



RUTH HARBOR
MINISTRIES

Mother-Child Home
Resident Handbook

Program Overview

Ruth Harbor is unique in its approach to providing services. It models Christian family life and is home for women parenting babies as they are working towards their goal of independent living. During your stay at Ruth Harbor the staff will be supporting you to become strong, successful, and independent in your relationships, life skills, as well as spiritually and emotionally.

We will be at your side when you face challenges and there to celebrate life's victories—look at us as a team dedicated to seeing you succeed! Each staff member is a part of the Ruth Harbor team and here to pour into you, love you, and help achieve your goals.

You will find Ruth Harbor is a safe place that will consistently meet the basic needs of you and your child. You will have a comfortable, safe place to live, plenty of food to eat, and staff dedicated to walking beside you.

We understand settling into a new home can bring up many emotions both good and uncomfortable ones, please know this is normal. In time we are confident you will adjust to your new home and routine.

While you are here it will be hard to let go of some of the past patterns, thoughts, and behaviors that have been unhealthy. You may start to feel restless or question your decision to come to RH. You may disagree with a rule, programming, or feel something is unfair. You may feel the program is too hard, expecting too much from you. When that happens, please talk with your Life Coach, and honestly assess what you are receiving at RH, versus what you have had to give up.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when things get hard:

- Why did I come here in the beginning?
- What was so great about where I was before?
- What am I getting here that I can't get on my own yet?
- Where and what would I be going back to if I left?
- How will my decision impact the ones I love and care about?

Remember, you have a team dedicated to helping you achieve your goals, overcome difficulties, and cheer you on. You are not in this alone!

House Parent Responsibilities

House Parents are the leaders of the home and provide you with coaching and stability. They live in an apartment onsite and are on duty 5 days per week. During their time off there will be an Assistant House Parent that will stay in the home.

House Parents are there to see you obtain your goals and will come alongside you to support, encourage, coach you on your journey. They will provide a safe, well-kept home for you and your child to live in. It is important for you to know some of their key responsibilities so that you can know what to expect from them.

Cooking: House Parents and residents work together to create a menu for the week. Each resident will have a turn to plan and cook meals. Breakfast and lunch will be made by you and there will be days that will be self-serve or group cooking, depending on the schedule for the week. This helps create a good balance where you can learn to cook from the House Parents and also practice making meals for yourself.

Supervision: House Parents will always know where you are. You will communicate with them by phone or text. Because schedules in the house can be chaotic, and rarely line up, a house parent will always be on the first floor from 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM to assist as needed. Otherwise, they are “on call” and can be called when needed. If they aren’t in the house they will never be more than 40 minutes away from you.

House Operation: If you notice anything is broken or not working properly let a House Parent know. They will also ensure the home is always stocked with needed cleaning, hygiene, and food supplies.

Life Coach

Meeting twice a week with your Life Coach is required for each resident. Your Life Coach will coordinate and develop your personal care plan, by helping you identify and set goals in the following areas of your life: Physical Health, Emotional Health, Social Support, Spiritual Health, Life Skills, and Parenting.

Your Life Coach will be helping you address physical, emotional, and spiritual needs during your stay. Your active participation in these individual meetings is vital and required, because they are central to your success.

Care Plan

Within your first 30 days at Ruth Harbor, an individualized care plan will be developed. Your care plan consists of key goals specific to your development and desire for success, and steps you may take to reach those goals. You play an important role in creating your care plan and the team helps to ensure that you are successful in accomplishing your goals.

Care Plan Monthly Evaluation

- We will meet monthly to review and update your care plan. Weekly meeting with your Life Coach will present an opportunity to discuss any modifications that may need to be made before the next care plan meeting. You must show progress towards your goals outlined in your care plan to continue to qualify for Ruth Harbor's program. Lack of forward progress may result in dismissal from RH.
- The Care Plan meeting will include House Parents, Life Coach, and yourself. Occasionally the Program Director may join in the meetings for oversight purposes. These meetings will be conducted monthly until you leave or graduate Ruth Harbor.
- As part of your Care Plan you may be required to attend counseling with a licensed professional, or attend appropriate group meetings, in person, as needed.

Learning Opportunities

Your care plan may include education in an area that will help you. The following is a partial list of topics you can explore. Ruth Harbor staff, a partnering agency, or individuals from the community may provide the education.

- Life Skills
- Nutrition
- Decision making
- Sexuality

- Parenting
- Budgeting and Finances
- Career planning
- Job applications
- Healthy relationships
- Stress management

School - Work - Volunteering

According to which Phase you are on, you will be required to either be enrolled in school, work, or volunteer while you are in the RH program.

Ruth Harbor prioritizes education for building a strong, healthy, and successful life. If you have not earned your High School Diploma, you will be required to successfully complete the HISET program. If you are interested in enrolling, several area schools are available for continuing or completing your high school education, college courses, or certificate programs.

It is necessary for your future independence to find employment. Your House Parents and Life Coach will assist you and provide guidelines as to a location perimeter you may look for employment as well as an acceptable schedule. **Before a job offer may be accepted, it must have the approval of the House Parents.**

Volunteer work is encouraged overall, but volunteer work will need to be found if you are not in school or employed. This can be very helpful for discovering interests and abilities in a particular area of work or for building a positive referral if you have a poor work history. Contributing to others in the community not only helps them, it helps you feel good about yourself!

Money

If you are employed, you will deposit your earnings to your personal bank account. The House Parents and Life Coach will need your permission to view your account online with you to review transactions, as part of assisting you in learning to manage money. **No one will access your account without you present.**

A savings account will be established for you to deposit a percentage of your earnings toward your future independence. We require a minimum of the deposit and first month's rent amount* be maintained, once that goal has been met. *This amount is to be determined by the average market value in the area you would like to live.

To keep relationships in the home healthy, we ask that you do not lend money to, nor borrow money from, another resident.

While at Ruth Harbor you are given the opportunity to earn Ruth Harbor bucks to spend on baby goods, house wares for an apartment, or special items. These Ruth Harbor bucks are for use while you are a Ruth Harbor client. We ask that you use your time here wisely and save as much money as possible to work toward independence.

Visitation, Social Events, Home Passes

Visits, Day Passes, Home Passes are dependent on which is your current Phase. These times with family members or others are arranged through the House Parents who are responsible for your safety and the family-like quality of the home. The house parents need a **48-hour notice** passes to manage scheduling, transportation and support needs required for all residents. Weekend passes need to be approved by Thursday morning to get on the weekend schedule.

All duties must be completed and approved before going on passes.

Residents are responsible for their own transportation in using passes.

Visitors, Social Events, Home Passes:

- **Passes:**
 - Up to two weekend passes are allowed per resident per month. House Parents have the right to limit home passes if they sense unhealthy situations.
 - Residents are not to use home passes to visit each other's homes
 - 2 day passes per month will be allowed for each resident to be used for social events, outings, family visits in town, etc.
 - House Parents will have the authority to approve or deny day passes.
 - Day passes are from 8am-8pm or within these time parameters.
- **Outing passes:**
 - Passes are for the event of outings with family, hair appointments, dinner, etc. that last a few hours in duration and are to be authorized per the house parents. Outing passes are to be given per the House Parent's discretion and are earned based upon behavior, attitude, progress, and decision making.

- **Visitors:**
 - All visitors in the home must have completed a background check and have been approved by the House Parents. Visitors must stay in public areas and may not go to the second floor.

Curfew – Check in times

- All residents are to be home from their work/school day no later than 6 pm., **or a time agreed upon with the HP ahead of time.**
- All residents are to be home from passes by 8pm.
- House Parents operate the schedule, so your arrival and departure times have to be permitted by them first.
- If you are going to be late in arriving back to Ruth Harbor, this must be communicated to a House Parent before your scheduled check in time. Failure to communicate will result in negative consequences.

Medical Care and Illness

Medical expenses are not paid by Ruth Harbor. If you do not have insurance, you will have to apply for state assistance (known as Medicaid or Title XIX).

Should you feel sick or have a concern about your physical wellbeing or that of your child, tell the House Parent immediately so that you can receive proper care. The House Parent on duty will help you assess whether or not an immediate trip is needed, or if an appointment can be made. No one will be denied or prevented necessary medical care.

State licensure regulations require that all medications, including supplements and over-the-counter medications, be kept in a locked box and dispensed by the staff. Ruth Harbor does not pay for medications.

At Ruth Harbor, we care about the health and wellbeing of both residents and staff. Therefore, we are proud to be a non-smoking home. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the premises. No alcohol or drug use, including tobacco products, will be permitted.

Any illegal or dangerous contraband will be confiscated at the time of identification by the House Parents, and are grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, and may need to be reported due to Mandatory Reporter guidelines.

If a resident is showing signs of illegal drug usage or alcohol, a drug test may be administered.

House parents are to be given a doctor's note or visit summary after every appointment to secure continuity of care in the home and for the health of the mother/child.

House Guidelines

The general tone of the home is one of respect and caring for all who live there, including house parents and residents. We like to have fun, play games, go on outings, etc. You will be encouraged to participate and suggest ideas for the house!

You may learn new skills for interacting with others that will help you the rest of your life in work, school and personal relationships. We encourage positive interaction with the staff and other residents in the home. If you experience a problem, we ask you to try and resolve the conflict with the person directly at first. If this is unsuccessful, ask the House Parents for a special time to discuss this so the problem can be addressed and harmony restored.

You are also required to participate in house meetings when they are held. This is a time when you will meet with the house parents and other residents, as a family, to discuss any concerns or suggestions you have regarding the management of the home. At the end of this handbook is a separate page with a statement of Ruth Harbor's resident grievance process.

What to Bring

Most items that you will need during your stay are provided by Ruth Harbor. This includes bedding, towels, personal care items and food. You will want to bring personal items that make you feel comfortable in a new setting, such as pictures, a special pillow or blanket or small belongings that have special meaning. We encourage you to bring any musical instruments you play, for your own enjoyment or to share your talent with others.

Each resident will be given an area to store personal belongings. This space is extremely limited, so we are unable to store large items. Discuss this with the House Parents or Program Director before your arrival.

Everyone Helps

Part of being a successful adult is learning to care for yourself and the place where you live. You will have an opportunity to learn and demonstrate these life skills while at Ruth Harbor. The house parents and residents work together to keep the home clean, organized and healthy for all who live there.

Light household duties are assigned on a rotating basis. Some are done weekly and others are daily, such as straightening your room or helping with meal preparation or cleanup. The house parents will help you learn if you lack experience in any area.

Your room will be expected to be kept in good order with a floor free of debris, to ensure safe passage in cases of emergency. No food or drink, other than water is allowed in private rooms. Staff will do a door inspection of your room weekly to insure tidiness. Any requests for cleaning must be completed within 48 hours.

Dress Code

We ask that you dress modestly when outside your room. No halter or mid drift tops, no tight jeans/shorts, or see-through clothing. Shorts and skirts must be modest and must not reveal the buttocks when bending over. Cleavage also must be covered at all times. Tank tops must be 2-3 finger widths or wear a shirt over or under it. No two-piece bikini-type bathing suits. Stomachs are not to be exposed and examined outside of the bedroom areas. If you are in need of clothing let the house parents know, because they may be able to help you obtain clothing.

Bedtime

- Room time each night is 10 PM for all residents.
- Lights out is 10PM for all residents.

Laundry and Showers

You will be responsible for doing your own laundry while living at Ruth Harbor. If this is a skill you have not yet learned, the House Parents will teach you. Laundry supplies are provided and you will have an assigned day once a week to do your laundry.

- The laundry will be open 6AM- 9PM, each day. This allows for a little time before and after the workday in order to do a few loads of laundry as needed.
- Laundry will be removed from the laundry room by 9PM each evening.
- If your work/school schedule gets in the way of your laundry time you can talk to the House Parents about another possible arrangement in order to get it done.
- If laundry is not done by 9:00pm 10 Ruth Harbor bucks will be deducted from point sheet.

Daily showering and good personal hygiene is required. Shower times may be assigned to accommodate each resident's schedule.

Electronics

The house parents reserve the right to restrict any TV or radio programming, CD's, DVD's or reading materials that are inappropriate to the home.

Public Computer Use:

- We provide a computer for you to use.
- It is to be used for schoolwork and job/volunteer searching
- No social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) or streaming movies is allowed.
- Email may be checked with the permission of a House Parent

- Each resident is provided a specific log in and password. You must not share this with other residents, because your internet activity is recorded.

TV Use:

- The TV is an earned privilege by following instructions and accomplishing daily goals. (chores, school, employment, care plan goals, etc.)
- The family room TV is to be used for G rated, family-friendly content only.
- Movies may be watched on the front room TV with permission from the House Parents

Cell Phone Guidelines

During Phase One, you will not have cell phone access, however you will have the ability to make necessary phone calls.

Phases will determine the hours in which you will have cell phone use.

At no time are cell phones allowed in bedrooms or on the second floor.

We ask that you be polite in your phone usage and not use them at church, mealtimes, when staff is talking to you or during others moments where it would be rude to not give your full attention. **Ruth Harbor staff can confiscate your phone if these guidelines aren't upheld.**

At the time of admission, each parent or guardian of residents under the age of 18 is asked to provide a list of approved callers. The house parents reserve the right to restrict calls to or from any person who threatens the wellbeing of any residents.

Transportation

It is the policy of Ruth Harbor Ministries to provide safe, affordable, and appropriate transportation options, for program related purposes, for residents living in the program.

House parents provide transportation for residents as the schedule allows for necessary doctor's appointments, school and work. It is the resident's responsibility to find personal transportation for passes.

Resident-Owned Vehicle:

- Residents may park their own vehicle on the property under appropriate circumstances
- Resident has a valid driver's license. A copy of her license will be placed in the resident file.
- Vehicle is properly insured. Resident will provide documentation of insurance and registration which will be placed in resident file and updated at each renewal period.
- Resident is responsible for all vehicle maintenance and for the purchase of gas for the vehicle. Resident will not allow others to drive her vehicle.
- Vehicle will be safe and functional for transportation.
- A resident wishing to purchase a vehicle during her stay at Ruth Harbor Ministries will work with the Case Worker to demonstrate her ability to meet the necessary expenses of ownership. Residents not meeting this expectation will not be allowed to park the vehicle onsite.
- Children will be transported in a car seat appropriate to their age, weight and height. Car seat installation will be inspected by RH staff. Children will not be allowed to be transported in improperly installed car seats.

Resident Grievance Process

*"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."
Colossians 3:13-14*

Ruth Harbor observes and protects the legal and human rights of residents at our facility. Residents have the right to express a grievance or complaint they have

relating to the program. Every effort will be made to resolve complaints at the time and with the person with whom they occur. When problems arise, trust and faith may be hindered.

Grievance with Another Young Woman

- If another young woman offends you, you are first to go to that young woman and calmly explain what has been done to offend you. Your goal in this step should be to try and resolve the issue.
- If she does not hear or understand your concerns, or refuses to resolve the issue, the next step is to go to the House Parents and discuss what happened. They will counsel you how to best approach the next step. If necessary, they will meet with you and the other young woman so that the matter may be made right.
- If, after the House Parents have done all they can do, and you remain dissatisfied, you may fill out the Conflict Resolution form and give it to the Executive Director. A meeting will then be scheduled for you to share your concerns.

Grievance with a Staff Person

- If a staff person offended you, you are first to go to that person and explain the problem in a calm manner. The purpose of this step is to resolve the issue by allowing both of you an opportunity to share your thoughts.
- If you feel the problem has not been resolved with the Staff Person your next step is to fill out the Conflict Resolution form and give it to the Executive Director, who will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your concerns.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Conflict with: _____ Date of Conflict: _____

- I have tried to calmly talk about the situation with the other person.

- I have met with my House Parents to discuss this situation.

Summary of Conflict and Steps Taken Thus Far

Signature _____

Mandatory Reporting

All Ruth Harbor Staff Members are mandatory reporters. This means that any suspicion of child abuse or neglect is reported immediately to the state of Iowa.

SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

In Case Of Fire Alarm

Everyone is to proceed to the nearest exit and meet on the side walk directly across the street to the North. (across from the front door)

Tornado/Disaster

Everyone is to go directly to the basement. Bring your pillow and blanket if time allows. Proceed to the area just at the bottom of the stairs. If you cannot make it to the basement, go the bathroom on either floor. Practice drills occur periodically to insure that you are prepared for these events.



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