



Safe Harbour House - Resident Handbook

Welcome!

The resident handbook will be your guide while living at Safe Harbour House. It includes house rules, expectations, and general information about our daily routines. *Please feel free to ask staff any questions that may come up.*

Safe Harbour House is designed to provide safe accommodations and support to youth who are making a commitment to participate in education, skills building, training and employment components of the program.

A formal plan/agreement will be created between Safe Harbour House and each resident outlining how the House and local community resources can be utilized to assist the resident with the transition to adulthood. An investment in education and skills building are expected from the resident in order to improve their chances of never experiencing homeless again.



Safe Harbour House is a transitional, supportive housing approach. The accommodations are not time limited. Safe Harbour House strives to provide a home-like environment and a natural approach with youth.

Staff are not permitted to connect with residents over social media.

Respect for self and others: Safe Harbour House promotes an inclusive environment; free of oppression, prejudice, bullying and discrimination. Respecting, accepting, and celebrating diversity of each individual is important. All residents and staff are expected to treat one another with mutual respect and courtesy regardless of gender, ability, ethnic origin, physical/mental abilities, sexual orientation and age.



Case Management includes programming based on:

Youth Engagement Services program (YES) is a Social Development program available to youth age 16-19 who are participating in some type of education and/or employment programming. Each youth receiving this service will be assigned a provincial/personal social worker who will assist youth with various resources and services available through the program. Safe Harbour House will be required to report to Social Development when a resident leaves the House. Staff will be able to assist the past resident with their transition to another address if an early exit occurs. Safe Harbour House will do everything possible to avoid an exit into homelessness.

YES Benefits – Social Development will provide a monthly income for youth participating in specific programs (education and employment training). The benefit rate is \$537 per month.



Rent – Safe Harbour House requires each resident to contribute to the cost of food and shelter. This practice builds skills and is an absolute reality of the future. Rent is \$200 per month and will be paid when the resident receives their benefit each month.

Savings – Safe Harbour House residents are required to contribute a monthly amount to a personal savings account. These savings will be given to the resident at the time of exit and can be used toward damage deposits, furnishings and other moving/start-up costs. Savings will be \$137 per month and must be paid when the resident receives their benefit.

Personal Spending -- Safe Harbour House residents will keep \$200 per month of their benefit for personal spending purposes. Any extra monies earned through employment are considered part of the youth's spending money. Staff are willing to assist residents with financial literacy.

No cash is kept on site; therefore, any savings will be issued by cheque as soon as possible after a resident's exit.

Consent Forms – All residents must sign consent forms for all services providers to enable Safe Harbour House staff to communicate with outside agencies regarding resident's case plan and services.

Room Assignment – Residents will be assigned a room on arrival. Room changes may be permitted for a number of reasons; however, a request must be formally made to staff for consideration.

Education – Residents are encouraged and expected to participate in some form of education while staying at Safe Harbour House. This will be determined during the construction of an individualized case plan. *Education is the pathway out of poverty, which is a root cause for homelessness.*

School Relationships – Safe Harbour House staff are willing to support residents in building healthy relationships with their school, teachers, and guidance counsellors to ensure the quality of one's education. Alternative education will be explored for those who have been suspended from school. Advocacy to have the student reinstated into their school is also an option.

Employment – Residents are expected to be employed or in an employment training program while residing at Safe Harbour House. Full time students can be employed on a part time basis. Non-students must be enrolled in some type of employment development and/or volunteerism in some capacity. Safe Harbour House requests a copy of the resident's timetable for their file.

Health – Wellness is important for all residents therefore you will be encouraged to pursue a healthy lifestyle. Residents are expected to follow the advice of their health professionals and address physical/mental health issues. Residents will receive a Social Development Health Card which will cover most health related services.

Pets – We are not able to accommodate any pets in Safe Harbour House; please make arrangements to have your pets cared for while living in the House.

Smoking – There is no smoking permitted on Safe Harbour House property. While smoking off property, residents and staff are expected to pick up cigarette butts and related garbage to dispose of it appropriately. Assistance with smoking alternatives is available through community health clinics.



Birth Control – Safe Harbour House staff believes every resident should be using some form of birth control to prevent a pregnancy. Supplies are free and available for all residents to access (located in the main bathrooms). All residents are expected to practice safe sex.

Case Plans:

Safe Harbour House focuses on individual goals as identified by each resident. This is a living document that will be re-evaluated monthly, or as often as necessary. Safe Harbour House staff will utilize a number of approaches to assist youth with developing their case plans. **Youth will be asked to think about their personal goals and wishes for their future.** Detailed steps will be outlined for each goal.

Various approaches for case planning include:

- A Solutions Focused approach is based on respect, and a component of hope, while valuing residents' wants/needs and acknowledging their past successes. Safe Harbour House believes in moving forward while leaving the past behind.
- A Person Centered approach will assist youth with developing goals (with the help staff) for their education, employment, and life skills.
- A Strengths Based approach will assist youth with creating a personal assets inventory. Youth will begin to focus on building necessary skills while integrating their existing skills in regards to school/employment goals. Tapping into one's resiliency can guide you through difficulties.

Motivation for change is key to identifying personal goals and developing skills that will lead to overall wellbeing. Staff will review the *stages of change* and assist residents with identifying where on the continuum they may be with each of their prospective goals.

Safe Harbour House will provide a number of skills building programs during one's stay. The skills are intended to better prepare youth for the transition to adulthood. Skills building/Trainings may include:

- First Aid/CPR • Mental Health First Aid • Empathy Building • Anti-Oppression Training • Cooking and Kitchen Basics • Road Map/Career Development Training • Making Waves/Healthy Relationships Programming

Finances – Building financial literacy skills, acquiring a bank account, paying rent, spending/purchases: These are key components in learning to live independently. Safe Harbour House has a savings/rent program that provides residents with a monthly allowance, a contribution to savings, and a monthly rent payment. The financial literacy program will assist youth with developing necessary skills for the future.

Health – The importance of physical self-care and exercise, healthy eating, birth control. *YMCA passes may be available to residents through their Youth Engagement Services social workers.*

Mental Health – We believe in a proactive and holistic approach to mental health. When a youth is impacted by mental illness, Safe Harbour House will be included in the circle of care. Youth should have a treatment program to address any decline of their mental health due to homelessness, past trauma, addictions or specific diagnosis'. Open communication with staff is a must and communication with your medical health professionals is expected. Staff will help to facilitate medical appointments, support



telephone interventions, and assist with transportation to counselling sessions, or hospital visits. Reassessment of your mental health will be continuous during your stay at Safe Harbour House and any concerns will be brought to your attention.

An intervention plan will be put in place and may include contact with Mobile Mental Health, construction of a safety plan with staff and/or support during a psychiatric assessment. Non-follow through will be addressed immediately and may result in an early exit plan. Youth's mental health will be discussed at their weekly case planning meeting. **Safe Harbour House takes mental illness seriously for safety and well-being of everyone in the residence.**

Addictions – Daily usage of drugs or alcohol will be addressed with any resident immediately. A reduction in usage will be necessary in order to remain in the House. Access to treatment programs and/or support groups will be encouraged and facilitated. A willingness to engage with harm reduction approaches will be considered; however, abstinence is the best solution for addiction. Youth are encouraged to view life with a clear mind in order to allow for appropriate brain development. Assistance with accessing a treatment center and completing a program can provide the youth with an opportunity to continue to maintain their residency at Safe Harbour House.

Employment – The Road Map/Career Development program delivered through Safe Harbour House can assist with employment skills such as interviewing, resume writing, dressing for success, and volunteer opportunities.

Social Relationships – Making Waves is a healthy relationships workshop that will be provided in house. Safe Harbour House recognizes all relationships can be difficult. The House will provide healthy relationship training for all residents which will include interactive methods of conflict resolution and indicators of unhealthy/abusive relationships.

Self-Care – Safe Harbour House encourages individual self-care plans. Staff are willing to assist youth with individual plans which may include a physical exercise plan, volunteer opportunities, music/art therapies, recreational activities, and any other forms of self-care.

Cultural/spiritual beliefs – This exploration is personal and specific to the youth's goals listed in their case plan. These connections may include the history of one's culture or the participation in local community events. Staff are willing to connect youth with community resources in order to enrich their experiences/lives.

Journal – Safe Harbour House encourages new residents to complete a journal for the first four months of their stay. Journaling can help articulate the youth's process and the changes they will experience after receiving safe and affordable housing.

Monthly House Meetings – All residents are expected to attend a monthly house meeting. The meetings will be facilitated by staff and/or youth and will address 'home' issues.

Positive Space – Safe Harbour House will strive to provide a positive space. Residents are expected to contribute to the positivity of the environment. Any violence or threats of violence may result in an immediate exit plan.



Resident's Council – Safe Harbour House will assist residents with developing a Resident's Council which will assist the staff with peer mentoring, decision making for the House, and interviewing/referring new residents.

Daily Living Guidelines:

Safe Harbour House is a VIOLENCE AND HARRASSMENT FREE program and a breach of this rule will result in an immediate discharge and possible criminal charges. Safety of residents and staff is our top priority.

House Rules and Resident Handbook – This information will be thoroughly reviewed with each new resident on the day they move into Safe Harbour House. House, staff, and resident expectations will be outlined and discussed during this time; so please come prepared to ask questions.

Community Living – This can be complicated; however, Safe Harbour House would like to assist with skills that will enable residents to properly handle situations with other residents in a respectful manner. All issues can be discussed with Safe Harbour House staff and will focus on a resolution as soon as possible.

Quieter Hours – Safe Harbour House requires quiet time between 11pm-7am so residents can sleep, study, or relax. Please respect noise levels during this time. This practice will be a requirement when leasing your own apartment in the future. Residents are expected to be in their rooms by 10:30pm during the weekdays during the school year, and 11:30pm on the weekends and during summer months.

Bedrooms - Residents are expected to keep their bedroom clean and tidy so please allow time each day to do so. This will prevent problems with old food, wet towels, and dirty clothes causing unwanted odors and/or damages. Bedrooms will be checked weekly for cleanliness and residents must be present during the inspection. If your bedroom is not properly cleaned you will be expected to address the identified problem(s) following the inspection.

Room Safety Inspections – Staff reserve the right to inspect any resident room if there are safety concerns or hygiene issues/concerns.

Common Areas – Residents are invited to share the common area with staff and other residents. We try to have dinner together each evening in the kitchen/common area. Netflix is available on all televisions; however, we must respect content restrictions: There will be restrictions on the type of shows viewed based on the recommended age and subject/content. Violent and/or extreme sexual content will not be allowed in gaming or television/movies.

House Responsibilities/Chores – Residents and staff are expected to assist with the maintenance and cleanliness of Safe Harbour House. Residents will be responsible for completing weekly tasks in the House as outlined on a chore chart which is posted in the kitchen area. Not participating with chores will be addressed individually and consequences may be set in place if the lack of participation continues.



Signing In/Out – Please sign in and out at the main office. This is to ensure the safety of the residents and to create a sense of accountability for youth's whereabouts--Also necessary in case of an emergency evacuation.

Curfew – Safe Harbour House has a curfew of 10:30pm from Sunday to Thursday, and 11:30pm on Friday and Saturday. Extension of curfew can be arranged with staff depending on individual circumstances. During the summer months the curfew is 11:30pm Monday to Sunday.

Overnight Passes – Safe Harbour House residents can pre-arrange an overnight pass with staff. Overnight passes will be limited to 3 nights per 7 day week (there will be few exceptions; however, a family vacation or weekend event can be pre-arranged with staff). Contact information will be requested in case of an emergency. A check-In the following day to confirm a return time, or to communicate a change of plans, is expected. This will be addressed in your individualized case plan.

Visitors – Safe Harbour House cannot accommodate guests therefore residents are asked to meet up with friends and family outside of the House. Resident's bedrooms are a safe/private space therefore visitors will not be allowed in individual bedrooms.

Keys – Residents will be issued keys for their room and will be responsible for having their key to access their bedroom and locked cabinet. There will be a charge to replace any lost or broken keys.

Belonging Searches – Safe Harbour House reserves the right to conduct random room and belonging searches to ensure the safety of residents and staff.

Recordings and Photos – Please do not record or take photos of any other residents in Safe Harbour House for privacy purposes. Posting unauthorized pictures or inappropriate comments on social media is considered offensive: please refrain from doing so.

Resident Privacy – Safe Harbour House does not disclose to anyone who lives in the House for the purpose of privacy. We ask that residents do not discuss the names or information about other residents with anyone in the community.

Cell Phones – There are no limits for cell phone use; however, staff will ask residents to abide by the quieter time rule (11pm-7am) by lowering the volume on your device.

Dress Code – Safe Harbour House residents are expected to be fully clothed in the common areas of the residence. Outdoor footwear must be left in the front entrance. Indoor footwear is suggested outside of one's bedroom.

Personal Hygiene – Youth are required to maintain an appropriate level of daily hygiene while living in the House. Hygiene includes clean clothing (*doing your laundry*), regular showering, and oral hygiene.

Personal Belongings – Safe Harbour House cannot be responsible for personal belongings. Residents are encouraged to keep all valuables locked in their bedroom.

Medication – All medications must be turned into the Safe Harbour House upon admittance. Keeping medications in resident rooms is not permitted due to concerns around misuse of prescriptions. Not turning in medications may result in an immediate exit plan.



Laundry – Safe Harbour House will provide residents with full access to the laundry facility. Assistance with learning the proper use of washers, dryers, and how to launder is available. *Please sign up for a time slot to ensure everyone has an opportunity to use the machines.*

Bedding – All bedding is provided by Safe Harbour House. We recommend washing your sheets every week; blankets and quilts do not need to be washed as often. Each bed has bed bug covers on the mattress and box spring, these do not need to be laundered unless they have been soiled.

Meals – Safe Harbour House will provide all meals and healthy snacks for residents. Youth are expected to participate in the preparation, cooking, and clean-up of the daily shared meal. ‘Treats’ will not be provided through regular meal plans; however, residents can purchase their own treats and keep them in their rooms or labelled in the fridge/cupboards.

Kitchen Access – Residents are encouraged to use the kitchen during the hours of 7am-11pm.

Food Clean Up – Residents must leave the kitchen clean (*food put away and dishes cleaned up*) after each use.

Transportation – Monthly bus passes will be provided through a Youth Engagement Services social worker or current school. Safe Harbour House social workers MAY provide transportation for medical appointments, counselling sessions and/or school events. Transportation must be pre-arranged with staff prior to day of appointment/counselling/event etc.

Length of Stay – Safe Harbour House will accommodate all participating youth until they finish school, acquire full time employment, and/or secure housing. There are no specific time limits on length of stay; however, **residents must be engaged and following through with their case plan**. Safe Harbour House adheres to the age of eligibility (16-19).

Mail – Safe Harbour House will allow 30 days for past residents to reroute their mail. After this date mail will be returned to senders.

Storage – Safe Harbour House cannot provide storage to past residents. Staff is willing to assist with planning and preparing for moves which includes the removal of all personal belongings.

Birthdays – Safe Harbour House staff would like to celebrate resident birthdays; however, if the youth is not comfortable with this practice please speak with staff about your wishes.

Graduation – Safe Harbour House residents will work toward graduation by transitioning to adulthood. Staff will provide assistance with steps leading up to graduation and ensure youth are prepared to move forward to independent living.

Music – Safe Harbour House encourages the use of headphones/earphones for individual use. Loud music will not be allowed during quiet hours (11pm-7am). Music is therapeutic and welcomed in Safe Harbour House; however, respect for other residents must be acknowledged. Discriminating lyrics can also cause issues for other residents therefore we encourage youth to consider the implications of negative or derogatory language/racism/sexism etc.



Mentors – Safe Harbour House believes mentors can provide life lessons and guidance to youth. Staff encourages residents to seek out mentors within their circle of family and friends. Natural peer mentorship could also be available from longer term House residents.

Employment – Safe Harbour House residents are expected to work or be in some sort of employment training program while residing at Safe Harbour House. Residents who are in school are able to work part time. While residents who are not in school are expected to develop an employment action plan and provide daily proof of an independent job searches.

Wake Ups – Safe Harbour House residents are responsible for waking themselves up in time for school and work. Alarm clocks will be provided for each resident. Staff do not mind helping with wake-ups; however, learning to regulate your own wake-ups is a good skill to have.

Smoking – There is no smoking permitted on Safe Harbour House property. While smoking off property, residents and staff are expected to pick up cigarette butts and related garbage to dispose of it appropriately. Assistance with smoking alternatives is available through community health clinics.

Drugs and Alcohol - Are not permitted in Safe Harbour House or on the property. Safe Harbour House will not permit the selling, dealing, or distributing of illegal drugs, paraphernalia, alcohol, weapons or tobacco products. Any such behaviour may result in an exit plan and a referral to law enforcement.

Entry Under the Influence – Residents who return to Safe Harbour House under the influence will be permitted to enter the House providing the resident's behaviour remains respectful and non-threatening. Staff reserve the right to deny entry to anyone who they consider to be a safety risk to fellow residents, and/or staff of Safe Harbour House. Staff may ask a resident to exit the House for the night if their behaviour escalates or is aggressive. Regular occurrences of intoxication will be addressed with resident and can result in an immediate exit plan.

Illegal Belongings – Safe Harbour House will dispose of any illegal belongings during intake and thereafter (sharp objects, discriminating subject matter, stolen goods, etc.).

Fire Safety – There are building safety routes posted throughout the building which each new resident will be introduced to during their orientation. Residents must be willing to participate in a fire drill practice when required. Anything deemed to be a fire hazard is not permitted in the bedrooms; this includes: cigarettes, candles, incense, fireworks, and kitchen appliances. **Our meeting place in case of evacuation is Rainbow Park which is located across Broad Street.**

House Security – Safe Harbour House has a secure entrance. Residents will be let in by staff after ringing the doorbell. The House has cameras in the office, at the front door, and on the side of the building for the safety of residents and staff. Any violence, or threats of violence, will be reported to the City Police and charges may be laid. Vandalism of the building or property will be reported to City Police and charges will be laid.

Suicidal Ideation – Safe Harbour House staff will seek assistance from Saint John Mobile Crisis Team or the Saint John Regional Hospital for any youth who are having suicidal thoughts and/or feelings. We understand that youth often experience feelings of despair and sadness. Please reach out to our trained



staff if you are experiencing any suicidal thoughts/feelings. Safe Harbour cares about their residents and want to provide support and assistance with an intervention plan to prevent any serious or negative outcomes. **Remember you are not alone!**

Self-Harm – Safe Harbour House staff can teach residents positive coping methods to address self-harming behaviour. Please approach staff and/or mental health professionals regarding your thoughts and feelings to prevent serious outcomes. Staff are trained to provide support and assistance with accessing mental health services when residents are feeling overwhelmed. **Again, you are not alone.**

Harm to others – Safe Harbour House staff are available for any youth who is upset about a relationship or angry with someone in their life. Please approach staff and/or mental health professionals regarding your thoughts and feelings to prevent serious outcomes. Safe Harbour House cares about you and the negative feelings you are experiencing. House staff can support youth who may need to report an incident, or a person who is posing a threat to them. Talking these issues out with staff can help youth develop skills for future encounters/situations and demonstrate how to resolve a situation without violence. **Please note: staff have a duty to report (to City Police) any serious concerns they may have in regards to a resident who makes verbal or physical threats towards themselves or others.**

Move-Out – Residents will be expected to discuss a move-out plan with staff as the date approaches. This includes packing and cleaning the bedroom, removing belongings from the fridge/freezer and kitchen cupboards, arranging move-out support, identifying community supports and resources in the resident's new community. *Outreach services are available through Safe Harbour House and follow up is tailored to meet the individual needs.*

Consequences – Safe Harbour House utilizes a natural consequence approach. This means youth are responsible to follow through with their case plans, adhere to the guidelines in this handbook, maintain mental and physical health, manage substance use, and participate in their transition to independent living. If you are unable to meet the expectations of your case plan, or the expectations of the program, the following steps will be taken to ensure the House has provided enough support and services to each youth who enters the residence:

1. **Learning Opportunities (x3)** - All concerns/issues will be brought to the resident's attention as quickly as possible and circumstances/behaviour will need to be altered in order to move forward.
2. **Written Agreement** – This is a contract created by the resident and a Safe Harbour House social worker. The contract will be detailed and is expected to be followed through within the time limits included in the agreement.
3. **Resolution Meeting** – This will be the final meeting to address ongoing issues/concerns and to explore other housing options available. The meeting will include the resident, their Youth Engagement Services social worker (if requested by resident or Safe Harbour House staff) and a Safe Harbour House social worker to complete a resolution plan. The plan may include a suspension, an immediate exit plan, a plan to enter a treatment center, or an exit to alternative housing within the community.
4. **Exit Plan** – This is an articulated move out plan that will include a date.



Reasons for an immediate exit plan (or possibility of a 30 day suspension):

- Possession of a weapon
- Physical/sexual/emotional assault, violence, or threats of violence, on any person in Safe Harbour House
- Possession of drugs or alcohol
- Chronic failure to follow case plan
- Tampering with security