

## **Welcome To Positive Alternatives Wisconsin Rapids!**

Welcome to Positive Alternatives- Wisconsin Rapids Group Home. You have probably been through a pretty hard time in your life for you to be sitting here reading this handbook. Your stay may be very short or long. You may be feeling angry, scared, or confused as you enter a new environment. I'm sure you're wondering what this place is all about and what will be happening while you are here. Hopefully this handbook will help answer most of your questions. Please feel free to ask any of the staff or other residents if you have any further questions.

First of all, we have several programs in our agency. The program you are in is the Wisconsin Rapids Group Home. It is broken down into several different programs. We have respite, short term and long-term programs. For the most part they are quite similar; however, there are a few differences. This handbook has special sections for all. No matter what program you are in, this handbook is here for you to learn. It will help you to understand the types of things you will do here and why we do them. It will clearly define our expectations, programming, and other aspects of staying with us.

The first couple of days may be difficult. There are a lot of new things and people coming your way. The staff is here for you and excited about getting to know you. We would like for you to ask any questions and to bring up any concerns you have. We want you to feel comfortable here so you can work on some of those things that brought you here. Please read on and remember to ask if you don't understand something.

**\*\*The following pages are not all inclusive to the expectations of the house. These are not black and white as a lot of the expectations have gray areas, with the understanding of staff all meeting at the same goal in the end.**

**\*\*This binder also does NOT include all expectations of the residents so some of staff requests may not be outlined. \*\***

## **Different Types of Placements**

**Long Term:** This is someone who is at Positive Alternatives for more than 30 days. If you are here for more than 30 days, you will get a treatment plan, services put in place, have treatment team meetings, and be enrolled in our public school district.

**Short Term:** This is someone who is at Positive Alternatives for less than 30 days. If someone is where for that time period, if you have services in place already, we will assist with coordinating the appointments and ensuring that you can attend. Depending on the time of the year, you may be enrolled in our public school district.

**Respite:** This is someone who is at Positive Alternatives for 14 days. This could be shorter; however, 14 days is the maximum that someone could stay as a respite. If it is longer than it would be considered a short-term placement. A respite placement is utilized for those that need a healthy break from their current living situation. If someone is where for that time period, if you have services in place already, we will assist with coordinating the appointments and ensuring that you can attend. If this is during the school year then we will work with your social worker on a plan for school so you do not fall behind in school work.

## After Care

This is a program that we have in place in order to assist you once you are nearing your time to leave and then for up to 6 months after you leave. The case manager, or sometimes a lead, will facilitate after care. This is to help you transition smoothly to your new place. Some things that after care can give support, resources, and guidance are the following, but it is not limited to this.

- Financial planning
- Affordable health care
- Counseling and/or mentoring
- Safe and stable housing
- Mental health services
- Educational planning
- Employment
- General independent living skills
- Spiritual support

When you go into after care you will get a treatment plan that gets updated at the 3 month mark and then a discharge summary at the 6 month mark. Aftercare is another form of support, you will be guided to resources, etc. but it will be up to you, your parent/guardian, or social worker to facilitate appointments, etc.

## **TREATMENT PLAN**

If you are or become a long-term resident at Positive Alternatives, you will receive an Individualized Treatment Plan within the first 30 days of your placement. Your Case Manager gathers input from you, your support system, and your social worker to develop three to five goals to help you work on during your placement.

These criteria are considered:

1. Did it cause a referral?
2. Can Positive Alternatives Group Home assist?
3. Are there behaviors or actions you need extra support changing?

Your parents/legal guardian and your social worker will receive a Treatment Goal Report within one month after your long-term placement. Your Treatment Plan will outline your goals and what you should expect to be working on. Members of your treatment team may also receive a copy of your treatment plan.

Obviously, your main goal is to leave Positive Alternatives and live successfully in a less restrictive placement (i.e., home, foster home, independent living). This is our goal for you too. We are working to help you leave here with the skills needed to be successful. Working on your Treatment Plan and ultimately replacing old unsuccessful behaviors with new, alternative behaviors is a way to achieve the goal of moving on from Positive Alternatives. This progress will be summarized in a Month End Report which will be given to you, your social worker, and your parents, and any other members of your treatment team.

## Daily Shift Transition

Shift transitions occur at the beginning and end of every shift, typically at 7:00a, 2:30p, and 11:30p. These times may fluctuate depending on the events of the day.

This part of the day typically takes place during the first 5-10 minutes of that shift. Transition takes place in the Resident Counselor office with staff only. During this time, the departing staff is updating the entering staff on the following:

1. Important resident updates
2. Any medication changes
3. Appointments
4. Any updates about the house

Kids need to be prepared and have everything that they need before staff begin transition. Residents can remain in the living room, kitchen, etc. However, there might be times where you are asked to go to your rooms if transition takes longer.

## **Study Hour**

Study Hour is an important aspect of the program and allows you to quietly work on tasks and mentally clear your mind from the day. If you do not have homework that is okay, please find a different activity to do during that time. We want to be respectful of the people who do have homework to complete. If the weather is nice out then study hour could be done outside.

Expectations during study hour is as follows:

1. Come on time and be prepared.
2. Work quietly and productively for the entire hour. Staff have the right to extend study hour to ensure a full productive hour is completed.
3. Work on schoolwork first. If that is completed, you may also read, journal, write a letter, or play a quiet card game by yourself or with staff.

Expectations of the staff:

1. Assist you with your homework if needed
2. Supervise and re-direct as needed to make the study hour as productive as possible.

## **Groups**

Positive Alternatives offers groups as a way to have discussion, teach skills, and hear everyone's thoughts on the topic. The group topics are typically related to Independent Living, Relationships, and social skills. There can be other groups such as current events, journaling, and other skill building activities.

### **These are some of the expectations for group**

- ⊗ Contribute to group. You are a unique individual and have a lot to give. This requires you to be awake and alert.
- ⊗ Share your feelings. They are valid and important.
- ⊗ Express conflicts or concerns you may have in a healthy and appropriate way. The only way for you to resolve them is to get them out in the open.
- ⊗ Please offer suggestions.
- ⊗ Everything in group should be kept confidential. It is important for us to keep things among ourselves to build trust.
- ⊗ Please be on time.
- ⊗ You are expected to let others talk without interruption. There is plenty of time for everyone to speak.
- ⊗ You are expected to treat everyone with respect and not use rude, cruel, or unfair language.
- ⊗ And remember to have fun! Group is what you make it.

**Other guidelines may apply per the facilitator.**

# Chores

## **Introduction:**

During your stay at Positive Alternatives, Inc. it is our expectation that you do household chores and keep your room clean. You will earn a weekly allowance for doing so. If you complete extra chores there is opportunity to earn extra allowance. Each week there is a base pay of 3.00 dollars. From there each completed chore is added on to that.

## **Chore Criteria:**

Chores are typically completed after mealtimes. There is allotted time after meals to complete your chores, which is usually about 30 minutes after the mealtime is over. In order to receive your allowance, you need to complete your chore within that time. If there are times when staff complete your assigned chore; **You will not be given credit for chore completion.**

We provide a poster that clearly defines what is expected to be done to ensure they are completed. If there are questions on how to complete something, please ask. Staff will decide when you have completed your chore appropriately. They may ask you to redo part of your chore or fulfill part of the chore you missed. You will be assigned a chore number and that number will correspond with what chores you will need to complete. Chores do change weekly so please double check that you are completing the right chore before starting it.

## **Chore Leader**

The job of Chore Leader is to complete any chore that was not completed by another peer. This includes partial or full chores. If a staff member sees that a chore was not completed, it is the Chore Leader's responsibility to either **appropriately** request that it is completed by that peer who is assigned that chore or complete it themselves.

If you are Chore Leader, it is also your responsibility to ensure all chores are completed thoroughly by conducting a walkthrough of all parts. It is not meant to be a freebee of no chores.

If you are assigned another chore in addition to Chore Leader, you must complete that chore as well.



**Clean Room Criteria:**

You will also be required to clean your room during chore time in the morning (at wake up) and before lights out (bedtime). The following list states what you need to complete in order to receive points and allowance.

1. Bed is made neatly prior to leaving for your daily programming (i.e. school/day treatment).
- \*\* IF YOU DO NOT WANT THE FLAT SHEET, PLEASE ENSURE IT IS IN YOUR CLOSET**
2. Clothes are neatly hung or folded in your closet or drawers, if available.
3. All furniture is dusted and organized.
4. Floor is vacuumed and free of clutter.
5. No posters and/or knick knacks which exhibit and/or imply abuse, sex, drugs, alcohol, or offense to others.
7. Garbage taken out of room daily.
8. No food, drink, or wrappers in room besides water.
9. Dirty clothes in hamper in closet.
10. Screen and window crank in place.
11. Furniture arranged as staff directs.
12. Towels hung up to allow time to dry.

## Super Cleans

### **SUPER CLEAN CHORE:**

On Saturday mornings you will be required to do a super clean chore. Think of this as a deep clean that would normally occur in a home. With up to 6 kids living in the house, it can get messy quick. If everyone keeps up with their weekly chores, then the super cleans will be easier to complete. This expectation is above and beyond your daily chores. There is a specified time that it is to be completed and just as your chores you will be required to complete it within that time frame. This time frame is after breakfast, medications, and hygiene are completed. Super Clean Chores need to be completed before additional shift activities will occur. Staff will assign that chore and will give a final approval of its completion. There is an expectation checklist to follow to ensure you are completing the chore to satisfaction.

### **SUPER CLEAN ROOMS:**

On Sunday mornings you will be required to super clean your room. Sunday mornings you will vacuum, dust, and organize your closet and change all your sheets. If you keep your room clean all week, then this clean should be easy. It is a licensing requirement that your bedding get washed so that is why you must change and wash your sheets. If you go on a weekend home visit, you will be required to super clean your room prior to leaving or immediately upon return.

## Recreation

You can participate in recreational activities while at Positive Alternatives. The activities vary by nature from crafts to highly active sports to team building activities. The purpose for recreation is to aide in improving peer relations, explore, and implement positive alternatives, and to find new ways to spend time and to have fun.

**If there are safety concerns, it can be determined by staff that it might not be appropriate or safe to take you off grounds. If this is determined, staff will have a conversation with you about it and explain the reasoning of their decision.**

The activity calendar is posted by the Resident Counselor Office and will have activities planned for every day. This calendar gives residents and staff an idea of activities that are available. Activities may be on-grounds or off-grounds. **Examples of on-grounds recreation include** playing basketball, football, soccer, board games, house movie night, crafts, video games, and cookie making. **Examples of off-grounds recreation include** sports events, going to the park, going for a walk, window-shopping, movies, bowling, swimming, and community events.

Recreation activities occur once per shift typically after lunch or dinner time.

During recreation, staff will provide direct supervision to everyone whether indoors or outdoors. Any time you are off-grounds and in the community, you will be expected to follow these guidelines:

- You must always stay with the group and staff, unless staff permission is granted.
- Staff to youth ratio will remain 1:4 for Positive Alternatives guidelines
- You are expected to be kind, courteous, and respectful at all times.
- Staff can deny or restrict off-grounds time. Staff discretion can be utilized.
- Non-essential off-grounds recreation/community time will be limited.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES-** Physical activity is a time when you will be able to get up and be active. It may be on or off grounds. It could include a sport, a game, or a physical trust builder.

**OFF GROUNDS-** These activities will be out in the community. It will most likely be in the Greater Wisconsin Rapids Area but there are occasions when we travel to other cities/towns. We are open to suggestions for recreation, but not all may be approved. If it is determined by staff that you are not in a safe place to go off grounds, then you will stay back with staff and complete an on grounds recreation.

**IN-HOUSE ACTIVITIES-** These activities are scheduled activities in the house or on grounds.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE/VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES-** Giving back to the community is important for all of us. Being here will allow you to do this with community service events. For some of you, this will help you fulfill your court ordered hours and for everyone it will be great learning and growth experiences.

## Closure

Closure is an opportunity to evaluate your week. The purpose of Closure is to help you stay focused on your treatment goals and gauge your daily progress, identify, and verbalize feelings, and concentrate on your role within the group. Closure also offers the opportunity to provide constructive feedback to your peers and staff.

- Closure will be completed as a group once a week on evenings with at least 30 minutes to complete it, longer if needed.
- Closure can be done in the kitchen, living room, or outside on or off grounds, pending behaviors of everyone.
- Staff will read out loud one question at a time and everyone should respond accurately and appropriately. During this time, your peers will listen appropriately and offer without interruption, positive and constructive feedback.
- At the end of Closure, each resident will develop a Closure Goal to work on throughout the following week. All goals set must be treatment focused and an area that they identify needing improvement. Staff are allowed to assist in goal development as needed.
  - Provide some detail to the goal for a better understanding with all parties.
- Closure Goals for each youth will be written on the white board in the RC office.
- Staff may challenge you with your Closure Goal as well as challenge you on your responses to the questions if staff observed discrepancy between behaviors and your answers.

## School

Most long-term residents will attend the Wisconsin Rapids Public School System. **The option for schools are Lincoln High School, River Cities High School, Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School, or the Wood County Alternative School.** After you are enrolled in the school district you will have an opportunity to attend an enrollment meeting. While there you can ask the school any questions that you would like, and get to know some of the staff there.

The Group Home Case Manager is responsible for coordinating with the treatment team for enrollment. They also maintain regular contact with the attendance office and teachers. While you are in our care, our role is to attend meetings, supervise and monitor schoolwork and grades, encourage and support the you with homework, require attendance, expect appropriate behavior, notify the attendance office in the event of absences, and attend conferences. Our role is that of a liaison as well; through tracking and monthly reports, we relay information to the treatment team.

While attending school you are also encouraged to participate in the activities that are offered through the school, such as sports and clubs. If there is something you are interested in, this will be discussed with your treatment team.

If you are not yet registered for school or suspended you are to follow daily programming.

School is an important program component.

### School related expectations:

You will use the provided transportation for school.

1. You have to be back to the group home by the provided transportation.
2. Attendance reports will be picked up periodically: If there are any concerns with your attendance, this will be addressed with your treatment team and the school. We want to ensure that your needs are being met at the school and

### Illness/Sick Policy during school hours

Staff will determine illness. Symptoms staff will look for are the following: you were ill or complaining of feeling ill the night before or during the night, are running a temperature of 100 degrees or more, you have a doctor's excuse, you have other physical signs (flushes, sweating, chills, etc.), it is not like them to claim to be sick, they told you the first time you talked to them, or got up and got ready and then told you. You will be encouraged to go to school. You can go to the nurse after two (2) class periods if you still are not feeling well. If staff determines you are sick, you are house and room bound for the remainder of the day except for meals, bathroom use, and medication administration times; meaning you will be required to be trying to sleep or being constructive in your room. You are not required to do room and house chores, but you do not earn allowance for that day either.

### School Refusal Policy:

If a resident is not determined to be sick and/or refused to get up and attend school, they are placed on RED light and restricted to their room for the remainder of the day and evening. Interaction with other residents is not allowed. They can come out during meal times, bathroom use, and medication administration times only.

Some privileges may be earned back if the youth decides before 10am to go to school. **Our goal is to get you up and in school!**

## **Sick Policy**

If you are determined to be sick by staff or school faculty, you are to remain at the house and in your room for the remainder of the day, except to come out for meals/drinks, bathroom, and medications. You are NOT required to do room or house chores and you will not earn allowance for that day either. A resident that is on "Sick Policy" will not be allowed to come off early, regardless of if they are feeling better later in the day. The purpose behind Sick Policy is to try to prevent illness from spreading.

The only way that you are allowed to come off early is if you are to school by 10am, no exceptions. You will be re-evaluated for symptoms the following morning.

You are to remain in their rooms being constructive or sleeping. You may take a book, magazine, deck of cards, coloring items, etc.

If it is determined to be appropriate you could be permitted to have electronic devices in your room. Such as your school issued Chromebook, the house iPad to play games, or other permitted devices. This will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

- Sick policy is only to be used because you visually don't look to be feeling well, you state that you don't feel well and you have a fever or have taken an OTC for symptoms but it hasn't worked, etc.

If after two class periods you are still feeling sick, you may go to the nurse's office. If the nurse determines you are sick, the school will call the group home and a staff will pick you up as soon as possible. Immediately upon return to the group home, you will be requested to go to your room for the remainder of the day.

## Employment

If you are interested in gaining work experience for your resume and additional income for spending money, a job may be an option for you.

### INITIAL REQUIREMENTS

- With approval from your treatment team (social worker, parents/legal guardian, case manager, etc.).
- You will then ask your Primary Resident Counselor (PRC-mentioned later) to assist you with obtaining, filling out, and returning applications. They will also practice mock interviews with you.
- Part of getting a job also requires a bank account to have your checks direct deposited into. In order to get a bank account, you will have to have your parent/legal guardian open the bank account with you and/or for you. Positive Alternatives cannot open a bank account for a resident.

The expectations will include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. You will be successful at school.
  - A. You will be on time for class and have no unexcused absences.
  - B. You will participate fully in study hour.
  - C. You will be passing all of your classes. If you are struggling in class then you will speak with your case manager and teachers on ways they can better support you.
2. You will be responsible and keep staff informed about your shifts.
  - A. You will turn in a schedule as soon as you get it. This can be turned in to any lead staff and your case manager.
  - B. When you get a job, staff will assist with transporting you to and from work. If it is approved by your treatment team, you can find other modes of transportation. This can look like; having an approved co-worker transport you, walking, biking, or paying for a taxi.
3. You will follow expectations of Positive Alternatives' Program.
  - A. You will complete my room cleaning and chores.
  - B. You will participate and be present during groups and community service, if your work schedule doesn't interfere with it.
  - C. You will participate in all scheduled appointments and services.

**If you are unable to balance all of your duties, you may need to resign from your job.**

## Primaries

Primaries are Resident Counselors (RC) who are volunteers to work on treatment related issues with you on an individual basis. If you are a long term resident, you are given an option of which RC you would like to be your primary. Typically, the you can list a couple RC's and it will depend on the availability of the RC, and if they would like to be a primary, and also which match works best. Once a match is made, the match is considered permanent. If there is a request for a change of primary it will have to be discussed with the case manager.

Primaries and youth work together about one hour a week. Before their initial meeting, the RC consults with the group home case manager to inquire what topics should be the focus. The program staff will inquire ideas, concerns, or topics to address. Money is not typically provided for the meeting, however if enough notice is given, it can be provided. The meeting between the RC and the youth can happen on or off grounds and should be used as extra support for the resident to work on treatment related issues on a one on-one basis.

The meeting is to be held between staff and youth only. There may be times where dual primaries may be approved. For example, 2 staff and 2 residents going on a group primary together.

At the end of the primary meeting, the RC documents what happened on the visit in the house log under that resident's section. It should include where you went, what was focused on, what the conversation consisted of, how it ended and what the next primary meeting may inquire. This way, all staff members can see the progress of your primary meetings and can input ideas or add concerns when relevant. The primary meetings will also be charted and put in the 30 day reports.

Primary visits will be discussed at staff meetings and as another opportunity for all staff to suggest topics and/or activities for future primaries.

### **Ideas/Suggestions for Primary Communication:**

- Notebook – having a notebook is a great way to communicate between shifts or talk about an uncomfortable topic. These are usually traded by hand or using staff mailboxes.
- Activities - library, museum, zoos, parks and state parks, walking path, bowling or movie theatre for rewards.
- Assignments – writing assignments are an effective way to get the resident to look at how they act in or view a situation – anger, hurt, goals, etc. Having these sheets allows them to look back on them long after the primary.
- Career/educational interests – college tours, shadowing a career interest, interviews, mock interviews, help them collect and complete applications.
- Suggest books or movies related to their treatment goals.
- Community service and volunteering.
- Job shadowing.
- Assign a journal.
- Complete personality tests.
- Talk about house, group home, peer, family concerns and questions.



## **Mediations**

Mediation sessions are utilized when residents in the group home are unable to maintain respect for one another or are unable to settle a conflict on their own. Mediations are facilitated by a staff to ensure respect and understanding by both parties and to come to an agreement regarding future interactions and respect.

If a staff feels that mediation becomes necessary each resident will be asked to participate. This encourages problem solving skills, resolving conflicts, and advocating for yourself.

Each party will have the opportunity to explain their point of view and listen to the other resident. There will be respect for each other during this time.

To end the mediation, you and the other person should come to an agreement and a closure of the issue at hand. You should have an agreement on how to move forward, how to handle things moving forward, and be able to co-exist respectfully.



### What happens if expectations aren't met?

While staying at Positive Alternatives, it is expected that at times there might be areas that you struggle in, express yourself in the not most appropriate way, or have a serious incident. In these types of situations, we want **you to know that we are here for you. If you have something that you need to talk about, there is something bothering you, or you just want to chat please seek us out!**

If you find yourself in a situation where you are struggling and it leads to a serious incident, the following could happen, this does not include everything, it is simply an overview. Each person is treated as an individual so what might work for one person might not work best for you.

- You will have **the opportunity to meet and process with your case manager**. They might provide some activities or questions for you to work on with them. This is a skill building activity, and it can also help you with discussing what to do if you are in that situation again. You can also process with your treatment team.
- There might be **natural consequences**. A natural consequence is something that happens, as a result of your actions. For example, if you refuse to work on your schoolwork your grades will drop, and you might fail a class. Then you might have to be in school longer due to missing credit. Another example would be if you fell behind with cleaning, now someone else will do your chore and get paid for it and you will not get paid.
- You might be asked to **help repair damages**, so if you get mad and kick a hole in the wall, you might be asked to help repair it.
- Due to **safety concerns** you might be asked to stay back at the house if there are off grounds activities. This can look like; making comments about harming yourself or others and having heightened emotions. This is just an example.
- You might also be asked to stay back from an off grounds activity due to consistently not making the appropriate choices while out in the community. So, if we go to the YMCA and there are disruptions being made and the YMCA staff say that you cannot come back, then you would not be allowed to go on that planned recreation. This would also be considered a natural consequence
- If behaviors and actions are heightened enough and there is a significant safety risk, property damaged, or other dysregulated things happening **law enforcement can be contacted**.

**At Positive Alternatives we are here for you. Our goal is to give you the skills to help you be successful and to work towards your goals. We are here to team with you, advocate for you, and to be realistic with you.**

## House Expectations:

1. Males and females must not be on the same side of the house unless rooming situations cannot prevent this from occurring or staff is/are present. This includes getting ready in the morning.
2. You may not be in any room at same time without a staff present. Only one youth should be in the bathroom at a time. The door should be closed when the bathroom is in use and no youth should stand in the door way to hold a conversation with one another.
3. During meals or time at the kitchen table or in the car, females must be on one side and males on the other, or staff/empty chair between them.
4. If there is one staff here with both male and female residents and staff needs to leave the group for any reason (i.e. use restroom) you have to be in rooms with alarms on.
5. During movies it can NOT be dark and you can NOT share blankets, everyone must be clearly separated.
6. No movies over the rating of PG13 will be allowed in the group home at any time. If you bring your own movies, staff will hold on to inappropriate movies until they are able to be given back to parents. Please do not ask to watch them, as it will not be allowed. Staff may use discretion on some PG13 movies if they feel like it may not be appropriate.
7. You must ask staff to go room to room. E.g. You are in the living room and you want to go to your room, you must ask and wait for staff acknowledgement. This is so we know where you are for safety and supervision purposes.
8. Controlled items such as the following, but not limited to, aerosol deodorant, colognes or perfumes, nail polish, pens, pencils, and CD's may NOT be in rooms and must be locked up in your lockbox. If a controlled item is found in a room, it will be removed and put in your lockbox, disposed of, or given to your social worker.
9. Any note passing, regardless of content, is not permitted. This is a safety concern as this notes could be used to bully, make inappropriate comments, or used to harass someone.
10. Video games are to be rated E or T, any games rated M are not allowed to be played at Positive Alternatives.
11. Flashlights are not permitted to be given to residents by staff. If you need an extra light source for your room at night, please let your case manager know.
12. No blankets are allowed in the common areas of the house, with the exception of a weighted blanket needed as a cope. They should remain in your assigned bedroom. This is in place for hygiene reasons.
13. If skirts or dresses are worn in the house or on outings with staff, shorts must be on underneath in order to prevent anyone from accidentally seeing something. Tank tops must have at least a ½ inch strap and not have a low-cut top. *It is up to staff discretion on appropriate clothing. If they request you to change your attire or put another piece of clothing on, please do so without argument.*
14. There should be a healthy distance between you and your peers, arm's length is a good rule. This helps promote healthy boundaries.

15. Maintain boundaries between others; you cannot do the hair of others, pluck eye brows, do nails or any other act that requires boundaries to be broken. If you are wanting to help someone please ask staff before hand and they can determine if it is appropriate or not. No hugs, piggy back rides, etc. High fives, "air fives", fist bumps, thumbs up or other appropriate encouragement gestures are allowed.

16. No sitting on, jumping over, scaling over, or standing on countertops, couches, and other items. You should only be sitting on furniture that is meant for that purpose. This helps prevent the furniture from becoming broken.

**17. Cell phones are not allowed in the group homes by youth at any time for confidentiality and safety reasons for everyone. If you are found in possession of a cell phone, the cell phone will be placed in a secure location. Your parent/legal guardian and social worker will be notified. If the treatment team is in agreement, there can be times where you can be allowed to take it to school, work, and on visits. It would need to be turned in as soon as you returned to the group home.**

## Expectations

The following expectations are necessary for all of us to live in harmony and peace at Positive Alternatives. If the expectations are not followed, you will have to take responsibility for your choices and the consequences resulting from your behavior. These agreements include, but are not limited to the following:

### **A. INTAKE AND OVERNIGHT VISITS**

Upon intake to the group home, you will be asked to leave all your personal belongings in the office with staff to be checked in. During this time, staff will write down all your items that you arrived with on to a Possession List. This is to ensure that you leave the group home at discharge with all the items you arrived with. It also ensures that if there is any disagreement about if something belongs to you, it can be verified on your list. If you purchase additional items throughout your placement or receive gifts, those items will be added to your list.

If you are going on an overnight home visit, please have your bags packed with enough time for staff to go through the items and to write what you are taking home. This is to ensure that you are returning to the group home with the same items that are on your main possession list. When you return, staff will check your items back in and highlight each item on the form to indicate it was checked back in.

Once these items are in staff's possession and "checked out", you will not be allowed to have anything from your bag until you leave for your visit or are discharged.

### **B. CHORES**

As in all places where people live together, there are chores to be done. Chores will be assigned on the overnight staff weekly. We expect you to do all of your chores during the time allotted and, in the manner, consistent with the chore criteria list. All chores need to be completed before the program schedule continues. If chores are completed by everyone ahead of schedule, the next part of programming can begin. This could lead to there being more time for Rec/Free Time in the afternoon.

1. All youth are expected to participate in daily chores. Super Clean weekend chores are as assigned by staff. Please pay attention to what chore you are assigned as they may have changed. If someone is out of programming for more than a day, their chore can be done by someone else, and that person can earn extra allowance. If someone does not complete their chore and no one volunteers to do it, then the chore leader will complete it. Once they return, the chore returns to their responsibility.
2. Everyone is expected to keep their rooms clean, including: make beds, pick up clothes and other items in their rooms, and no food or food wrappers left in there. Room checks will be done twice daily.

3. You are expected to wash your own laundry, if you need assistance staff can help. All laundry must be finished and out of the dryer by 8:30pm. Staff will help if you don't know how to use our machines.
4. If you need to be absent during chore time (primary, appointment, visit, etc.), it is your responsibility that the chore gets done when you get back.
5. Each person is expected to pick up after themselves. Any personal items left unattended in public areas could end up being stolen or moved by staff.
6. You are expected to bathe (shower, brush your teeth, etc.) daily. You will be living with a group of people, and it is necessary for everyone to keep clean and wear clean clothes.
7. Your bed must be neatly made and must have a mattress pad, fitted sheet, and comforter on.
8. Clothes should be neatly hung or folded in your closet or dresser, if available.
9. Your nightstand and other furniture should be dusted and organized, regularly.
10. Your floor should be vacuumed and free of clutter.
11. No posters, clothes and/or Knick knacks which exhibit and /or imply abuse, sex, drugs, alcohol, or offense to others will be allowed in the group home. All such items will be sent home with your parents.
12. Do not use anything to hang things up in your room that could potentially damage the walls/doors. If you need something, please ask staff.
13. Garbage should be taken out of room daily. If garbage is left in your room, it could lead to bugs.
14. NO FOOD OR DRINK IN YOUR ROOM, BESIDES WATER.
15. Dirty clothes should be in laundry basket in the closet, not on the floor in your room.
16. Screens and window cranks need to be left in place. Damage to either may result in a charge of property damage.
17. All furniture in your room must remain how it is positioned. NO EXCEPTIONS!
18. Towels hung on hooks in closet. Do not leave them in the bathroom! This can lead to smelly towels.

### **C. MEALS/FOOD/EATING**

1. Meals will be prepared by you, with staff assistance. If your chores include meal prep, then you are responsible to help prepare the meal during that time.
2. The menu is made out weekly by our overnight lead. If there is anything you would like to prepare or have, let staff know.
3. Every meal begins with a moment of silence. This is to accommodate anyone who wants to pray before the meal starts.
4. Everyone must sit together at the table for supper whether eating or not. You may be excused by staff to use the restroom and then to return back to the table. If you need space from the group, you are welcome to sit at the kitchen island.
5. Appropriate table conversations and manners will be expected from all residents, i.e., passing food, not speaking with your mouth full, no reaching across the table, asking to be excused, no inappropriate bodily functions (farting, burping, etc.)
6. Staff and youth must scrape off their dishes into the garbage and rinse them. If you are assigned dishes must load the dishwasher and ask for staff to start it to have their chore considered complete.

7. No food or beverages allowed in any room but the kitchen. Only water is allowed outside of the kitchen area.
8. Eating is not allowed in resident's rooms.
9. Personal food items should be kept in your lockbox and may only be consumed during designated snack times.
10. Soda may be consumed at any time up until 6pm. Residents are allowed to eat fruits and vegetables throughout the day with permission from staff.
11. When in the community, residents may not buy food items for each other, they must use own money to buy things.
12. All four legs of any chair must remain on the floor. This is a safety thing, so you don't call and hurt yourself.

#### **D. PERSONAL BELONGINGS/VALUABLES**

1. Positive Alternatives cannot assume responsibility for stolen or damaged articles or money. We encourage you to leave special or valuable items at home, in your locked closet, in your lock box, or leave money in the bank. You are solely responsible for your property.
2. There is no giving, buying, borrowing, sharing, or exchanging of any items among everyone. Do not bum, borrow, or accept money, clothes, or anything from others. If you need anything please ask staff.
3. Do not leave your personal belongings lying around. If you do, you may find that they have been moved by staff. This also increases the chances of them being stolen or damaged.
4. Posters, clothing, and paraphernalia of alcohol, drugs, nudity, violence, or offensive to others etc. will not be allowed and sent with your social worker or parent/legal guardians.
5. MP3 players and small portable radios are allowed. Large stereo systems or speakers, portable TVs, cell phones, or any device that has Wi-Fi capabilities and camera installed are **not** allowed. Positive Alternatives will have age-appropriate technology available for you to use pending placement and individual treatment plan.

#### **E. RESPECT OTHERS AND PROPERTY**

You are expected to be respectful of each other and staff. To be respectful is to appreciate the value of others and their property, to be considerate, to be concerned, to honor, and to be courteous.

We show respect by:

1. Maintaining confidentiality both during and after placement. This means not disclosing names or specific information about your peers or staff. There should be no mention of any current or previous resident regardless of content, even to parents/legal guardians while on the phone.
2. Avoiding swearing and verbal abuse.
3. Playing the radio at a volume that cannot be heard outside your room.
4. Giving privacy to someone on the phone or with visitors.
5. Behaving appropriately in house and the community, i.e. avoid yelling, being loud, running, rough playing, fighting, wrestling. Physical aggression is not permitted.
6. Avoiding the telling of past negative situations or conversations about weapons. This could be triggering for others.



7. Refraining from racist, sexist, offensive, demeaning remarks or “jokes” that may offend someone.
8. Staying out of other residents’ rooms.
9. Taking care of property; damage to property and vandalism could result in a call to local law enforcement and also charges for property damage.
10. Any Positive Alternatives property must remain where it is placed. No moving of furniture around the house for any reason.

#### **F. RESIDENTS RELATIONSHIPS**

1. Sexual activity will not be permitted at Positive Alternatives. This includes but is not limited to back rubs, handholding, hugging, kissing, piggyback rides, etc.
2. Sleeping or lying on a couch or in bed with another peer is not allowed.
3. Intimate/romantic relationships among residents are not allowed during your residency.
4. Residents should be a full cushion apart while sitting in the couch.
- 5.

#### **G. PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

1. You are expected to wear appropriate clothing. Staff can judge what is appropriate clothing and make the resident change. No spaghetti strap tank tops/tube tops will be allowed. Pants must be worn on or about your hips. All straps must be at least the width of your thumb's first knuckle.
2. Resident must be dressed properly as judged by Positive Alternatives staff. Examples: shirts and pants must be always worn. Residents do not wear bathrobes unless walking to and from the bathroom in the morning and before bedtime and you must have clothes underneath it. Night wear must be worn (You must wear clothing that covers breasts and pubic areas). Residents must have a shirt AND pants on.
3. Only professional haircuts and coloring are acceptable. No drastic haircuts or coloring will be done without prior consideration from parental thoughts/consent.
4. No self-body piercing or tattooing are allowed while at Positive Alternatives.
5. No bandanas.
6. Hats must be worn either straight forward or straight back and must not be offensive to anyone in the house.
7. Skirts/dresses are allowed to be worn but you **MUST** have shorts on underneath. Staff will ask if you have shorts on and if not, you will be requested to change immediately.
8. Shorts must be appropriate length even or past middle fingertip when arms are straight down by your side.
9. One piece swimsuit or tankinis only. No two-piece swimsuits are allowed. If you bring or use a two piece, you must wear a shirt/tank top over it. If you refuse to follow staff prompts, you will not be allowed to go swimming or to the beach.

#### **H. GENERAL RESTRICTIONS**

1. You are not allowed to use ladders under any circumstances (insurance reasons).

2. Turn off electrical appliances such as TV, lights, and radios, when leaving a room if no one else is in the room. If these things are left on when no one is in the room, they may be confiscated for 24 hours.
3. Gambling and betting is not allowed.
4. All prescription and non-prescription medications must be kept in the medicine cabinet in the Resident Counselor's office. The staff will make the medicine available for you to take at the prescribed times. No medication is to be given from one resident to another. Medication is taken with staff supervision at the office door following medication administration policy.
5. No candles are to be allowed at Positive Alternatives unless on a birthday cake.
6. No alcoholic beverages, toxic substances, ammunitions, firearms, knives, etc. are allowed on Positive Alternatives' property at any time.
7. House keys are to be used by staff members only. Please do not consider this a lack of trust when they don't let you use them.
8. No "R" rated or "Not Rated" movies. If you are 12 years old, you may not watch PG13 movies. \*\*Staff always has the right to not allow any movies that they deem inappropriate regardless of rating.
9. A light needs to be on in all public areas of the house when there are people occupying them.
10. Residents are not allowed to go into the mailbox for any reason. All letters must be approved by your case manager prior to being mailed out. Any inappropriate mail sent to Positive Alternatives; Inc. will be returned to sender unopened.
11. Any packages you receive must be opened with staff person present so contents can be added to your personal possession list. Each incoming and outgoing letter will be documented.
12. Residents must be under direct supervision at all times while out in public, unless told otherwise.

#### **I. SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE POLICY**

***Smoking and possession of tobacco are illegal for all persons under the age of 21.***

If you want to make a conscious effort to quit smoking, ideas to quit will be made available. You can request to see a doctor or a counselor to work out a quit smoking program. If you are found in possession of any tobacco products, the police may be called, and you could be issued a citation. Your treatment team will also be updated on what occurred. The product will be disposed of by staff or law enforcement.

#### **J. POLICY ON CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

***Illegal drugs and alcohol use by residents will not be tolerated!***

##### **SUSPECTED DRUG USE:**

- If staff, social workers, or parents suspect that you have been using drugs and/or alcohol, the resident may be requested to take a urinalysis drug test. If a resident is found to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, their social worker and parent/legal guardian will be notified. Failure to produce a specimen equals a "positive" result and consequences will follow.

- While waiting for drug screen results, you will remain under staff supervision. If you have a positive screen, your treatment team will be updated.

**UPON ARRIVAL TO POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES:**

- If a resident is checked in upon arrival at Positive Alternatives, and found to be in possession of drugs, alcohol, and/or contraband, this could result in the police being contacted. The treatment team will be updated and the item(s) will be disposed of.

**K. IF YOU DECIDE TO RUN AWAY FROM POSITIVE ALTERNATIVES:**

- If you run, the staff will notify the police, social worker, and your parents/guardians. An absence without permission (AWOL) of more than 15minutes or out of staff's sight is considered a "run;" if you are found and returned to Positive Alternatives, you can expect the following to occur:
  1. You will be called in as a runaway to the local police department. A missing persons report will be submitted to them.
  2. Your treatment team will be notified
  3. If you are consistently running and being called in to the local police department, it could result in you being placed in a secure setting for safety reasons.

**L. Medications**

If you are prescribed daily medications or need a Tylenol, we do have a medication procedure that has to be followed. These are not only our guidelines, but licensing guidelines as well.

1. You must take medications with water, unless we have a note from the prescribing doctor stating that you can take it with something else, like juice or milk.
2. We cannot alter the medications, like cutting them in half or crushing them, without a note from the prescribing doctor.
3. The medication procedure happens as followed  
 Staff will give medications to one person at a time  
 If you are wearing long sleeves, you will be asked to push them up  
 Staff will ask you what medications you take, if you don't know that is okay, they can tell you so that you know, then they will show you the medications in the cup to ensure it looks correct  
 They will then hand you the medication cup and watch as you take the medications, this is for safety to ensure that loose medication is not on the floors, etc  
 After you take the medication staff will ask to see the inside of your mouth, ask you to blow-like blowing out a birthday cake candle, and also ask you to cough. This is a safety measure as well.  
 Once that is completed you are free to go on with your day
4. If you make the decision to not take your medication it will be documents and your parent/guardian, social worker, and prescribing doctor will be notified. A med refusal report

will be written. Staff cannot force you to take your medications, however they will educate you on the importance of taking them properly and as prescribed.

5. If you have any side effects or any adverse reactions to medications please let staff and your case manager know. That way an appointment can be made with your prescribing doctor to address the concerns.

***Remember, staff is here to talk to you. If you are feeling down, depressed, or feel like running, talk about it. Most of the time talking about these things and trying to work things out helps. Whenever you decide to run, remember that your problems will go with you wherever you go.***

#### **ADDITION TO POLICY AND PROCEDURE:**

1. At lights out, a documented bed check is completed to ensure all you are in their assigned rooms and in their beds.
2. The alarms to windows are set 24/7. You are not allowed to open your windows unless for an emergency.
3. Bed checks continue every 15-20 minutes and documented unless it is determined that more frequent bed checks need to occur.
4. If you leave your room after bedtime, staff will stay in the common area until you are back in your bedroom and all doors are shut. Staff will not rely on door chimes.
5. You may not place any object in front of their bedroom door for any reason to prevent entrance of a staff member.
6. Once all of the youth have their doors closed the staff member may return to the RC office or their tasks, they were working on prior to anyone coming out of their rooms.
7. The staff member must document all actions that took place in the house log as well as on the OBS log.

### Phone Policy

**Guidelines:** The following is the phone policy for Positive. The policy can be altered according to each your treatment plan, privilege level, and restrictions.

1. Phone calls may be made and taken no later than 1/2 hour prior to the residents' assigned bedtime.
2. Calls may be restricted according to house schedule. For an example, no calls will be made or taken during mealtime, chores, or group/study time. Exceptions may be made, specifically for lawyers, social workers, and emergencies.

3. Phone calls will be about 15 minutes in length or less; with the exception of attorney or social worker. If no one is waiting for the phone, then it could be longer.
4. All calls, taken or made, must be from the Approved Call Log. If the person is not on the list or are calling from a different number than documented, they will be told that a message can be taken for the case manager. From there, they will reach out to the treatment team to see if this person can be approved.
5. All calls MUST be taken at the work desk in the kitchen unless told otherwise.
6. All calls will be logged in the house log under your section and tracked in our online system.
7. Calls can be terminated at any time with the exception of calls to social worker and lawyers. This could look like if there is yelling, swearing, high emotions, and inappropriate conversations.
8. You may not dial outgoing calls. Staff will dial the number and transfer the call out to the resident phone.
9. You are always allowed phone calls from parents or guardians. Staff will ask if you can return their call if it is during group, study hour, mealtime, etc.
10. Parents always have the right to call their child, but the call may be limited or restricted based upon court orders, treatment, or it is deemed appropriate by the treatment team.
11. All phone calls made can be local or long distance without restriction. **Messages must be left!**
12. If a parent or guardian expresses concern with the phone policy, you can direct them to speak with the Program Director or Group Home Manager during daytime hours. They have voicemail available for them to leave a message at.
13. If you request privacy when on the phone with your social worker or attorney, there are options that can be discussed.
14. **Cell phones are not allowed in the group homes by residents at any time for confidentiality and safety reasons for everyone.** This can be discussed with the treatment team for options to bring one to school, work, or on visits. Once back at the house, you will have to turn it back in.