

# Saint Gianna and Pietro Molla Maternity Home Family Guidelines

**Welcome to Saint Gianna and Pietro Molla Maternity Home!** We are happy to have you with us and want you to feel at home here. When people from various backgrounds and situations all come together to live, we need some basic rules to function as best we can together. We want **an environment where everyone is respected and feels safe; this is most important.** Our housemothers and staff will work to ensure this. They oversee the day-to-day operations and living schedule. We have some general guidelines below.

**Schedule:** The schedule will be determined according to the time and season and individual needs. The housemother will let you know when things are different than the normal schedule. Those in school will need to be ready for that on time; generally, the other residents will need to be down and dressed and have breakfast by 9:00 am, later on weekends. At night there is a set time to be upstairs so that the alarm can be set and doors locked. Usually, weekends are different than weekdays.

**Meals/Diet/Kitchen:** We keep restaurant codes in the kitchen, and so as far as sanitation and cleaning we are very strict - strict with no double dipping, strict with washing hands before any meal prep, clean up, sanitizing, washing each day any dish towels, labeling any leftovers or other food, and marking dates on food when it is opened. We always eat dinner together, and when possible, breakfast and lunch as well. We always have things available for those with special dietary needs. We understand personal eating habits and preferences as well as the need for some comfort foods. We have plenty of snacks but try to have fruit and vegetables and healthy options available. We limit soda and sweets (doesn't mean we don't celebrate with them sometimes!).

**Housekeeping:** We all work together to make this house our home. The housemothers do many of the jobs here, but they are not our maids. We all need to work together to be a part of the Saint Gianna and Pietro Molla Family. Each resident is responsible for their own room, to pick up after themselves in the bathroom, to do their own laundry (we try not to do laundry on Sunday), to maintain good personal hygiene, and assist the housemothers with meal prep and clean up after each meal. During the summer and days off from school we ask each resident give approximately one-half hour each day to the upkeep of the home as assigned by housemother (for instance watering flowers in the summer or taking out garbage). On Saturday mornings all residents and staff on duty deep clean the resident floor and bathroom. Exceptions will certainly be made at the end of pregnancy and during the post-partum period or when people are sick.

**Rooms:** Rooms are to be kept neat and orderly. Wet towels should not be anywhere except on a hook on the back of the door. Dirty clothes should be separated from clean. You are only allowed in your own room. There are public areas to visit with other moms. Everyone needs to know that they have a place for privacy and that their personal items are kept safe.

**Medical Considerations:** The health of our mothers and their children are most important. All appointments go through the assistant director so that we are best able to determine the scheduling that fits with our staff. Prescriptions must be reported to staff, and if necessary, staff will help distribute them. We feel emotional health is as important as physical health and will generally require counseling in addition to medical appointments. We typically begin at Unity Clinic in Grafton; babies are delivered in Grand Forks at Altru Hospital; we use Park River Dental and Spectra Health for dental; Northland Christian Counseling; and generally, Heartland Eye clinic for vision health.

**School:** We put a lot of emphasis on education. This is really needed as you are going out from here. If you have not graduated and are under 20, you will be attending Minto High School to work on that. If you are older, we will work on a GED with you, if necessary. Depending upon circumstances, beyond the high school requirement, women may be able to work on skills and other educational opportunities.

**Phone and Other Electronics:** Phones and electronics have been a source of struggles over the years here. Many issues with former relationships, abuse, restraining orders, privacy, and addictions are caused by using social media and phones. We also know that it is difficult in today's society to be without a phone and access to social media. We have expanded our phone usage to allow, if residents are able to maintain their own phone, then they can check it out for the afternoon. Usage of phone is allowed on the two main floors or outside. It cannot be taken into bedrooms or the upper floors. It is also allowed to be taken along when residents leave for appointments, school, or home visits. This is a privilege and can be taken away if abused or used in the wrong way.

**Television/Movies:** We try to keep a balance in our life here at Saint Gianna and Pietro Molla Maternity Home. We understand that many of our moms come to us watching a lot of tv or movies as their primary form of entertainment. We allow tv and movies that are appropriate but would like to limit the amount of time watching tv to 1 movie a day or about an hour of TV. Exceptions can be made, but we also have many other things to do in free time – like games, Xbox games like Just Dance, fire pits, reading, art projects, bike rides; we have access to a gym that has pool tables, air hockey, ping pong, foosball, a treadmill, elliptical, and other exercise equipment; we have a basketball hoop, and ice rink in the winter, and many other family activities and events to take part in.

**Dress Code:** We dress appropriately and modestly. T-shirts must not depict inappropriate images or words. We will help buy appropriate attire as necessary. Thrift stores are utilized, and we try on things before we buy them. Facial and tongue piercings must be removed. Earrings are allowed.

**Religion/Faith:** We are a Catholic Maternity Home and live according to the teachings of the Catholic Faith. Our mothers do not need to be Catholic to come here, nor do they need to join the Church. We pray grace before and after meals, we pray in gratitude together each night (Night Prayer of the Church – Psalms), and we attend Mass together each Sunday or other special occasions (like Christmas...). If a mom is active in another denomination, we can work to make accommodations for that as we are able. We also have many other spiritual opportunities that moms can participate in, like daily Mass, the Sacraments, and classes. We have a chapel in our Home that is available for prayer, and we ask that you use it respectfully.

**Home Visits:** Home visits and other outings need to go through the staff of the home. These would only be considered if the mom has been at the Maternity Home for at least 2 months and the situation, friends, family, circumstances are proven to be appropriate. This is the same for visitors to our Home; they would have to be approved in advance and with appropriate people. Visitors will only be allowed in certain areas of the home out of respect for other residents. Only the bottom two floors of our home are public. The top two floors are private.

**Language/Conversations:** We ask for respectful and kind language to be used at all times: no bad language, rudeness, inappropriate jokes or talk.

**Privacy/Confidentiality:** Each person here has their own story and background. The staff shares information to best serve each person. Residents are free to share information with each other; however, we do not have a right to share information with people outside of the home on social media or with family and friends without prior permission. When we publish newsletters or things on our website, these are with permission and then are public. Each staff and resident will sign a confidentiality agreement with this understanding. Of course, if there is ever a suicide or homicide threat, these would be reported immediately.

**Adoption/Parenting:** We consider both options to be good options and will assist you in determining the best path forward in your pregnancy. If adoption is chosen, we work through agencies licensed in the state of ND.

**Childcare:** If a mother is parenting or comes already with other children – that mother is the primary caregiver of the child. We will help guide and teach and always make sure that little one has every need met, but the relationship between the mother and child is key. Breaks will certainly be given, and accommodations met when circumstances call for that. If a mother is in high school, we will either provide or pay for daycare for the child during that time.

**Cost:** All of our services are free. There is no charge to live here. This includes food, shelter, clothing, baby supplies, and rides to appointments.

**Different Programs:** Mothers come here from all different backgrounds, ages, and circumstances. We will best determine a program for each person depending upon these situations. For instance, the program for a 15-year-old will be different than for someone who is 30. Some mothers will attend high school; some will be taking care of children; as people are transitioning out, some may have a job. We promise to do our best to treat each mom and their little ones with respect and dignity, but there will necessarily be different goals and programs to meet individual needs.

**Freedom to Leave:** We are not a correctional facility. Everyone here is free to leave. Your cooperation is also needed to stay. We reserve the right to determine your length of stay based on your willingness to be a part of our program.

**We reserve the right** to check your rooms and belongings especially when you first arrive or after a time away.

**Drugs, alcohol, and smoking are not allowed** and can be a reason to be asked to leave.

**Recovery:** For those who are in recovery we will do our best to accommodate by taking to meetings...; however, based on staff, this is not a guarantee. We live a clean and sober, balanced life in a family setting with a spiritual basis which is also a needed recovery skill.

These are some of the major guidelines and rules; however, we are always trying to accommodate, adapt, and grow as best we can to accommodate the current needs and situations of our mothers. The Housemothers, Assistant Director, and Director have the right to change expectations as needed and ask for your help in making this home and your time with us positive and productive.

We will give a tour and explain various things about the day-to-day life and order of our home after you arrive. We will show you where the dishes are, the dishwashing regulations, how our laundry works, where extra shampoo, toilet paper, and towels are, what the public areas of the home are, where cleaning supplies are and all other necessary information you may need during your time here.

**Short term and long-term goals** will be discussed after you arrive, and we will do our best to follow these as your program of stay. We will meet periodically to evaluate your progress.

**We are always here to help you as necessary. Again, we welcome you and we look forward to having you as part of our Saint Gianna and Pietro Family!**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Copy Given: \_\_\_\_\_