

# Oberlin College Village Housing Handbook



**OBERLIN**

COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Office of Residential Education

Last Revised: July 20,2020

Dear Obie Residents:

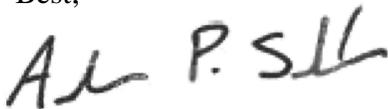
Welcome back to Oberlin and to your home for your corresponding terms. We are all quite happy to have you back on campus for another academic year. The Res Ed staff has worked diligently to prepare this handbook to assist in orienting you to living in Oberlin College Village Housing. As you might imagine, there are a few things that distinguish Village Housing from the residence halls, particularly the smaller style of many of the properties, as well as such domestic joys as trash and recycling disposal, housekeeping, neighbor relations, and reporting of repairs. We gently remind you that, while you no longer reside in a residence hall, you have still signed a housing and dining agreement with Oberlin College and the same rules and regulations that apply to residence hall living apply to College owned houses and/or apartments. There are variations on a few policies and procedures and those are noted in this handbook. The complete *Student Regulations: Policies and Procedures* is available on-line at [new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/](http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/).

The purpose of Village Housing is to provide seniors, juniors, and a few second years with the opportunity for more independent living, one more similar to an off-campus or post-college experience. Your designated Res Ed professional staff member – the Area Coordinator for the Senior Experience – plays both an educational role, as well as one perhaps more similar to an apartment manager. Village Assistants, or VAs, are another resource akin to the RAs in your residential hall setting.

Please review this handbook as well as your Oberlin College Student Handbook carefully. This handbook is also available on the web at <https://www.oberlin.edu/housing/options/village>. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Residential Education.

On behalf of the entire staff, we wish each of you a successful academic year.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Sadouskas". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Andrew Sadouskas, Ph.D.  
Assistant Dean of Students  
Director of Residential Education

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# Telephone Numbers At A Glance

Telephone service is provided in Village Housing facilities at no additional charge to students. Students are responsible for long distance charges. All problems with telephones or telephone service should be reported to the College Telephone Office at 775-8178.

Firelands, Union/Goldsmith, 137 Elm, 148 and 150 Elm are part of the College Telephone system. When dialing on-campus, use the last five digits of the phone number. When dialing off-campus, dial 7 plus the 7 or 10 digit phone number.

All other village houses are not part of the College Telephone system. When making calls, residents must always dial the full phone number.

## **EMERGENCY (FIRE, POLICE & MEDICAL)**

Campus Safety and Security (Emergency)	<b>911</b> 440-775-8911
Campus Safety and Security (Non-emergency)	440-775-8444
Oberlin Police Office	440-774-1061
Oberlin Fire Office	440-774-3211
Mercy Allen Hospital Emergency Room	440-775-1211

## **Useful Telephone Numbers**

Cable Co-Op	440-775-4001
CIT Help Desk	440-775-8197
Counseling Center	440-775-8470
Dean of Students Office	440-775-8462
Registrar's Office	440-775-8450
Student Health Center	440-775-8180
Telephone Company	800-483-4000
Service Response Desk (emergency work requests)	440-775-8445

## **Residential Education Numbers**

<b>Office of Residential Education and Dining Services</b>	<b>440-775-8472</b>
Stevenson Hall – Griswold Commons	

Please visit the Res Ed website for staff members' names and contact information

# **Information You Need To Know**

The next few pages outline information that will make your living situation a bit easier. **We strongly suggest that you and your roommate(s) take a few minutes to review the information contained in this book and the *Student Regulations: Policies and Procedures* carefully.** The *Student Regulations: Policies and Procedures* can be found at <https://www.oberlin.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/resources>. The term “Village Housing” refers to senior and junior housing operated by the Office of Residential Education including college houses, apartment buildings (Firelands & Elm St.), and townhouses (Union and Goldsmith). College houses refer to residential houses located on North Cedar, East College, West College Elm, Elmwood, Woodland, West Lorain, East Lorain, North Main, North Pleasant, North Professor, and South Professor streets

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

Residents are responsible for understanding and complying with the social conduct standards as stated in the Oberlin College *Student Regulations: Policies and Procedures*. Behavior that threatens or endangers the well-being of others or substantially interferes with the rights of others may result in eviction, as well as other judicial disciplinary actions. In general, Oberlin students are expected to have the good judgment and the sense of responsibility to regulate their lives in ways that make a positive contribution to the community in which they live. Please remember, that many College houses are located in residential neighborhoods and respect for the residents of Oberlin should be shown. Students are expected to be good citizens as well as scholars and to be conscious of and respectful toward the basic needs of others.

## **Occupancy Information**

Occupancy begins on your official arrival date and ends at the end of your housing contract. Graduating seniors participating in commencement exercises will be permitted to stay until 10:00 am the day after Commencement. Students are not permitted to sublet their College owned house and/or apartment. In the event of a vacancy in your house/apartment, the College will allow five business days for roommates to find a replacement. The replacement must have met the 2-semester residency requirement (for the 2020-21 academic year). In the event you do not find a replacement the Office of Residential Education reserves the right to assign an individual to that vacancy.

## **Fire Safety**

### **Fire Policy for Village Housing**

All residents must abide by state, local, and College regulations regarding fire-safety. Failure to comply with these regulations jeopardizes the safety of others and results in fines, judicial action, and/or eviction. In addition, negligent activation of fire safety equipment results in fines and/or judicial action.

- Residents may not limit access to or block fire escapes, room windows and doors, or other exits with furniture or other obstacles/objects.
- Excessive wall coverings to include posters, tapestries, flags, and pictures are not permitted. (No more than 30% of any wall surface may be covered).
- **Basement, garage, and attic access is prohibited, regardless of whether the spaces have been locked off by the College.**

- The oven and stovetop must be kept clean of grease build-up.
- Smoke detectors are located in each apartment and/or house. Smoke detectors are never to be tampered with or covered.
- Porches and yards, especially in the front of the house/apartment, must remain free of trash, interior furnishings, and generalized clutter.

Please see the Oberlin College *Regulations, Policies, and Procedures* for more information regarding Fire Safety and items not permitted in College Housing.

## **Fire Alarms/Evacuation**

All residents and guests must exit a building when a fire alarm/smoke detector sounds. Failure to evacuate is a violation of state law and College policy and could endanger the life of the building occupants and the responding fire and safety services personnel. Failure to evacuate, tampering with life safety equipment, and/or intentionally causing a false fire alarm may result in disciplinary action through the College or referral to the civil/criminal court system by fire authorities. Please refer to the Oberlin College *Student Regulations: Policies and Procedures* for more information on fire safety. All residents should be familiar with at least two exit routes from their building, even in low light conditions.

### **For Firelands, 137 Elm, 148-150 Elm, and Union and Goldsmith Housing**

In case of a fire incident detected by the alarm system, an audible alarm will sound to initiate an evacuation of the building. The alarm reports to a monitoring agency that contacts the Oberlin Fire Department and Oberlin College Safety and Security. Residents should immediately evacuate the building upon hearing the fire alarm, exiting the building via halls and stairways. **(Residents should NEVER use elevators to exit during a fire incident.)** Should fire or smoke be evident and an alarm not sound, the resident should pull the nearest fire pull station while exiting the building to alert the building, Fire Department, and Safety and Security.

### **For all other College Houses/Apartments**

These units have smoke detector devices that alert only a local alarm within the apartment or house/room. Should a device sound an alarm, phone 911 to report the location of the incident, alert others when exiting the building, and meet responding fire and safety personnel outside of the building. Be prepared to inform them of the location of the problem and if others may be present in the building. In addition, report any malfunctioning smoke detector issues to Facilities Operations at [440-775-5445](tel:440-775-5445) as soon as they occur. Facilities Operations is responsible for changing all smoke detector batteries in College houses/apartments.

Should you accidentally set off the fire alarm system (by cooking, steam, or other activity) **DO NOT** attempt to disable or reset the fire alarm system. You should exit the building, as required, after phoning the Fire Department or the Safety and Security Office, and inform responding units of the cause of the alarm.

## **General Safety**

All students are encouraged to be aware of their surroundings and to minimize risk to themselves and others in their community. Students should not leave doors unlocked or propped as it increases risk to all who occupy a house, apartment, or building. Apartment hall doors and exterior building doors must be locked at all times and never propped. Residents must never admit anyone who is not their guest when entering their building and must report anyone who is not a resident or other suspicious circumstances present at the time they observe them. First floor sliding glass doors and windows must be secured, except when patios are in use, and must never be used as primary apartment entrances as this compromises building security. The balconies of Firelands are not to be used and rooftops should not be accessed.

## **Life Safety Inspections**

Life Safety Inspections will be conducted once per semester and once over the Winter Term. Notification of the general time frame of the inspections will be issued before they are conducted. Please remember that all residential buildings, including all of Village Housing, are closed during Winter Shutdown.

## **Prohibited Items**

In addition to items prohibited on campus and in residence halls, trampolines, pools, and all types of personal grills are not permitted in village housing. Hammocks are only permitted if they have been inspected and approved by Facilities Operations. Please contact Facilities to have your hammock inspected. For a complete list of prohibited items for college housing, visit: [new.oberlin.edu/office/housing/forms-and-policies/items-not-permitted.dot](http://new.oberlin.edu/office/housing/forms-and-policies/items-not-permitted.dot)

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in any college housing, including village housing. All smoking is to be at least 30 feet away from a building entrance.

## **Parking**

Students are permitted to park only in house and/or apartment driveways or authorized parking spaces. Parking is never permitted on lawns. Individuals who park or drive on lawns or other unauthorized locations will be responsible for damages (i.e., lawn, personal property) and may be charged with judicial action. Students may also be responsible for any fees necessary to repair the damage. Vehicles must be registered with the Oberlin College Safety and Security Office; visit [new.oberlin.edu/office/safety-and-security/parking-policies.dot](http://new.oberlin.edu/office/safety-and-security/parking-policies.dot) for specific instructions. In addition, no vehicular traffic is permitted on the pedestrian walkways/access ways in and around Union and Goldsmith Housing. These access ways are for pedestrians, maintenance, and emergency vehicles only.

## **Students in College Houses**

Each student residing in a College house, who has a vehicle, must register the vehicle with Safety and Security. Most College houses have a driveway. **Only two vehicles are permitted in the driveway at any given time.** All other vehicles must be parked in designated student/guest parking lots (i.e., Woodland lot, Union St. lot, etc.). Vehicles parked in the driveway must display the Oberlin College vehicle registration tag. **Vehicles may be asked to park in various lots during extreme snow to accommodate driveway plowing.**

## **Students in Firelands, 137 Elm Street, and Union Street**

Each student who has a vehicle must register the vehicle with Safety and Security. There are 26 spaces (2 handicap) at Firelands, 4 at 137 Elm Street, and 37 at Union Street. There are no reserved parking spaces at any of these locations. Vehicles parked in the Firelands, Elm Street, and Union Street lots must display the Oberlin College vehicle registration tag.

## **Bicycles**

Bicycles not removed from campus or properly registered and stored in bike storage with Residential Education during the summer months invite theft and vandalism to campus. Bicycles must be removed and/or properly stored by the day after final exams, unless registered by students on campus for summer employment. Bicycles left in non-working condition for a period of more than two weeks are considered abandoned, even during the academic year. Such bicycles will be removed and stored by Campus Security and a fifty dollar (\$50) fee will be charged for not properly storing the bike. Any bicycles not claimed after September 30 of the next year will be disposed of by Oberlin College. If you have questions about the bicycle policy or registering your bike, please contact Safety and Security.

## **Check-in and Check-out**

### **Check-In**

Upon checking-in at the Root Room in Carnegie Hall, you will be given information on how to complete an online Apartment or House Condition Report. **It is imperative that you complete this form, note the condition in which you find your assigned space and its furnishings, and submit the form within 48 hours of moving into your space. Any student not submitting a form will be not be able to appeal any charges at check-out.** All damages noted on this form during the check-in process will protect you from being billed at the time of check-out. Damages not noted on this form at check-in and noted at the time of check-out will be the residents' financial responsibility.

### **Check-Out**

**Upon checking out of an assigned space, residents must restore the assigned space to check-in condition.** This means that furniture must be in proper order, trash and garbage must be removed, and the space must be clean. In addition, food must be removed from the unit, including food in refrigerators. All members of the unit will be held responsible for any cleaning, trash removal, or broken furniture.

Residents living in village housing use the Express Check-Out method for checking out of their space. Students must complete and Express Check-Out Envelope and return it with their keys to a drop off

locations. Locations specific to village housing are: Union/Goldsmith laundry room, 137 Elm Street, Firelands lobby, Stevenson Hall – Biggs Hallway, and Safety & Security. Failure to return your key(s) will result in charges of no less than \$60 per lock being assessed to your student account. Please note that once you have turned in your keys, you must have completely vacated the space. If during the close down inspections, we find you still in the housing space, you will be assessed for improper check out and late checkout fees. To ensure that you are not charged for these additional fees, you should be completely moved out of the housing unit prior to turning in your keys and you need to vacate your unit by the published deadlines. Please note that charges may be assessed after your departure/check-out. Due to the timing of external vendor invoicing, the College may not receive bills until up to a month after you leave. This may result in charges being assessed to the residents well after the end of the semester for damages and cleaning fees, including excess garbage pick-up. Any property left in a Village Housing space may result in a fine for its removal. Information about leaving furniture or other items will be disclosed at the end of the Spring Semester. Any items left in College property will become the property of the College. **Once you officially check out of your housing assignment, you are not permitted to reside in the space.** This includes the end of the year during Commencement Week.

All residents are required to follow proper check-in and check-out procedures.

## **Party and Noise Policy**

The Party Registration process has resumed for the Summer 2021 semester. In order to host a party, students should complete the [Village Housing Party Application](#) (please note, completing this form does not guarantee your party will be approved).

### **Preparing for your party**

After filling out the Village Housing Party Application, Area Coordinator Josh Matos will reach out to set up a walk-through of your apartment/house. During the walk-through, Josh Will ask you where the party will occur and how you plan to keep the party in this area. This is important as you will want to ensure guests are not accessing rooms or other areas that the hosts will not be. You will also want to make sure you have a fire evacuation plan in case of an emergency. You should be notifying your neighbors that you will be having a party. Notifying your neighbor does not mean you will not be shut down for excessive noise.

At the time of your walk-through you will need to provide your [Party Agreement](#) (which must be signed by everyone in the house) and a full guest list (including the residents and each guest's T-Number). Failure to produce these items at the time of your walk-through will result in your party not being approved.

## **Garbage Pick Up**

### **All Residents**

The following items are not allowed to be placed in or around receptacles: hazardous or infectious waste, tires, storage batteries, appliances containing Freon, brush, grass clippings or other yard waste, waste oil, bricks, rocks, concrete, dirt, or any material prohibited by state or federal law from being land filled.

### **College Houses**

The maximum number of receptacles per regular pick-up is two. The Village Housing Area Coordinator refuses to accept any illegal or hazardous waste. Receptacles provided by the College. Receptacles must be on the curb by 6:00 am the day of collection, but no sooner than 12:00 noon the day before collection. Empty receptacles must be removed from curbside by 11:59 pm of pick

Do not leave bags full of refuse out in the open. Please keep garbage can storage areas neat and clean. Keeping this area clean will limit the number of problems with rodents, bugs, and other wildlife. Your neighbors will appreciate it as well. Maintenance/up-keep of the exterior of the College house (keeping trash and discarded items off of lawn and front porch) is the responsibility of the residents of the house. This is governed by City Ordinance. Failure to comply may result in city fines and/or judicial action.

## **Schedule for Trash/Recycling Pick Up**

Residents in Village Housing who miss their garbage/trash pick-up may use any College dumpster. There are dumpsters specifically located behind Allencroft, Kahn, Dascomb, Stevenson, East, Firelands, 137 Elm Street, Union-Goldsmith, Baldwin-Talcott parking lot, South Hall loading dock, and Barrows.

### **Trash Pick-Up:**

- Tuesdays: *Cedar, W.College, Elm, Elmwood*
- Wednesdays: *Woodland, N.Professor, N.Main, S.Professor*
- Thursdays: *W.Lorain, E.Lorain, N.Pleasant, E.College, Willard Ct.*
- Residents of Firelands, 137 Elm Street, and Union-Goldsmith are to use the dumpsters by their residence buildings and are not part of the city's waste removal process.

### **Recycling Pick-Up:**

- Union/Goldsmith use recycling dumpsters.
- Firelands and 137 Elm have recycling bins inside.

Please visit the City of Oberlin's Refuse & Recycling webpage at: <https://www.cityofoberlin.com/city-government/departments/public-works/refuse-recycling-division/>

## **Recycling Materials Guidelines**

Oberlin College is not currently participating in the recycling program.

**Junk Mail:** 2.1% of municipal solid waste is junk mail, over 2 million tons a year. To reduce your junk mail, write to: Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service, a free service established in 1971 to have your name removed from most national mailing lists for five years. Send your name and address to: MPS, c/o DMA, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008.

## **Repair Request**

All requests for service or repair should be reported to Facility Operations via the online work order system. Please visit <https://www.oberlin.edu/facilities-operations/submit> to learn more about the work order submission process. Emergency requests and problems during working hours Monday – Friday should be called into the Service Response Desk at 775-8445. Emergencies occurring after hours, weekends, and holidays need to be called in immediately to Safety & Security (440-775-8444). An emergency is a situation that requires immediate attention (i.e., electrical outage, gas leak, flooding, etc.).

## **Contact with Residential Education Staff**

The Village Assistant assigned to your area is your main student contact for issues with your Village Housing experience. You may also contact the Village Area Coordinator ([jmatos@oberlin.edu](mailto:jmatos@oberlin.edu)) who are the professional staff contact persons for residents in Village Housing. Contact information is located on the Residential Education website. Village Assistants do not conduct complete rounds of buildings and are not on-call. You may also contact the Facility Operations if you have questions about facilities. In case of emergency, please contact Campus Safety.

## Furniture

Each bedroom comes furnished with a full or twin bed, desk chair, desk, dresser, and storage space for clothing (e.g., built in closet, wardrobe). The kitchens are furnished with appliances (stove and refrigerator), table and chairs, and the common spaces include upholstered furniture based on size of living space and occupancy. There should be enough seating for the number of students assigned to the space. Personal furniture is permitted provided that it is removed from the property at the end of the academic year. Microwaves, dishwashers, washers/dryers, etc. are not provided by the College. If a house contains any of these appliances, the College will not remove them from the premises if they are in working condition, but also will not repair or replace any of the items. If an appliance is in non-working condition the residents may submit a work order to have it removed. Any items left in College housing after check-out will become the property of the College.

## Internet Service

Internet access is provided in Village Housing at no additional charge to students. The following apartments and townhouses receive connectivity directly from CIT: 137, 140, 148, and 150 Elm Street; Union/Goldsmith complex; and Firelands (wired connection in rooms; wireless in common rooms only). Contact CIT (not Res Ed) for questions at [cit@oberlin.edu](mailto:cit@oberlin.edu) or [440-775-8197](tel:440-775-8197).

All other village houses receive internet connection through the Oberlin Cable Coop. Contact the cable coop (not Res Ed) with any questions regarding internet at [techs@oberlin.net](mailto:techs@oberlin.net) or [440-775-4001](tel:440-775-4001).

Cable Co-op network access is both wired and wireless. Cable Co-op provides up to 3 Mbps connection speed. Since the connection is shared amongst the residents of a house, performance may be poor. Your Cable Co-op connection receives an Oberlin College IP network address. This allows residents to access services as if they were on the College's network. For houses served by the Cable Co-op, residents may need an Ethernet cable to connect to an available Ethernet port in the house. Cables may already be present. The Oberlin College Technology Store (on Mudd Level A) has Ethernet cables if you don't have one. The wireless network for houses served by the Cable Co-op has the SSID (identifier), ObieVillage. Please do not share the following information with non-Oberlin personnel (they may jump on your network, further degrading performance):

The password for ObieVillage is in the form **wifi4xxx**, where xxx is your house number.

- 190 Woodland St. would be: **wifi4190**
- 2-digit street addresses use a leading 0.  
68 Elmwood Pl. would be: **wifi4068**

## Air Conditioning

Central air conditioning is provided in Union-Goldsmith housing and window units are provided in Firelands. No window air conditioning units are permitted to be installed in other Village Housing units.

This includes residential houses. Residents who have a medical or disability condition that requires air conditioning must complete the accommodations process by the specified deadlines. This information can be obtained from the Office of Disability Resources.

## **Unauthorized Areas**

Students are not permitted access to attics, basements, roofs, ledges, terraces, balconies, garages, or any other unsafe areas. If a resident finds that a basement or attic is unlocked, they must contact their Area Coordinator or facilities to have the area locked. Residents of Union-Goldsmith are allowed to access balconies.

## **Laundry Service**

Residents living in Firelands, 137 Elm Street, 150 Elm, and Union-Goldsmith Housing have centralized laundry units in those communities. The basement of 270 Goldsmith contains multiple laundry units. Residents living in Village will have access to a nearby assigned laundry facility for the 2020-21 academic year.

If any laundry machine is malfunctioning, please contact the laundry company, CSC Service Works, at the phone number listed on the posted placed in the laundry~ room. Or you can complete a work request form located at the following webpage: <https://www.cscsw.com/request-service/>.

Work orders for laundry machines should not be submitted to the College work order system.

## **Housekeeping and Care**

It is the resident's responsibility to maintain his/her individual room and all shared areas. The College does not provide garbage bags, trash cans (except for outdoor receptacles), paper products, cleaning supplies/equipment, and/or maid service. Students may be billed if excessive cleaning is needed after check-out. In Union-Goldsmith housing it is the responsibility of all units to keep the common vestibule areas clean.

## **Meal Plans and Cooking**

All students are required to purchase a meal plan. Students residing in College owned houses/apartments may opt for a smaller plan. More information about meal plans are available online at: <https://www.oberlin.edu/dining-services/meal-plans/options-rates> Students need to practice and safety in the kitchen when using the stove and other appliances.

Below are a few "Cooking 101" tips to keep safe and prevent setting off the fire alarms:

- Wear short or close fitting sleeves. Loose clothing can catch fire.
- Cooking is permitted in the house/apartment kitchens. Students must supply their own cooking supplies
- Clean cooking surfaces after each use to prevent food and grease build-up.
- Keep towels and potholders away from hot surface.

- Turn pan handles to the rear to prevent food spills by accidentally knocking a pot off the stove.
- Never plug more than one high-wattage appliance into a single outlet.
- Never pour water on a grease fire. Use baking soda or a fire extinguisher.
- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher handy.

## **Pets**

Fish and other aquatic animal that can live only in water are the only pets permitted by students in college housing. No other animals are permitted in residential spaces for any period of time unless specially approved by the Office of Residential Education. Unapproved pets may result in judicial action, fees, fines, assessment of cleaning, and possible pest control.

## **Storage**

Students are not permitted to store items in the College owned house or apartment during the summer months. Any items left in College houses or apartments become the property of the College. Visit our website for outside storage options: <https://www.oberlin.edu/housing/services>.

## **Keys, Lock-Outs, and Building Access**

### **Keys**

Duplication of any College key is prohibited, including keys for any Village Housing space. In the event that you lose a key, please report it to the Office of Residential Education immediately for a lock change or replacement. Lock changes will be automatically completed for exterior doors at a rate of \$60/lock. Interior bedroom door lock changes will be provided at the request of the individual student and the \$60 cost associated with the lock change will be charged to the student's term bill. To request a bedroom key, you will need to complete this [Form](#). Please note, not all village housing bedroom doors are lockable. If you are residing in a village housing space without a lockable bedroom door, you may request a lock be put on the bedroom door at a cost of \$60.00.

### **Lock-outs**

Safety and Security should be contacted for all lock-outs when the Residential Education Office is closed. Village Assistants do not have access to keys for Village Housing units. Because it is the individual's responsibility to manage his/her own keys, Campus Safety will not prioritize response for lock-out service to Village Housing.

### **Access**

137 Elm and Firelands residents will need to use their ID card to enter the building. Other Village Housing residents will be issued exterior apartment door keys. Oberlin College students who are not residents of 137 Elm or Firelands will have access to the building. During Winter Shutdown students will not be able to access 137 Elm Street and Firelands, including residents of those buildings. All student ID cards will be deactivated during Winter Shutdown.

## Guest Policy

- Guests must follow all Campus Policies and are the responsibility of the student hosting them.
- To register your guest, email Area Coordinator Josh Matos with your name and T-number as well as your guests name. If you have a housemate, they should be cc'd in this email.

## Mail

Students who reside in College houses may have mail delivered by the United States Post Office or they may use their OCMR box. Students who use their College house address, must also file a change of address card with the US Post Office upon departure. **All mail originating from the College will be sent to the OCMR box ONLY and not to College houses directly.** Students residing in Firelands, 137 Elm Street, and Union/Goldsmith MUST use their OCMR box. Do NOT get mail sent to your village house/apartment. The college is not responsible for any lost or stolen mail sent to village houses/apartments.

## Snow Shovels

Village Houses are responsible to shovel their own porch and sidewalk (City of Oberlin Ordinance 521.06). Village Apartments are not responsible for shoveling. Salt distribution and snow shovel rental is run through the Area Coordinator (Josh Matos, [jmatos@oberlin.edu](mailto:jmatos@oberlin.edu)).

## Help!

### Tips from VAs to Village Residents

Living in a Village House or Apartment with roommates can present different challenges than traditional housing. There are many new experiences that arise when you transition from living in a residence hall to an apartment or house, such as divvying up chores and buying common area objects. Discussing a plan early and choosing a system that you can all agree on will help prevent frustration later in the semester. The following guide is provided to help you negotiate living in village housing and bring up some of the questions you should be discussing with your roommates.

## **Bedroom Selection**

There are many different styles of housing within the Village Housing community and the options are much more variable than traditional housing. Because of this, there may be significant differences in the bedrooms and bed sizes available for you and your housemates. When you are deciding who will live in each room it is important that you can all agree on the selection process. In doing so, you and your housemates make conflicts over rooms less likely.

You may choose an arbitrary system like the first-come first-serve system most of us used in our first year or flipping a coin. Those options are fine as long as everyone is okay with the idea that they may end up with the least desirable bedroom. If instead you would like to negotiate the room selection as a group, you will want to think about the following things:

1. Think about what makes a bedroom favorable or unfavorable, including:
  - Size and shape—is one significantly larger or smaller than the others?
  - Storage availability—are there closets, places to put belongings?
  - Location— is one bedroom near an area that will be loud when someone is trying to sleep or busy when someone is trying to study?
  - Lighting—is it darker or brighter in some bedrooms?
  - Other amenities – examples include separate exterior entrances, attached bathrooms, or bed size
2. Then, think about the people that will be living in the space, including:
  - Morning and night habits—does this person stay up late, wake up early?
  - Are some roommates going to be home a lot more than others?
  - Do some roommates study at the library? At home?
  - Do some roommates have a lot of belongings?
  - Does someone play a large instrument or do large art projects that they will need space for?
  - Desired noise levels—does someone play a lot of loud music? Do quiet times need to be established in the house?

Once you have figured out these preferences, if you're lucky, the bedrooms will match specific needs. It may be that the smaller bedroom is also likely to be the quietest and someone may want that room. It may be that the largest bedroom is also the furthest from the others and everyone may want to allow a certain roommate that frequently uses the "sleep" button on their alarm to have that room!

If there are still discrepancies, you can think about ways that the group can compensate for less desirable bedrooms. These may include:

- Share unequal resources, like allowing someone with a small closet to store things in the large closets in other rooms.
- As a group, you could decide to switch bedrooms after a semester to make the selections fairer.
- Let someone borrow belongings that might help them modify a bedroom—you could allow the person with limited storage to use space on a shelf that you don't need.
- The house could decide to help purchase necessary additions to a room, like a lamp or shelf.
- You can try to match a less desirable bedroom with more desirable options in other parts of the house—someone with a small bedroom may be allowed to use the best kitchen cabinets

for their things or allowed to leave their shower things in the bathroom if there is not enough room for everyone's things.

## **Shopping and Sharing**

When living with roommates, there are going to be certain goods that everyone will use and/or benefit from (i.e. paper towels, cleaning supplies, silverware, etc.). It is important to decide early who is going to buy what, and if everyone can share these necessary goods. Obviously, there could just be multiple sets of everything, but there are also cheaper and more efficient ways of sharing. One method is to make each roommate responsible for a particular good or set of goods. For example:

- One roommate can purchase cups, plates, silverware, pots and pans, and any blender or food processor you might use.
- Another buys napkins, paper towels, and toilet paper for the year.
- Another roommate might purchase basic cleaning supplies (dish soap, mop or broom, etc.), and could split the cable bill with the other roommate that buys basic necessities (trash bags, replacement light bulbs for non-college issued lamps, etc.) .
- Another can buy the television, a vacuum, and a shovel.

Clearly if you don't want a television or cable, or someone already has some of these things, this list would look very different. Make sure that roommates are spending about the same amount of money, within their financial abilities, and are comfortable with the amount that they will have to spend. All of the roommates will often share all of the supplies, so whenever something runs out, the roommate responsible for that good should replenish it. Whatever method you decide, be sure to be upfront about your feelings and stick to whatever decisions that you make as a group.

This conversation can also come up in the way of food. Some roommates like to share, some don't. This is an important conversation to have as soon as possible. If you do like to share food - one rule that can be helpful is that if you finish the last of something that you didn't buy (i.e., bag of chips, cereal, milk, etc), you should inform the person that bought it and you should replace it with a new batch as soon as possible. Again, sharing can become an iffy situation, so tread lightly.

## **Chore Completion**

Like bedroom selection, the specific process you use to divide chores doesn't matter as much as the agreement among all roommates. It will be important that everyone seems to be contributing equally to the maintenance of the space. It will be helpful to create a list of things that need to be completed on a weekly basis. The list may look like this:

- Trash and recycling: taking trash and appropriate recyclables to their specified locations within the time limits. This task also includes replacing garbage bags in empty cans.
- Cleaning the bathroom: weekly tasks include cleaning the toilet, bathtub or shower and sweeping
- Cleaning the kitchen: weekly tasks include sweeping, cleaning counters, refrigerator and sink (excluding washing dishes, unless one person really wants to do all the dishes all the time)
- Vacuuming and sweeping common areas: including dining room, living room, hallway and stairs

The important part is to make sure that everyone is happy enough in their jobs to actually do them. Housecleaning is much easier when everyone helps out! Although you are doing chores, find ways to make it enjoyable. You're going to be spending a lot of time doing cleaning and maintenance around the house over the course of the year, so you should have fun!

Once you have compiled a list, you can decide how the tasks will be completed. It may be that you rotate responsibilities each week or that a task is assigned for the semester. You may also want to decide how the completion is tracked and what will happen if a task is not completed. Some people choose to have a chore-chart that is initialed when a task is complete, others may find that unnecessary. You will also want to address cleaning tasks that should be done by the individual, including:

- Washing dishes: how long can a dish stay in the sink?
- Personal belongings: can they be left in common areas? When is it time to remove that stuff?
- How clean do individuals' bedrooms need to be?

## **Housecleaning Tips**

Some of you will never have taken care of your own household before this year. Having an apartment is a very different experience than living in a residence hall—there are no cleaning personnel to vacuum for you or clean your bathroom.

Here are a few tips for cleaning your house quickly and thoroughly:

- Let dishes soak in hot soapy water while you clean up the rest of the kitchen after a meal. This will allow a lot of the detritus – huh? to loosen up and come off the dishes more easily.
- Buy a toilet scrubber and a plunger.
- Use diluted bleach or disinfecting wipes when cleaning surfaces that are often used—these will kill germs and make your bathroom a healthier place to use.
- To remove mildew from your shower curtain, wash in hot soapy water, rub with lemon juice and let the curtain dry in the sun. For plastic curtains, clean with laundry pre-wash spray. Spray along the top, letting it run down to cover the curtain. Allow it to sit for a few minutes, and then rinse it off.

The last thing you will want to consider is when you will complete cleaning tasks that do not need to happen as often. Will you have monthly “Cleaning Days”? Will each person have a responsibility to complete one of those tasks each month as well as their ongoing chores? These irregular tasks might include:

- Mopping hard floors
- Dusting
- Cleaning windows
- Cleaning outdoor areas, including porches and yards
- Shoveling snow

## **Conflict Resolution**

Although residents living in Village Housing should be familiar with sharing their living space, your new place in Village Housing is likely to present a greater number of occasions on which you will need to be aware of others' different needs regarding their living space. Residents living in the same house may have different expectations revolving around issues like the use of space, cleanliness, or amplified noise, and if these things aren't discussed at the beginning of the year, things can escalate quickly!

It is always important to establish boundaries that are comfortable for everyone involved in a Village unit early, but even when clear boundaries are set and agreements reached, there is still the potential for disagreement to occur.

In most instances we encourage residents to try to address whatever disagreements might exist with their housemates directly, being clear about what the problem may be and how they would like to resolve the issue. What is the problem? What interests do each party have in the matter? What sort of solution can satisfy the interests of all involved parties?

Though it is preferred that housemates resolve their conflicts together, sometimes issues arise which may seem too great to resolve within the house. In these instances, you have support. Your Village Assistants are equipped to handle disputes that are too sensitive for you and your housemates to comfortably handle on your own. If you have concerns, you can simply email your VA to arrange a time to meet.

If any party involved in a conflict doesn't feel comfortable bringing a case to your VA, your Area Coordinator can assist in mediation or you may want to use the Oberlin College Dialogue Center (OCDC). Information about the OCDC can be found on the web at <http://www.oberlin.edu/ombudsperson/index.htm>.

The OCDC is overseen by the ombudsperson, the Oberlin Campus Dialogue Center promotes social change through conflict transformation, mediation, community building, and dialogue. The center's mediation team includes students, faculty members, and staff members who represent various constituencies on the Oberlin campus. These individuals are trained to mediate using the social justice model.

You can contact their offices by calling (440) 775-6728 or emailing [ombuds@oberlin.edu](mailto:ombuds@oberlin.edu).

