

# PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

*Basis + Headstart*  
FULL TIME ATTENDANCE PROGRAMS

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JohnHoward  
The John Howard Society of North Island

## FTAP (Oasis and Headstart) Programs Overview

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Oasis and Headstart Programs are 6-month Full-Time Attendance Programs (FTAP) for female and male youth (ages 13 to 19) who want to make positive life changes. Youth in these programs are supervised and referred through a Youth Probation Officer. This is a Provincial Youth Justice Program funded through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).

Young people can stay at the program for *up to 6 months*. During the day (Monday to Friday), they participate in activities that help them reach their goals – school, strengthening life skills, recreation, exploring part-time work, practicing skills in the community, learning about positive relationships, and individual and/or group counselling. It is important to us that their time at the FTAP Program fits their unique needs and interests, so they are involved in setting goals, planning the weekly schedule, and assessing progress.

Youth stay with contracted caregivers while they are here. Our caregivers provide a safe, healthy environment – and another place where they can learn and practice the skills they need. Youth are also connected to a primary counsellor who is often the go-to person while they are here.

The first 30 days with us are for settling in and sorting out what to work on. After that, if things are going well, we encourage youth to build independent skills and plans for healthy 'structured' free time to do activities in the community, look for work, etc.

We have a teacher from our local school district (SD72) onsite, so it's possible to complete their individual education goals. For many youth, this can be an excellent chance to complete some schooling – several clients have graduated while here.

## What to Expect if Your Child Needs Detox

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This program can **only provide a non-medical detox**. If something more is needed, we can help connect you with a regional detox program first.

When a youth arrives wanting a non-medical detox, we can offer 24-hour support and supervision in the caregiver's home. Detox typically lasts 5 to 10 days, and youth have regular contact with program staff and additional support from our clinical counsellor if needed. Youth are also seen by a local doctor within 24-72 hours of arrival at program.

## Typical Day at Program

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During the weekdays, youth will be dropped off at the day program to participate in activities related to their goals and for recreation. For example, a youth week could be a combination of check-ins, cooking, physical education, individual/ group counselling, cultural connections, supervised time in the community, work experience, independent learning (school), and weekly chores. If youth have specific ideas, they are invited to share those with staff and add them to the weekly schedule.

**Here is an example of a daily schedule:**

9 am	<b>Caregiver drives youth to program</b>	After the first month, youth can make plans to walk, bike or bus this commute
9 – 9:15	<b>Check-in</b>	Time with other youth/staff for a casual or more formal group check-in
9:15 am	<b>Walk or Counselling</b>	Individual or group counselling time
10:15 am	<b>P.E. Block</b>	Sports or workout routines at a local school gym or other exercise facility
11:30 am	<b>Lunch</b>	Shared eating space/kitchen
12 pm	<b>School Block</b>	1-1 school support with a teacher in the program or time to do independent learning towards other learning/training goals
1 pm	<b>Activity</b>	Healthy activities such as art, yoga, hikes, bowling, swimming, skating etc.
2 pm	<b>Regular pick up</b>	Caregiver picks youth up from program
2 – 4 pm	<b>Extra activities arranged</b>	Activity workers will make plans with youth outside of regular program hours

## About the Program Staff

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Youth will be connected to various staff at the FTAP Program. You are always welcome and encouraged to connect with staff to help us support your child.

### Primary Youth Counsellor

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Your child will be assigned a primary Youth Counsellor. This primary worker is the youth's main support while they are here in the program. They are typically the best person to contact for any questions or concerns. They also help set and manage goals for your child.

### Teacher

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The program has a School District 72 Teacher. The teacher will support the youth in developing an individual learning plan to meet their academic and employment goals.

### Clinical Counsellor

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The Clinical Counsellor meets with the youth regularly to provide individualized or group counselling. They can also work with youth and their family members, as necessary, to ensure the best possible outcome for the youth during and after the program.

### Youth & Family Transition Counsellor

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The Transition Counsellor supports a youth's transition in and out of the program. They can assist you in connecting with your youth and help organize/facilitate a smooth and successful transition back home upon completion of the program.

### Activity and Supervision Workers

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The Activity and Supervision Workers will be spending individualized time with youth, doing activities, both inside and outside of day program hours.

### Program Manager

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The manager oversees the day-to-day running of the program and is an active part of case management. You can contact the Program Manager if you have any questions or concerns.

### Family Resource Coordinators

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Family Resource Coordinators (FRC) primarily work with the caregivers and help youth get set up in their care homes when they first arrive. Youth can meet with a FRC if they have any questions or concerns about their care home.

### Administrative Support

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The Administrative Support person is one of the first faces youth see as they enter the building each morning. She loves to welcome and connect with our youth.

## About the Care Homes

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Care homes are families in the community who work with our program to offer space for youth to live during their time in the FTAP Program. Each adult in our care homes has been through an extensive screening process as part of a Safe Homes<sup>®</sup> study. Youth are not left alone with anyone unless the person has been screened and approved.

### Confidentiality

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We don't share all the information that comes in a referral with our caregivers, just the information they need to meet your child's needs. Caregivers are bound by confidentiality agreements and may not share confidential information with anyone outside program unless they have permission. Caregivers keep a daily log of their time spent with the youth. These are given to the youth's primary counsellor and then placed in the youth's file.

### Privacy

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Each youth has a private bedroom, and caregivers respect their need for privacy. From time to time, caregivers may do a visual check to ensure everything is safe and in order.

### Discussing Issues

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Youth and caregivers will discuss things with staff as they come up. Youth, caregivers and staff will also plan to meet once a month to discuss how things are going in the care home. This practice supports a youth to develop conflict resolution and relationship skills.

### Part of the Family

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While living at the care home, youth are included in regular home routines, family-style mealtimes, weekend outings, grocery shopping, etc. Program staff collaborate with the caregivers to make sure activities are reasonable and fit a youth's interests/abilities.

### 24/7 Support

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Support is available to our caregivers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If there's a crisis, the person on-call can provide help to the caregivers and the youth.

### Medication

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Any medication your child takes is stored in a locked-up area at the care home. Youth can communicate with their caregiver about taking it, and we keep a record of the time, date and dosage. This included non-prescription medication such as Tums, Tylenol, melatonin.

### Substance Use

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We ask caregivers to make sure that any alcohol or marijuana in the home is locked away and not used while youth are staying at their home.

## Important Information

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During a youth's time in the FTAP Program, they are considered to be in the care of the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD) and are protected by the laws that go with that. We have information about that which we can give you or your child. For example, there is a document called: ***Know Your Rights: A Guide for Young People in Care***

## Arrival

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In their first week here, youth will be completing some paperwork with their primary youth counsellor. During this time, they will explain about confidentiality, rights and responsibilities, program commitments. Youth will also create a safety plan to outline what helps when they're having a bad day and what makes it worse. We explore any immediate needs and help them think about goals to work on while they're here.

## Program Commitments

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Youth may wonder what the consequences will be if they do something 'wrong.' We try to be reasonable, respectful, and use logical consequences that are relevant to what happened. The FTAP Program staff also try to focus more on why something happened and whether the behaviour aligns with a youth's goals and who they want to be.

**The Youth Handbook** provides the following outline of the FTAP Program commitments:

*The key commitments we ask youth to keep are:*

- *We respect each other and create a safe space for everyone who is working hard to change. For example, this means we avoid language or clothing with explicit talk that might trigger someone.*
- *Be open with staff and don't hide stuff from us. For example, cell phone access can distract you from what you're trying to do here. If you hide it, you might feel disconnected from the program and staff, making it harder for you to create positive change. We are here to support you. If you're struggling with something (anything), let us know, and we'll figure out what to do together.*
- *If you need something or are not sure, ask us about it. For example, you might want to go on social media to make healthy changes to the content, and once you ask, we can help you set it up.*

*If you're not keeping the program commitments, we'll start by asking what's going on and how we can help. If we need to take some action, we'll make it logical and reasonable. We've tried to cover the main things here, but if anything that's not covered comes up, we will talk to you and figure out the best way to move forward.*

## Communication

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The staff will help each youth create a contact list, a list of healthy supports that they will be able to call from the care home or program space. As the youth's parent/guardian, it is valuable to have your input on this list to keep them connected with positive supports. Parents/guardians can provide this list before or during a youth's arrival and ask to add or update the contact list.

Youth can make phone calls during the time in the program and at the care home. We ask youth to keep phone calls to 20 minutes in length. This general timeframe seems to promote healthy dialogue and prevents the lengthy conversation from taking turns. If you or another positive support require more time, do not hesitate to contact the youth's primary counsellor to make arrangements. We can also set up video calling, help youth send mail and be flexible to ensure that a youth's communication aligns with their goals.

When youth make phone calls at the care home, we ask that all calls be outgoing and not incoming. While this might seem frustrating at times, in our experience overall, this works best. Please feel free to contact staff at the program if you need to talk to your child or if you want to know more about this policy.

*If there is an emergency and you need to reach your child after-hours,  
you can always call the after-hours number provided at arrival.*

## Home Visits

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Home visits are a chance for youth to connect with key people and practice things they've learned. For some youth, a home visit will mean going back to their home community to stay overnight for a few days or up to a week. For other youth, this may include family members, or others supports coming to visit them in Campbell River. Either way, the program staff can help make a plan and help with organizing visits. This would be done in conjunction with the Youth Probation Officer. We recommend that youth wait until they have been in the **FTAP Program for a month before planning a home visit**. This gives youth a chance to focus on themselves and settle into program routines. If family or other supports want to visit a youth before a month, it can be arranged, and any approved contact can make plans to visit in Campbell River. It is often best to contact the transition counsellor or primary counsellor to decide what is needed and what will suit a youth's needs best.

## Discharge Planning

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One of the most important things is for youth to have a smooth move back home, so we will work with you, your child and the Youth Probation Officer to make a safe, positive plan. We have monthly Youth Centered Meetings (YCM's) and encourage youth to invite their parent/guardian to these. You can join by telephone or video conference.

As the parent/guardian, you will also be asked about the emergency discharge plan if your child needs to leave the program on short notice. If a youth does leave early, we do everything we can to make sure they arrive home safely.

## How Parents/Guardians Can Support

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We recognize that parents/guardians offer immense amounts of care and support to their children throughout their lives. As a person who has spent significant time with youth, you likely have a wealth of knowledge about what has worked well in the past and what some challenges might be for your child. It is always valuable if you can share your knowledge and past experiences with staff members.

When youth are in the FTAP Program, their communication with parents/guardians can vary and potentially bring up strong emotions. If you need support having a difficult discussion, we have staff who can help supervise, mediate or plan for these talks. If you have not heard from your child or want a general update, you are always welcome to contact the primary counsellor.

We also realize that having your child away from home can be challenging in different ways, and therefore, **you are always welcome to contact us with any questions!** If you need additional support, we can also help you connect with resources in your community.

## Frustrations or Complaints

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If something isn't going well, we encourage you to contact us. If the program staff or manager does not help address the situation and you feel a formal complaint is needed, we can provide you with a complaint form that is reviewed by the Executive Director.

## Contact Information

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You can send mail to your child at the address below. Let the staff know if you are planning to send mail to watch for the item. Staff will sit with the youth when they open the mail.

Mailing address: **(Youth's First Name) FTAP** (e.g. John Smith FTAP)  
**140 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue,**  
**Campbell River, B.C.**  
**V9W 5M3**

Program phone: **250-286-0222**

General email: [mail@jhsni.bc.ca](mailto:mail@jhsni.bc.ca)



## Program Philosophy

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The FTAP Program uses a number of models to guide what we do. For example:

- **Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency (ARC).** The difficulties that young people have are often their attempts to adapt to their world and any trauma that has happened.
- **Trauma responsive practice.** So rather than 'What's wrong with you?' we think about 'What's happened to you?'
- The **Circle of Courage®** was developed by Dr. Larry Brendtro and Dr. Martin Brokenleg. This model has four central values – belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. It brings together the wisdom of indigenous cultures and research on positive youth development.
- **The bio-psycho-social-spiritual model.** Looking at a person's needs from as many angles as are appropriate.
- **Safer Practice.** A pragmatic response that focuses on keeping people safe and minimizing harms associated with higher risk behaviour while recognizing that the behaviour may continue despite the risks.

## Next Steps

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Thank you for taking the time to gather information to help your child/youth. We can all appreciate that looking for outside support may not always feel easy. If you are feeling unsure or wondering what to do, here are some next steps:

- If you have any questions about the FTAP Program or other John Howard services, contact us at the number below. We can connect you with a non-judgemental counsellor who can confidentially support you in deciding the next steps for your child.
- You can also review the FTAP Program - Youth Handbook. This handbook has a FAQ section and a list of things for youth to consider.

**CONTACT US BY CALLING: (250) 286-0222**