

## Alternative House Visitation Center

### Visitation Ground Rules

These rules must be signed by both the custodial parent/guardian and the non-custodial parent/visiting adult in order to utilize the Visitation Center's services. These rules apply to both the custodial parent/guardian and the non-custodial parent/visiting adult.

#### *Arrival, Parking, and Departure*

1. Visiting parents **must arrive 15 minutes before** the visitation begins and immediately enter the Visitation Center through the assigned door.
2. No one may accompany any visiting parent to the Center (unless there is a serious medical condition, in which case, a request must be put in writing to the Coordinator for approval prior to the visit). **Visiting parents must park in the assigned parking area or be dropped off and your ride must leave and must not return until 20 minutes after your visit is scheduled to end. If they arrive sooner, security staff will ask them to leave.** Visiting parents will enter the designated entrance.
3. If either the custodial parent or visiting parent arrives more than 10 minutes late, the visit will be cancelled at the discretion of the Center. You should call the Center in advance if you know you will be late. The Center will then determine what action will be taken. The parent who is late will be asked to pay the cancellation fee in full prior to visits resuming.
4. **Custodial parents and visiting parents must arrive on time for their appointments and park in the assigned parking area. Custodial parents and visiting parents must enter their designated entrances.**
5. During the visit, staff will prepare observation notes about occurrences during the visit. Observation notes are factual and do not contain opinions or recommendations about future parent/child contact or visitation. There will be no note taking by parents during visits.
6. Visiting parents must remain in the Center for **a minimum of 15 minutes** after the custodial parent/guardian has left. The security staff will inform you as to when you may leave.

#### *Appropriate Behavior*

7. It is up to the discretion of the center as to whether security personnel will be utilized for a visit. Whether security is utilized will be based on a thorough assessment of each case after both the Custodial parent/guardian and visiting parent complete the intake process.
8. **Possession of a weapon will result in immediate termination of our services.** Our security staff, who may use a hand held metal detector, will conduct periodic pocket checks. You may also be required to open your purse and/or bag and/or empty the contents of your

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purse/bag/pockets\*. Refusal to cooperate will result in cancellation of your visit. Continued refusal will result in termination of services at the Center.

*\*For the purpose of these ground rules, a purse and/or bag are considered by the Visitation Center to be anything you carry into the Center or our building.*

9. **If the staff detects that you have used alcohol and/or drugs prior to arriving, the visit will be cancelled at the violator's expense.** The Center has the right to notify or contact the proper authorities and such incident will be noted in the case report. If staff fails to detect this right away, your visit will be cancelled (even if it has already begun) when staff does detect it. If you are caught using drugs and/or alcohol while at the Center, your visits will be terminated.
10. Fighting, harassment of any kind, loitering or confrontation of any child or adult associated with the Center, in the Center or in the general area will result in immediate termination of services.
11. Any verbal or non-verbal threat made to any staff person, volunteer or representative of Alternative House Visitation Center will result in immediate termination of our services and legal action will be taken by AHVC.
12. No derogatory remarks about the custodial parent/guardian will be permitted.
13. No derogatory remarks about the non-custodial parent/visiting adult will be permitted.
14. Swearing is not allowed.
15. **Discussion with your child(ren) regarding your case at the Center or with staff or other visiting adults is not allowed.** In addition, discussion regarding issues external to the visitation is strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to: appointments, addresses, specific people and places external to the visitation, making promises, etc. Staff will intervene if and when the conversation becomes inappropriate.

In addition, no statements will be permitted regarding any of the above especially when you, as a parent, intentionally make inaccurate statements to your child(ren), knowing your child(ren) will give you the correct facts you are seeking. Your visit will be terminated immediately if you do not follow this rule.

#### YOU MUST FOCUS ON YOUR VISIT.

16. Note passing or passing of anything else while at the Center is not allowed. There will be no notes written on cards, pictures, food packages, etc. for your child(ren). There will be no exchange of telephone numbers, pager numbers, cell phone numbers, e-mail addresses, nor addresses between parent and child(ren).
17. Medical information may be passed to the parents through staff only. It must be in writing and staff will determine if what is to be passed is appropriate. If staff deems it inappropriate, it will not be passed.

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18. A foreign language is not to be spoken at the Center at any time unless your Visitation Monitor is proficient in that language.
19. Whispering and low-tone talking will not be permitted. If your child(ren) whispers, it is your responsibility to re-direct them. If you, as a visiting adult, whisper and speak in low tones, staff will intervene.
20. Custodial parents and/or visiting parents may provide their child(ren) with lunch and/or snacks and drinks.
21. Custodial parents/guardians may not interfere with on-going visits and may not stand outside or sit outside of the playroom door(s). You must wait in the designated area or leave the building during the visit.
22. No cameras, video cameras, audio, visual, computer equipment and/or other recording devices will be permitted at the Center. Photographs may not be shown during the visit without a specific court order. Photographing children is never allowed without a specific court order and the prior approval of the Coordinator.
23. Cellular phones and beepers must be turned off during visitation. If you require a cell phone/beeper for employment purposes, please make other arrangements.
24. There is no smoking in the Visitation Center or on grounds.
25. Inappropriate verbal discipline of any child, including any child that accompanies you to your visit at the Visitation Center is not allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, yelling, swearing, threatening, blaming, name calling, mocking, etc.
26. There will be no physical discipline of any child, including any child that accompanies you to your visit at the Visitation Center. This includes, but is not limited to, grabbing the arms, legs or body, pushing, pulling, holding onto, throwing objects at, hitting, spitting at, punching, etc.
27. The visitation staff are mandated reporters, so any form of child abuse will be reported to the Department of Social Services, and a review will be held to determine if your case will be terminated from the Center.
28. Appropriate dress and appearance is required; i.e. no profanity on clothing, no visible and/or obscene tattoos. Staff will use discretion in determining appropriateness of clothing.

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#### ***Gift Giving and Activities during Visitation Sessions***

29. The Visiting Parent may bring games, books, and activities from home to use during visitation. Staff will determine their appropriateness. The child(ren) may not take these items home, but may take a finished project home. Please make special note of our anti-war toys policy

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30. Visiting parents may not bring gifts for the child(ren) unless it is a specified gift-giving day or unless prior approval has been given (i.e. birthdays). A sample list of gift-giving days will be made available to you
31. Custodial parents may not determine if child(ren) receive and keep gifts and/or clothing. The AHVC permits all children to receive gifts and clothing unless otherwise ordered by the Court. If you, as a custodial parent, refuse to allow your child(ren) to receive and/or take the items home, this information will be included in any report which may be submitted to the Court, D.S.S., and referring agencies.
32. Gifts from family members, relatives, or friends will not be permitted unless that person currently visits with you and your child(ren) on a regular basis at the Center (with Court order or prior approval only).

### *Scheduling*

33. It is your responsibility to contact the Center at 978/937-5777 to find out if it will be closed due to bad weather. The Center will offer makeup visitation to families with non-weekly visits.
34. Schedule changes may arise during you time at the center. Staff may briefly assist communication between parents, but if the scheduling issue is not resolved it is the parent's responsibility to seek resolution through the Court or mediation.
35. If any of the following occur, your case may be terminated from the Visitation Center:
  - Three or more consecutive cancellations/late arrivals (regardless of canceling party)**
  - Attendance becomes inconsistent**
  - Two no-shows (which do not have to be consecutive)**
 If you fail to arrive for a visit, you will be charged the/your regular visitation fee, which is due on your next visit

### *Observation Notes/Summary Reports/Court Involvement*

36. To provide services in a neutral and non-confrontational environment the Center will not be involved in Court Litigation. If the Center or any of its staff members are subpoenaed to appear at any hearing or appointments the client hereby agrees to secure a \$350 prepayment. The case will not be supported until litigation is resolved and the Center can provide services in a neutral manner.

A parent may make a request for a Summary Report. Such reports are prepared only for a scheduled court hearing. Requests must be made to the Coordinator in writing two weeks before the report is needed. Summary reports provide an outline of dates, times, & lengths of visits scheduled for your family. Summary reports do not contain any assessments or recommendations with regards to visits. A flat rate of \$15.00 will be charged for each "Summary Report." The fee is due at time of request.

37. The Center reserves the right to suspend or terminate services at any time.

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## Alternative House Visitation Center

### Preparing for Your Visitation Session and/or Monitored Exchange

Welcome to the Visitation Center. The staff are here to assist you by answering your questions, initiating or recommending activities, helping to increase your parenting skills, and most importantly, to put your child/ren at ease during the visit. The success of your visits will be determined by your willingness to let go of the past and not nurture bitterness that attempts to turn your child/ren against the custodial parent. You, as a non-custodial parent, must endeavor to build your child/ren's self-esteem through positive nurturing and loving visits. These guidelines will assist you in making visitation a positive experience for both and your child/ren.

You must be on time for your visit. (15 minutes before visit scheduled to begin)

When a visit needs to be rescheduled due to a conflict for either parent or the child/ren, be reasonable. The happiness of the child/ren is everyone's primary concern. Always notify the Center as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a visit. Please also note the Center's cancellation policy.

The visit is time for you and your child/ren to be together. Do not question your child/ren about the other parent, where they live, etc. If there is a Restraining Order against you or you are on probation, follow what the order says.

Do not visit with your child(ren) if you have been drinking or using drugs. If we do not feel you are in control of your own behavior, the visit will be terminated.

Do not promise your child/ren gifts or trips that will not take place. This leads to confusion and causes a loss of trust and respect.

Children may be angry with you due to your previous behavior. Allow them to adjust to the visits and to vent their anger. Do not blame the other parent. Take responsibility for your behavior and tell your child/ren it was unacceptable. This helps to form more positive relationships.

Children may feel they are, in some way, responsible for the separation. Assure them it is not their fault and that both parents love them.

Abide by the ground rules of the Center. They are in place to protect the emotional and physical safety of your child/ren and others in the program.

Please ask for help from Center staff if you need it. We are here to make sure that both you and your child/ren have a pleasant visit and to assist in strengthening the parent/child relationship.

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## Alternative House Visitation Center

### Preparing Your Children for Supervised Visits and Monitored Exchanges

In our experience, the custodial parent is an extremely important factor in making visits a positive experience. Please think carefully about how you prepare your child/ren for a visit. Let your child/ren know what the Center is, when they will be coming, who will be there, and who they will visit with. Please feel free to make an appointment for your child/ren to visit and explore the Center prior to their first visitation session. We encourage you not to speak negatively about the visiting parent, but rather focus on what they might do or talk about during the visit. You might encourage your child/ren to bring a picture s/he drew or a favorite toy to show the other parent. If the child/ren is anxious or fearful regarding seeing the other parent, you can reassure her/him that there will be another person there throughout the visit who will ensure that s/he is safe. It is important during the intake process that you alert us about your or your child/ren's concerns, as well as prior to any visit when Center staff checks in with you.

Prepare yourself and your child for saying goodbye prior to the visit. Please understand that some children experience separation anxiety even though they are pleased to see the visiting parent. Child/ren are allowed to bring a favorite toy or snack with them that might be comforting. Your child/ren will never be forced to go to the visiting room to begin a visit, but will be encouraged by staff to visit with the other parent.

During the visit, you may stay in the waiting area, however, you are not able to enter the visiting room or listen at the door during a scheduled visit.

At the end of a visit, Center staff will check in with you again regarding the general mood of the visit and inform you if there were any problems. Please do not ask Center staff questions pertaining to the visiting parent or ask that information, other than medical, be passed between parents; the Center staff's role is to ensure your child/ren's physical and emotional safety during visits.

If concerns arise regarding your child/ren during the course of visits, the Center encourages you to discuss them with your child/ren's therapist, if there is one, and inform the Coordinator. Please note again, however, that the Center does not have the authority to change how visits occur. The Center may facilitate communication between the parents on a very limited basis about possible changes in visits. Otherwise, it is the parents' responsibility to seek mediation or Court intervention.

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# Alternative House Visitation Center

## Gift Giving Days and Policies

These are the days when you may bring gifts to your child(ren). Any additional requests should be directed to the Coordinator only, please do not ask Supervisors to make exceptions.

Valentine's Day  
St. Patrick's Day  
Easter  
4th of July  
Labor Day

Halloween  
Thanksgiving  
Christmas  
Hanukah

Birthdays\*  
Religious Celebration – such as First Communion, Bar/Bat Mitzvah  
School Graduation

\* You will only be permitted to bring a gift for the child celebrating his/her birthday, religious celebration, graduation, etc. No gifts can be given to the other child(ren) with whom visit with you.

All gifts must be appropriate for each holiday. Cash is not appropriate. All gifts must be brought unwrapped and will be checked by Staff prior to your visit. All cards must remain unsealed until approved by Staff. In the fifteen minutes prior to your visit, you may wrap/finish wrapping your gifts.

All gifts brought to the Center will go home with the child(ren). The Center will not allow a child to receive a gift and then be told s/he cannot bring it home. The Center will also not allow custodial parent/guardians to determine what gifts may be brought home which have been given to a child by a visiting adult. Please remember that we are all trying to work together for the common good of the child(ren) involved.

The Alternative House Visitation Center has a *no violence policy*, which includes no war toys. By tolerating war toys, we are telling children that aggression, violence and war are attitudes to which they should aspire.

### *What is wrong with toys of violence:*

- They endorse violence as a way of solving problems;
- They reinforce sexist stereotypes of male dominance and female passivity;
- They foster unnecessary aggressive competition;
- They create the need for an enemy; and
- They falsely glamorize military life, combat and war as exciting and fun.

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<b>ALTERNATIVE HOUSE VISITATION CENTER</b>
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**Sliding Fee Scale**

<b>NET INCOME PER YEAR</b>	<b>RATE</b>
Under \$15,000	\$25.00
\$15,000- \$17,000	\$30.00
\$17,000- \$19,000	\$35.00
\$19,000- \$21,000	\$40.00
\$21,000- \$23,000	\$45.00
\$23,000- \$25,000	\$50.00
Over \$25,000	\$55.00

The charge for:

- Fully Supervised Visits is the scale amount per hour.
- Semi- Supervised Visits is ½ the scale amount per hour.
- Monitored Exchanges is a flat rate of \$10 per exchange, each way.

The non- refundable fee for an Intake is \$45.00.

All payments shall be in form of a Money Order.

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**Alternative House Visitation Center**

**GROUND RULES AGREEMENT**

I have read, understand, and will abide by all of the above ground-rules. If I did not understand any part of the ground-rules I have asked that the center staff further explain them to me.

I further understand and agree to sign (if required to sign) and abide by any further policies and/or procedures set forth by the Visitation Center.

Lastly, I understand and agree that all of the above are in effect to protect the emotional and physical well being of my child(ren).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Alternative House Visitation Center

## Fee Policy

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Court Ordered: Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Session: \_\_\_\_\_

Because specific hours of the Visitation Center are set aside for your visit and because many other clients need visitation time, keeping your scheduled appointment is very important. If for some reason you are unable to keep an appointment, please notify us at least 48 hours before your scheduled visit so we may schedule another client during that appointment time.

- All cancellations, except those that are due to a visiting child's illness will be charged a cancellation fee for the time scheduled.
- The canceling party is always responsible for this fee.
- If visitation cancellation is due to a child's illness, the fee may be waived if a pediatrician's note is provided, stating that the child was seen by the doctor, the diagnosis made, and that the child cannot participate in visitation for the specific date.

In addition, you are booking a time period for supervised visitation services to be provided, not for a successful visitation session. Your child(ren) may need some time to adjust to this new situation. Please be patient.

Payment must be made with a money order. We do not accept cash, checks or credit cards.

FEE (as determined by net income) \_\_\_\_\_ per hour

I understand that I am/am not responsible for payment of services provided by the Alternative House Visitation Center. However, I understand that I may be responsible for the payment of a cancellation fee.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Alternative House Visitation Center**

**Litigation Policy**

Alternative House Visitation Center (AHVC) and its staff will not provide evaluations or recommendations. AHVC, through its staff, will, however, upon request of the Court or Court ordered Guardian Ad Litem provide an attendance record and report any issues, concerns, infractions or violations of AHVC's policies, rules, and/or guidelines. AHVC treats its observation notes as confidential and, therefore, they are not available for review by clients, therapists, attorneys or other parties.

The above was explained to me and I hereby agree that I will not be involved in any legal action myself or through an attorney or other party to order or subpoena AHVC's records or its staff to appear or produce any documents in any legal action. I further understand and agree that if I am involved in any way in said action, that upon the initiation of any action:

1. I will no longer use the services of AHVC and its staff, and
2. I agree to immediately provide to AHVC a three hundred and fifty dollar (\$350) money order as partial payment for all costs and expenses incurred by AHVC staff, including but not limited to staff's time which is billable at the rate of seventy-five dollars (\$75) per hour (billable in 10 minute increments). AHVC's legal representation; administrative costs; and any and all costs and expenses incurred in any action requesting or requiring AHVC records or services of AHVC's staff; and
3. Any balance of AHVC's billing "to date" is due "in full" by a money order prior to the delivery of said AHVC records and/or appearance or AHVC staff and/or legal counsel; and
4. AHVC's costs and expenses (as stated above) will continue to be billable until the matter is resolved, at which time any remaining balance of AHVC's billing will be due and payable by a money order with in forty-eight (48) hours.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Alternative House Visitation Center**

**Liability Statement**

The custodial and non-custodial parents accept full responsibility for the care and safety of all parties participating in visitation sessions and/or monitored exchanges at the Visitation Center, Haverhill.

The Center will not be held responsible in any way for any accidents, injuries or damages sustained by any visiting parties while on the premises.

By signing below, I have indicated that I have read and agree to follow the Visitation Center's Ground Rules and other rules and policies. I also agree to pay the designated fee.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Alternative House Visitation Center**

**Client Confidentiality Policy**

Confidentiality is essential in order to maintain a safe environment within this Agency:

1. Clients must not share the name of other people they may see when coming to the Visitation Center, Lowell or Haverhill, for supervised visitation, exchanges, or other services, nor may clients discuss other client's situations.
2. Violation of this policy may result in termination of services.

I have read this Confidentiality Policy and will abide by its contents.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Alternative House Visitation Center**

**Children's Rights Policy**

The center protects children's physical as well as emotional safety. These guidelines are designed to protect the children from feeling uncomfortable, non-verbally threatened, or upset. It is in everyone's best interest to respect your child(ren's) feelings about physical contact with you.

The center has found it best to follow your child(ren's) lead throughout the visits, especially with hugs, kisses, and other physical contact. You should greet your child(ren) upon arrival while letting your child(ren) initiate any such contact. During the visit, please avoid any extended physical contact with your child(ren). Please respect your child(ren's) feelings and rights to determine when to be touched. Be patient and focus on making the visit as conflict free as possible.

I have read and understand this policy and agree to abide by it. I will ask to have any part of this policy explained to me if I do not understand it. I further agree that if I do not follow this policy, I may be terminated from the center.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Alternative House Visitation Center**

**Information Release**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give the Alternative House Visitation Center permission to give the following individuals any and all information pertaining to my intake and involvement with the Center including my attendance, level of participation, and compliance with rules and policies:

Court: \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian ad Litem: \_\_\_\_\_

DSS Social Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Therapist: \_\_\_\_\_

Department of Revenue: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If I wish to withdraw this release at any time, I shall do so by written request.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

## CHAPTER I

The first part of the history of the United States is the story of the discovery of the continent by Christopher Columbus in 1492. This event marked the beginning of European exploration and settlement in North America.

The second part of the history is the story of the early colonial period, from the first English settlement at Jamestown in 1607 to the American Revolution in 1776. This period was characterized by the growth of the colonies and their increasing independence from British rule.

The third part of the history is the story of the American Revolution, from the outbreak of hostilities in 1775 to the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

The fourth part of the history is the story of the early years of the United States, from the signing of the Constitution in 1787 to the end of the Revolutionary War in 1781.



June 6, 2007

## **Addendum**

According to Alternative House policies should your family terminate or suspend visitation and be absent from the center for three months or more, an intake must be redone and the intake fee must be paid at the current rate. Your visitation fees will be assessed with the current sliding fee scale.

Thank you,

The Visitation Center

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