



Guidelines and Rules

You are blessed to be here on Residential Scholarship. What this means is that several individual people, families, and churches make personal sacrifices in order to support BH. They care about you no matter what, regardless of your past. Just like Jesus, we love you no matter what. The sponsors want to be a part of God’s great plan to give you a hope and a future..... A Residential Scholarship is an offer for you to stay at BH as a guest for up to 2 years. You will be provided a safe place to live in a loving atmosphere. The length of your Residential Scholarship depends upon your educational plan. Once the training/certificate/degree program is coming to completion, the transition process from BH to independent living begins. We will assist you with your job search and setting up living arrangements (obtaining an apartment/renting a room/sharing an apt, etc). Preparation for “graduation” from Bethesda House starts at intake. This will not be a time of rest and relaxation. It will be a time of working to better your and your baby’s life. Being a student and a mother is not easy but is a means to an end. By completing the job training you choose, your days in the future will be easier. You will be in control of your future – able to provide and not be dependent. Use this beautiful opportunity to do something amazing for yourself and your child. It will not be easy; but, it will be worth it and we will be beside you!

We are blessed to have you here and be a part of your life. All the “staff” are volunteers. We give of our time and energy because we care and want to help you break free from past hurts and mistakes and feel God’s forgiveness and freedom. BH is a faith based home where we teach from the Bible, about Jesus and how your life can be transformed. We would never force a personal relationship with Jesus; however, you must be willing to attend all parts of our program including Bible Studies, devotional time, prayer time, and church attendance on Sundays with your mentor family. We all have experiences (good & bad) that make us who we are. We all have different pasts and reasons we want to help but we all have a heart to make a difference in your life. We will treat you with respect and dignity and ask the same of you. We will give our all and ask the same of you. If you ever have a problem with us (as humans, we make mistakes), please respectfully tell us. If it is not resolved, please bring the matter to the Director. If you have a problem with the Director, speak to her directly. If it is not resolved, you may bring the matter to the Board of Directors. The Director is a mandated reporter who must report any suspected neglect or abuse; all concerns will be addressed with her.

Guidelines are an outline used to encourage the right way to do something. Guidelines, when willingly followed, bring greater personal freedom and liberty.

Rules function as law. Rules are an absolute boundary and may be necessary to promote unity while living together in an unrelated household.

Guidelines that are ignored will become rules. Rules restrict the freedom of self-determination for one, in order to preserve the freedom of all.

It is the desire of Bethesda House (BH) to have rules when necessary and implement guidelines instead. Guidelines may be negotiable when approached with a right attitude. It is not our desire to dictate but rather to lead by example and encouragement.

Personal Possessions

- Personal possessions will be checked by Staff/Director upon arrival. A list of items will be kept in the Resident's file to ensure that these items are accounted for. Due to space limitations, clothing and other possessions should be kept to a minimum. Each Resident is allotted one large storage bin in addition to what can be safely and neatly stored in their room. BH is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

General

- Wake up time is by 8:00 a.m. on weekdays. This time may vary depending on earlier class or appointment times. Wake up time on Sundays will vary depending on the church time of your mentor family.
- On weekdays, chores, shower and breakfast should be completed by 10:00 a.m. or before leaving the house for the morning. Saturday deep cleaning chores must be done before going out for the day. They may be completed on Friday afternoon/evening if needed.
- All Residents must be in by 5:30 p.m. on weekdays and 6:00 p.m. on weekends unless permission is obtained for extenuating circumstances (i.e. classes, medical emergency, etc.)
- Bedtime for all children is 8:00 p.m. Children may be left in their room only when sleeping and the mother is using a functioning monitor.
- For the safety of your child, children are expected to sleep in their crib. When a child wakes in the night and cannot be quieted, please use the Common Room until he/she is ready for bed again.
- Residents should be in their rooms by 9:30 p.m. Lights out is at 10:00 p.m.
- Personal hygiene is important. Everyone must shower and brush teeth on a *daily* basis.
- Babies are to be changed on the changing table in the playroom when being changed downstairs. When diapering upstairs, use the changing table if your bedroom has one. If not, change baby on a diapering pad. The diaper must be immediately disposed of in the diaper pail.

- Residents must wear appropriate and modest clothing (covering top, midsection, and bottom) at all times. A bra is to be worn any time Residents are in public, including the common area of the home.
- Whenever a child is left in the care of another Resident, Staff approval is necessary. If the time period is less than 15 minutes, verbal notice/text to director is sufficient. If longer than 15 minutes, the mother must complete a *Babysitting Form* to be approved by Staff/Director.
- Public transportation should be utilized whenever possible. We provide transportation to local grocery stores, doctor's appointments, and other commitments off-site as needed. All transportation is arranged with Transportation Coordinator.
- BH is set up to house a mom with one baby (exception for multiples made). If a repeat pregnancy occurs during Resident's stay at BH alternate living arrangements must be made. BH Staff/Director will assist Resident connect with MA Dept. of Housing & Community Development emergency shelter.
- Residents are not to change the thermostat. If the temperature is uncomfortable, notify Director/Staff.
- Windows must remain closed when the A/C or heat are on.

Meals / Snacks

- Breakfast must be completed (including clean up) by 9:00 a.m., lunch must be completed (including clean up) by 1:30 p.m., and dinner will be at 5:30/6:00 p.m. with the kitchen available for prep, eating and clean up from 5-7:00 p.m.
- Everyone (residents and evening care) will sit down together, family style. Each Resident will have some responsibility in the meal preparation or clean up. Details in "*Chore Booklet*". If not assigned, to meal prep., residents are to participate in clean up.
- Each resident is responsible to prepare, pack and clean up her own breakfast and lunch.
- The food shopping will be done weekly on a rotating basis with Residents spending their SNAP benefit and WIC on the grocery list for food for the entire house. There will be no individual food items in the house. Out of consideration to other Residents, use reasonable portion control.
- Proper nutrition is extremely important to the health of each Resident and to the development of her baby. Sugary drinks and snacks will not be a part of the house supply.
- Snacks are available throughout the day but should not replace a regular meal.
- Food and drink are only allowed in the kitchen. No food or drinks (except for water) are permitted in the bedrooms, living room, and education room. No water at the computer counter in the Education Room.

Education

- If a Resident has not graduated from High School, she is required to work toward obtaining a HiSET (GED).
- Tutorial assistance will be available when needed.
- Residents will attend the classes provided within the program, such as Bible Study, parenting, life skills, and decision-making classes, etc.

Safety

- Children must be attended at all times.
- Mop buckets are to be emptied and put away IMMEDIATELY after use.
- Residents using the kitchen should take care to have their child outside of the cooking area.
- Stove top cooking must be attended to at all times while in use.
- Please let staff know about any areas of concern regarding potential hazards or maintenance issues. Non-urgent needs can be written in the maintenance log. We expect that everyone will respect BH property; but, should anything be damaged, the resident will be responsible to make amends by replacement or repair of the item.
- No weapons of any sort are permitted at BH.
- No candles permitted in the house.
- Residents are not to feed another resident's baby unless the mother of the baby requests.
- Balloons, pets, and kiddie pools are potential hazards and are not permitted at BH.
- BH reserves the right to inspect or search rooms, closets, or personal items.
- **For safety purposes, BH address should not be disclosed. This may lead to immediate revocation of Residential Scholarship.**

Medical

- All medications, including over-the-counter types, will be locked in Resident's lock box. All medication will be logged in with BH Staff. BH Staff & Resident will have the key to her lock box.
- All medications will be approved by the OB/GYN prior to being administered.
- Drug and alcohol use is prohibited while in residence at the home. Possession of such will result in immediate revocation of Residential Scholarship. Any Resident suspected of being under the influence will be asked to submit to a drug/alcohol screening. Random drug tests will be administered on a regular basis as well. A positive screening or a refusal of drug/alcohol screening will be presumed positive resulting in the Residential Scholarship being revoked. The Resident will be asked to vacate the premises immediately. If your condition deems you unable to care for your child, DCF will be contacted.
- Smoking is harmful to the health of the mother and to her unborn baby and is strongly discouraged by BH. Smoking is only permitted on the back patio limited to three/day at

certain times. All butts must be properly extinguished in designated receptacle. Staff/Director will help develop a plan to quit if desired. Smoking inside of BH may lead to immediate revocation of Residential Scholarship.

- Residents will be under the care of a board-certified OB/GYN for prenatal care and will deliver at South Shore Hospital. Childbirth classes will be provided either by a volunteer nurse or childbirth educator at BH or at a local hospital. We encourage all Residents to follow the medical recommendations of their Doctors and Counselors. A birth plan will be established by Resident and BH Staff/Director two months prior to due date.
- If a Resident is ill, in labor, or needs help in any way, please do not hesitate to call the Director at any time. If the Director cannot be reached, call your doctor or 911 for any emergency.
- If at any time there is a reason to believe that a Resident is a danger to herself or others, 911 will be called and an evaluation will be completed immediately. Medical professionals and BH Staff/Director will determine whether the program is capable of meeting the needs of the Resident.

Spiritual

- Residents are required to attend worship service on Sundays with their mentor family.
- Residents will attend weekly Bible study.

Visitation/Outside Activities

- Residents may visit off-site with Birth Father, relatives and friends on Saturdays with prior approval of Director. No visits will take place at the home. We will help facilitate a visit where Birth Father, family or friend meet at designated location, if possible. Weekend Plans request must be submitted to Director by Friday at noon. A weekend plan must be submitted for all events/occasions outside of the normal routine, even if it was discussed with director verbally.
- A once a month Friday overnight away visit *may* be arranged if the Staff/Director feels it would be beneficial for the Resident. These visits will not occur until a Resident has been in the home for two months. These visits must be pre-arranged with Director, with 48 hours prior notice of approval.
- An overnight will be denied if that would leave another Resident alone.
- All pickups are to take place at the designated spot – not BH.
- Holiday visits will be arranged with Director ahead of time
- In the case of emergency, we want to respond quickly and effectively, and we need to know who is in the house. Residents **MUST** sign out when exiting the house. All Residents must complete the sign out sheet as described DATE, LOCATION, TIME LEAVING and EXPECTED RETURN as well as enter ACTUAL RETURN upon return. Whenever you leave the house, sign out on the sheet provided for this purpose. Please be sure to enter dates.

Phone / Mail

- No phone calls will be made or accepted after 9:00 p.m. Personal cell phones should be silenced.
- Cell phones are to be away during all classes and dinner.
- Proper phone etiquette should be followed....don't be interacting with phone when there are people interacting with you. Also, when you are caring for your child, put your phone away and enjoy your baby.
- House phone is available for emergencies.
- No collect calls will be accepted on the BH phone.
- Residents will have limited access to the internet.
- Letters can be written and mailed daily by BH staff. Any incoming mail will be given to the Resident promptly upon receipt from the Post Office.

Media / Music

- A television is provided in the Common Room but no televisions in the bedrooms. Television is only permitted in the evening after all daily activities have ended. On weekends, Residents may watch TV or PG-rated (some PG-13) movies only. No R-rated movies are permitted.
- All music, TV programs, and movies must conform to the Christian philosophy of the ministry.

Child Birth/Delivery

- Residents are required to complete a Hospital Plan prior to the birth of their baby so that all of the Staff involved is aware of who is to be contacted once labor begins.
- A solid Aftercare Plan must be in place before delivery.

End of Stay

- A *Discharge Form* must be completed and signed before leaving the home.
- The forwarding address paperwork must be completed in order to forward mail received after leaving. Any mail received after a Resident's discharge will be forwarded once a month only. After one month, the home will not forward any further mail to a former Resident.
- MAHealth/DTA must be informed immediately of the Resident's change of address to ensure continuation of benefits.
- The Resident's room and closet will be cleaned by the Resident and checked by Staff prior to leaving.
- All personal belongings should be taken by the Resident at the time of discharge. Any belongings left behind without special arrangement with the Staff will be considered not wanted and will be discarded or donated.
- BH will not pay for items to be shipped to another address.

- A Resident who chooses adoption *may* remain in the house for agreed upon time at discretion of Director.
- If a Resident leaves the program prior to completing her education plan/graduating, she must make all of her own arrangements to leave the home. BH Staff will not be responsible to pay for or provide transportation or to make travel plans. No resident will be permitted to return to live at the house.
- If a Resident desires, a continued relationship may be maintained between herself and the Staff through correspondence, phone calls, and visits back to the home.

Clarification/Warning System

Living in a community can be a positive and beneficial experience for all involved. As with anything new, there may be some difficulty adjusting to a different way of doing things. We hope that the Residents understand our philosophy and values and we will do all we can to help them meet the challenges they are facing. Should there be on-going difficulty adjusting to Bethesda House, we have the following system in place to restore them to community. **Please note: when a resident chooses actions that are serious and/or harmful, this Resident has chosen to leave the program immediately (relinquish their Residential Scholarship) regardless of the following steps. These actions may include (but are not limited to): drugs, alcohol, smoking inside house, disclosing BH address.**

The Clarification/Warning System has a four-level progression:

1. Clarification
2. Response and plan
3. Written Warning and plan
4. Probation/Evaluation

1. Clarification:

This first step serves as a reminder of the guidelines. A resident receives a verbal clarification after the first time a guideline is not followed so that the expectation of BH is clearly communicated and further steps may not be taken.

2. Response and Plan:

The second step occurs when the same guideline is missed. BH staff will give the resident an opportunity to respond and look at a different strategy to meet the community expectations. A plan will be created for the resident to follow so that a third offense may be avoided.

3. Written Warning and Plan:

Should the resident not respond to the 1st and 2nd steps of this system, a Written Warning will be issued, and another plan created. A Written Warning may be given immediately in the case of a verbal or physical altercation, property damage, stealing, not meeting your monthly budget (monetary or SNAP) commitment or taking an unauthorized overnight. A serious offense of a community guideline will result in an immediate Written Warning.

4. Termination of Residential Scholarship

If a Resident accumulates 3 different Written Warnings, the Resident has chosen to relinquish their Residential Scholarship and must vacate the home within 48 hours.

We affirm each Resident has dignity in their uniqueness and is full of potential. In achieving this potential, Residents will meet each week with the Director to discuss their goals while at BH and beyond. Housing, finances, scheduling appointments, living in community, and building your strengths are tasks achieved through collaboration with the Staff and Director.

1. **Goal Setting:** The Family Achievement Plan is created within 3 weeks of arrival with Director. On-going meetings with the Director are held each week to follow up with the Family Achievement Plan. Each Resident's progress toward success will be re-assessed each quarter by Resident, Director and Mentor to recognize success and/or identify barriers in completing the Resident's goals.
2. **Finances:** In planning for financial security, each Resident will put together a budget which includes saving a portion of the monthly income. Each month, \$100 of the Resident's benefit will go directly to BH to help with monthly living expenses. The Resident keeps \$100 for their monthly spending money (cell phone, etc). The balance is deposited in their individual folder, signed off on (by director and resident), and kept in locked closet as their savings.
3. **Housing:** The Staff and Director will walk with you through the housing search process by establishing goals and equipping you to take ownership of your search. We will work with Housing Solutions for Southeastern MA. Application and needed documentation will be sent to area Housing Authorities in addition to Section 8 application to Housing Solutions.
4. **Community Empowerment:** We believe you can contribute something positive to the community. The BH Staff/Director will help to create quarterly goals and equip you to utilize your strengths and build up the community as well as the churches that support BH. This include helping at BH fundraising events.

Bethesda House

Guidelines/Rules Agreement

I, _____, agree to be an active participant in the community of Bethesda House (BH). I am committed to setting goals and working toward the completion of these goals in cooperation with Staff and Director. I have read and understand the Bethesda House Guidelines and Rules and agree to abide by them. If I choose not to abide by these policies, I acknowledge that my Residential Scholarship will be revoked, and I will be choosing to end my stay at Bethesda House. I am also aware of the following: These Guidelines may be modified at any point if deemed necessary. BH reserves the right to determine a Resident ineligible to stay on the premise with or without a particular reason or advance notice, subsequently the Resident will need to leave the property of BH.

We are excited to enter into this relationship with you and we look forward to having your time here be a productive and valuable experience.

Resident Signature

Date

Director Signature

Date