



Guidelines and Rules

We offer you the gift of a 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 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.

All “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. 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.

Personal Possessions

- 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.
- All personal belongings should be stored in bins corresponding with your room number.

General

- Wake up time is by 7:00 a.m. on weekdays. Monday - Friday day starts at 8:45a.m.- breakfast, shower, and chores must be completed before. Sunday church ride is via Lyft - breakfast and shower must be completed before. (see Attachment A- Weekly Schedule)
- Saturday and Sunday afternoons are “free” days, with privilege according to your level. All of the week’s deep cleaning chores must be done by 3p.m. on Friday.
- All Residents must be in by 5:00 p.m. 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.
- NOTHING in the crib (no blankets, bumper pads, stuffed animals, etc).
- 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 Living Room until he/she is ready for bed again.
- Lights out is at 10:00 p.m. Friday night lights out at 11pm. Resident that is responsible for Kitchen is responsible to make sure all downstairs lights are off.
- 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 Staff/Director is sufficient. If longer than 15 minutes, the mother must complete a *Babysitting Form* to be approved by Staff/Director.
- We provide transportation to medical appointments and other commitments off-site as needed. All transportation is arranged THROUGH Director/Asst. Director on Slack - never directly through volunteers. Appointments are to be submitted immediately after the appt is made. Non-emergency appointments submitted within 48 hours of appt. may cost

residents the Lyft fee. Residents should be waiting for their ride in front foyer at scheduled pick up time.

- 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 help residents connect with MA Dept. of Housing & Community Development emergency shelter.
- Bedrooms will be changed/rearranged as needed to best fit the needs of the Residents in general.
- 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.
- Google calendar is the system used to share all household events.

Meals / Snacks

- Breakfast must be completed (including clean up) by 8:30 a.m., lunch (including clean up) is at time noted on weekly schedule (A), and dinner is at 5:30 – family style.
- Dinner cleanup will be done together by all Residents immediately after dinner using a dice and the cleanup chart assignment (see CHORE BOOK).
- 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. Residents may label their \$40/month SNAP personal items. Out of consideration to other Residents, use reasonable portion control.
- Screenshot of SNAP benefit balance and WIC balance should be sent to the Director every Thursday.
- If a Resident is not present for dinner, the cook will serve a plate, cover and set aside, before anyone has seconds.
- Leftovers will be utilized as best possible.
- 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 near computers.

Education

- BrightCourses will start immediately as the Ed Plan is determined.
- If a Resident has not graduated from High School, she is required to work toward obtaining HiSET or diploma.
- If Resident already has a GED/Diploma, she will choose and enroll in one of the online certificate programs.
- Following the weekly schedule (see attachment A), on-line classes will be worked on Monday-Thursday in the Ed Room.
- Tutorial assistance will be available when needed.
- Residents will attend all classes provided within the program, such as Bible Study, Parenting, Life Skills, and Decision-Making classes, etc.
- Ed Room time: Enrolled in Ed Program = 20 hours/week
Not enrolled yet/Brightcourses = 10 hours/week

Safety

- Children must be attended at all times.
- Babies are to be buckled into seats and swings at all times.
- No propping bottles – babies are to be held to be fed.
- 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. 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.
- Babies are not to sleep in any seat of any sort. When sleeping, they must be laid flat in the bassinet, crib or pack and play.
- 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 locking cabinet. All medication will be logged in with BH Staff. BH Staff & Resident will have the key to her cabinet.
- All medications will be approved by the OB 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 the 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 the due date.
- Pediatric care will be provided by South Shore Medical Center.
- Primary care for residents will be provided through South Shore Medical Center.
- The immunization schedule outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics must be followed for all babies.
- Flu shots are required for all Residents and babies over 6 months old.
- ILLNESS: When you or your child have a fever or are experiencing diarrhea and/or vomiting, please protect others by staying in your room or in the playroom.
- 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.
- A Resident who chooses adoption *may* remain in the house for agreed upon time at discretion of the Director.

Spiritual

- Residents are required to attend church on Sunday mornings. Transportation will be provided.
- Residents will attend weekly Bible study just like all other BH classes offered.

Visitation/Outside Activities

- Residents may visit off-site with Father of Baby, relatives and friends on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons and holidays, depending on level (see Attachment C) and with prior approval of the Director. No visits will take place at the home. Pick up will be at the local plaza. Residents should arrive before the pickup and leave after the drop-off to ensure the confidentiality of the location. Weekend Plans request must be submitted to the Director by Friday one on one meeting. A Weekend Plan must be submitted for all events/occasions outside of the normal routine, even if it was discussed with the Director verbally.
- The Holiday schedule is:
 - New Year's Day (January 1)
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day (3rd Monday in January)
 - Presidents' Day (3rd Monday in February)
 - Patriot's Day (3rd Monday in April)
 - Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
 - Juneteenth (June 19)
 - Independence Day (July 4)
 - Labor Day (1st Monday in September)
 - Columbus Day (2nd Monday in October)
 - Veterans Day (November 11)
 - Thanksgiving Day (Fourth Thursday in November)
 - Christmas Day (December 25)
- If you are running late to return to BH from an outing please contact the Director to inform of the situation, plan and expected time of return. If you decide to stay out all night, you are choosing to terminate your stay at BH. Contact the Director the next day to make arrangements to get your personal belongings.
- Late time will be made up next outing
- Message Director upon return (inside BH) notifying of return
- We will attempt to assign you a monthly mentor, this includes calls and texts on a regular basis as well as 2 monthly get togethers.
- In the case of an 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

- Cell phones should be maintained with the ringer off.
- Cell phones are to be in the basket during all classes and evening care.
- No speaker phone calls in the common area.
- No cell phones at the kitchen island.
- Proper phone etiquette should be followed....please don't be interacting on phone when there are people interacting with you. Also, when you are caring for your child, put your phone away and enjoy your baby.
- No cell phones at kitchen island.
- House phone is available for emergencies.
- Residents will have access to the internet.
- Letters can be written and mailed 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.
- The postpartum policy of BH is 2-3 weeks of New Mama Care. New Mama Care consists of a volunteer coming in the morning and afternoon for a 2-hour period to help care for the baby so new mama can rest or shower. Volunteers may also help with laundry, etc. For the same duration of New Mama Care, postpartum Residents are exempt from chores, cooking, and will stay home from church for 2 Sundays.

End of Stay

- The forwarding address paperwork must be completed in order to forward mail received after leaving. All mail that is not forwarded will be sent back "return to sender"
- The Resident's room and closet will be cleaned by the Resident and checked by Staff prior to leaving.
- The Key to the cabinet must be left in the cabinet upon leaving.
- Baby Monitors and sound machines must be turned in as well.

- 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.
- If a Resident leaves the program prior to completing her education plan/graduating, she must make all 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 (if deemed appropriate by the Director).
- “Verification” letters will be provided only upon graduation from BH.
- All correspondence with BH after discharge will only be responded to through BH email or USPS to PO Box 227 N. Pembroke, MA 02358.

Clarification/Warning System

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 the 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 the house, disclosing BH address.

3 STEP Clarification/Warning System:

1. Clarification
2. Response and Plan
3. Written Warning and Plan

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. A serious offense of a community guideline will result in an immediate Written Warning.**

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. **Level System:** Each Friday, during one on one, the Director will review any “issues” of the week. Level 1-4 will be assigned according to effort over the week. The level is in effect the following Sunday through Saturday. Issues affecting the level may also warrant action within the warning system. Residents enter on Level 3 when they arrive. Postpartum Residents don’t earn level during their 2-3-week postpartum period.
2. **Goal Setting:** The Family Achievement Plan is created within 1 month of arrival with the Director. Weekly one on one meetings with the Director are held to follow up with the Family Achievement Plan. Each Resident’s progress toward success will be re-assessed each quarter to recognize success and/or identify barriers in completing the Resident’s goals. Information will be shared among staff as the Director deems necessary in the best interest of moms, babies and staff.
3. **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 envelope, signed off on (by the director and resident), and kept in a locked cabinet as their savings. If a resident comes with money in their bank, that money is to be deposited into their savings envelope.
4. **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. Section 8 and Housing Applications to local Housing Authorities should be completed during ED ROOM time.

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 the 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 premises 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