



GET THE GOODS ON WOOD'S

Look inside for answers to your questions...

— Check it out —

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WOOD'S HOMES
SERVING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

We are here to help you

Hi! We know this is probably the last place you want to be or thought you would find yourself. You may have been brought here by a parent; a family member; a friend or a social worker.

Wood's Homes is not a place kids want to be. In fact, you may have heard bad things about what goes on here. Tough things do happen to kids who come here – but usually before they come!

Actually, Wood's Homes has been caring for young people just like you, for a very long time – over 90 years in fact. We do this because we believe it's important that kids have people in their lives who never give up and never turn them away . . . no matter how bad it gets!

At Wood's, we have something we call core values. Values are something that help remind us all about what is most important. They are:

Commitment: We will never give up and we will never turn anyone away.

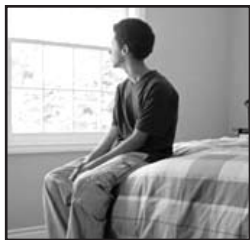
Respect: Do to, and for, others as you would want them to do to, and for, you.

Belonging: Feel accepted for who you are no matter what. Accepting others for who they are.

Responsibility: Learn from your mistakes, forgive others when they make mistakes.

Leadership: Do your absolute best, work with others and be a positive leader.

You might be here because your parents don't understand you and your friends are the only ones who do. You might feel like you don't fit in, you might be in trouble with the law, living on the street, involved with drugs and/or alcohol, or really confused and feeling very alone. We know there are as many stories as there are kids that walk through our doors. Our job is to help you sort things out.



HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS THAT KIDS, JUST LIKE YOU, ASK US:

1. What are the rules of this place?

This is the part of the booklet you will probably dislike the most: The rules! They might seem crazy or old-fashioned to you, but our job is to make sure you're safe, other kids are safe and our staff are safe. These rules help us to do that.

Your right to privacy is always respected by staff. However, if the staff at Wood's are concerned about certain unsafe items that you have, a search of your space and personal things, such as your bedroom, backpack or locker, may be done. We may even do a person search. This is when we will get you to empty your pockets or have you change your clothes. You may use your right to privacy to hide things from us or get away with things and you may succeed.

We know this is true and we expect it. It just makes your stay here longer.

We will say NO to: WEAPONS

Why? Because they can hurt other people and you! If we believe you have a weapon, the staff will do a search of your room and personal belongings.

You also need to know that the police may be called. If you know someone else has a weapon please tell the staff – you are not ratting, you are keeping this place safe.



CELLPHONES

Sometimes, the people who call kids put them in danger, make them scared or upset. We have phones you can use. It's our job to make sure you're safe and you can handle difficult conversations.

So if you bring a cellphone, we'll lock it up or have you give it to your parent, guardian or social worker to hold on to while you're living here.

STOLEN PROPERTY

We must report stolen items - sometimes to the police. You won't be able to keep anything stolen, even if you're not the person who stole it.

DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

Neither is allowed here. It's against the law and can harm you.

CIGARETTES/LIGHTERS

It's against the law to smoke if you're under 18. In fact, Wood's has a 'No Smoking Policy', which means you can't smoke on our campuses. Lighters can start fires - we know because we have had this happen. Some of our staff smoke but they're not allowed to smoke with you or give you cigarettes or matches. We will also tell your parents or case worker about our policy. Sometimes programs will have sacred ceremonies that use tobacco as an offering; it is not smoked.



WE DO SAY YES!

In fact, that's our motto! For example, we say yes to food – especially healthy food. We say yes to fun – safe fun. And, we say yes to games – even ones that make a lot of noise. Oh ya, we also say yes to tears and to laughter.

What happens to my stuff?

When you get here, the staff will make a list of all your personal belongings so that when you leave, you will go with all the things you came with.

We have everything you need, so your parent, guardian or case worker will be asked to hold on to your valuables. If this is not possible or you do not want to do this, we will lock your stuff up to keep it safe until you leave.

Please remember that there is no borrowing or lending of personal belongings and no buying or selling of your belongings with other residents. And new belongings will

need to have a receipt for proof of purchase or the OK from your parent, guardian or case worker that the item was purchased.

Do I get an allowance?

Yes. The government sets these amounts:

6-8 years: \$2.44/wk

9-11 years: \$6.10/wk

12-15 years: \$9.76/wk

16-17 years: \$13.42/wk

This is the amount you will receive, even if you do not have a case worker and your parents usually give you more allowance. We will ask your parents not to send you back to your program from a home visit with money.



At no time will you be denied your allowance, but if a staff member feels you are at risk in any way, it may not be given but held for you at a better time.

We will hold your allowance if:

- There is a risk of buying drugs or alcohol
- There is a risk that you might leave the program without permission
- Other young people are bullying you for your money
- Money is being used to purchase inappropriate items such as music with explicit language, pictures or posters that depict violence, racism or sexist views
- You and the staff member will agree on a plan to have your money returned once the staff member feels you're no longer at risk and you have a spending plan.

What happens if I break something?

There might be a time when your emotions get the best of you and you damage or break something in a program or on the campus.

We know this because it happens. But we believe in forgiveness. We also believe you are responsible for your behaviour. If you damage something you will hear us use the word 'restitution'.

This means you need to find a way to pay for the damage or whatever was broken. If this happens, you and your key worker will make a plan about how you plan to pay for the damages. The plan may involve extra chores or fixing the broken item yourself.

There are lots of options but the important thing is that you make a plan and follow it through.



5. What are my rights while I'm here?

You have many rights and we want to make sure you know what they are:

1. Know why you are here;
2. Know how long you will be staying;
3. Know how we are going to help you;
4. Know what the plan is for you when you leave;
5. Know how we are going to look after your medical needs;
6. Be treated with courtesy, fairness, respect and understanding from staff and peers;
7. Get an education;
8. Live in a place where you can feel safe without violence;
9. Have your cultural, spiritual or religious needs addressed in the way you would like this to happen;
10. Have a lawyer if you go to court. Consult your file, if you are over 14 by following set procedures;

11. Confidentiality about your information and who it gets shared with, except for the stuff that the law says we have to tell;
12. Disagree with things and complain if you do not like something;
13. Have a key worker.

6. What do I have to do while I'm here?

1. Be involved in planning for the service you receive;
2. Work with the staff to resolve difficulties as best you can;
3. Know and follow the rules of your program;



4. Express your feelings – sadness, anger or dissatisfaction without being verbally or physically violent;
5. Know that violence is unacceptable and not welcome here;
6. Use respectful language (although you may get really mad and lose it sometimes);
7. Treat others with respect – even when you're angry;
8. Learn from your mistakes;
9. Meet with your therapist if you have one.

7. What do I need to do to leave?

From the moment you arrive you should be planning to leave.

The first step is to sit down with the program staff and the person or people that brought you here. Understand why you are here. Ask questions and don't stop until you understand. There is no such thing as a dumb question.

You will make what's called a Treatment or Service Agreement. This is a plan that has your goals, responsibilities, what you expect from the program and what the program, your parent(s) and/or your guardian expect from you.

The staff will be watching and writing every day about your success as you work on your goals. They do this so we have lots of information to share about the changes you have made since the first day you arrived.

Formal meetings called **Case Management Reviews** occur every one to three months to talk about the progress you have made toward your goals and to make new ones if needed.

You, or the people who are involved in your treatment, can request a special review meeting at any time so you don't have to wait if you have something important to say or changes to make.

8. What does positive behaviour management mean?

Wood's Homes expects troublesome behaviours from people. We also expect these behaviours to be dealt with in a positive, constructive and respectful way by our staff.

We have something at Wood's called **Positive Behaviour Management and Discipline Methods**. This is a type of training that our staff go through so they know how to support you when you're having a really, really bad day.

At Wood's Homes, the following things will never happen:

1. The staff will not hit, slap, punch or spank you;
2. No one will tease, humiliate, or insult you and the good feelings you have about yourself;
3. No one will act out any humiliating or degrading things about you;

4. No ropes or belts will be used to hold you down;
5. Medication will not be given as punishment;
6. You won't be given shocks or other painful things to make you stop doing something;
7. You won't be locked up;
8. No one will deny you your meal;
9. No one will make you stay awake as a punishment;
10. We won't deny a visit with your family, legal guardians, Children's Advocate, legal counsel or spiritual advisor.

Things we might do:

1. Take away your allowance or a part of it, if you damage something or steal something and you need to pay it back;
2. Keep everyone from doing something if the group has been

acting up and it is unsafe to go – even if you feel you did nothing.

9. What is a Restrictive Procedure?

Restrictive procedures usually mean the taking away of something that you usually get – such as allowance, community outings, program activities. This happens sometimes if you are not following the rules or you are being unsafe. It is always time-limited. This means the staff will inform you about how long your privileges will be on hold.

They might involve:

Timeouts: These may be used to assist in regaining your self-control. They may involve a walk by yourself or with a staff member, or direction to a specific room such as your bedroom to cool down.

Unlocked confinement: This means being somewhere alone to think. You will never be locked in a room. There may be a time when you are a danger to yourself or to other people,

or you need a safe place to be after taking drugs or drinking alcohol.

There may also be a time when the risk of you doing serious property damage is high. When staff members have tried all kinds of ways to make the dangerous behaviour stop, unlocked confinement might involve removing you from others, or taking away your shoes or your regular clothes. We do this because we don't want you to run away, we want to help you.



10. Do you use physical restraints?

Sometimes, but only if we absolutely have to. Physical restraint is a last resort and only used when you are potentially a danger to yourself, others, or you are at risk of doing serious damage to our property. This is a time when things like timeouts and unlocked confinement are NOT working.

All of our staff are trained to know how to carry out a safe restraint and there are rules they must follow. One of them is that only restraints that are not meant to hurt you are used.

If a restraint happens to you, the staff will inform your parents, guardian and/or your case worker, and the manager of your program. The staff will talk with you after the restraint to

make sure you are OK and to try to prevent another one from happening in the future. You will get to have a say about the restraint and how you felt about it, too.

11. Who can complain?

There are 4 types of people who can complain to Wood's about difficulties you are experiencing.

1. You
2. The staff who work with you
3. Your parents, guardians, or family members such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, brothers and sisters
4. Outside people such as friends, neighbours, teachers or social workers



12. What is a Grievance Procedure?

A grievance procedure is a formal way of filing any complaint you have with Wood's Homes. It is your key worker's job to help you with this. Try to do it politely and calmly or write it down if you are having a hard time with it. At Wood's, we believe you and your family have a right to be heard.

If you have a complaint - tell us. Try to do it politely and calmly, or write it down if you are having a hard time with that. At Wood's, we believe you and your family have a right to be heard.

There may be a time when you are not happy with the service and want to make a complaint. It is the staff member's job to help you with this. You can complain to any Wood's Homes staff member. Your complaint can be made by talking with a worker about your concern or you can write it down and give the paper to any staff member you choose.

Use your house meetings to talk about complaints or problems so they don't grow into big problems.

All complaints will be addressed quickly so that your concern can get fixed fast and without anyone being angry with you. This is called a **Grievance Procedure** and a staff member will tell you how it works.

13. What if I don't feel comfortable talking about my complaint?

We know that sometimes it's hard to say what you are unhappy with, or you may not even be sure what it is you want, so you don't even know how to ask.

Because of that, you want some help. When you arrive at one of the residential programs, you will be introduced to a staff member who will be your key worker.

This person will have the responsibility of acting on your behalf and can be called your Advocate.

An advocate is someone who can be your voice when you don't want to talk. He or she will make sure you know your rights, help protect your rights and make sure that your concerns or problems are being looked after.



If you don't want to talk to a Wood's Homes staff member, you can contact the following places:

**Office of the Child and
Youth Advocate**

406 Hillhurst Professional Building
301, 14 St. NW
Calgary, AB T2N 2A1
Phone: (403) 297-8435
Toll-free: 1-800-661-3466
Email: ca.information@gov.ab.ca

**Alberta Youth in Care
and Custody Networks**

c/o The Calgary John Howard Society
917 9 Ave. SE
Calgary, AB T2G 0S5
Phone: (403) 543-7819
jen@albertayouthincase.ca



IN CONCLUSION:

We understand this is a tough time for you. We know this booklet may not answer all of your questions.

If you have any other questions, feel free to ask your program staff members. It is their job to make sure you understand why you're here, what you can expect and what your rights are.

Although it probably doesn't feel like it right now, we're here to help. It might take a little bit of time to get to know one another, but there is one thing we already have in common – figuring out how to help you leave feeling better about yourself and experiencing success in your life!



WOOD'S HOMES
SERVING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES



Wood's Homes

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