**[Your Home] Handbook Template**

Name of your organization here

**Introduction**

Welcome to [Name of Home]! This handbook is designed to provide you with some background information as well as to answer any questions you may have about living here. You will find information about [Your Organization], [Name of Home] and your rights and responsibilities as a resident at the home. As [Name of Home] is a new initiative, this handbook will be in process. There will be changes and additions made as we learn and grow.

**About [Your organization]**

General information about your organization

***Hours of Operation:***

***Contact Info:***

**About [Your Home]**

***Supporting Roles in [Your Home]:***

* **Peers**: There will be other 2SLGBTQ+ residents in the home and we encourage individuals to build healthy relationships with one another.
* **[Your Home] Staff**: Trained Support Workers who provide the youth with:
  + Creating and achieving goals laid out in case plans
  + Group and one-on-one peer support
  + Assistance in mediating conflict within the home
  + Assistance in navigating and attending appointments
  + Advocacy for youth when needed
  + **Two Spirit Elder/Knowledge Keeper/Mentors**:  Our Two Spirit Elder/Knowledge Keeper/Mentors, [Names] will provide support services as requested to youth in [Your Home].

**Guiding Principles**

All of [Your Home]’s operations are guided through these principles and staff, mentors and home residents are invited to embody these principles.  [These guiding principles can be created in a youth-led, cooperative manner and can be designed to your specific home. The following are just examples]

* **Acceptance** of all people exactly as they are
* **Respect** for others and ourselves by valuing our differences and treating all with dignity
* **Cultural Humility** through acknowledging the limits of our own cultural perspectives and being open to learning from the experiences and cultural expressions of others
* **Hospitality** through creating a welcoming, compassionate, and safe space for 2SLGBTQ+ people, their families, and their allies
* **Harm Reduction** through non-judgmental services and philosophies that respect the self-determination of those we serve
* **Equality** of all people. Valuing all regardless of gender identity, sexuality, sex, race, culture, ability, and socio-economic status
* **Social Justice and Advocacy** for the equity of 2SLGBTQ+ people.

**Resident Eligibility** 

**In order to live in [Your Home], you need to:**

* Be between the ages of 16-21
* Identify as 2SLGBTQ+
* Want to benefit from living in a supported, youth-centered environment
* Want to live at [Your Home] and choose to move here voluntarily

**Basic Expectations of Living in [Your Home]:**

* Respect for self and others
* Desire to improve one’s life
* Contribute to keeping [Your Home] a safe space
* Keep open communication with [Your Home] Staff
* Participate in house programming
* Participate in case planning and work to achieve goals
* Follow guidelines and house rules

**Safe Space Guidelines** (created by residents)

* Respect pronouns and names
* Be relaxed
* Address conflict directly
* Bi-weekly house meetings and check-ins that everyone has to attend
* Respect people’s boundaries, personal space, and privacy
* Respect common areas and clean up after yourself

**House Rules**

* Rooms should be kept tidy and must follow fire code rules.
* Clean up the messes you make in common areas.
* No alcohol or drugs stored or used on the premises.
* Curfew is at 10pm
* Quiet time is from 11pm to 7am.

**[Your Home] Operations**

**Expenses:**

Rent for each bedroom in [Your Home] is [$459] plus 1/5 of utilities. A damage deposit of [$459] is also required.

[This section will be changed, depending on your own practices] Youth are responsible for personal expenses and may choose to buy your own groceries. General groceries will be purchased for the home.

Youth residing in [Your Home] will cover their rent with one of the following ways [Note that these are specific to Saskatchewan, but may provide some ideas for your home]:

* The 16/17 program (Section 10) through the Ministry of Social Services
* Through Child and Family Services, through the Ministry of Social Services
* Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS)
* Saskatchewan Assistance Insurance for Disability (SAID)
* Through their own employment

**The following items are provided to residents:**

* A private, fully-furnished bedroom which contains:
  + Built-in murphy bed with foam mattress
  + Built-in desks and storage
  + Mini-fridge
  + Closet
  + Bathroom with a shower, sink, and toilet
  + A locking door and personal key
  + Wiring for internet and cable (youth will need their own TV and Shaw cable box to have cable in your room)
* WIFI, Netflix, and Crave TV
* Garden and outdoor recreational space
* Common areas with kitchen & living room
* An affirming and inclusive space for all identities

Each bedroom will have its own set of keys. If you lose your keys and cannot access your room, contact staff. There is a replacement fee of $5.00 for lost keys.

Youth are responsible for keeping their rooms tidy, but it is their own space. Room checks will be done once a week to ensure fire paths are clear and there is room for emergency services if needed.  These will not be surprise checks, youth will be informed and expected to be present during room checks.

**Common Areas**

All residents are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of all common areas. [Your Organization] will provide cleaning supplies to ensure the home is being kept clean.

Youth are expected to help daily with chores, as listed on the kitchen whiteboard.

Common areas are as follows:

* Kitchen
* Dining area
* Living room
* Laundry room
* Main floor washroom
* Hallways and stairs
* Outdoor areas

**Kitchen & Dining**

All residents are expected to work together to keep a healthy level of cleanliness in the kitchen. Any personal food should be labelled to avoid conflict.

The kitchen is equipped with:

* Two fridges with freezers
* Stove/oven
* Microwave
* Toaster
* Coffee maker
* Dishes, cookware, and cutlery
* Garbage and recycling cans
* Deep freeze in the garage

**Living Room:**

The living room is for everyone and youth are expected to be respectful of others using the room. Youth are asked to also be respectful of noise levels.

The living room is equipped with:

* TV with Netflix and Crave
* Nintendo Switch gaming system
* Desktop computer
* Couches, pillows, and blankets

**Laundry Room**

[Your Organization] will provide laundry soap and dryer sheets for all residents. Each youth is responsible for their own laundry and being respectful of other youth’s use of the machines. Youth are required to empty the lint trap after dryer use, as this is a fire hazard.

The laundry room is equipped with:

* Washer
* Dryer
* Personal cubby

**Outside Areas**

Youth are asked to participate in the upkeep of outside areas, which includes weeding, raking, shovelling, etc.

The outdoor areas has:

* Patio tables and chairs
* Fire pit
* Two large garden boxes
* Three small garden boxes
* Locking shed

**Garbage and Recycling**

Youth are expected to assist staff with garbage collection. Garbage and recycling pickup schedules can be found on the kitchen whiteboard. [Think about including where to find this on your city’s website if available]

**Cameras**

There are cameras located in some of the common areas of [Your Home] as well as the exterior for your safety. Cameras will be reviewed by staff following any incidents within the home.

**Visitors**

Visitors and guests are allowed in the home between the hours of 11:00am and 11:00pm, but must be approved by housing staff. No overnight visitors will be allowed.

**Curfew**

For youth under the age of 18 curfew is 11:00pm on weeknights. There is no curfew on weekends, but we do ask and expect youth to openly communicate with staff on their whereabouts for their safety.

**Overnights Away**

Youth are allowed to spend nights away from [Your Home]. Youth are asked to openly communicate with staff about their plans. If you plan to spend more than two consecutive nights away from [Your Home], please arrange this with staff ahead of time.

If you are spending a significant amount of time away from the house, [Your Home] may not be the best fit for you at this time.

**Noise**

Quiet times are between 11:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m. Please be respectful of these times.

**Conflict**

It is very important that we maintain a level of security in the house and that residents feel safe. It is your responsibility to follow the guidelines and to act in a responsible manner. It is understood that from time to time conflict and other issues will arise at [Your Home]. [Your Organization] will work together with you to problem solve and to help you develop the skills to live in a collective, shared living environment, however, the best approach for managing conflict is prevention.

Some quick tips to for helping prevent conflict include:

* Avoid Gossip
* Respect and approach others with respect
* Be open to listening to others
* Seek support from the [Your Home] staff when you are frustrated by a situation
* Take a moment
* Try to understand the other person’s perspective and experiences.
* Refrain from romantic or sexual relationships with housemates

Everyone is expected to work towards creating solutions to conflict and to develop healthy problem-solving skills.

**Pets**

Pets are not permitted in [Your Home]. Youth in the basement suite may seek permission from both [Your Home] Manager and [Your Property Manager] to have a pet.

**Cigarettes**

There is no smoking of any substances in the house. Youth may smoke cigarettes outside of the house. ALL butts must be placed in a proper can or container.

**Alcohol and Drug Use**

[Your Home] values a harm reduction approach to drugs and alcohol.

Alcohol and other substances cannot be consumed or be present in common areas of the house.

If you are [Your location's legal age of drinking] years or older and are legally able to consume alcohol, you may do so outside of [Your Home] but may not consume or store it anywhere on the premises.

Any residents under the age of [Your location's legal age of drinking] may not legally consume alcohol and are expected to adhere to the law.

The presence of any illegal substance on [Your Home] property is not allowed. The presence of any illegal substances may result in police intervention.

**Leaving [Your Home]**

[Your Home] staff are here to support you to transition into whatever is next for you. This might include helping you with finding a place to live and working on budgeting. We recommend connecting with staff as soon as you are considering moving out so there is plenty of time to work on a plan!

**Discharge**

You may voluntarily discharge yourself from [Your Home] (as this is a voluntary program!) or you may be asked to be involuntarily discharged for not following through with program expectations (see above). There is a legal process regarding eviction that the landlords must follow.

**Safety Procedures**

A list of emergency and non-emergency phone numbers is posted beside the house phone.

**Medical Emergency**

In the case of a medical emergency please call 911 and contact on-call support to notify them of the need to call 911.

**First Aid**

There is a First Aid kit located on the main floor in the kitchen underneath the pantry. Supplies in this First Aid kit are for emergencies only. If you need First Aid assistance, staff are trained and available to help.

**Communicable Disease and Infection Control**

Universal precautions should be followed to minimize the risks of transmission of disease when there is potential for contact with hazardous materials, blood, and/or other human waste.

[Your Home] will follow [provincial health authority] guidelines for disease outbreaks.

The first four steps to universal precautions are:

* Wear protective gloves (found by the first aid kit)
* Clean contaminated surfaces
* Dispose of contaminated articles and
* Remove gloves and wash hands

Needles and other sharps need to be placed in approved sharp containers that will be provided by [Your Home].

**Scents**

[Your Home] strives to be scent free in all common areas. Please be respectful of other roommates when using scents in your room.

**Fire Safety**

There is absolutely no smoking inside of [Your Home]. Please be careful when burning candles.

Please call 911 if there is a fire. There is a fire extinguisher located in the kitchen of the home and smoke detectors on every floor. In case of a fire, all members are expected to follow the fire safety plan including meeting across the street from the home if the home needs to be evacuated. Fire safety plans are posted on each floor.

**Police**

We acknowledge and understand there is a long and often negative history of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals with the police. [Your Organization] has been working with the [Your city’s] Police Service to create a better relationship between our community and their service.

Call 911 if it is an emergency.

Non-emergency police line is: ###-###-####

**Mental & Emotional Crisis**

If you are in crisis, please contact the [Your Home] staff and/or the on-call manager for after hours support.

You can also call [Agency Name] at ###-###-#### (during office hours) or Mobile Crisis ###-###-#### (24/7)

**Building Complaints**

Please notify [Your Home] staff if you have any concerns regarding the building or house. Stewart Properties should only be contacted in cases of emergencies such as a flood or fire.

**Contact List**

**[Your Home] Staff**

* [Staff name]: [staff email] or [phone number]

**Property Manager** – [property manager name]

* Takes care of all leasing, showings, rent collections, evictions, dealing with tenant concerns, maintenance requests, notices for complaints, moving tenants in, moving tenants out
* ###-###-#### (Cell – only on Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm)
* ###-###-#### ( Office – Open Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm)
* Email: [email address]

**Maintenance**

* Maintenance on all properties
* Works Monday to Friday 8 – 4:30 - Contact [contact name]
* After hours emergency maintenance is 5pm to 8pm, Monday to Friday & Weekends and Stat days call ###-###-####

**Rent E-Transfer**

* Email: [email address]
* Include name, suite number, and house address

**Community Resources**

**[Community Organizations] : ###-###-####**

Add information to your community organization here

**Hours:**

**Drop-in Hours:**

**Location:**

**Examples:** HealthLine, Sexual Assault Crisis Line, Harm Reduction Resource

**Counselling**

**Examples:** Youth Community Counselling Program, Family Services

**Food**

**Example:** Food Bank Information, Places where free meals can be accessed

**Youth Programming**

**Clothing**

**Example:** Clothing Depot, accessible and affordable thrift stores

**Emergency Housing**

**Legal**

**Social Services**

**Examples:** Social Services, Child and Family Services, Needle Drop Locations

|  |
| --- |
| ***Note: Please take this template and adjust it to your organizational needs and specificities*** |