



# Client Handbook

Welcome to the LifeHouse! We are all very excited that you have decided to come and be a part of our family during this challenging time in your life. We know that being in a new environment can be very difficult and we hope that you adjust quickly to the changes and feel “at home” very soon. We are so glad you are here and we look forward to getting to know you.

We understand that you may be feeling a little overwhelmed with your situation. Perhaps you have decisions to make and a lot to think about. Certainly you have some work to do in preparation for the birth of your child. We strongly desire to provide an environment that is safe and comfortable while preparing you to face the challenges that are coming your way.

As you may know, having a large family can be difficult, especially in a family like ours here at LifeHouse where there are a lot of people of different ages, backgrounds, experiences, etc... Our desire is to provide a family environment in which everyone can feel safe and comfortable and which allows us all to live together in harmony. To do so, it is important that we have certain guidelines in place. The remainder of this handbook will discuss these guidelines in detail. Please read it thoroughly and carefully and make notes of any questions you have or areas where you need further clarification. We understand that some of these guidelines may require a change for you and may even feel limiting, but we believe they are necessary to provide that environment mentioned above, which will allow you to prepare for your future and allow us all to live together in harmony.

Again, we are so excited that you are here!

## CHECK-IN

The day you move into LifeHouse, the HouseParents will inventory the items you bring with you and list them on an inventory sheet. Please be sure any clothes you bring with you have your initials on the tags.

## DRESS GUIDELINES

- We have access to a good variety of maternity clothes for you to use during your time here. Our goal for dress in the home is that everyone exercises modesty that is comfortable for others.
- To assure this standard, the following dress guidelines will be expected:
  1. Avoid clothing with inappropriate logos (such as beer logos).
  2. Avoid clothing that is too tight or too big.
  3. Avoid clothing that is in poor condition (such as with holes).
  4. Avoid short shorts and tank tops.
- Your HouseParents will advise you regarding appropriate dress for church, job hunting and interviews.
- Your housemom will be reviewing the dress guidelines in more detail.
- If you have a clothing item you are not sure of, please check with your housemom.

## CLASSES

We offer several educational classes to help you to be well-informed regarding the options available for an expecting mother and to help you prepare for your future. Every resident is expected to attend all sessions of the following classes:

1. Prenatal Care and Nutrition
2. Sex Respect Class
3. Parenting Class
4. Childbirth Class
5. Financial Planning Class
6. Adoption Class

## CURFEW

- 9:00 PM Monday through Thursday.
- In-room time is 9:30 PM on week nights.
- Weekends vary with your privilege level.
- Times may be adjusted at HouseParent's discretion.
- If an emergency or unforeseen circumstance causes you to be late in returning to the home, please notify a HouseParent as soon as possible.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Speech and communication should be honoring and uplifting.
- Swearing or vulgar language will not be accepted.
- Although every household will have conflicts, conflict is for the purpose of resolution, not wounding. You are expected to approach conflict with this goal in mind and if there is a need for help, you should bring a Houseparent in to help bring resolution.

## BEDTIME PROCEDURES

- Lights out 30 minutes after your in-room time. Lights and radios in your room should be off.
- If your roommates have an earlier lights out time, please respect her sleep.
- Roommates with the same lights out time may talk quietly for up to 30 minutes after lights out.
- Sleep between the sheets on your bed and not on top of the comforter.
- Sleep on the pillows without the shams.
- When you are sitting or lying on your bed, please remove the comforter or cover it with a blanket in order to protect the comforter.
- If you have a problem during the night, please contact the HouseParents on duty and do not disturb other residents or off-duty HouseParents.

## MORNING PROCEDURE

- HouseParents will help you with a “down-time” and a departure time.
- You should set your alarm , allowing yourself time for shower, dressing, cleaning room and bathroom, eating breakfast, doing morning chore and making your lunch.
- You may sleep in on Saturdays as approved by HouseParents on duty.

## BORROWED ITEMS

- We ask that you please take good care of the home’s items that you use.
- All items should be left at time of discharge or departure.
- Please launder any maternity items you have used before discharge.
- You are not allowed to borrow any items from other residents.

## RESIDENT RIGHTS

- Should you feel that any of your basic rights are being violated, please request an appointment with the HouseParents to discuss your concerns. Use appropriate problem solving skills.

## EDUCATION

- High School or GED is a first priority; girls who do not have a diploma will work toward it while in the home.
- There is a mandatory study hour until it is no longer needed.
- If not in school, resident will be working or volunteering.

## WORK

- Residents who are not in school are required to work at least 30 hours (whether in a paying job or volunteer position).
- HouseParents will help girls acquire job or volunteer position.
- Places of employment must be within a 10 mile radius of the home.
- Final acceptance of a position must be approved by HouseParents.
- Residents may work Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Saturday 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM (some adjustments may be considered but must be approved by HouseParents).
- Work will not be permitted on Sunday.
- You will also need one morning or afternoon off during the week for counseling and doctor's appointments.
- Current residents may not work at the same place.

## FAMILY VISITS

- You are eligible for your first visit after completing your first week in the home.
- Minimum of 24 hours notice must be given (visitors should never just "stop by" the home).
- Approved females on your visitors list and your father may take you off the grounds for your visit.
- Transportation needs to be provided by the visitor, that person must be the one to bring you back.
- All other approved visitors may visit with you at the home.
- Once arrangements have been made, they should not be changed during the visit.
- Visitors should always come in at the beginning and end of visits and check in with HouseParents.
- Boyfriends are allowed to visit the home when housefather is present.
- HouseParents will establish guidelines for such a visit.
- Visit time is based on your privilege level, availability to use privileges and approval by HouseParents.
- Visits earned cannot be combined, nor may visits be split (a 4-hour into two 2-hour visits).
- You will not be able to go on overnight visits or more than 50 miles from the home after you reach the 36<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.
- Health conditions may further restrict travel and visits.

- We do not accommodate overnight stays for friends and family.
- You are responsible to inform visitors of rules they need to know regarding visitation and to be sure that visitors return you to the home on time. If you will be late to the home for a specific reason, you should notify the HouseParents immediately and gain their approval. Also, staff members reserve the right to restrict visitation during your time in the hospital.

#### TELEPHONE USE

- Telephone use and time is based on privilege level and availability of privileges.
- Calls cannot be combined nor can they be split up.
- Ask permission before using the phone.
- All calls are to be logged on the telephone log.
- No phone calls will be made or received after 9:00 PM.
- The telephone will not be answered during dinner, family conference, or devotions.
- The best time to make or receive calls is 7-9 PM weekdays.
- No long distance calls can be made without a phone card; no collect calls.
- Residents are not permitted to make calls to young men, however, young men may call during the approved times.
- Do not give out home phone number unless approved by HouseParent.

#### MEALS & SNACKS

- Dinner is served between 5:30 – 6:30 PM.
- You may say “No thank you” to one item on the table; you must help yourself to at least a spoonful of everything else.
- You will be expected to finish what you put on your plate.
- Some kind of breakfast is required.
- Ask permission before having sweet or salty snacks.
- Remember food may only be eaten in the kitchen area or at the dining room table. Food or drinks are not permitted in the bedrooms

#### FINANCIAL ISSUES

- If you have an allowance or spending money, you can use it when you are on privileges.
- Residents can have up to \$20 in their possession. The remaining monies will be stored in the LifeHouse safe and accessed whenever you need it.
- Borrowing or lending money is not permitted.

## HYGIENE

- Each resident must shower every day.
- Hair must be clean and well groomed.
- Brush teeth daily.
- Wash your hands before handling food or dishes.
- Wash sheets and towels once a week.

## ILLNESS

- If you are ill, please contact a HouseParent so that you may receive proper care.
- If you cannot carry out your daily responsibilities, you will go on “sick rule.”
- Residents on sick rule:
  - Remain in bed all day with room lights out and blinds closed.
  - Reading, listening to the radio, or visiting with others is not permitted.
  - HouseParents will prepare appropriate meals and serve them to you in your room.
- Our goal is to help you get the rest you need and to facilitate recovery quickly. HouseParents will contact your school if appropriate to excuse your absence. If you are employed, you should call your employer to let them know of your absence unless otherwise directed by HouseParents.

## MEDICATION AND HEALTH

- You will be expected to take any medications as prescribed by your doctor.
- No medication prescribed or otherwise, may be kept in your room.
- Analgesics (such as Tylenol), antacids (such as Tums), prenatal vitamins, or any other medicines must be kept and dispensed by HouseParents.
- You will be responsible to ask HouseParents for your prescribed medications on a daily basis.
- Use of illegal drugs, alcohol, or non-prescribed drugs will result in serious program consequences, may be reported to the police and may result in discharge from the LifeHouse.
- Smoking is prohibited (at the home, work, school, or on visits) during your time at the LifeHouse. No smoking will be permitted on LifeHouse property by residents, staff, or visitors.

## 100% BED REST POLICY

For the first 48 hours the resident on 100% bed rest is only allowed to leave her bed to use the restroom. After the first 48 hours with the Houseparents' approval she will be able to spend time on the sofa with feet elevated on side table or sofa. If the resident needs to be reminded to keep feet elevated she will be placed back on bed **only** rest.

The Following activities are prohibited for any resident on 100% bed rest:

- Cooking
- Cleaning of any kind (including laundry)
- Visits outside of the home
- Taking meals at the table
- Going shopping (including in a motorized cart)
- Going to Church

The following are approved activities for any resident on bed rest:

- Walking from bed to restroom and after the first 48 hours walking from restroom to bed or sofa.
- Reading in bed
- Watching TV in bed, if available
- Using LifeHouse laptop computer, if available
- Talking with other residents
- Listening to approved music
- Any other Houseparent approved activity
- Use of cordless phone in bed (two or three 15 min phone calls a day; based on last point card privilege level)

While on bed rest the resident will remain off the point card and will maintain privileges as long as these policies are followed. Any negative consequence will result in the loss of all approved activities listed above for 12 hours.

#### MOVIES, BOOKS, AND MUSIC

- You will have access to watch appropriate TV shows in the den.
- Your personal CD's, radio and reading materials are allowed as long as they have been approved by the Houseparents.
- We utilize a Christian movie guide to determine the appropriate movies. The appropriateness of the movie is up to the HouseParents to decide.
- Headphones are not permitted.
- Volume should be kept at a level such that the music does not disturb others in the home.
- Music may be played in the main areas of the house with HouseParents' approval.

#### RECREATION

- There will be at least one scheduled family fun time a week.
- All residents are expected to participate, unless excused for illness or due to loss of privileges.

## RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

- We will have a family devotion time five nights per week.
- We will also attend church on Sundays together as a family.
- After your first month in the home, you may attend a local church with family members or friends on your visitors list pending approval from HouseParents.
- Four-hour visits are not permitted during church hours.
- Bibles, Bible studies and other resources are available upon request.
- We ask that you please bring your Bible to church and to devotions each night.

## RUNNING AWAY

- If you choose to run away or leave the LifeHouse, we are obligated to notify your parents and to file a report with the police department.

## THEFT

- Stealing in the home or in the community will result in serious program consequences.
- Theft may be reported to the police.
- Resident may face discharge from the LifeHouse.

## VIOLENCE

- Corporal punishment will never be used in the home.
- Physical violence between residents or from a resident toward a staff member will result in a thorough interview conducted by the appropriate staff and significant program consequences for all parties involved.
- The incident may be reported to the police and/or the resident may be discharged from the home.

## HOUSEKEEPING/CHORES

- You will be responsible for the upkeep of your personal living space.
- You will share in the daily and weekly responsibilities of the home.
- The following tasks will be a part of your regular responsibilities:
  - BEDROOM CHECK: You will be responsible to perform the following tasks in your bedroom on a daily basis. These tasks should be done before 10 AM daily except on Saturday (noon).
    1. Drawers organized and closed
    2. Dresser tops dust/clutter free
    3. Neat under beds
    4. Trash can empty
    5. Closet neatly organized
    6. Lights and fan off
    7. Beds properly made
    8. Floors clean
    9. Blinds/drapes open

- BATHROOM CHECK: You will be responsible to perform the following tasks in your bathroom on a daily basis. They should be done before 10 AM daily except on Saturday (noon). If you share a bathroom, this responsibility will rotate on a weekly basis.
  1. Trash can emptied
  2. Chrome dry/polished (no spots)
  3. Towels neatly hung on racks
  4. Shower curtain/glass closed
  5. Paper products in supply
  6. Counters clean, dry, clear of personal items, hair, etc...
  7. Toilet paper on roll
  8. Toilet lid closed
  9. Floors clean
- DAILY CHORES: All residents and HouseParents rotate through the daily chores of the kitchen (dishwasher/trash, cook, dinner clean-ups). The daily chore sheet is posted on the bulletin board. HouseParents will assist you as needed in becoming proficient with these chores.
- CONSTANTS: Each resident will be assigned a “constant” area in the home. They will then be responsible for making sure this area is neat at bedtime and at other times as instructed by the HouseParents.
- WEEKLY CHORES: Weekly chores are our “deep cleaning” and are typically done on Saturday. Each resident is assigned two areas, a cleaning checklist is supplied and the chores are to be completed and checked by HouseParents no later than 5:00 PM. Residents who work on Saturday should arrange a time during the week with the HouseParents for completing their weekly chores.
- LAUNDRY:
  - You will be assigned a laundry day to do your own laundry.
  - It must be completed by 9 PM that evening.
  - Approval from HouseParents is needed to change your laundry day; emergency laundry time is available with approval from HouseParents.
  - Please be sure you have at least a half load before doing laundry.
  - Laundry supplies are provided.
  - If you need assistance with your laundry, ask a HouseParent on duty.
  - Please wash your bed sheets each week.

## MEDICAL CARE

- During your stay, medical care through an excellent clinic will be provided for prenatal care, delivery, postnatal and standard first aid care.
- These services are provided at no financial cost to you with your Medicaid coverage as long as you remain in the home.
- Housemothers will take you to all appointments and will be in the exam room with you.
- You will also receive education in prenatal care, postnatal care, well-baby classes and nutrition during your time in the program.
- If you make an adoption plan, you may be moved from the maternity floor in the hospital to recover from labor and delivery.

## COUNSELING

- You will meet with a LifeHouse counselor once a week (more if the counselor deems it helpful).
- Your counselor will help you to work through various physical, emotional and spiritual needs during your stay in the home and in preparation for your life after completing the program.
- You and your counselor will explore both parenting and adoption choices.
- Counselor may request that boyfriend or legal guardian(s) come in for joint counseling sessions.
- You will be given assignments to complete in between sessions.
- Counseling with professionals outside the home must be approved by the HouseParents.

## LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

- You will work on different life skills while in the home.
- HouseParents will help you identify areas where you are strong and areas where they can help you to grow.
- Each young lady will work with points or merits.

## SEARCH OF ROOMS

- LifeHouse reserves the right to search resident's rooms including closets, drawers, suitcase, etc. at any time if deemed necessary by the staff.
- If any contraband is found as outlined in this client handbook, the item(s) will immediately become the property of LifeHouse. The Executive Director will make the decision as to if and when the contraband will be returned to the resident.