

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Binkley House Emergency Youth Shelter is intended to be used when families are experiencing a crisis or require extra support to maintain safety. We are also used as an alternative to detention for youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system. We do not see our program as punishment or a punitive action; we appreciate and request your cooperation in framing your child's stay as an opportunity to learn or work on critical skills, build connections, and promote solutions.

While your child is in the shelter, there are guidelines and expectations of which you will want to be aware. This letter contains important information about our policies and procedures; please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Counselor

- Your child will be assigned a counselor. The counselor is a Master's level clinician (or Master's level intern) and will be the primary contact if you have questions or concerns during your child's stay. If you have not heard from your child's assigned counselor within 72 hours, please call 812-349-2507 to schedule an appointment or phone session.
- Counselors will provide short-term, solution focused services to help support the family in addressing concerns that led to placement. Counselors can schedule individual and family sessions on weekdays, with daytime and evening hours available.
- We believe connections and continuity are important. We will do our best to ensure contact with existing providers, including counselors, while your child is a resident in the shelter.
- Aftercare options, including follow-up sessions and referrals to community agencies, will be discussed as a part of your child's exit planning.
- The counselor is the person you should contact for any questions and/or concerns you have regarding your child's needs, such as transportation to appointments, medication, bringing in clothes, school issues, visitation, or counseling needs.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

- It is our expectation and hope that you will actively participate in your child's shelter experience; this includes family sessions and discharge planning. We are a short-term emergency shelter and believe we have a

responsibility to work with parties from the beginning of a resident's stay to ensure there is a safe and agreed upon exit plan. **Please let us know of any barriers or challenges that may impede your participation.**

- There are occasions in which we may request a guardian exit their child sooner than planned or partner with us to identify alternative placements. These instances typically connect to concerns about a child's safety.
- **You are also expected to provide copies of immunization records to us within 72 hours of placement.** These may be obtained from your family physician or from your child's school. These records may be faxed to YSB at (812) 349-2892.
- Although the shelter does provide transportation to and from school, as guardians, you are expected to transport your child to counseling, medical or court appointments, and any extra curricular activities including a job. Contact your child's counselor with any questions or concerns.
- When school is in session, please pre-pay school lunches for the upcoming week at your child's school. If you need assistance with meal arrangements, please let staff know.
- Please read the attached *Notice of Privacy Practices for Protected Health Information*. YSB of Monroe County adheres to HIPAA regulations and strives to protect client confidentiality; exceptions are made only when we become aware of potential or actual harm to self or others. We are required by law to notify the Department of Child Services of suspected abuse or neglect and to contact law enforcement when immediate attention is needed. Client information is shared within the agency's clinical team for the purposes of supervision, consultation, and quality assurance.

Phone Calls

As the guardian, you have the right to confirm your child's approved phone contacts and visitors during their stay. Please communicate with the assigned counselor to make any changes.

You are welcome to call your child when it is convenient for you; please be aware that, depending on shelter programming, we may ask for them to call you back.

Visitation

- Visit hours are Tuesday from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, Saturday from 7:00pm to 9:00pm and on Sundays from 2:30pm to 5:30pm. During these times you can visit with your child on site without calling ahead to make arrangements. Please talk to the counselor working with your child if you'd like to schedule a visit outside of the noted days and times.
- Visiting is limited to only those persons living in the same household as your child. Exceptions to this rule are rare, and must be approved by the child's counselor on a weekday at least 24 hours before the visit.

- Visitors under the age of 18 must be supervised by an adult family member.
- If you would like to take your child off of shelter grounds for a visit, discuss this with your child's counselor on a weekday, at least 24 hours before the visit. Unless the visit is therapeutic or medical, we stipulate that your child must be on Level 2 of our behavior management program before the counselor would consider granting such an outing. These outings are not standard policy and will be granted on a case-by-case basis.
- During such an outing, the person to whom the youth is released is responsible for maintaining supervision of the resident, and should return the resident at or before the agreed upon time.
- The child and adult(s) must check in and out with shelter staff upon exit and return to the shelter.
- Any visitors who appear under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted to visit in the shelter or take a child out of the shelter for a visit.
- Visitors may not smoke on the premises. Residents are not permitted to smoke or possess smoking materials during their stay at the shelter. We also request that you do not allow your child to smoke when in your care on an approved outing from the shelter.
- Bringing your child food and beverages while they are in the shelter is discouraged; however, if you do bring in such items they will need to be eaten in the foyer and cannot be taken into the shelter or visit room.

Personal Belongings

- Residents do not need money while at YSB. We request that you do not make arrangements with your child for any money to be given to them while at school or other outings unless approved by the counselor.
- Your child is permitted to have 5 complete sets of clothing, 1-2 sleep outfits, 1 or 2 pairs of shoes, and one jacket or coat as needed. It is a good idea for kids to have a pair of slippers while in the shelter. All clothing is labeled with your child's initials in the tags. Clothing is laundered nightly. Clothing requiring special care will be returned to you.
- Once your child has 5 outfits and the other necessary items, they will not be allowed to trade these items in for new ones or have any extra items brought in, with the exception of hygiene products. The only other exception is if the season changes while your child is in the shelter.
- Your child is also allowed to have some other personal possessions, such as hygiene products and school supplies. All items must be checked in by YSB staff.
- Pillows, bedding, personal radios, TV's, movies and video games are already provided by the shelter and are not to be brought in by residents.
- Your child is responsible for his/her personal possessions. The shelter is not liable for items lost, stolen or damaged. We suggest that any valuable items be left at home.

- If your child has an item that holds special significance or helps with their comfort, please let us know. We may be able to work with you and your child to make accommodations.

Medication

If your child is taking prescription medication, you must provide the medication to the shelter staff at the time of intake. In order for shelter staff to administer the medication, it must have the prescription label or doctor's written order with it. The label on a prescription bottle is sufficient. **YSB's staff must follow the prescription label or doctor's order exactly as it is stated.** If you would like for the dosages or times to be changed, you need to provide written confirmation from the prescribing doctor. Doctors can fax such notification to YSB at 812-349-2892.

Runaways

If your child chooses to run away from the shelter, you will be notified immediately. Regardless of placement type, we will also notify the police and file an apprehension form.

Discipline and Behavior Management

The shelter staff has written guidelines for how they may or may not discipline a resident. Physical punishment is never used. Shelter staff will not put their hands on a resident unless the resident is hurting themselves or another person. If you would like more information about the shelter program and approaches to intervention, please let staff know.

Procedures for filing a complaint

- Please speak with the person with whom you have experienced the difficulty.
- If the matter is not successfully resolved, please contact the immediate supervisor of the YSB staff person with which you have had the difficulty. They can be reached at one of the following numbers:
 - The Binkley House Manager (supervisor for the shelter staff) or Clinical Coordinator (supervisor for the counseling team) can be reached at 812-349-2506.
 - The Binkley House Manager or Clinical Coordinator will make the Deputy Director aware of the situation and proposed solution.
 - If not successfully resolved, please contact the Deputy Director at 812-349-2506.
 - If still not resolved, please contact the Executive Director at 812-349-2506, they will inform the Presiding Judge and/or the Board of Judges of the concerns.

- If not successfully resolved, please contact the Presiding Judge at 812-349-2640.