



Residents' Disciplinary Policy

Chester House is managed by the Guy Chester Centre. The Guy Chester Centre is the trading name of the Trustees of the North Bank Estate.

1. Purpose of policy

This policy (and the relevant clauses in the accommodation agreement) are designed to reinforce a culture within Chester House where all residents, staff, guests and visitors are treated with dignity and respect (see our dignity and respect policy for more details).

Chester House expects all residents to behave in an appropriate manner at all times in line with the accommodation agreement and other policies. Guests of residents are expected to behave in the same way and their behaviour is the responsibility of the resident.

This policy details how Chester House will:

- Deal quickly and informally with minor offences for which a warning will be given and a financial charge may be made;
- Deal formally with more serious or repeated incidents whereby a resident may be required to leave the accommodation and a financial charge may be made;
- Allow students to appeal against decisions made for formal stages and for those appeals to be handled fairly and in a timely manner;
- Ensure that any warning or financial charge is fair, reasonable and proportionate.

2. Role and authority for disciplinary action

The Accommodation Team is responsible for responding to any disciplinary issue. This includes behaviour deemed inappropriate, illegal or in breach of the accommodation agreement, dignity and respect policy, and other policies while in Chester House or on the North Bank Estate. This will also include behaviour that occurs away from Chester House either towards another resident or of a serious nature that causes sufficient concern for the wellbeing of residents and staff of Chester House.

If there are concerns regarding the well-being of a resident during any disciplinary action, the Accommodation Team will seek advice from a suitable resource to establish the most appropriate action to take.

The Accommodation Team has jurisdiction over residents who reside in Chester House, providing the incident does not merit action beyond this policy, e.g. criminal behaviour. The Accommodation Team will determine the seriousness of the incident and the appropriate action to take. Where a guest of a resident misbehaves while in or around Chester House, the guest will be banned from Chester House and the resident themselves will be held responsible and would be the subject of any disciplinary action.

The types of disciplinary action that can be applied by the Accommodation Team are:

- A financial charge for damage caused and/or loss incurred by a resident and/or Chester House
- A verbal (informal) or written (formal) warning not to repeat the behaviour
- A final warning for repeated or serious behaviour
- Termination of residence with notice or with immediate effect for a repeated or serious behaviour

3. Explanation of disciplinary action

All residents of Chester House are expected to respect all persons and property at all times; this includes keeping noise to an appropriate level, especially at night, to respect other people's property, to follow the rules of Chester House, to maintain an appropriate level of cleanliness in communal areas such as kitchens, and to behave in a manner that does not put the safety or security of persons and property at risk. Residents are also expected to follow instructions from Chester House staff and volunteers when asked to do so.

3.1. Financial charges

Should a resident's behaviour cause damage or result in a loss to another resident or Chester House, a financial charge will be made on the resident's account with an invoice created. An explanation of the charge will be provided with the invoice. All charges such as a cleaning charge, repair or replacement charge or accommodation charge will be reasonable and in line with our accommodation fees and inventory policy.

3.2. Informal stage one (verbal warning)

A verbal warning will be given (this may be via email if the Accommodation Team is unable to speak to the resident) and/or a financial charge. The warning will be recorded by the Accommodation Team.

3.3. Informal stage two (written warning)

For behavioural issues deemed more than minor, such as actions that cause a nuisance to other residents or a repeat of a minor behavioural issue, a written warning will be issued. This will be sent to the resident in writing via email. The email will detail any action that will be taken should the behaviour be repeated or should there be any further issues. The warning will be recorded by the Accommodation Team.

3.4. Formal stage one (final written warning)

Stage one of the formal process is to ensure more serious incidents or repeated poor behaviour is dealt with quickly by the Accommodation Team to prevent further issues and to maintain the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of all residents.

Upon being made aware of an incident, the Accommodation Team will begin to investigate and will attempt to speak in person to the resident/s concerned within 48 hours of the incident being brought to our attention. If for any reason this is not possible then the Accommodation Team will attempt to call the resident/s concerned. An email may only be sent to arrange to speak to the resident. This conversation is to explain the situation to the resident/s concerned and provide them with the opportunity to explain what happened. Depending on the seriousness of the Incident, a second member of the Accommodation Team may be present if the conversation is in person. Notes of the conversation will be taken as a record of the discussion to assist in the investigation. The resident/s concerned are entitled to bring a second person if the conversation is in person. The second person is not permitted to speak on behalf of the resident. The Accommodation Team may also request a written statement to be sent by email.

Careful thought will also be given as to how to best inform the resident/s concerned of an incident if the information has been provided by a third party. Where there are witnesses to the incident, the Accommodation Team will attempt to speak to those witnesses and will request a written statement to be sent by email.

After the meeting and any subsequent investigation, the Accommodation Team will decide if the resident/s concerned are at fault and if so will issue a final written warning and, if needed, a financial charge. The investigation will aim to be completed within five working days. The warning will be recorded by the Accommodation Team. It will be made clear to the resident/s concerned that any future behavioural issue will lead to stage two of the formal disciplinary process.

3.5. Formal stage two (termination of residence)

Stage two of the formal process is to ensure very serious incidents or repeated poor behaviour where a formal stage one warning has already been given are dealt with quickly by the Accommodation Team to prevent further issues and to ensure the safety of all persons and property and to maintain the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of all residents.

Termination of residence will be given either with notice or with immediate effect as per clause 4 in the accommodation agreement. Incidents that may result in termination with immediate effect being issued include any criminal activity or behaviour that puts the safety of people and property at serious risk. The resident/s concerned will still be required to pay the licence fees for the remainder of the licence period and will lose their deposit. Where a termination of residence is issued, the resident must return all Chester House property, including room keys, in their possession and is permanently excluded from Chester House and its grounds on departure.

3.5.1. The decision to issue a termination of residence with immediate effect will be made by the Accommodation Team based on the information and evidence available to them and the immediate consequences of the behaviour. This stage is only for the most serious behaviour and is likely to have resulted in the authorities being contacted, e.g. the Police. Depending on the situation, the resident/s concerned will be notified of the decision either in person or by phone. Notification may also be given via the Police or another authoritative body. The termination of residence will also be sent in writing via email and, if needed, a financial charge will be added to their account. The resident/s concerned will be informed if they are permitted to return to Chester House to collect their belongings and return the keys. Depending on the situation, arrangements may need to be made to either ensure that the resident/s concerned are accompanied or that their belongings are collected and the keys returned by a third party.

3.5.2. The decision to issue a termination of residence with notice will be made by the Accommodation Team once being made aware of an incident. The Accommodation Team will investigate the incident and will attempt to speak in person to the resident/s concerned within 24 hours. If for any reason this is not possible then the Accommodation Team will attempt to call the resident/s concerned. An email may only be sent to arrange to speak to the resident. This conversation is to explain the situation to the resident/s concerned and provide them with the opportunity to explain what happened. A second member of the Accommodation Team may be present if the conversation is in person. Notes of the conversation will be taken as a record of the discussion to assist in the investigation. The resident/s concerned are entitled to bring a second person if the conversation is in person. The second person is not permitted to speak on behalf of the resident.

Careful thought will also be given as to how to best inform the resident/s concerned of an incident if the information has been provided by a third party. Where there are witnesses to the incident, the Accommodation Team will attempt to speak to those witnesses and will request a written statement to be sent by email.

After the meeting and any subsequent investigation, the Accommodation Team will decide if the resident/s concerned are at fault and if so will issue the termination of residence in writing and, if needed, a financial charge. The Accommodation Team will decide the notice period based on the behaviour and the impact on persons and property in line with clause 4 of the accommodation agreement. This will be communicated in writing. The investigation will aim to be completed within five working days. The action taken will be recorded by the Accommodation Team.

3.6. Formal stage appeal

A resident may apply to appeal the Accommodation Team's decision for formal incidents within five calendar days of the decision being made and communicated. An application to appeal must be submitted via email for the attention of the Centre Director. An application to appeal can be made on grounds that new information is available which, for good reason, was not available at the time the original decision was made, and had it been available would have affected the decision. The application to appeal should include any evidence.

The Centre Director will review the application to appeal statement and any evidence submitted and will determine whether the resident has provided evidence that they have grounds for appeal. If not, the resident will be informed of this within five working days. The resident will have no further right to appeal. If there are grounds for appeal, the Centre Director will then investigate the incident under the same conditions as the formal stage processes and report the findings to the resident/s concerned within ten working days. The Centre Director will either uphold, amend or rescind the original decision. If the original decision for a termination of residence is rescinded the resident/s concerned will be allowed to continue to reside in Chester House under normal license conditions. The resident will have no further right to appeal.

4. Other information

Further information or clarification can be obtained by emailing office@chesterhouse.org.uk

5. Review date

This policy was last reviewed in March 2019 and will be next reviewed in March 2020.