



Vanderburgh HOUSE

Resident Handbook & Resource Guide

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RESIDENT HANDBOOK

Vanderburgh House is a recovery-focused, peer-supported structured sober living community. Our mission is to build recovery communities where our residents will be supported in their personal recovery journey. We are a structured sober house where home structure is balanced with encouragement to develop and pursue a personal recovery journey. Our residents are the recovery community, and each is encouraged to participate actively in the community and contribute to the success of their brothers and sisters.

This handbook addresses the way we ask residents to participate in the home community. Our rules and policies guide the community with the goal of supporting each resident in their personal recovery journey. We have tried to cover all aspects of life in the home, but we can't cover everything. Your House Manager and office staff will enforce rules on an as-needed basis

ADVANCEMENT

1. First 30 days

Curfew: Sunday – Thursday: 10:00pm; Friday – Saturday: 11:00pm

During the first 30 days, a new resident should focus on transitioning into the home, meeting housemates, and becoming familiar with our structure and requirements. You may not spend nights outside the home during the first 30 days. All residents must establish their own recovery pathway. Most chose a 12-step program, but we allow you to create your own recovery pathway if you desire to do so. You must demonstrate your recovery engagement by participating in a minimum of five weekly meetings and obtaining a sponsor or equivalent.

2. 30 to 90 days

Curfew: Sunday – Thursday: 10:00pm; Friday – Saturday: 12:00pm

After 30 days, we give residents additional privileges as they become more comfortable in the home and farther along in their recovery journey. You may spend one night outside the house on either Friday or Saturday. You must be in good standing and submit a request form by Wednesday evening, more information on overnight requests is discussed later in this Handbook.

3. After 3 months

Curfew: Sunday – Thursday: 10:00pm; Friday – Saturday: 12:00pm

After 3 months, Residents may stay out for Friday and Saturday, provided you are in good standing and approved. Residents with over 6 months of seniority may request weekday overnights.

BANNED SUBSTANCES & ITEMS

Marijuana and THC, including medicinal use, *despite legalization*

Drug pipes, needles, syringes, and all other paraphernalia (other than for prescription use)

Kratom, Valerian root, PCP, Kava Kava, Krokodil, Flakka, Ketamine, K2, Bath salts, W-18

All drug paraphernalia, collections of items commonly used to consume drugs, etc.

Substances which are created to hide the effects or evidence of drug or alcohol use

Any items or devices used to give false negatives on urine drug screens or Breathalyzer

“The great thing in this world is not so much where you stand, as in what direction you are moving.”

– Oliver Wendell Holmes

HOUSE RULES

Each resident is required to follow **House Rules** at all times. If you violate these rules, or your behavior affects the recovery or safety of another resident, disciplinary actions will be taken by the House Manager. These may include a verbal warning, written warning, or discharge. The House Manager may determine appropriate disciplinary action imposed, or refer to the Community Manager.

Core Requirements: The following rules are the foundation of our recovery communities. Violating these rules may result in immediate discharge from the home.

- 1) **Substances:** Possession, consumption of, or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or substances on the **Banned Substance List** at any time. This includes refusal, failure, or attempted manipulation of any urine drug screen or breathalyzer.
- 2) **Violence:** Acts, threats, intimidation, bullying - of any kind towards a resident, House Manager, or staff.
- 3) **Weapons:** Possession of any kind, including but not limited to firearms, pepper spray, mace, or knives.
- 4) **Theft:** Theft of another resident's property, house property, or stealing outside of the house. This includes eating or drinking another residents' food without permission.
- 5) **Criminal Activity:** Acquiring new criminal charges while a resident.

Screening: By choosing to live in one of our homes, you've agreed to random supervised urine and breathalyzer screens. These may be administered any day, any time, especially when active use of a substance is suspected. Refusing a screen or tampering with a sample is grounds for discharge. If you dispute the results of a drug screen, you may obtain a laboratory test to challenge these results. You will be placed on restriction until lab results are confirmed, and if the laboratory results show negative, you will be reimbursed for the laboratory costs, up to \$50.

Warnings: Warnings may be verbal or written. Multiple written warnings will be addressed by both the House Manager and Community Manager to discuss the behavior being addressed. Disciplinary action will be decided on a case by case basis and may include discharge from the home.

Discharge: Residents can be discharged from the home for the following reasons:

- Violation of our Core Requirements, including relapse, violence, weapons, theft, or criminal activity
- Missing rent payments for more than one week without a payment arrangement established
- Evidencing a serious health problem requiring immediate, off-site treatment
- Evidencing a psychological state which constitutes a danger to themselves or others
- Non-compliance with rules and requirements of Vanderburgh House, including conduct of guests

If you are discharged, you must leave the home within 30-minutes. We will do our best to help you transition to a new location but cannot guarantee alternative living arrangements. If you need to come back to pick up belongings, you may do so only between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday and only with a scheduled appointment made with the House Manager. We may pack up your items and store them elsewhere. If you authorize another person to pick up property, that person must have written permission and their ID at the time of pickup. Unclaimed property will be discarded after 72 hours.

"My identity shifted when I got into recovery. That's who I am now, and it actually gives me greater pleasure to have that identity than to be a musician or anything else, because it keeps me in a manageable size." – Eric Clapton

RENT PAYMENT

On-time payment of rent is required of all residents. Chronic late payments of rent will not be tolerated. We understand unforeseen situations occur, in which case you must be proactive and talk with the House Manager to see if a solution can be achieved. Hardship situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Due: Friday at 5:00 PM (if paying weekly) 1st of each month (if paying monthly)

Payment Options: Online at www.Vanderburgh.ManageBuilding.com, sign in using your Resident Sign-In. We accept credit cards, debit cards, and EFTs (bank drafts). Speak with your House Manager if you have questions about online payment.

Paid to your House Manager, we only accept Money Orders and Cashier's Checks
Make all payments payable to **Vanderburgh House**.

Mailed to our office. **Vanderburgh House, 119 Forest Street, Worcester MA 01609**.
Do not ever mail cash. Include your full name and home address in the memo.

SAFETY

Fire Safety: In the event of an emergency, immediately call 911. We do not allow candles or open flames permitted in the home. Never leave the stove unattended or pour water on a grease fire. Grills are not allowed on porches, decks, or balconies. Space heaters are not permitted. Do not store flammable or explosive liquid inside any structure.

Overdose: Immediately call 911. All homes have Narcan available in each bathroom above the toilet. If you are trained on the use of Narcan and comfortable doing so, administer an appropriate dose(s) to the overdose victim. Notify your House Manager immediately and wait for help to arrive.

Suspected Use of Substances: We ask all residents to participate in building a recovery community. One way you can do this is by notifying your House Manager of any suspected drug or alcohol use by another resident. This is not only the right thing to do, but it can save lives.

PERSONAL GUIDELINES

Employment: All residents are required to maintain employment or volunteer for at least twenty hours per week, enroll in school, or attend a day treatment program. Your House Manager can recommend employment opportunities and can guide you while you look for work. We ask you to look for employment suitable for you in your recovery journey, avoiding work in bars, liquor stores, hookah, head shops, etc. Discuss with your House Manager if you wish to work a 2nd or 3rd shift position.

Overnight Requests: You may stay overnight outside of the home provided you are in good standing. Overnight Request Forms are obtained from the House Manager and **must be submitted** by Wednesday for the upcoming weekend. For you to be considered in good standing, you must have attended your required community engagement meetings, have not received any written warnings that week, and be current with rent. If you have a job that requires you to work weekend nights, it is possible to obtain an overnight pass for a different night of the week.

"Sometimes you can only find Heaven by slowly backing away from Hell." – Carrie Fisher

Holiday Season: Overnight requests relating to Christmas, Hanukkah, or other end-of-year holidays will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All other holidays have regular curfew. No overnights are allowed on New Year's.

Rooms: Your room and bed will be assigned to you by your House Manager when you move in. Rooms are to be kept clean and orderly at all times. **No food is allowed in bedrooms.** Rooms and all personal belongings are searched by staff without prior notice. Beds must be made each morning, trash must not be left out, clothing must be in drawers or hung in the closet. Cleanliness is important, and your personal spaces must demonstrate care, attention, respect, and discipline.

Food: Residents are responsible for providing and cooking their own food. Refrigerators and microwaves are available for common use. Please store all food appropriately and do not leave it out. You must clean up after yourself, if you dirty a dish, clean it, dry it, and put it away. If you took something out, put it back when finished.

Laundry: On-site laundry may be provided. When doing laundry, please empty all pockets and do not overload the machines (1 pillowcase full equals 1 load). Do not put laundry in the wash and then leave the house. If you find laundry in the machine, please check with all other residents in the home before removing it.

Relationships: If any resident's intimate relationship causes problems for the house, it will be addressed as a community issue. Staff, including House Managers, are not allowed to have intimate relationships with residents.

Medications: Residents manage their own medication independently. All prescription medication must be stored in a locked container provided by the resident. Controlled medication will be subject to additional restrictions. Your House Manager or other staff may conduct pill counts to ensure medication is being taken as prescribed. Please notify your House Manager of any changes to your prescriptions.

Vehicles: Residents are encouraged to have bicycles and other forms of personal transportation. If you would like to keep a motor vehicle at the home, please speak with your House Manager for approval. To have a vehicle, you must have a valid driver's license and the vehicle must be property registered. Parking is on a first-come, first-serve basis, with the two spots closest to the main door to be left available for staff. Please be considerate of neighbors and other residents when parking on the street. We ask that you do not perform oil changes or major repairs on the property. Vehicles kept at the home are done so at the owner's risk.

Smoking: Vanderburgh House recognizing that the use of tobacco is addicting, whether smoking, vaping, chewing tobacco, or other use of nicotine-containing products. We encourage all residents to quit the use of these substances, but do not prohibit residents from using tobacco. Smoking, vaping, and the use of any other tobacco products are **NOT ALLOWED** inside the house, basement, covered porches, breezeways, or in front of the house. Residents who smoke are only allowed to do so in the designated smoking area(s) and all cigarette butts must be put in the "butt can" and not thrown into the yard or driveway. The butt can must be emptied daily by those who use it.

Personal Property: Any belongings must be limited to what fits in the space allotted to you, which may include closet and bureau space and whatever can be fit neatly under the bed. We may ask residents remove excessive personal property from the house due to lack of storage space. Personal property and possessions brought to the house are the sole responsibility of the resident and we are not responsible for any loss or damage to any of your property, including an especially if you leave the house.

Guests: Visitors are allowed for a limited time during the day with the advanced approval of your House Manager. Guests are asked to stay in the common areas and under no circumstances to be in bedrooms. Residents remain with their guests and be accountable for nuisance or damage they may cause. Guests must be sober.

Gambling: Residents are prohibited from engaging in gambling activities.

"Every noble work is at first impossible." – Thomas Carlyle

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

House Meetings: Residents are required to attend the House Meeting scheduled once a week. You must plan your schedule in order to attend the House Meeting. Please arrive on time, do not leave early, and do not use your cell phone during the meeting. The House Manager may call additional House Meetings to address specific concerns.

Community Accountability: You have the opportunity to help build a supportive, life-changing community by being active at home activities, attending all house meetings, and helping your House Manager by identifying areas of concerns. Please be attentive to your role in building this environment. Please keep the home free of substances which are made to look like drugs, non-alcoholic beer or wine, or other items which may trigger you or another resident. Be mindful that certain household items contain alcohol such as certain mouth wash, hand sanitizer, extracts (like vanilla), and others.

Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheet: Please sign in and sign out when entering and leaving the home. If you are going to be home later than expected, please notify your House Manager. If you are out of the house all day or overnight, we ask you to check in with your House Manager periodically.

Keys: Most of our homes are equipped with keypad access allowing entry with a four-digit code. This code is changed often. Do not give the home's keycode to anyone, especially guests or former residents.

Telephone: We may provide a house phone for common use. Please be respectful of other residents and keep phone calls limited. If you answer the phone, be prepared to take a message. When answering, a simple "hello" is good enough. Never confirm whether a particular resident lives in the home.

Common Areas: We ask you to wear proper day clothing during the day in the common areas. Common areas are available to our residents 24 hours a day; please be considerate of other residents. Sleeping is not allowed in the common areas.

Mail: Mail sent to you should be sent to the address of the home and addressed to you. The House Manager will collect mail and distribute to each resident. You may not handle another residents' mail.

Heating & Air Conditioning: We set the temperature at a comfortable level and work to save energy when heating. Do not adjust any thermostat. Air conditioners or other high-energy appliances are allowed only at the discretion of the House Manager. All appliances must be approved before bringing them into the home. The home does not provide these appliances, and the use of yours is at your own risk. To offset the cost of the additional electricity, we charge a weekly fee for the use of these items. Speak with your House Manager for more information.

Volunteering: We ask our residents to work together to build a recovery community. Residents are encouraged to participate in occasional volunteering events in service of others. If you are uncomfortable participating in a particular event, speak with your House Manager for an accommodation.

Good Neighbor Policy: Please maintain quiet time of 9:00 P.M. through 8:00 A.M. Always be courteous and respectful to neighbors. If you have an issue with a neighbor, please speak with your House Manager immediately. Do not enter a neighbor's property or loiter in front of a neighbor's house at any time. Please do not play loud music in the house or in vehicles if they are close to the house. If you are outside shoveling or raking, please take a few minutes to help your neighbor out by shoveling their sidewalk, etc. Small gestures like this can mean the world to someone. All complaints made to Vanderburgh House regarding the conduct of residents, the condition of the property, or safety concerns will be immediately investigated.

"I avoid looking forward or backward and try to keep looking upward." – Charlotte Brontë

Commercial Activity: Commercial activity is not allowed to take place at the home. This includes any selling of products, manufacturing products for sale, performing services for compensation, or engaging in activities which would require permits or licenses even if not for pay (cosmetology, tattooing, etc.). Working from home is permitted.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is prohibited by State and Federal law. Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances. Anyone who feels like they are a victim of harassing behavior should speak immediately with their House Manager.

Confidentiality Policy: Please work with us to keep life in the home private; please do not publicly share your location on social media, publicly share the address of the home, or publicly post photos or videos of other residents without their permission. Vanderburgh House cannot release the contents of your file without your written permission for us to do so, unless we are obligated to do so under a court order.

Grievance Policy: You have the right to report and file any grievance or concern – you have a voice. We will work with the resident to attempt to resolve any grievance and concern to provide a satisfactory outcome for all involved.

Grievance Procedure: The first step is taking the concern to your House Manager. If the grievance is with the House Manager or if the concern is not resolved satisfactory, you may file anonymously by submitting a grievance form to the office or email at Info@VanderburghHouse.com. All grievances will be kept confidential. The grievance will be reviewed and a response will be made within 3 business days to address the concern. If unable to resolve the issue, the Community Manager, the House Manager, and the resident will meet within 5 business days for mediation and work to resolve the issue in a mutually respectful manner.

Please visit the following website for any unresolved grievances:

<http://mashsoberhousing.org/grievance-policy/file-a-grievance/>

Every Vanderburgh House resident has the right to:

- Live in an environment supportive of their personal recovery journey
- Be free from verbal and physical abuse from others
- Be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of the circumstance
- Receive clear information regarding rent payments, fees, and other financial obligations
- Receive and send unopened mail
- Have personal information held confidentially; accessible only to designated staff
- Have and use personal property that does not disturb other residents
- File a complaint with staff without retaliation, and to have the complaint investigated quickly
- Be fully informed when changes occur to Vanderburgh House policies and procedures
- Be held accountable by their brothers and sisters in recovery
- Have the opportunity to live an independent and joy-filled life!

www.VanderburghHouse.com



We grow stronger together