



Miriam's Hope

HANDBOOK REVISED 2024

Mission:

Miriam's Hope mission is to confront the foster care crisis in a Christian way. We discipline troubled families from instability to evolve into a family built on principles that lead to a personal realization of their strengths and purpose. We see preservation of the family as a foundational approach to being part of the solution to eradicate the foster care epidemic.

Our Statement:

From many backgrounds comes one pursuit; to see Jesus Christ glorified in His people. We adhere to the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. Where sin has brought a divide Christ brings a bridge. Where man has fallen Christ has risen. We know that love never fails.

1st John 3:18 *“Dear Children, let us not love with words or tongue but in actions and in truth”*

Miriam's Hope Handbook

PROGRAM/DESCRIPTION – FAMILY HANDBOOK – Revised 7/15/2024

Note: Every mom has an individual path she is taking. These guidelines are a blanket policy but things may be modified based on each individual case.

Your progress is extremely important to us. Every month you will be required to discuss your progress with our Family Committee. These are individuals who care deeply about your spiritual and natural progress.

Policies can change at any time. You will be notified if a policy changes.

Resident Responsibilities:

We respect and encourage one another while living in a loving and positive environment. We expect our families to put forth their best effort to work together to create a healthy atmosphere for one's self, other families, and the staff. You are expected to be timely, respectful to other clients and volunteers, and to be clean and organized.

All clients will adhere to respectful communication, particularly, "please" and "thank you."

Check-in Process: Upon arrival, residents will complete the following check-in process.

- I will turn in:
 - Cell phone and charger
 - EBT card and PIN number (see pg. 8 "Meals and Kitchen")
 - Any and all credit cards
 - Medicaid / insurance card
 - Visitor list with contact information
- Personal property will be checked, by staff, upon arrival for cleanliness and bugs
- Items only on the approved item list can be brought and will be inventoried
- I will turn out my pockets, and those of my children, and turn over my purse for inspection. If contraband is found, entry will not be permitted.

General Visitors Policy:

- **All families must submit a visitors list for prior approval by the staff upon entering Miriam's Hope. This list must include all contact information directly related to each visitor. No access to phone for contact info is permitted.**
- No visits before completion of 14 days of programming.
- All visitors must be approved by Miriam's Hope and can only visit on Saturdays 9:30am – 11:30am. Other options may be considered after 30 days of program completion.
- Visitors **MUST** confirm visitation with MH staff 24 hours prior to scheduled visit. Even if this is a regularly occurring visit, the visitor must contact staff 24 hours in advance, to confirm he/she will visit as scheduled.
- No surprise visits allowed. No exceptions. Surprise visitors may be turned in for trespassing.

- Visitors CANNOT bring any items to a resident without prior approval from MH staff. Any unapproved items brought onto campus for a resident will be confiscated immediately.
- Residents are **not** permitted to leave with visitors prior to completion of 60 days of programming. All off campus visits must be approved by MH staff.
- All visitors are restricted to the cafeteria or outside for the first two months of a family's stay.
- Miriam's Hope will honor any and all court ordered visitation schedules. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- All court ordered visitation documents must be provided to Miriam's Hope Director and stored in case file.
- No visitors are permitted to visit a family's house without approval of MH staff.
- MH staff have the authority to terminate any inappropriate visitation including: cursing, threats, verbal or physical, visitors smoking on campus, violence, repeated redirection by staff, not abiding by case specific guidelines, suspected use of drugs or alcohol before visit and any other behaviors as deemed inappropriate by staff.

Violation of any of the above visitation requirements will be considered an infraction and terminate this privilege for a period of time to be determined by the staff.

Dating Policy: Dating on or offsite is **NOT ALLOWED** for the duration of your stay at MH.

Security: House key code will be provided to the mother upon entrance to Miriam's Hope. There are cameras throughout the facility for security purposes. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- All residents will keep the house code confidential. Do not share the house code with anyone who does not reside on campus.
- Families will earn the house code after 2 months of programming.
- No families are allowed in the Kliewer House. (Green house to the west).

Offsite permission: The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- Families may NOT leave campus with any visitor for the first 2 months. No exceptions.
- No leaving campus for the first 30 days with the exception of Sunday church. Doctor appointments will be pushed out 30 days or be an emergency. I.E. Broken leg. No grocery shopping, no pharmacy pickups, no outings.
- The following list is the tiered progression of privileges. (Details are found at the end of this handbook).
 - Two-week Introduction
 - Phase one: Creating New Foundations
 - Phase two: Developing Daily Disciplines
 - Phase three: Building a Better Tomorrow
 - Phase Four: Launching the New You

Alcoholic Beverages/Drugs/Tobacco:

- Miriam's Hope has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy for use or possession of drugs or alcoholic beverages.
- Miriam's Hope is a smoke-free environment. Residents will not smoke cigarettes and use of E-cigarettes/vapes is limited to designated areas outside during specific break times. Absolutely no use of vapes in the buildings during their stay at MH.

- Residents arriving at Miriam’s Hope using a vape will have the first 2 months (first stage) to achieve quitting. No vaping will be allowed after those first two months.
- Violation of these policies will be cause for immediate termination of our services and could involve law enforcement if necessary. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Programming: Families are required to follow the daily schedule observing the designated times for meals, Bible studies, sessions, housekeeping tasks, and community service projects. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- Residents must be on time for all activities listed on the daily schedule.
- Sessions typically run between the hours of 8am – 5pm and will be throughout MH campus. Families are not permitted to complete independent bookwork in their bedrooms.
- All bookwork supplies must be left upstairs in their designated area. All bookwork must be completed upstairs, not in the basement.
- All programming will be followed like a job; if programming is not followed then, like a job, you will be terminated from the program.
- The daily sessions are your job, you are required to be prompt and prepared every day.
- If you are sick, you must get up, get dressed, and come upstairs to report your sickness. If you are still feeling sick after 30 minutes, staff will determine if you need to stay in bed. While sick, you will be confined to your bedroom and the only activities allowed are Bible reading, journaling. Even if you are sick, you must care for your children.
 - The staff will evaluate the family and make a decision regarding best care for the children.
- If your child is sick and you cannot participate in sessions because the child needs care, there are tasks that will be assigned for you while you are caring for your child. If your child or you have reported as sick, you will not be permitted to leave MH for 24 hours.
- Families are not permitted to discuss, with other families, leaving the program.
- If a family’s doctor visits become so frequent that they interfere with the family’s success in the program, they may be asked to leave and reapply at a later date.

Counseling:

- MH will approve counselors to work with our families as needed.
- The first option allowed for counseling will be to meet with a counselor via video call.
- All virtual counseling sessions will be completed in the house office.
- No offsite counseling will be permitted for the first three months.

School and Work: (Requirements in this area are based on the individual needs of each family). The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- You will be required to attend all GED training classes and complete a GED program during your first 6-month stay at Miriam’s Hope.
- Work offsite is not permitted for the first 9 months of the program or longer. Work must be approved by Miriam’s Hope staff.
- When work is found, the family must also immediately work to secure off site housing in preparation for leaving the program by the end of month 12.
- No personal vehicles allowed before month 9. Vehicles are ONLY allowed if Mom has a job.

Personal Grooming/Dress: Residents should bathe themselves and their children daily, keeping their hair and clothes clean. Residents may dress casually but proper (modest) dress will always be expected outside the house. **No sleeping apparel** will be allowed outside the house at any time. The definition of modesty will be determined by Family Advocate. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- All family members should have a haircut before arrival if needed. No outings before 14 days of programming.
- No spaghetti strap tank tops, (except as undershirts), no backless dress, no sleeveless dresses or shirts.
- No low-cut tops, crop tops, shirts that reveal the belly or waist area.
- No low-rise pants or jeans.
- No pants with rips, tears, or in general bad condition.
- No see-through clothing.
- Shorts and skirts/dresses are to be no more than 2-3 inches above the knee.
- Bras and panties are to be worn with all clothing while in public areas. No bra straps showing. No thongs.
- No clothing with obscene language, secular messages, pictures of, or anything representing tobacco, drugs, alcohol, secular music, the occult or racism, etc.
- Staff may deem clothing inappropriate and you **MUST** change immediately.
- **Shoes must be worn at all times outside the house. Shoes must be worn properly, on the foot completely. Don't look sloppy!**
- No body piercings allowed when entering the program with exception of ear piercings; one on each lobe.
- No additional tattoos while in the program. If the MH staff deems an existing tattoo inappropriate, it must be covered by clothing while in the program.
- Children must be dressed appropriately for weather conditions.
- Everyone must wear pajamas and/or nightgowns to bed at all times.
- Changes in hair style or color require written approval by MH staff.

Personal Property:

- Each family and staff person will respect the personal property of all others at Miriam's Hope and of the volunteers who help us.
- Families must treat others respectfully and use "please" and "thank you" often.
- No one should enter another family's room, including children.
- No one will take anything that belongs to another person or use another person's property without explicit permission.
- Families will not leave any personal property lying around.
- All mail incoming and outgoing mail is subject to be checked by the staff.
- All mail must be opened in the presence of staff.
- Bedroom inspections are completed daily. (Expectations according to room checklist).
- Staff will also complete spontaneous room checks as needed.

Cell Phone Policy:

- **NO CELL PHONE ALLOWED!!** If a cell phone is found, the program ends immediately.

- Prior to entry at Miriam’s Hope, clients MUST retrieve necessary contact information for visitors and necessary account information (email, bank, bills etc.). Residents will NOT be permitted access to their cell phone once it is confiscated.
- Upon arrival at Miriam’s Hope, a resident’s cell phone must be turned in along with the following information:
 - Necessary contact information for visitors
 - Necessary account information such as email, bank, bills etc.
- No additional electronics are allowed. No Switch, no tablet, no smart watch, no laptop, etc. If brought to campus, they will be confiscated.
- No children are permitted a cell phone or any other electronic device. (see above)

Facility Supplies & Property: Many types of donated items such as: personal hygiene, janitorial, food, bedding, housewares, clothing, etc. bless Miriam’s Hope. These items are to be used for residents of MH. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- Do not take any supplies other than items you have been given for your personal use without express permission from MH staff.
- Regarding bathroom products: For the first 30 days, families will use the products provided. Families may not retrieve additional products from the storeroom. Families may earn a preferred product with appropriate behavior and effort after 30 days. Preferred items will be purchased with Mother’s own money.

Housekeeping Standards: It is our policy to keep a neat home inside and outside at all times. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

Bathroom – Each family is responsible for leaving the bathroom, sinks, tub & shower clean on a daily basis.

- All water must be wiped off the floor and sink and tub
- All used feminine hygiene products must be disposed of properly in a trashcan
- Bathrooms must be cleaned **thoroughly** at least once a week or more often if needed. A bathroom is not considered clean unless staff have checked it.
- A weekly schedule is posted in the house and must be followed.

Family Bedroom – Each family is responsible for their room. All rooms are to be kept clean and neat daily. A detailed list of chores will be found in the house rules.

- Dusting furniture weekly (more often if necessary)
- Vacuuming carpet weekly (more often if necessary)
- Beds are to be made each morning before breakfast
- Floors picked up each day (free of clutter always)
- Nothing set or stacked in front of fire escape door
- Clothes should be hung in the closet or folded and put in the dresser **at all times**
- Dirty clothes must be in a laundry basket and not on the floor
- **No food or drinks other than water with a lid are allowed downstairs. Food is only allowed in the kitchen and dining areas.**
- Laundry will be done on your assigned laundry day.
- Furniture and other items are not to be moved from one room to another without permission of Family Advocate
- Nothing will be hung or posted on walls without the permission of MH staff

Kitchen/Dining Room – When you are finished using the kitchen/dining room areas you are to leave it clean and sanitary.

- The dining room table, counter tops, stovetop, front of cabinets (if spills occur), highchairs and the microwave are to be wiped down after each use.
- Microwave: All food is to be covered when using the microwave and all spills must be cleaned immediately.
- The floor (in the kitchen & around the dining room table) is to be swept and spills are to be wiped up immediately after each meal.
- Dishes are to be washed, dried, and put away after every use. When you are finished using the kitchen you are to leave it clean and sanitary.
- Garbage is to be taken to the big dumpster outside daily.
- **Never** allow the trashcan to overflow with garbage.

Sitting Room/Cafeteria/Cabin – When you or your child is finished using these areas they are to be left in a neat and clean order. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- All toys are put back in their places before leaving.
- Floors swept and carpet vacuumed and tables wiped down if needed (especially after crafts)
- Snacks are allowed in the kitchen and should be cleaned up after each time; sweep floor if crumbs are on the floor, wipe off tables, throw away trash and wash dishes and put away.
- Trash must be emptied often and when trashcan is full.

Laundry: Each family is responsible for washing their own family's laundry. Laundry may be done during daytime hours. Each family will have one assigned day for laundry. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- Remove clothes from the washing machine and/or dryer as soon as the cycle is complete and take your clean clothes to your room and put them away immediately.
- Families will clean up the laundry area after each use.
- Dryer lint trays must be checked before each use and emptied.
- Families should never leave any personal items in the laundry room.
- Families may not leave campus while clothes are in the washer and/or dryer.
- Sheets & pillow cases must be washed weekly. Blankets washed as needed.
- Only adults are allowed to operate the washer and dryer. The equipment is very expensive and is not easily replaced. It must be treated with respect.

Children: The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- Each mother is responsible for her children at all times.
- Children are to play in the designated areas only; sitting room (downstairs or upstairs) or outside playground.
 - At times service vehicles are driving around and children must be supervised for their safety.
- Children are to be supervised by a responsible adult at all times.
- Children should not be left in the care of others without permission. Don't assume someone will watch your children. You must ask someone to watch your children if you need to leave them.
- Play equipment is to be treated with respect and taken care of properly.
- It is the mother's responsibility to make sure the child(ren) have cleaned up an area after playing.

- Children age 10 and over are allowed to be left alone to watch a movie or play in the family room or on playground, provided the mother checks on the child at least **once every 15 minutes**. They are not allowed to be in the kitchen or any other room without adult supervision at any time. If this rule is not followed, the privilege will be revoked.
- Children are not allowed to supervise other children. No matter the age.
- **Mothers are not to be sleeping while their children are awake.**
- Mothers must follow the bath & bed times listed on the house schedule for their children at all times.

Television/Computers/Movies: A television and DVD player are located in the living room at the house. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- Cafeteria TV is not available for family use.
- Families may watch TV only at the appointed times listed in house rules. Additional times may be earned.
- No TV viewing allowed when chores are not completed or during sessions.
- Families may NOT access their streaming accounts while at Miriam’s Hope.
- Family ratings only: (G – General, PG – Parental Guidance, PG -13 not for children under 13).
- If R movies are found they will be thrown in the trash.
- Computers will be provided by MH for use for email, educational programs, job searches, community resources, etc. Email will be provided by MH for the duration of a family’s stay.
- Computer may not be used after 5 pm
- Computer time will be scheduled by MH staff as needed.
- All computer time will be monitored by staff.
- Families are not allowed to use social media during their stay at MH. No exceptions.

Personal Cars:

- No personal cars are permitted while at Miriam’s Hope prior to months 9-12.
- Each family must find a place to store their vehicle prior to arrival at Miriam’s Hope.
- Once a family reaches Phase Four: “Launching the New You”, Mother may have a vehicle onsite **ONLY** if she has obtained work.
 - Mother must have a valid driver’s license
 - Mother must have valid insurance
 - Mother must have valid licensure of the vehicle

Telephone:

- There is a phone for families to use in the home, upstairs only.
- No phone calls or communications within the first 14 days of arrival.
- Phone will be used only Tuesdays 10am-10:30am. Additional privileges may be discussed after at least 30 days of good effort and behavior.
- Calls must be pre-approved and will be monitored. All calls must be taken on speaker phone.
- If a family or friend wishes to contact a family, they may contact staff.
- Family Advocate phone number may be given to doctors for contact.
- **MH reserves the right to terminate or regulate phone usage as deemed necessary by the staff.**

Meals & Kitchen: All residents will be enrolled in the EBT food stamps program for the duration of their stay at Miriam's Hope. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times. These policies are for the shared upstairs kitchen in the house and in the cafeteria.

- All EBT cards and PIN will be turned over to Miriam's Hope and will only be used by staff to provide meals for families.
- Staff will determine which food to purchase. No brand preference will be given to families.
- There is no eating food during sessions unless outlined in schedule.

Pets: Families will not be allowed to have pets on the premises at Miriam's Hope.

Financial: The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- All families must participate in the financial planning program offered through Miriam's Hope
- All families will submit all receipts to MH.
- If a family is on partial disability, 30% of disability will be given to MH, 30% of income from employment will also be required when employed.
- MH will not assume any responsibility for payments of bills incurred by families prior to, during, or after your stay at MH.
- All families must make arrangements with creditors to delay or suspend payments until employed. When employed, bills must be paid on time and before money is used for anything else.
- All families, upon entry, must provide a complete list of creditors.
- Residents are NOT permitted to apply for credit cards or loans or use existing credit cards during their stay at MH. Existing credit cards must be turned in upon entry. They will be placed in locked storage for safekeeping.
- Grants and student loans are required for college education and vocational training whenever possible. MH will not provide money for educational fees or supplies.
- Grant and student loan monies are to be used strictly for educational cost and not for personal spending while in the program at MH, regardless of the guidelines set forth by the school or government agencies.

Medical: Miriam's Hope staff will review your medication list with you upon arrival. If any changes are made by your doctor, Miriam's Hope staff must be notified. MH believes in preventative medicine and will work with you and the local medical staff to ensure you stay healthy.

- MH will not assume responsibility for paying any medical expenses for families, including children.
- MH will not pay for or provide vitamins or herbal supplements.
- All families are required to doctor at the closest medical facility.
- All medication, including over-the-counter (OTC) meds, will be locked away by staff and administered as directed. Families are responsible for requesting medication at the prescribed times for themselves and their children.
- If a family's doctor visits become so frequent that they interfere with the family's success in the program, they may be asked to leave and reapply at a later date.

Community/Outreach: Families can be asked to participate in community outreach. The following guidelines are to be followed at all times:

- All campus rules apply off campus.

- Community service will be on progressive basis to be discussed with each family. It will be increased every two months.
- All chores must be completed prior to leaving the Ranch for community/outreach service projects.

Holidays: The following guidelines will be followed regarding holidays and birthdays.

- Halloween is not celebrated by Miriam’s Hope. Families may not attend trick-or-treating or bring halloween objects onto the Ranch.
- Thanksgiving is celebrated as a Ranch. We will have a meal and games all together. Dates may fluctuate.
- Christmas is celebrated as a Ranch. We will have a meal and games all together. Dates may fluctuate.
- Easter is celebrated as a Ranch. We will have a meal together. Dates may fluctuate.
- Other holidays are celebrated throughout the year. Activities and meals will be planned as needed.

Legal policies: MH is not responsible for helping families in finding legal help.

- When legal assistance is necessary, the director/ family advocate may assist the family in procuring legal aid.
 - Examples: Child custody arrangements, divorce, other hearings, etc.
- Miriam’s Hope may refuse to aid the family in procuring legal assistance whenever, as judged by the Director, the assistance would be detrimental to the ministry.

Infraction/Dismissal Policy: Dismissal could occur if a participant incurs any three of the minor infractions listed below.

The MH staff will document all infractions of the rules in writing. Infractions will be discussed with the resident to determine a course of action to be followed to avoid further infractions. The family and staff will sign both the infraction and the course of action. One copy will be given to client and another will be put in their personal file. Refusing to sign an infraction will put a resident at risk of immediate dismissal from the MH program.

Minor Infractions:

- Dress code violation
- Inappropriate or obscene language
- Leaving child unattended
- Curfew violation
- Bedtime curfew violation
- Failure to get up on time in the morning
- Failure to complete chores on time or to staff person’s satisfaction
- Disrespect for staff or other residents
- Misuse of property
- Covert behavior
- Inappropriate handling of conflict
- Any behavior the staff deems unsuitable

Consequences for minor infractions:

- Loss of privileges:
 - home phone usage, computer usage, television etc.
 - any other option decided by MH staff.
- Loss of privileges is determined by MH staff.

Immediate dismissal if any of the following occur:

- Refusal to participate in the Miriam's Hope sessions and strategy to attain self-sufficiency.
- Use or possession of drugs or alcohol
- Use of cigarettes or e-cigarettes
- Child abuse or neglect. (will also be reported to appropriate authorities)
- Dangerous or foul play in or around the residence or to staff/other residents
- Theft
- Disrespect for staff/residents and other rules set by Miriam's Hope
- Inappropriate behavior outside of Miriam's Hope that negatively affects the reputation of the center
- Not following visitation rules set by Miriam's Hope
- Sexually Acting Out (including actions and/or behaviors)
- If after 3 months you have not progressed to standards set by MH staff or have not taken any steps toward a new and more responsible lifestyle for yourself and your children
- Refusing to sign an infraction

If you are asked to leave the program for an infraction, MH can require you to be out of the building immediately.

Initials: _____

Upon being asked to leave the program MH staff may pack your things for you and leave them for you to pick up within three days. If you do not pick up your belongings within three days after removal from program, they will be considered MH property.

The only things Miriam's Hope will return to you are the things you brought in with you, your clothes and toiletries. All furniture, appliances and furnishings are property of Miriam's Hope and remain that way.

Initials: _____

You also forego the right to take legal action against MH when you are asked to leave the program.

Initials: _____

Miriam's Hope will administer random drug tests upon discretion.

Initials: _____

I understand a background check will be done prior to entry at Miriam's Hope.

Initials: _____

I have read these rules and my signature indicates that I have a good understanding of them and that I am willing to commit myself to these agreements.

I also understand that this is a voluntary program and I can leave at any point. I understand I must follow the Exit Policy. Unless I have finished the goals of my case plan I have not successfully completed the program.

Terms and conditions of the policies set forth in this handbook may change with or without advance notice due at the discretion of the director and/or the Miriam's Hope Board of Directors. All families will be notified of any changes to this policy either by posting said changes or memorandum.

Applicant's Signature

Date

Staff Signature

Date

Voluntary consent for your picture to be used in promotional material without names.

Signature: _____

Exit Policy:

In the event I choose to leave the program, I understand there is an exit policy which must be adhered to respectfully.

If I am asked to leave the program for an infraction, I will adhere to the following procedure:

- An exit plan will be made by staff within 24 hours. A leave time will be determined.
- I will complete the booklet, “Sometimes I Feel Like Leaving” and discuss with staff.
- I will make proper arrangements for my children’s school if my children are in school.
- I will make arrangements for housing for myself and children.
- I will make a plan for immediate income to ensure my financial needs are met.
- If allowed, I will gather my personal property and assist staff with review of inventory to ensure I have only property which belongs to me.
- I will not leave in the middle of the night or at any time unannounced, knowing this is inexcusably disruptive for my children.
- I will sign a form stating I am leaving the program voluntarily and that I have not completed programming.
- I know that any person who comes to pick me up must be on the visitor list. If not, staff have the right to contact police for trespassing.

Initial _____

If I graduate the program, I will adhere to the following exit procedure:

- I will work with staff to create an exit plan between months 11 and 12.
- I will work with staff to make arrangements for my children’s education (as applicable).
- I will work with staff to secure stable employment.
- I will work with staff to secure arrangements for stable housing.
- On the day before graduation, I will pack my personal property with staff and review my inventory list and ensure I have only property which belongs to me.
- On the day of graduation I will collect my confiscated property upon leaving.
- On the day of graduation I will receive my certificate of completion.

Initial _____

Applicant’s Signature

Date

Staff Signature

Date

I am exiting Miriam’s Hope on my own decision. I am aware of the exit policy (above).

Applicant Signature

Date