Off-Campus Housing Guide – Fall 2015

Why Messiah College requires an Off-Campus Orientation
Several years ago there were some local folks who were upset by the behavior of some Messiah College students who were living in their neighborhoods. In response to their reaction a Grantham Community Association was formed to address “town gown” issues (which are basically any concerns that arise when the college and town intersect.) One of the things we agreed upon was that we would hold this orientation for all students who wanted to live off campus. The orientation served a couple different purposes, one was to educate students about a variety of things related to living off campus – from budgeting to renters insurance to services offered to our off campus personnel. The other purpose was to talk with students about how to be a good neighbor and the importance of representing themselves and the college well.

The Residency Requirement
Messiah College is designed as a residential college. Part of the “Messiah experience” is the relationships that students build in college with roommates and those who live across the hall. Our residency requirement states that all single, full-time students under the age of 23 (by the first day of classes) are required to live on campus. Exceptions are granted to those students who meet the commuter criteria.

Difference between a commuter & an off-campus student
Commuter students are those who are not required to live on campus because they are not a single, full-time student under the age of 23. In other words commuter students meet one of the following criteria:
1. They are married
2. They are 23 or older by the first day of classes
3. They are living locally with family
4. They are filed as an independent with the Financial Aid Office

Off campus students are juniors or seniors are single, full-time students under the age of 23, who have applied for an exception to the residency requirement.

Determining the number of students approved for off campus
Messiah College is a residential campus which means our first commitment is to maintain the educational residential program we have in place in the on-campus residence halls and apartments. The final number of students who will be approved to live off-campus will be determined after we know how many students will be participating in study abroad and Philly programs as well as how many incoming and transfer students will be coming to Messiah College.

Who may apply to live off campus?
1. Students who meet the minimum credit hour requirement (57 not including AP or CLEP by the end of your 4th semester) prior to the deadline/application.
2. Students who maintain good standing with the College. Good standing is defined as not being on academic, chapel, or disciplinary probation within the six months prior to application. In addition, previous alcohol or drug violations may prevent a student from being approved to live off-campus.

Steps for applying to live off campus
1. Complete the application process prior to the deadline set by the Office of Residence Life
   a. Attend an off campus orientation before submitting application
   b. Fill out an application form and submit it to the Office of Residence Life
   c. Submit a letter of parental support for living off campus. Must be submitted with application
2. Confirm with the Financial Aid Office that aid package is not affected by living off campus.
4. Do NOT enter into a lease or rental agreement until you have received official approval from the Office of Residence Life. If you sign a lease or rental agreement without having received this approval, you may be liable to the landlord for rent even though you are required to live on campus.

**Criteria used for determining which students are approved** - these factors will be taken in to consideration when decisions are made about who is approved

1. A complete application that is submitted by the deadline
2. Number of credits
3. Disciplinary record
4. No probations
5. Compelling reasons or need to live off campus
6. In some cases exceptions are made for students w/o a compelling reason if additional spaces are needed on-campus.

Students commonly request to live off campus for one of the reasons below. While these are all valid reasons they will not give a student higher priority over comparable group.

1. To prepare for life after graduation
2. To live with a group of friends who has a unique bond or purpose
3. Local nursing clinicals
4. Local internships and
5. Local student teaching

**Off-campus housing agreement**

**Expectations**

All students (both traditional and nontraditional) who have been extended the privilege of living off campus remain members of the Messiah College community. They are obligated to honor their commitments to Messiah’s community standards as outlined in the Community Covenant, Off-Campus Agreement and the current student handbook. In addition to these College standards, off-campus students are also required to abide by the local laws and ordinances of their communities. It is expected that students living off campus will be good ambassadors of Christ and Messiah College. In addition to representing Messiah College, as members of this Christian community, we are called to be “salt and light” in the world—this includes our local communities. As such, it is expected that off-campus students will be good neighbors, respectful and considerate of the rights and needs of neighbors, always being sensitive to issues regarding noise, parking, guests, upkeep of dwelling, etc. With regard to these and other “courtesy issues,” it is expected that students living off campus will always defer to the needs of their neighbors in addition to obeying all state and federal laws and local township ordinances. The use, possession, and/or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol are prohibited for Messiah College students living on or off campus while enrolled during the academic year. (See Alcohol Policy). Off-campus students are responsible for the behavior of their guests. It is also expected that off-campus students will abide by visitation standards outlined for students living in on-campus apartments. (See Visitation Policy).

**Loss of Off-Campus Housing Privilege**

Students determined to be responsible for violating College standards and/or federal, state, or local laws will have the privilege of living off campus revoked. This will result in the student’s mandatory return to on-campus housing. Any students who return to live on campus after being approved to live off campus will forfeit their off campus approval and will need to reapply in order to move off campus again.

**Renter’s Insurance**

When you are renting an apartment or house your landlord is not responsible to replace any of your possessions in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. Renters insurance is very helpful to have in
case you experience a fire or smoke damage, theft, vandalism, wind & hail damage, water damage or
damage from an explosion. Renter’s insurance also sometimes protects you if something is stolen while
you travel. In the event that the home you rent is damaged and you need temporary housing, your
renters insurance will help cover the cost of a hotel or other housing. Often times young people think
they don’t own enough “stuff” to make renters insurance worth it, but if you add up all the pots, pans,
appliances, computer, iPod, cell phone, etc., you quickly ring up a hefty bill. Renters insurance is quite
affordable and runs between $100 and $300 a year. If you get renters insurance from the same company
you get your car insurance the company will generally give you a discounted rate on both insurances.

For more information about renters insurance go to www.ins.state.pa.us, click on Services for Consumers,
then on Types of Policies; then Home Owner Products; and finally Renters Insurance.

Be a good neighbor (town gown relationships)
Please keep in mind that when you move off campus, you are still representing Messiah community to our
local neighborhoods. You are also joining a new community. Respecting your neighbors is absolutely
essential. And this goes both ways. Most neighbors have had wonderful experiences living next to Messiah
students. Unfortunately, some have not. Remember, you are still expected to abide by Messiah’s
community standards (see contract) in addition to the laws / ordinances of your local community. You can
be held accountable to both sets of standards by college administration and local authorities.

Here are a few essentials toward being a good neighbor:
2. Remember that neighborhoods are comprised of people at various stages of the life span. You may
live among a lot of working families with young children. There may be some retired and/or
elderly citizens nearby. There may even be folks who live with disabilities in your neighborhood.
Most likely, you will not be in an area where everyone is a college student and therefore, don’t
assume your neighbors keep ‘college student hours.’ In other words, be considerate of their needs.
3. A lot of your neighbors get up early in the morning to go to work so be careful of the noise level.
If you happen to be walking home late at night, try not to scream or make any unwanted noise.
They may not be your next door neighbors, but they would certainly appreciate the consideration.
4. If your neighbor does come over with a concern or complaint, listen to him or her. Respond
appropriately. They have the option of calling the police, the College or your landlord – or all
three to resolve their issues. The best option for you would be for them to contact you instead.
5. If you have concerns with your neighbors, express them directly. If you become discontent with
any of your neighbor’s actions or practices, approach them first with your concern. If you are able
to resolve the problem without calling the authorities, your neighbors are likely to do the same for
you if they have a complaint.
6. Remember that town ordinances and laws apply if the authorities become involved in disputes.
For example if your music is too loud during a certain time of day or night, you can be cited for a
noise violation or disorderly conduct. These violations will cause you to incur costly monetary
fines as well as sanctions through the College.
7. All Messiah College students are part of the community. You should be aware that your actions,
whether you live on-campus or off-campus, reflect the entire student body. Good communication
and a general respect between neighbors are two-way streets. Not only will this help to make your
experience go smoothly, but to improve relations between the College and the surrounding
community.
**On Campus Services**

**Commuter lounge & contacts**
The commuter lounge is a great place to relax, study, or even catch a few winks!! It is located in the basement of Hoffman Hall and is reserved strictly for commuters. The lounge is open daily from 8 a.m. – Midnight. Free tea, coffee, hot chocolate, microwave oven and refrigerator are available. There are 2 working network connections. They are jacks/plugins A18b and A18c. Available power could be a problem, so please be sure your laptop batteries are fully charged.

**Parking**
All persons who bring motor vehicles or motorcycles to campus must register them with the Department of Safety. As an off-campus student you will be issued a commuter parking permit which will allow you to park in the Starry parking lot. Off-campus students may park in employee parking lots between 5 p.m. and 7 a.m. For more info go to [http://www.messiah.edu/offices/safety/vehicle.html](http://www.messiah.edu/offices/safety/vehicle.html) or contact Officer Stephen Smith, Parking Officer at 691.6005 extension 6753 or slsmith@messiah.edu.

**Escort Service and Emergency Phones**
On-campus safety escorts are available for anyone from dusk to dawn. The emergency phones can be used to request an on-campus escort. Emergency phones are located in B, C, D, F, and Treona Lots; and at Jordan/Kline, Starry Field, Lenhert Building, Safety House, and in front of Fry, Mellinger, and Smith Residences. Please call 691-6005 from off campus or ext. 6005 for an escort.

**Health Services info**

**Engle Center Telephone:** 691-6035 or Ext. 6035

**Office Hours:**
Mon thru Fri 8 AM to 5PM and Monday evening 5-7 PM
Appointments must be made to see a nurse

Nurse and Nurse Practitioner Appointments:
Monday thru Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
By appointment only

To make appointments call 691-6035 or stop by our front desk to schedule.

**Allergy Shots:**
All allergy shots will be given by appointment only during limited Physician or Nurse Practitioner Clinics. All students are required to stay for 30 minutes following their injection to have their site(s) checked by a nurse. No allergy injections will be given during the last 30 minutes of any scheduled clinic.

**Lab Work:**
Appointments for lab work will be taken for T-Th, 8-10 AM and 2-4 PM.

**Self Care Room:**
Located in Health Services, near the receptionist's area, is our "Self Care Room", which has been set up as a convenient place for you to diagnose and self treat simple respiratory infections. There are bins of over the counter medication available. Just leave a form for whatever medication was taken. If you have any questions, you may then see the nurse for further evaluation.
On-call Nurse:
The on-call nurse is available after hours and weekends while school is in session for phone consultation. The cell phone number is 717-649-3153. If you are unable to reach her please contact Public Safety at 717-691-6005 and they will contact the nurse for you. This information is also on the phone mail message left at ext. 6035.

Area Walk-in Clinics:
Seidle First Place
120 S. Filbert St.  Concentra Urgent Care
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
795-6656
Hours: 8-8 M-F, 9-5 SS
4910 Ritter Rd. (Near Isaac’s)
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
795-1819

Area Hospitals:
Harrisburg Hospital/Pinnacle Health
205 S. Front St.
Harrisburg, PA
ER: 782-5256
Holy Spirit Hospital
503 N. 21 St.
Camp Hill, PA
ER: 763-2314

Pharmacies:
Alert @ MV Commons.................796-3611 (Will deliver to the Engle Center)
CVS @ Gettysburg Pike ..............697-0359  Rite Aid @ Dillsburg Plaza ...........432-0490
Giant @ Dillsburg Plaza ..........638-1234  Target @ Carlisle Pike .............249-3509
Giant @ Cumberland Parkway.....591-0993  Wal-mart @ Carlisle Pike ..........691-3144
Rite Aid @ Cumberland Parkway....796-7685  Weis @ Bumble Bee Hollow .........796-1692

Messiah College Emergency Hotline. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .691-6084
Also – SIGN UP for the Text Alert System to get alerts on campus happenings and snow closings!

Fire safety
- Install and maintain smoke detectors
  Smoke detectors warn you of a fire in time to let you escape. Install them on each level of your home and outside each sleeping area. Follow the manufacturer’s directions, and test once a week.
  Replace batteries once a year or when the detector “chirps” to signal that the battery is dead. Never borrow the batteries for other uses.
- Plan and Practice an Escape
  If a fire breaks out in your home, you must get out fast. With your roommates, plan two ways out of every room. Fire escape routes must not include elevators, which might take you right to the fire. Choose a meeting place outside where everyone will gather. Once you are out, stay out! At least twice a year, have everyone practice the escape plan.
- Learn to Use a Fire Extinguisher
  Most fires start small, and it is at this stage that if a fire extinguisher is handy, you could use it to put out the fire or keep it from spreading. You should only attempt to fight a fire with a fire extinguisher when it is small and in its early stage. If your exit could potentially be blocked by fire, don’t attempt to fight the fire. Instead, get out of the building.
- Types of Fires:
  Class A: Ordinary combustibles such as paper, rags, wood, etc.
  Class B: Oil, flammable solvents, gasoline, grease, etc.
  Class C: Electrical fires, energized electrical equipment
- Types of Extinguishers:
  Pressurized water – use only on Class A fires
Carbon Dioxide – use only Class B or C fires
Dry Chemical – use on Class A, B, or C fires

- Most fire extinguishers operate this way:
  1. Pull the locking pin
  2. Aim at the base of the flames
  3. Squeeze the handle
  4. Sweep back and forth over the burning area

Know what kind of fire extinguisher you have and know what kind of fires it can extinguish. The contents of most extinguishers last less than 30-60 seconds. Aim carefully at the base of the flame. Fire extinguishers are meant to fight only small fires (no bigger around than a trash can). Fighting too large a fire can be dangerous. Whenever a fire occurs, get everyone out first and call the fire department. Only use your extinguisher when the fire is still very small. Remember, safety first!

- Space Heaters Need Space
  Although our office does not recommend the use of space heaters, there are still some things to understand if you are going to use one. Make sure your space heater is UL approved. Keep portable and space heaters at least 3 feet from paper, curtains, furniture, clothing, bedding or anything else that can burn. Never leave heaters on when you leave home or go to bed, and keep children and pets well away from them. Space heaters have the potential of being extremely dangerous. If you believe you need to use one, BE CAREFUL.

- Smokers Beware
  Carelessly discarded cigarettes cause ten of thousands of fires every year. Never smoke in bed or when you are drowsy. Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers, and put water on the butts before discarding them. Before going to bed, check under and around sofa cushions for smoldering cigarettes.

- Be Careful Cooking
  Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles, and do not leave items cooking unattended. Keep pot handles turned inward so your roommates won’t knock or pull them off the stove. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames, and then turn off the burner.

- Use Electricity Safely
  If an appliance smokes or has an unusual smell, unplug it immediately and have it repaired. Check all your electrical cords, and replace any that are cracked or frayed. If you use extension cords, do not overload them or run them under rugs. Remember that fuses and circuit breakers protect you from fire; do not tamper with the fuse box or use fuses of an improper size.

- Cool A Burn
  If someone gets burned, immediately place the wound in cool water for 10-15 minutes to ease the pain. Do not use butter on a burn, as this could prolong the heat and further damage the skin. If the burn blisters or chars, see a doctor immediately.

- Stop, Drop & Roll
  Everyone should know this rule: if your clothes catch fire, do not run! STOP where you are, DROP to the ground, and ROLL over and over to smother the flames. Cover your face with your hands to protect your face and lungs.

- Crawl Low Under Smoke
  If you encounter smoke using your primary exit, use your alternate route instead. If you must exit through smoke, the cleanest air will be several inches off the floor. Get down on your hands and knees, and crawl to the nearest safe exit.

REMEMBER... By planning ahead, you can do a lot to prevent a fire. But once a fire starts in your home, there are only two things to do: first, get out. Second, call the fire department from a neighbor’s home. Do not go back into a burning building, no matter what. If you think someone is trapped inside, tell the fire fighters when they arrive.

**Money saving tips**
1. Cover pots and pans when you are cooking.
2. Switch refrigerator to the power saving setting.
3. Turn off the water when you are brushing your teeth, shaving, etc.
4. Use the right size pots and pans when you are cooking on the stove. If the burner is not fully covered, the extra energy is wasted.
5. In the winter, turn your thermostat down 10 degrees at night or when you are leaving for 4 hours or more.
6. Keep the curtains open on the south side of your dwelling so that the solar energy can help to keep you warm.
7. Turn off lights when they are not in use. Even if you are leaving a room for a few minutes, you can save some extra money when you turn the light off.
8. Make sure you are using the lowest wattage light bulb allowed in a lamp or light fixture.
9. If you have a washing machine, be sure to use cold water when doing laundry, and make sure that you are washing a full load.
10. If you have an electrical range, turn off the burner when your food is almost cooked. The heat that burner continues to give off will be sufficient to finish the job.
11. Shut the door to your refrigerator quickly in order to minimize the amount of cold air you let out.
12. If you are cold, try putting on some extra layers of clothing before turning up the heat.
13. Do not heat your house with the oven or burners.

Breaking Your Lease
Getting out of your lease once you have signed it is not easy. You are legally bound and liable to fulfill the lease to term. However, there are certain circumstances when you can break a lease. One way is to prove your residence is a hazard to your health and safety. Keep in mind that only serious matters will be considered as being health hazards.

If the landlord has committed a substantial breach or has violated town, state, or federal laws, you can legally break your lease. Failure to fix your leaky toilet is not a substantial breach of contract. Always contact your landlord first before acting. In most cases, your landlord will work with you.

A third way to get out of your lease is for your landlord to be nice and let you go. This is between you and your landlord. It can never hurt to ask. The worst thing he/she can do is say “no.”

Notice of Departure
In 1967, the Pennsylvania General Assembly amended the “Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951” by adding section 512: Recover of Improperly Held Pension Funds. There are fine points to the law which are very clear.

- Point “A” states that the landlord must return to you an itemized list of damages along with the remainder of your deposit within thirty days from the time you move out, or the termination of the lease, whichever comes first.
- Point “B” says that if the landlord fails to offer either a damage list or money within thirty days, they forfeit all right to hold any amount of the deposit for any reason. If the landlord keeps your money, you can file suit.
- Point “C” tells you that if the landlord does give you an itemized list but fails to return the remainder of the deposit, they are liable for double the remainder of the deposit. However, if the landlord fails to issue a damage list or return your money, the landlord is liable for double the amount of the security deposit.
- Point “D” says that there is no way a tenant can forfeit their rights to the law by signing a lease.
- Point “E” requires the tenant to provide the landlord with a written notice of a forwarding address.

Here is a word of advice about your deposit. Wait at least a week beyond the thirty days for your landlord to respond to you. Allow for the inefficiencies of the U.S. Postal Service. If a check comes late but is postmarked within the thirty-day period, you have no case against the landlord.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS
EMERGENCY SERVICES
Ambulance/Police/Fire ......................................................... 911
Mechanicsburg Police (Non-Emergency) ................................. 691-3300
Upper Allen Township Police (Non-Emergency) ....................... 795-2445
(M-F 8:00AM-4:30PM ONLY)
Upper Allen Township Police Dispatch (24 hours daily) .............. 2389676
Upper Allen Township Fire Department ..................................... 697-9595

UTILITIES
AT&T .................................................................................. 1-800-222-0300
PP&L .................................................................................. 1-800-342-5775
Verizon ............................................................................... 1-800-660-2215
United Water (24 hour emergency number) ........................... 737-1475
Comcast Cable .................................................................... 1-800-266-2278

TRANSPORTATION
Greyhound ......................................................................... 255-6970
Capitol Trailways .................................................................. 1-800-333-8444
Capital City Cab Service ..................................................... 939-6363
Zimmerman’s Auto & Tow Service ....................................... 766-7656
Denlinger’s Auto & Tow Service .......................................... 697-8059

HOSPITALS
Harrisburg Hospital ............................................................... 782-3131
Holy Spirit Hospital ............................................................... 763-2100
Hershey Medical Center ...................................................... 1-800-243-1455

CAMPUS
Engle Center ....................................................................... 691-6035
Receptionist Desk ................................................................. 766-2511
Residence Life/Associate Dean of Students ......................... 796-5239
Messiah College Emergency Hotline ................................. 691-6084

MISCELLANEOUS
Mechanicsburg Post Office .................................................. 795-0157
Grantham Post Office ........................................................... 766-0953
Upper Allen Township Office ................................................. 766-0756
PA Attorney General (HBG Office) ....................................... 787-3391