLICY



CONTENTS

Hover over each heading/subheading for a link directly to each section.

1. HOLIDAY CLUB ADMISSIONS

2. HOLIDAY CLUB MISSION STATEMENT

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This document should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding for children
- Health and safety
- General data protection regulations (GDPR)

1. HOLIDAY CLUB ADMISSIONS

Leighton Buzzard Mencap (LB Mencap) strives to make Holiday Club a safe, inclusive, and fun space for the children and young people who access the service. As of 2024, a decision has been taken that Holiday Club will accept up to, but no more than, 2 new starters each week per year (up to 6 new starters each year). This is to ensure the ongoing ability of the Holiday Club leadership team to reliably meet the safety and wellbeing needs of all young people accessing the provision.

Following an expression of interest, the parent/caregiver of prospective starters will be invited to complete a **form** giving a detailed outline of their child's current behavioural, health and communication needs. This will be followed up with a telephone conversation and a face-to-face meeting with a member of the Holiday Club leadership team, where both the parent/caregiver and the prospective child shall be present.

Should a parent/caregiver decline to provide adequate information about the needs of their child, or refuse a face-to-face meeting prior to the start of Holiday Club, then their application will not progress further and no possibility of a place on Holiday Club will be offered.

Following a successful application, the parent/caregiver will be invited to complete the annual registration and consent forms for Holiday Club; places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Holiday Club retains the right, under special circumstances, to allocate places in accordance with a child's age. New starters nearing the upper-age limit for holiday club (17 years) may be given priority ahead of younger starters, who have the possibility for many years yet to enjoy the opportunities that Holiday Club offers.

2. HOLIDAY CLUB MISSION STATEMENT

The LB Mencap Holiday Club provides an annual three-week summer club especially designed for young people from the ages of 8 to 17 who have varying degrees of special needs. We aim to provide experiences for the children through predominantly physical and creative activities with the emphasis on having fun rather than an extension of school.

Each week we run a number of activities at our base, currently in Leighton Middle School. We aim to go out every day on trips to facilities within an hour's coach ride. The timetable varies daily and we try to avoid repetition of the activities across the three weeks to allow as many different experiences as possible.

The children that come each week are all paired with one-to-one volunteer helpers who are students from the local secondary schools. The helper's role is to support, encourage and act as a befriender so that each child can achieve their potential and make the most of the opportunities we offer. Where individual needs dictate, children may be paired with two helpers. There is a dedicated team of volunteer leaders to oversee the management and welfare of the children. Although the team of leaders do not hold qualifications in special needs education, they bring with them a range of skills and valuable experience of special needs gained over many years of working with LB Mencap. We are on OFSTED's Voluntary Register and meet all of their requirements.

We always welcome new members to the group and meet with parents/carers beforehand to discuss their child's individual needs. We aim to be flexible to around each child's needs, but as we have a broad range of abilities within the group, our activities are planned to encompass this. We aim to be all inclusive but we cannot provide an individual programme. However, we adapt activities as far as our expertise and equipment allows. Although the leaders have received training in challenging behaviour and are willing to employ strategies suggested by parents/carers, ultimately the health and safety of the whole group is paramount. We have to accept our limitations and do not profess to be experts in this area. We always have a qualified first aider present but we cannot offer nursing care.

The Holiday Club works on three levels. Firstly, of course, we are there for the children giving them their own club and hopefully a happy time to remember and look forward to each year. We aim to give them the opportunity to participate in activities that they cannot usually access and have at least as many different experiences as their peers. Secondly, for the parents/carers to give them a much-needed break, knowing that their children are safe and having fun during the long summer holidays. Thirdly, for the students, who often return year after year as they have gained so much from their participation in our Holiday Club.