



Homespace Corporation

Next Step

Agency Operating Boarding Home

Resident Handbook Program Policy Manual

Revised February 2019

Welcome!

Next Step welcomes you to its family of supportive staff and residents. We hope that your participation in the program leads to the fulfillment of the goals that you have set for yourself. Not only will you find a comfortable, safe home, but also an environment in which individuals are encouraged to value themselves and others.

This Handbook is your guide to policies, procedures, expectations and information that will help you to become a successful Next Step resident.

It is our goal at Next Step to provide an environment that helps residents achieve their goals and learn independent living skills. Please feel free to bring all questions and concerns to the Next Step staff for clarification and guidance.

Sincerely,

Homespace-Next Step Staff

Homespace Mission:

Homespace supports at-risk young women to achieve independent two generations at a time.

Homespace-Next Step Values:

The Homespace mission statement is best achieved through a set of values that helps guide both residents and staff. In becoming a Homespace-Next Step resident, it is important to recognize these values so that you may understand our policies and procedures, as well as be able to live the values in your own life.

Family

Responsibility

Security

Self Sufficiency

Resiliency

The Next Step “Family”

Next Step employs a supportive staff to help all residents achieve their best. Staff is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to ensure a safe and comfortable environment. All staff is available to provide assistance and offer guidance.

Executive Director

The Executive Directors role is to oversee all operations of Homespace-Next Step through supervision of the Directors.

Director of Program Operations (DPO)

The role of the DPO is to oversee the overall functioning of the program as it relates to the Direct Care Worker Team. This includes over-site/supervision of the Direct Care Worker Supervisor as well assisting in developing the training and support aspect of our program for our staff members.

Director of Youth Services (DYS)

The role of the DYS is to oversee the overall functioning of the program as it relates to the clinical needs of the residents. This includes intake and supervision of the Clinical Supervisor. The DYS will also become involved with a resident that is asking and/or being asked to transition out of the program.

Direct Care Supervisor

The role of Direct Care Supervisor is to oversee and supervise the Direct Care Workers on a day-to-day basis as well as monitor the overall safety and well-being of the residents. This includes monitoring compliance with all program rules and expectations.

Clinical Supervisor

The Clinical Supervisor provides direct supervision to the Case Planner. In addition, the Clinical Supervisor attends all Service Plan Reviews and meetings as it relates to the resident's goals.

Independent Living Coordinator

The Independent Living Coordinator provides direct supervision to the Independent Living Trainers. In addition, the Independent Living Coordinator oversees all allowances that our residents receive as well as plans all IL groups.

Case Planner

The role of the Case Planner is to assist residents in developing realistic goals for themselves, make referrals for needed services and monitor the progress of the residents. The Case Planner also attends all court proceeding, coordinates/monitors family visitations as needed, coordinates Service Plan Reviews and ensures that all residents receive the mental health treatment that they may need. The Case Planner also ensures that the resident is linked with support services as it relates to their parenting goals/children.

Independent Living Trainer

The role of the Independent Living Trainer is to assist residents in developing realistic goals for themselves as it relates to their independent living skills including finding employment, securing community resources, budgeting, cooking, home cleanliness, getting along with others, etc.

Direct Care Workers (DCW)

The role of the Direct Care Worker is to monitor the overall safety of the home as well as ensure that all residents are following the routine/programming in the home. The Direct Care Workers are also there to assist residents with their goals that were developed by the IL Trainers and Case Planners.

***A full list of job duties are provided at the time of intake.**

Maintenance

The maintenance staff are available to fix issues in the home and maintain the grounds at Next Step. If a resident has a maintenance issue regarding their bedroom, they must complete a written request, which, can be provided by staff. All requests will be addressed within 48 hours if possible. If you do not feel that your request was completed in a timely manner or the work was not done correctly please see the Direct Care Worker Supervisor.

*Be aware maintenance staff are NOT responsible for cleaning resident's room and/or common areas of the home, removing garbage from resident's room, moving resident's belongings in/out of their room and/or the general cleanliness of the home (this is the responsibility of the residents).

Community Spaces

Next Step has several community spaces for residents, staff and visitors to utilize. The following are the rules/expectations of these spaces so that all can enjoy them. If the rules/expectations are not followed, the space may be closed and/or a resident may be banned from using the space.

Staff Office

There are no residents allowed in the staff office unless meeting with a staff member. If you need assistance, you should ask staff and/or knock on the door.

Laundry Room

The laundry room is available for use between 8am-8pm on a daily basis. Access to the laundry room must be requested through a DCW (the room is kept locked at all times and is located in the main building). Residents are assigned laundry days so that each resident is given adequate time to take care of their laundry needs. If you need to use the laundry room on any other day, you must ask staff for permission. Laundry soap and dryer sheets are available however; if you wish to use a specific brand, you must purchase that on your own. You are expected to do your own laundry; if you are unsure as to how to wash clothes, you can ask a DCW for assistance.

Living Room

The living room is for the use of all residents. Residents and staff are not allowed to eat and/or drink in the living room. The TV can be watched when residents are not in program (this includes school, group, etc.). Staff will monitor the programs watched on the TV and may restrict programs as deemed necessary and/or appropriate. You are expected to clean up after yourself after each use.

Dining Room

The dining room is another shared space. The dining room is used for all meals as well as many groups/meetings. All eating/drinking should take place in the dining room only. You are expected to clean up after yourself after each use.

Kitchen

The kitchen is used to prepare all meals. With the assistance from staff, residents will make monthly menus; Next Step will provide the food for each meal. Residents will however be expected to help with shopping and putting away the groceries each week. The kitchen is open between the hours of 7am-8pm. Although food is available at all times, residents are encouraged to eat balanced meals at meal times rather than snack throughout the day.

Parking Lot

The parking lot is available for use by residents and guests after normal business hours; during normal business hours the parking lot is for staff only. If you have, a car that you would like to park in the lot after business hours you must provide staff with a copy of your license, insurance and registration. Vehicles cannot be stored in the lot.

Garbage Area

Residents are responsible for the removal of their own garbage from their room and the home. All garbage should be placed in closed bags and thrown in the bins located in the garbage gate; loose garbage should NEVER be placed in the bins as this attracts rodents and bugs! Boxes MUST be broken down; do not place full boxes in the garbage area and/or fill them up with garbage. If residents have large items they can be placed at the curb on the evening before garbage pick-up and/or residents may ask maintenance for assistance. The garbage is picked up weekly on Wednesday mornings; staff and residents will put it to the curb on Tuesday evenings. The garbage gate is locked at all times; staff can open the gate for staff when needed.

What You Can Expect From Next Step...

- 1.) Peaceful home setting that is meant to bring comfort and security to you.
- 2.) Supportive staff that aim to assist in goal achievement and success for each resident and is available to help you overcome hurdles, discuss general concerns and offer encouragement.
- 3.) A safe, secure environment including staff on duty 24 hours a day.
- 5.) A family environment in which staff and residents form relationships that are mutually caring and respectful.
- 6.) Your privacy and confidentiality will be respected while you live at Next Step.

What Next Step Expects From You...

- 1.) Respectful interactions with all other residents and staff.
- 2.) Engagement in case planning so that you can continue on the road towards self-sufficiency.
- 3.) The desire to learn and grow as an individual.
- 4.) Active participation in all group meetings, individual meetings, and Homespace events.
- 5.) To keep your room and the community space of Next Step clean and tidy.
- 6.) Residents are expected to follow ALL rules and regulations so that safety, comfort, and progression of the individual are achieved.
- 7.) Respect of the privacy and confidentiality of other residents in the program.

Entrance into the Program

Moving Into Next Step

On the day you move into the program, the Independent Living Trainer will complete an entrance inspection to ensure that your room is safe and comfortable for your personal use. The LT will make note of all furnishings and the condition of your room. The rooms are furnished and you will be provided with linens. It should also be noted that Next Step provides your hygiene products. A fire drill will take place within the first 24 hours of you living with us.

GAP/"Getting Acquainted Period"

We understand that when you move into Next Step you might feel a bit uncomfortable in your new surroundings. It is also the same for staff as we have a new youth living with us who we are just getting to know. To help everyone make this adjustment and become more familiar with one another we have developed a "Getting Acquainted Period" (GAP). During GAP, you are not be permitted to have day passes and/or overnight visits with your family. Family visits during this time may also occur in the home if the county wants them supervised by staff.

It should be noted that although the GAP period is for 4-weeks, it could be extended if you are struggling with your adjustment into the program and/or you are under the age of 16. Therefore, you will meet with staff prior to your GAP ending to review your compliance with the rules during that time and to officially be taken off the GAP. Residents that are struggling in the program at any time during their stay may be put back on GAP.

Support Counseling

For all residents transitioning to Next Step, you will be required to enroll in counseling for a minimum of 12-months. After the 12-month period, the counselor, along with the Case Planner, will assess the need for continued services. Refusal to attend mental health treatment may result in you being discharged from Next Step.

Intake Meeting

Within the first week of living at Next Step, you will meet with the team. During this meeting, you will be introduced to your team and will be able to develop goals for yourself. This is also a time that you can ask for clarification about this Handbook and other policies.

Your Home

Security System/Fire System

The home is fully alarmed including the front door. This is for your safety as well as the safety of the staff and other residents. To enter the home you must use the doorbell, staff will instruct you to pull the door when ready. To leave the home you must ask staff to buzz you out; if you leave the home without informing staff the alarms will be set off.

In the event of a fire, residents will be instructed to leave the home immediately and meet on the corner of Dodge and Ellicott. If for some reason, that spot is not safe, residents and staff will meet at Second Chance (corner of Michigan and Dodge). Residents are required to leave the home whenever the fire alarm is activated. When you move into the home, a practice drill will be conducted. Drills will occur on a monthly basis. Never try to fight a fire on your own! Please know that to prevent fires, candles and lighters are prohibited in the home! Also, remember to unplug curling irons, flat irons, etc. when not in use.

Keys

At intake you will be provided a key to your own room. We encourage you lock your room whenever you are not in it. You should keep your key on you at all times; although staff can unlock your room if needed, it is your responsibility to lock/unlock your own room. If you lose your key, you will be charged \$5.00 to replace it. If at any time a resident is misusing their key and/or loses their key on a continuous basis, they will lose the privilege of holding their own key and will have to rely on staff to lock/unlock their room. If you have a roommate, you will be given a lock box to keep personal items such as money, important documents, etc. You will also be given a key to your lock box; if that key is lost, a fee of \$5.00 will be charged to you for a replacement key.

Furniture

Your room is furnished with a twin-sized bed, a dresser and a nightstand. You can also bring your own TV, radio, DVD player, etc. in your room if you choose to do so however time in your bedroom may be limited during the day.

Decorating

You are allowed to decorate your own room. If you wish to hang things on your wall, we ask that you talk with maintenance staff.

Cable/Internet

The home has cable and internet. As stated above, staff will monitor the television; programming may be shut off if felt to be inappropriate. In addition, the television cannot be on during programming including school, groups, etc. There is a computer in the home for your use. Again, your use on the computer will be monitored and may be limited by staff if being abused. The Wi-Fi code will NOT be shared with residents at any time.

Phones

As a resident of Next Step program you are able to have a cell phone once you are off of GAP. Phones rules and policies are different depending on what step of the Pathways Program you are in. See attached Next Step Pathways Program for more details.

Pets

Pets are prohibited with the exception of a therapeutic aid dog; documentation is required.

Room/Bathroom Inspections

Bedrooms and bathrooms are inspected on a daily basis. Staff are looking for general cleanliness of the rooms including clothing put away, bed made, counters wiped down, etc. If you do not pass inspection, you will not be able to leave on a day pass. If you are struggling with cleanliness, you will be expected to work with staff to learn the needed skills. In addition, if you feel that the person you share the bathroom with is not doing their share you are expected to talk with staff about your concerns.

Privacy

You are given privacy while in your bedroom however to ensure your safety, room checks may occur at any time.

What to Do In an Emergency/Crisis Situation

Staff at Next Step want to ensure your safety at all times. Staff are trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) and First Aid/CPR. We are a "hands-off" program and therefore staff will use verbal de-escalation strategies if a youth is in an emotional crisis. A Crisis Management Plan is completed with you at intake so that staff are aware of your individual trauma history as well as any triggers and strategies that work well for you in a crisis. If you are witnessing another resident in crisis, please follow any staff instructions given including leaving the area, going into your room and/or calling for assistance. During a medical crisis, your assistance may also be requested. For example, you may be asked to call for help, to ensure that others are able to exit the building, etc. If at any time you have questions or concerns as it relates to how staff handle crisis situations please speak with the Director of Program Operations.

Your Needs

SEFCU

You will be set up with a bank account at SEFCU (located on the corner of Main and Chippewa) upon entering the program. Residents under the age of 18 are only eligible for a savings account. If you are over the age of 18, you may sign up for a checking account as well. You can speak with your Independent Living Trainer about the importance of saving money and the use of a savings and/or checking account.

Allowances

Residents can earn \$10 per week for completing their assigned daily chore. In addition, residents can earn \$5.00 per group (1-2 groups are offered per week). Therefore, residents can earn up to a total of \$40 every 2-weeks. Allowances are provided via direct deposit into your checking and/or savings account. If you have any questions or concerns about your allowance please speak with the Independent Living Coordinator.

Savings Program

Residents are eligible to earn \$20.00 per month. This money is placed in a separate account that the resident does not have access to and is only given to the resident at time of discharge IF they successfully discharge from the program. Any money earned will not be given to a resident that is asked to leave the program on an involuntary status. Residents who transition from Next Step to SILP will be allowed access to their money to purchase needed items for their apartment. Money is deducted from the earned money each month for violating program rules. The amount of money you have in your savings tracker will be discussed at each of your quarterly meetings. If you have questions about the savings program please ask the Independent Living Coordinator.

Bus Passes

Residents that are not on GAP are eligible for a monthly bus pass. Next Step is not responsible if you lose your bus pass! If you do lose it, please speak with your Independent Living Coordinator as to the steps needed to replace it. In order to be eligible for a bus pass you must be working and/or attending school a minimum of 10 hours per week and proof of his schedule must be given to your county worker. In addition, you must provide your last month's bus pass when it expires each month to receive your new bus pass.

Other Transportation Needs

Transportation can be provided for needed appointments including medical appointments, counseling, school appointments, home visits, court, etc. if deemed necessary. Transportation is not provided for non-essential trips such as to the corner store, a friend's home, etc. When residents are being transported in a staff's personal vehicle and/or the agency van they must wear their seat belts regardless of age. Direct Care Workers are not permitted to transport non-residents (this includes friends, relatives, significant others, etc. Case Planners may transport family members if it relates to court, visitation and/or other reunification efforts. There is no eating, drinking and/or smoking at any

time in the agency van. Please note that due to several residents in the home if your appointment is not on the calendar you may have to wait and/or plan for other transportation.

*If at any time the weather turns sever staff will contact you to transport you home immediately! This is for safety reasons of staff and residents.

Clothing Allowances

You will receive a clothing allowance every 3 months. The amount is based on your age and the amount of days that you have been in the program during that 3-month period. When you do receive your clothing allowance, you will be required to shop with staff unless you are given permission by the Independent Living Trainer to shop alone. All clothing receipts are collected for the county. Although residents are free to express themselves through their clothing/dress, staff will encourage you to purchase appropriate clothing for you and your child including appropriate clothing for different seasons, appropriate clothing to wear to school daycare, etc.

*If you are in need of additional clothing due to weight gain/loss or other circumstances please speak with your Case Planner.

Hygiene Needs

Next Step provides you with a hygiene basket upon move in. You will also be provided with a monthly hygiene card to meet your needs. Residents are also encouraged to use their earned allowance to purchase needed hygiene items, as this is an IL skill.

Medication Policies

All medication will be locked in the medication room and will be monitored by staff members. At times permission may be given to you to hold your own medication; if this occurs, you will be provided with a lock box to store your medication in.

Food/Menu Planning

Direct Care Workers and Residents plan the menu each month. If you have any dietary needs please speak with the Direct Care Supervisor immediately. Meals in the home are planned to be nutritionally balanced and healthy snacks and drinks are always encouraged. If you do not like what is being served for a meal you can speak with the DCW on duty (due to limited extra items in the home however, your options for an alternative meal may be limited to a sandwich or salad). Fresh fruits will always be available for you to eat between planned meals. As an independent living skill, you will be assigned to cook dinner one time per week. The DCW's can assist you with this if needed. At no time can food be stored in your room. If you do purchase food for yourself, you can label it with your name and store it in the kitchen.

Your Community

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the program that is guaranteed for each individual. This is not only the responsibility of staff but also of each resident. It is prohibited to discuss the names or business of any resident while outside of the Next Step community. This includes talk, text and social media. This is to ensure the safety and dignity of each resident. Any person found in non-compliance of this rule may be asked to leave the program.

Personal Belongings

Residents are responsible for their own belongings. If you agree to lend out a personal item to another resident, you take full responsibility for this; Next Step will not replace lost, stolen or broken items! Please lock up valuables and keep your bedroom door locked at all times. If you are involved in a theft, you are encouraged to file a police report and they can follow up as needed. For safety reasons other residents/non-roommates will NOT be allowed into your bedroom if you are not home even if you call and give permission. Those residents with a roommate will be given a lock box to keep money, important documents and other valuables secured.

Mediation with Other Residents/Bullying Policy

You are encouraged to talk with staff if you are having difficulties with another resident. Staff can offer mediation between you and other residents if needed. Next Step will not tolerate bullying of any kind including physical violence or verbal harassment; this includes talk, text or social media. Any acts of physical violence and/or harassment on or off Next Step property may result in removal from the program.

Meetings and Groups

Service Plan Reviews

Minimally every 6 months you will meet with the team, your county worker and your adult supports to review your strengths and accomplishments over the previous 6 months. This is also a time to review your goals and develop new goals for yourself. Participation in your Service Plan Review is a requirement of the program.

Youth in Progress

Youth in Progress (YIP) is an advocacy group for youth in out of home placement. This group meets monthly at various agencies throughout the area. Next Step staff will transport to all meetings and

events and you are encouraged to attend often. If you want to become involved with this group, please see the Independent Living Trainer. Youth Handbooks, Bill of Rights and Need to Know Series are available for you from the Case Planner.

Case Work Contacts

Each resident is required to meet with clinical staff a minimum of eight times per month face to face. These meetings will be scheduled by your Case Planner and Independent Living Trainer and are required to remain in the program. At the meetings, you will develop goals, review your goals and work towards your permanency goals. Each resident will also have an Individualized Treatment Plan, Recreation Plan and Independent Living Goal Sheet that will also be discussed at these meetings.

Additional Groups/Activities

Next Step will provide you with a wide variety of events and activities. Along with weekly groups, events may include recreational opportunities, educational opportunities, skills groups, etc. All activities will be listed on the activities board located in the community area. If you want to attend an activity, it will be your responsibility to sign up. Be aware that if you sign up for an event that has a cost associated to it and you do not show on the day of the event you WILL be held responsible for the cost of that activity. Upon entering into the program, you will also meet with a Recreation Worker who will help you to develop recreation goals for yourself and get to know your interests and hobbies.

Group Policy

Groups will be provided to you 1-2 times per week. Groups are educationally based and focus on independent living skills and well-being. During group, you are expected to participate and be respectful of the group leader. As indicated above, for each missed group you will lose \$5.00. If for some reason you must miss a group due to an appointment and/or illness, you should speak with the IL Trainer.

Resident Meetings/Advisory Group

Next Step is committed to having residents participate in their programming and having a "voice" within the house. Therefore, each month minimally one resident meeting will be held. This meeting will address any concerns in the home and review any new policies. Residents will also have an opportunity to help plan recreational activities, groups and menu choices during this meeting.

Homespace Next Step Policies and Procedures

Next Step Pathways Program

Pathways is a 3-step program that was developed so that residents and staff at Next Step have a clear and standard way that youth can move through the program. Next Step was developed as a short-term program for residents with a goal to move to a Supervised Independent Living Program. Therefore, the Pathways Program is set up not as a level or punishment program, but as a way to slowly develop skills in youth to allow them more independence with an ultimate goal of moving to a lower level of care. Although the Pathways Program can be moved through within a 3-6 month period, some residents may take longer due to needs, age, and/or county/state expectations.

You will be given a clear outline of the Pathways Program at the time of intake. Pathway Steps determine day passes, overnight visits, cell phone use, daily routines and access to our savings program.

AWOL

You are considered AWOL if you leave the group home without permission regardless of the amount of time that you are gone. AWOL's are taken very seriously and can result in involvement discharge from the program. If for any reason, you are going to be late returning to the group home, please ensure that you are contacting staff. An attempt to locate with the Buffalo Police will be made if you are more than 1 hour late for curfew and a missing person's report and possibly a warrant with Family Court will be filed if you are gone from the home without permission for 24 hours. Any resident that AWOL's (leaves the home without permission regardless of time frame) will be placed back on the GAP for a minimum of 4-weeks! As per OCFS regulations, the Center for Missing and Exploited Children may also be contacted if a resident is AWOL.

Weekend Passes/Home Visits

You may be able to visit with your family and/or approved adult resources on the weekend. Prior to leaving on a weekend pass your plan must be confirmed and approved by the Case Planner please talk with them by the Wednesday before the weekend you wish to visit. Restrictions to your weekend passes may be enforced if you are on GAP. Transportation to/from home visits is the same as any other transportation needs; if you have a bus pass you will be responsible for using this and if you need transportation from staff you must ensure that this is on the calendar well in advance of the visit.

Extended Leave/Travel

You can ask for an extended leave from the program if you wish to spend time with family, go on vacation, etc. The granting of extended leave is up to the staff and not a guaranteed right. If you are going out of the county during your leave, you **MUST** get a travel consent signed by the county and/or your parent/guardian if you are under the age of 18. If you are over the age of 18, you may sign your own consent however; this must be provided to the county a min. of 3 days prior to you leaving. Extended leave for a resident cannot exceed 2 weeks!

Medical Leave

If you have a medical crisis and need to be absent from the program for more than 2 weeks you must submit proper documentation prior to leaving or upon returning to Next Step. Proper documentation must also be given to staff if the resident is called upon to care for a family member during a family crisis.

*Always try to alert staff of a medical crisis when it occurs so that staff is aware of your whereabouts and can ensure your safety.

Visitor Policy

Visitors will be permitted to visit you at Next Step however; they must be pre-approved by your Case Planner. All visitations will occur in the community space of the group home or the Community Room at the SILP; no visitors will be allowed on the second floor of the home. All visitors will need to complete a visitation packet prior to visiting the program. Each time a visitor does come to visit, they must also provide picture ID and sign into the home with staff.

Drug/Alcohol Policy

Next Step is a drug and alcohol free environment. If you and/or staff feel that you have concerns with drug and/or alcohol use, you will be referred and must complete drug counseling to remain at Next Step. If you do not comply, a 30-day notice will be given. Guests must also follow this policy and may be denied visiting privileges if they are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. In addition, the police will be contacted if you have illegal substances on Next Step property. Please note that because all residents are under the age of 21 years old (the legal drinking age) alcohol of any form is considered an illegal substance and is not permitted on Next Step property.

Cigarette Policy

There is no smoking on Homespace-Next Step property. Smoking of residents under the age of 18 is prohibited and any cigarettes will be confiscated if found. If you are over the age of 18 and smoke you must do so off property (this includes the parking lot, porch, sidewalks, etc.).

Weapons Policy

Weapons of any kind are prohibited on the property of Next Step. This includes guns, knives, pepper spray, mace, etc. If a weapon is found it will be confiscated and the police may be contacted.

Domestic Violence Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish agency protocols should there be a Domestic Violence incident at Next Step. This policy has been put in place for the safety of all residents and their children's best interest.

Homespace Corporation and all of its employees strive to promote healthy relationships. In the event that there is a situation that becomes physical between a resident and their guest, 911 will be immediately called. The guest directly involved in the situation will not be able to return to Homespace-Next Step premises until there is a meeting conducted with the Director of Program Operations, Director of Youth Services, Direct Care Worker Supervisor and Case Planner.

The Homespace-Next Step Administrative team reserves the right to revoke all visitors to ensure the safety and well-being for everyone involved.

Chores

In addition to keeping your bedroom and bathroom clean, you will be assigned a daily chore to complete. If you are unsure as to how to complete your chore, please talk with DCW. Failure to complete a chore will result in a deduction in your weekly allowance.

Interactions with staff

You are expected to work with all members of the Homespace-Next Step team. If you are having a personal conflict with any staff member, you are encouraged to talk to them respectfully and openly. If the situation is not resolved, you may then ask to speak to their supervisor. If you are not able to work with ALL staff, you may be asked to leave the program. Verbal and physical intimidation of staff is NOT tolerated.

If there is a situation with staff, you will be required to participate in a Life Space Interview (LSI) with that staff member. This LSI will help in teaching new coping and communication skills to be used in future interactions.

Sexual Harassment

Intimate relationships with other residents that live at Next Step are prohibited. In addition, any sexual harassment of another resident either in person or through social media is grounds for immediate discharge from the program. If you feel you are being harassed by another resident you should speak with your Case Planner immediately.

Discharge from the Program

Successful Completion Transition

The goal of all youth at Next Step should be to move to our Supervised Independent Living Program. This goal is monitored using our Pathways Program. To be eligible for a transition to the SILP you must remain at the Honors Step for a period of 6-months. All transitions to the SILP must be approved by your county worker and Next Step staff.

You can also initiate a discharge from the Homespace at any time; you can do this by talking with your Case Planner and/or your county worker. It is recommended that you speak with your Case Planner often about your discharge plans so that the transition can be as smooth as possible. A Transition Form will also be completed upon entering the program and updated quarterly to assist with this process. You have several options at discharge including but not limited to: 1.) Being referred to another program within the foster care system 2.) Being referred to HomespaceSILP 3.) Being discharged to your own apartment on a trial and/or final discharge status and 4.) Being discharged to a family member. Please be aware that in order to receive any money from the HS savings account that you may have earned during your stay at Next Step you must give your Case Planner a 30-day notice of your move as well as be discharged "successfully" (not staff initiated due to noncompliance).

All personal belongings must be removed from your room within 5 days of your discharge date. Any items left after this time may be thrown out and/or donated.

Immediate Referral Out Of the Program/10-Day Notice

The safety of all of our residents are our first priority. **Any action that violates another person's health, safety and/or well-being will be taken seriously and will result in a 10-day notice of discharge. This includes fighting on or off the property with another resident, threats of harm to another resident or staff member, sexual harassment of another resident, sale of drug on property or a crime against another resident or staff member.**

When an immediate discharge does need to take place the Case Planner, along with the Director of Youth Services and county worker, will work together to find a suitable placement option for the resident. All belongings must be moved out of the home on the discharge date and an exit interview will occur. All keys must also be returned on this date. When a resident is referred out of the program in this manner the resident will not be allowed back on property; this includes being a screened visitor for another resident.

Behavior Support Plans

If you violate a policy of Homespace-Next Step, you will be placed on a Behavior Support Plan. These plans outline the behavior that needs to be changed in order for you to remain in the program. These plans are shared with your county worker as well as your attorney. Behavior Support Plans are put into place for 30 days. After the 30-days, they will be reviewed as a team. If you have not made the necessary changes outlined in the plan you will be given a 30-day notice of discharge.

Behaviors that result on being placed on a Behavior Support Plan include: Refusal to attend counseling when recommended, non-compliance with medication as recommended, continued failure of home inspections, purposeful damage to your townhome or community space, failure to attend school or work, conflict with another resident (not including physical conflict), conflict with staff (not including physical conflict), failure to attend weekly meetings with staff, failure to attend group, failure to comply with your curfew, smoking on the property, failure to comply with the visitor policy and/or use of drugs or alcohol(not including sale of drugs on property).

Condition of Your Room upon Exit

Your room should be clean at all times; including when you exit the program. It is expected that your room is left in the same condition as when you moved in. Please make sure to follow these tips:

- Your room should be “swept clean”, meaning an overall removal of any paper, clothes, garbage, etc. that may be lying around.
- Remove all garbage/garbage bags.

Independent Living Coordinator will complete an exit inspection of your room with you prior to leaving.

Access to File

At the time of discharge, staff will ensure that you have the following documents: Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, Medicaid Card, Picture ID and your high school diploma (if applicable). You may also request any other forms at that time. If you want to access your file after your final discharge from the program, you may do so by making a request in writing to the front office staff. Your records will be available to be picked up within 10 business days of the written request.

Assistance with Moving

Next Step staff may assist if able with moving you to your new home however, you should plan to have help from friends and/or family members as well as plan this with your new placement team. Assistance with moving is not a guarantee nor should be seen as an expectation of the staff. If you do not have access to a van to move your items in, please talk with your Case Planner when you give your 30-day notice.

Other After-Care Services

Again, please speak with your Case Planner often about your discharge plan and services that you may need at the time of discharge. Referrals can be made for in-home and/or community support services after discharge if you would like to continue to work with someone on your goals. The following are other considerations when planning your discharge:

- If you discharge after the age of 18 your healthcare will remain until the age of 26; please talk with your Case Planner for assistance in applying for healthcare.
- If you were in care on your 18th birthday, you will be eligible for ETV (Education Training Voucher). Please see your Case Planner for more details if you plan to continue your education passed your high school diploma or GED.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand all policies and procedures outlined in the Resident Handbook.

I have also been given a copy of the Handbook and know who to talk to if I have questions about any of the policies and/or procedures.

Resident Signature

Date

Homespace Staff Signature

Date