



# Our **B**rothers **K**eeper Shelter

## Mission Statement

*To provide safe, faith-based, short-term shelter for those in need in Mecosta and adjacent counties through volunteers and community support.*

**Mailing Address:  
405 S. Third Ave,  
Big Rapids, Michigan  
231-629-8033**

**office@obkshelter.org**

**\*Policies & Procedures are subject to change**

## **WELCOME!**

Welcome to Our Brothers Keeper Shelter. Our staff/volunteers are here to serve individuals and families that find themselves in a housing crisis. We are committed to provide: shelter, food, and access to clothing resources, and community information.

While you are here, we expect you to seek permanent housing. Opportunities may be available during your stay to eliminate the barriers that led to your homelessness. Please let us know of any concerns or needs that you have so that we may best assist you.

No person, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, familial status, sexual orientation, or disability, shall be discriminated against or denied participation. We will do our best to help each individual to the best of our ability but we acknowledge that we cannot meet every need of every person. **Your stay here is at our discretion.**

This handbook covers important information regarding your stay at OBK Shelter. Please take the time to read this material or ask that it be read to you. We expect the individuals that utilize our facilities to maintain safety and gain self-sufficiency and respect for themselves and others.

### **Things you need to do:**

**Within 24 hours of entering the shelter you need to call the homeless hotline. 1-877-213-5955.**

If you do not receive a return call within 14 days you must call again. The return call will be from a Farwell number.

If you need a social security card you will need to go to the social security office on Northland Drive to get a new one.

You will need to have all birth certificates if you do not have them, Project Starburst can help you obtain them. They are located in the basement of The United Methodist Church across the street from Family Video.

DHHS is located on Water Tower Road. They have open appointments on certain days. If you have not applied for any help they can assist you with applying for assistance on those days.

## **OBK Handbook: Policies & Procedures**

### **Guest Expectations**

You are expected to become familiar with these expectations within your first day in the shelter. If an incident occurs, a report will be filled out and reviewed with you by the volunteer/staff.

- I will treat staff, other participants, and volunteers respectfully.
- I will not swear, sexually harass, or use harsh words against others.
- I will maintain personal hygiene and appropriate dress (please ask if you are unsure what is appropriate). Showers are to be taken daily or every other day.
- I will provide true and accurate information to staff in order to obtain services.
- I will make my bed neatly every day.
- I will adhere to the daily schedule of the shelter.

- I will not bring pets to the shelter or on shelter property.
- I will keep food and beverages on the tiled floor only.
- I will comply with curfew. Guests arriving after 8 p.m. will not be admitted.
- I will not gamble on OBK Shelter premises.
- I will cooperate with staff.
- I will report any action(s) that threaten the safety or security of myself or another person.
- I will not show public displays of affection or engage in sexual activities in the shelter.
- I will attend all my scheduled times with agencies and social work staff.
- I will complete my assigned chore between 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

### **Guests With Children**

- I will take full responsibility for the care of my own child(ren) and keep them under my watch at all times.
- I will follow the set bedtimes for children.
- Married couples may stay in a family room together with their children unless space is needed for another mother with children. The father will then need to move to a bunk on the men's side.

### **Shelter Hours – Admissions**

The shelter is open seven days a week. New admissions to the shelter will be accepted between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily.

### **Shelter Hours for Residents**

In order to ensure that the shelter runs smoothly, there are expectations regarding the times in which certain activities are to occur.

- Lights on at 7:00 a.m. Guests must be up and have beds made by 9:00 a.m.
- Guests must remain in bed until 6 a.m. (other than restroom use).
- Shelter will remain open on Holidays.
- Guests must be in the shelter by 8:00 p.m. unless at an approved meeting or event.
- Guests that do not return by 8 P.M. will not be allowed in for that evening.
- Guests who work nights need to discuss their schedule hours with staff. Persons working after curfew will be admitted to the shelter.
- Guests that have not returned to the shelter by 8:00 p.m. risk losing their bed by it being assigned to another guest.
- Spending the night away from the shelter is permissible with 24-hour written request. Write your request on paper and submit to the office. OBK is not responsible for any personal belongings left at the shelter.
- If a guest is gone without further approval, their bed could be reassigned to a new guest.

### **Length of Stay**

OBK Shelter offers temporary services. Your stay in our facility is determined individually. In the event the guest stay is not approved, a guest must vacate the shelter and its premises with just their belongings immediately. If a guest is evicted, they must vacate the shelter with just their belongings immediately or risk being arrested for trespassing.

## **Shower Hours**

The showers are available daily from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Clean up is expected after each use. Guests should be courteous with use of water (5-10minutes). Wet towels are to be hung on the drying rack located outside the shower/bathroom. **Absolutely NO Baths for adults.**

## **Laundry**

A laundromat is located just south of the shelter. Clean linens are provided by the shelter every Sunday unless needed sooner. When available, guests may request laundry detergent and dryer sheets.

## **Shelter Chores**

- Guests are expected to complete housekeeping chores around the shelter.
- The employee/volunteer on duty may request assistance with additional housekeeping chores as needed.
- Guests **will be assigned** a chore. Chore must be completed by bedtime with the exception of vacuuming. Vacuuming should be completed by 8:30 p.m. due to guests/children who may be sleeping.
- It is the responsibility of each guest to keep his/her own sleeping area, dining area, and common areas clean and free from personal belongings
  - Turn off lights, radios, televisions, and other appliances when not in use
  - Make bed and tidy individual sleeping area daily
  - Showers cleaned after each use
  - All personal belongings must fit in/stay in your designated locker
  - No hanging of blankets on bed for curtains.

## **Food Access**

A limited breakfast will be provided each morning between 7:00 am and 9:00 am.

A limited lunch will be provided each day between Noon – 1:00 pm

Dinner will be served daily between 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

Diabetics, and guests working late can request food from staff if needed outside of scheduled meal times. Clean up is expected after each meal. Food and beverages are allowed on the tiled areas only. **No food or beverages are allowed on carpeted areas.** Food or beverages may not be consumed or stored in lockers or sleeping areas.

The freezers located in the kitchen are for OBK use only.

## **\*FOOD DELIVERY IS NOT ALLOWED**

## **Employee/Volunteer Rights**

An employee/volunteer has the right to ask a guest to leave and not return until 8 p.m. if the guest is being disrespectful, causing a problem, not following the rules, or if the employee/volunteer feels threatened in any manner. They do not need permission from the Executive Director and/or Board Member.

## **Guest Rights**

- You have the RIGHT to check out permanently from the shelter anytime you choose.
- You have the RIGHT to not be discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, age color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or handicap/disability (mental, physical or developmental).
- You have the RIGHT to be treated with consideration and respect for personal dignity, autonomy and privacy by the staff, volunteers and other participants.
- You have the RIGHT to an extension of your stay, provided you have complied with the OBK Shelter's rules and regulations and are actively working to achieve your goals.
- You have the RIGHT to be informed of the reason(s) for your dismissal and the right to receive an explanation.
- You have the RIGHT to participate in any appropriate and available services

## **Privacy Policy**

- **Guests** should have no expectations of physical privacy; however they can expect privacy of personal identity. No pictures or names will be given out without permission.
- **Phone Calls:** In order to respect the privacy of guests, volunteers are not permitted to release information over the phone regarding guests (past or present) at the shelter. Volunteers may take the name, number, and a message from the caller.
- **Volunteers** are to keep guests identity secure. Information given to volunteers is to be kept confidential, including guest circumstances of why they are at the shelter.
- **Non-agency** visitors are not allowed in the shelter.
- **Police Agencies** are welcome on our property. Drug dogs have and will do inspections regularly and whenever deemed necessary.

## **EVICITION POLICY**

- Immediate eviction will take place for smoking, vaping, chewing, drinking, and any illegal drug use in the building. Possession of contraband consisting of: alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, pornography, and/or weapons is not permitted. Any guest that acts or has the appearance of being under the influence of any of the above could be evicted immediately.
- Immediate eviction will take place for assaultive behavior including: non-defensive physical contact or verbal threats of violence.
- An employee/volunteer may send the guest outside of the building, evict any guest, and/or call 911 if there is an immediate danger to anyone.

## **GUEST LOCKER KEY**

- One locker is provided for guest use. Locks can be obtained for a \$5 deposit. The deposit will be returned when the lock and key are turned in.

## **Medications**

- All prescription and over-the-counter medications must be signed in with the shelter volunteer/employee.
- Your medications will be placed in a labeled plastic tub and locked in the cabinet located in the shelter intake area.

- You are responsible to ask the shelter volunteer for your medications at the time they are to be taken.
- All medications are to be taken in the shelter intake area in front of the OBK employee/volunteer.
- Minor first-aid supplies may be available in the shelter reception area (for example: Band-Aids, gauze, burn spray, etc.), ask staff for assistance with these items.

## **Computer Rules**

Guests have access to the computer(s) located in the common areas. Computer use is for applying or searching for housing, employment, or other government related applications. They are not for social media, downloading of music, movies or photographs. Accessing pornographic websites will result in immediate eviction from the shelter. Tampering with computer settings will result in immediate eviction.

## **Mail**

- Mail will be delivered to P.O. Box 1642, Big Rapids, MI 49307
- Mail will be retrieved by an employee and distributed to guests in their mailboxes.
- If there is no forwarding address, all mail received after a guest is no longer at the shelter will be held for seven days and then returned to Post Office.
- OBK Shelter will not provide postage for guest's personal outgoing mail.

## **Guest Cell Phones**

- Personal cell phones may be used during the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.
- No personal speakers are allowed.

## **Safety Drills**

- Shelter participates in safety drills (for example fire and tornado drills) on a regular basis.
- In case you detect a fire, immediately contact staff.
- Fire extinguishers are located in several locations throughout the shelter.
- If you hear an alarm and if the hallway is safe, proceed to the nearest exit. If the hallway is not safe, leave through a window.
- Wait for an employee/volunteer or fire department personnel to give instructions when you can return to the shelter.

## **Guest Parking on Shelter Parking Lot**

- Please remember that parking is always at your own risk.
- Only shelter guests, employees, and volunteers may park on the lot.
- Guest may not park a non-operational vehicle on the OBK Shelter's parking lot. Doing so will result in the car being towed away at the guest's expense.
- Pets of any kind may not be left in vehicles.
- No one may sleep overnight in a vehicle on OBK property.

## **Discharge & Moving**

- Staff/volunteers are to be notified when a guest plans to move out of the facility.
- Guest(s) will complete the exit process.
- Sleeping areas are to be left clean. Trash thrown out and all personal articles removed from sleeping area and locker.
- Complete Exit Interview.
- Staff/Volunteers will sanitize beds and restock lockers with fresh linens and towels.
- Any personal belongings left will be kept for a maximum of 2 days. After that time, items may be thrown out or donated.

## **BEDDING AND PILLOWS**

OBK provides your bedding and pillow. For health reasons you may not bring in your own pillows or blankets. OBK cannot store them for you. We apologize for any inconvenience.

## **Smoking Policy includes Vaping, E-Cigarettes and Chew**

- Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building.
- Smoking in the building will result in immediate eviction.
- Smoke breaks are limited to 15 minutes long.
- Guest must smoke in the designated area by the picnic table, NOT near the building.
- Cigarette rolling is not allowed in the shelter.
- All children must be kept within visual supervision of the parent(s) at all times.
- No smoking is permitted for anyone under the age of 18.
- If cigarette butts are not picked up and/or properly disposed of, smoking privileges could be rescinded.

## **BEDTIME HOURS FOR CHILDREN**

INFANT TO 7 YEARS OLD

8:30 P.M.

8 YEARS OLD TO 14 YEARS OLD

9:00 P.M.

15 YEARS OLD TO 17 YEARS OLD

10:00 P.M.