

# **House Parent Handbook**

**Sophia Fahs Religious Education Camp 2018**

**FROM THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE**



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## Introduction

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### The Voice of Experience

The House Parent Handbook is a collection of tips and lessons learned from experienced house parents at Sophia Fahs. If you have any questions, contact David Sussman 516 473-3798.

### Sage Advice

- The most important 3 rules:
  - **Be safe**
  - **Be kind**
  - **Be respectful.**
  
- Be friendly, but firm. Safety is your number one concern. Do not settle for an environment in which you are uncomfortable (mess, atmosphere, etc.) If you have a concern, call a house meeting, and straighten it out.
  
- Encourage campers to deal with situations “in-house” Ask parents to allow house parents to handle difficulties as much as possible.
  
- **Speak up at the houseparent meetings.** If you are not sure how to deal with a situation, the meeting is a good place to get ideas.
  
- **Houseparent meetings are at 10:15 a.m. at the dining hall.**
  
- If you see a camper having trouble, make a referral to the Spirit Committee as soon as possible.
  
- Ask the campers to hang their nametags on their bedroom doorknob or in a designated space by the front door (you decide the location and communicate it during the house meeting).
  
- **Nametags must be worn at all times outside the house!**
  
- **A camper may not go back to the house alone to get something. The rule of three would apply and an adult must accompany them.**
  
- **Work with your co-houseparent to decide who will go back to the house from the late-night activity, and who will stay.** Remember the rule of 3—one houseparent cannot be alone with one camper
  
- **Do not provide any snacks with peanuts**
  
- **Read the confidential camper allergy list provided to you.**

## House Parent Handbook

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**Your Schedule** As a house parent, your responsibilities are as follows:

### **Mornings:**

- Wake campers who have signed up for the early morning activity (days for these activities are posted in the cafeteria). Have polar bear swimmers lay out their bathing suits/towels/water shoes the night before.
- **Activity sign up begins at 8:00.** Wake all campers in time for activity sign-up.
- **Make sure campers leave with proper shoes/footwear, nametags, and sunscreen or bug spray if needed.**
- The house must be empty before you leave for breakfast. **No campers can be left in the house for any reason.**

### **Cabin Clean-up (After worship) (10:00 a.m.)**

- Spray all surfaces—campers should not handle cleaning products
- Supervise the cleaning tasks
- The house must be empty before going to the houseparent meeting
- **Campers who are swimming for the afternoon activity need to wear bathing suits and bring towels, water shoes and sunscreen before going to breakfast.**
- Once campers leave for morning program they should not return to the cabin until after the afternoon activities (5:00 P.M.)

### **House Parent Meeting** (Immediately following cabin cleanup)

### **Lunch**

Please be on time for lunch.

### **Road Support/Activities** (1:00 – 5:00 **only as assigned**)

Provide road support, lead activities or support activities as assigned.

### **Cabin Time** (5:00 – 6:00)

- Make sure each camper checks in. Keep an attendance list, if needed, to track campers.
- If you are missing a camper, contact Patsy/Matt, an Advisory Committee Member or the Sight and Sound Coordinator, immediately.
- If your camper is late for cabin time, discuss the importance of being on time..
- You may have guests in your house, but guests are limited to common areas only (no guests upstairs, or in any bedrooms).
- **Only campers staying in a house are allowed in the bedroom areas.**
- If campers want to visit another house during afternoon Cabin Time, have the camper sign out. Call the other house parents to confirm that your camper has arrived.

**Your  
Schedule,  
Continued**

- Make sure cruisers leave for the dining room at the first bell.
- Make sure the campers leave with proper shoes/footwear and their nametags.
- **Make sure the house is empty before going to the dining hall for dinner.**

**Dinner (6:00 – 6:45)**

Sit at a table where there are no other adults seated

**All Camp Activity (6:45 – approximately 8:30)**

**All campers and all staff** must attend the **all-camp** activity. You may be assigned a specific area to monitor. If not, cheer the campers on!

**Late Night Activity (8:45 until their individual group curfew times)**

- **Youth (9th grade and older) must report to the late night activity for at least 30 minutes.**
- One houseparent goes back to the house with campers that leave the activity. Campers returning to the housing area must stay there.
- Remind campers of the all camp “Quiet Time” policy after 9:30
- Keep an eye on the curfew. House parents attending the late night activity should return to the house as soon as possible.
- If curfew passes and you are missing a camper, contact Patsy/Matt
- Evening cabin time is shower time. Set a schedule so campers with the earliest curfews shower first. Oversee young campers to keep showers short.
- Verify that each camper showers before bed.
- Campers should check themselves for ticks each night when showering.
- Enforce lights out time, by group.

**Curfews**

- Check the program schedule for cabin times and lights out times. The earliest cabin time for the youngest campers is 8:30, with 9:30 lights out. Cabin times and lights out get progressively later as the campers age, with Pebble cabin at 11:00 and lights out at midnight.

**A Few Safe  
Congregation  
Reminders**

- Never be alone with a camper.
- If you need to take a camper anywhere (e.g. to the nurse) take TWO other campers with you or one other staff member (who is NOT your domestic partner) with you. You cannot return with only one camper.
- Do not shower or dress in the presence of other campers. If you are in a dorm-style house, shower while campers are out, such as during program time. Change clothing in a bathroom stall.
- Never drive a camper anywhere, under any circumstances.

## Before You Come to Camp: Preparation is Key!

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### Supplies

1. Bring games and activities appropriate for age group.
2. Bring a battery-powered Lantern or large flashlight
3. Bring sunscreen
4. Bring insect repellent (consider packing extra for younger campers)
5. Large zip-lock bags may be used to store snacks. They may be available from Peggy or Joe
6. Bring rubber gloves and your favorite cleaning fluid.
7. You can bring extra snacks.

The houses will be supplied with cleaning fluid and water spray bottle and a sponge for every-day cleaning.

### Games and Movies

Bring some games and movies (maximum PG 13 rating) for the children/youth during their cabin time makes cabin time more enjoyable (especially if it rains). Here are some suggestions: (Do not purchase anything; bring if you have them or contact Activities Coordinators to see what is available.

#### Children: 6<sup>th</sup> grade and under

- Crafts (e.g. large poster to color; postcards, beads, etc.)
- Lanyard
- Playing cards
- Puzzle (to leave out on the table)
- Games such as Apples to Apples, Twister, Scrabble, Scrabble Junior, Clue, other board games
- Balls for games
- Jump ropes
- G and PG movies



## Before You Come to Camp: Preparation is Key! , continued

### Youth: (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade)

- Lanyard
- Playing cards
- Puzzle (to leave out on the table)
- Cards/Poker set/chips
- Apples to Apples, Scrabble, Scattergories, Monopoly, other board games
- G, PG or PG-13 movies

### House Party Supplies for Youngest Campers

Younger campers may leave the campfire early and NOT attend the “Pebble Farewell” speeches at the campfire on Thursday evening. Plan a house party for the kids, instead! Bring music for dancing, plan a special game, and perhaps decorate! Ask the housing coordinator to get extra snacks; and plan a special celebration!

## Preparing for Campers to Arrive

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### Supplies (Will Be Delivered to Your House)

- Floor plan
- Schedule
- Cruisers/Sweeper List
- Circle Group List
- 1 set of magic markers
- 2 pieces Oak tag
- 8 ½" by 11" paper
- Tape
- Limited cleaning materials—keep in your room only!
- A copy of the covenant for your group's age-group is in the Camp Handbook as well as in the Staff Orientation Resource Guide (SORG).

### Preparation: Before The Campers Arrive

#### **Choose a room and settle in**

Select the houseparent sleeping area, unpack and settle in BEFORE the campers arrive.

**Note:** In Jesse Lee and Asbury, at least two adults (house parents or other staff) must sleep on the first floor. In other houses, house parents should sleep in the bedroom with the emergency exit door.

#### **Make a Welcome Sign**

Make a welcome sign to greet the campers. Your sign should be posted around 3:30 on Sunday when the campers arrive.

#### **Locate the First Aid Kit and Check Supplies**

Locate the first aid kit—it is typically near or in the kitchen. Check to be sure the house First Aid kit has adequate supplies. If additional supplies are needed, contact the housing coordinator.

## Preparing for Campers to Arrive, continued

**Preparation: Before The Campers Arrive**     **Number the Bedrooms/ Prepare the Room Lottery (only if needed)**

Use your sticky notes to number the bedrooms if they are not already numbered. Note for yourself the group that will be assigned to each room number. Try not to mix age groups in rooms, because each group has a different curfew time. The house plans are in the appendix of this document.

***Check your confidential camper list to see if any campers require a lower bunk. You can assign that bunk, and exclude that camper from the lottery.***

Prepare your room assignment lottery. Each lottery ticket should have a room number (which matches a group/curfew time).

### **Bulletin Board**

**The following items may be posted on the Bulletin Board:**

- Covenant
- Daily Schedule
- Cruiser Schedule
- Dining Room Covenant
- Circle group list
- Job List
- Floor Plan showing room/bed assignments
- Sign in/out Sheet

### **Create Daily Clean-Up Jobs**

**Create clean up jobs for each camper.** If you have 22 campers, you need 22 clean up jobs. Jobs may include:

- Clean sink (assign 1 per camper)
- Clean kitchen sink
- Clean kitchen counter
- Clean kitchen table
- Straighten common room (2 campers)
- Empty trash (upstairs)
- Empty trash (downstairs)
- Sweep/Dustpan pairs (may assign 2 or 3 pairs, depending on the size of the house)
- Clean up grounds around the porch/house
- Bring in towels/swimsuits from the clothesline

## Preparing for Campers to Arrive, continued

### Create Daily Clean-Up Jobs

#### Decide on Lottery or Sign Up Sheet for Clean-Up

You can have either a lottery system for jobs, or a sign-up sheet. House parents of older youth report success with posting a sign-up sheet at a particular time—youth tend to report to the cabin quickly to sign up for their preferred job. Younger campers enjoy the excitement of the lottery. The choice is yours—but be prepared to communicate how housekeeping tasks will be assigned at your houseparent meeting.

### 2:00 Sunday Campers of Staff Registration-part 2

Line up to **complete registration for your own children. Try to get your own campers swim tested before 3:30.**

### 3:30 Sunday: Showtime! Wear Your Name Badge and Camp Shirt

Be at the house and ready (wearing name badge and camp shirt) before your first camper arrives at 3:30.

- Welcome the camper and his/her parents (Smile! You're happy to see them!)
- Ask the camper to choose his/her sleeping assignment (or use a lottery system). Inform campers they may not "save" bunks for friends. If you are using a lottery, children of staff members should also draw from the room lottery.
- Direct the camper to the room
- House parents should check periodically to ensure the campers are settling in and meeting each other.
- **Remind parents that they must accompany their children to the swim test. Remind campers they need water shoes.**  
**Note:** Remind campers to put their names on their towels. Have a sharpie handy!
- Have activities available for the campers—e.g. crafts, movie, games, etc.

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## House Meeting (Sunday Night)

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- In Advance**
- Select an icebreaker activity (one of your own or from the curriculum book)
  - Decide with your fellow houseparent who will discuss each topic on the agenda
  - An experienced camper might help explain the schedule, activities, and cruiser/sweeper roles.

### Agenda

#### Icebreaker Activity

Play a short “getting to know you” game (10 minutes or less), or ask the campers to introduce themselves, how long they have been coming to camp, and what they are most looking forward to this week.

#### Safety

Safety is of primary importance at the camp. Review the following safety requirements:

- **Ticks and Animals:** Shelter Island has a lot of deer; which means deer ticks. To be safe from Lyme disease:
  - Wear socks and closed shoes/sneakers
  - Stay on the paths and in cut grass--do not go into the forest, behind the cabins, or walk in any tall grass or brush
  - Shower every evening before bed—THIS IS REQUIRED!
  - If you suspect a tick, tell an adult staffer (Do not try to remove the tick. The nurse will remove the tick.)
- **Sight and sound:** Campers must be within sight and sound of an adult at all times and listen to their instructions.
- **Buddy system:** Always take a buddy with you; and always inform the adult leader where you are going.
- **Medications:** All medications (including Tylenol, etc.) must be left with the nurse. If you have any medications with you, please let the houseparent know.
- **Nurse:** If you do not feel well or get injured, tell an adult staff member immediately. You must be accompanied to the nurse.
- **First Aid:** If there is a minor injury, please inform an adult staff member. There is a first aid kit in each house (in the kitchen).

## House Meeting (Sunday Night), continued:

### Safety Continued

- **Water Safety**
  - Waterfront is available at scheduled times only
  - Wear water shoes
  - You must have a swim buddy, and perform buddy checks as directed by the waterfront staff
  - Follow instructions of the water staff
- **The Rocks**
  - Climbing on the large rocks is not permitted at Camp Quinipet.
- **Weather**
  - If there is lightening, adult staff will direct you to the nearest building. Again, you should not be alone—always have a buddy.
- **Fire Safety**
  - Lighting a fire (even a match) is grounds for immediate dismissal from camp. Campfires may be lit and tended by designated staff only.
  - Our emergency fire exits in this house are \_\_\_\_\_ (take a tour; point out the fire exits).
  - In the event of a fire, announcements will be made calling everyone to go to their designated place. Our designated place is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - There will be at least one fire drill. The fire alarm is either very fast ringing of the “meal” bell, or someone from Quinipet driving along the road, making an announcement with a bullhorn.
- **Report Hazards**
  - If you see anything in the house or on the property that is a hazard, please inform a staff member immediately.

### A Clean and Happy House

- Hang wet towels and bathing suits outside to dry
- Tidy your bunk area *before* breakfast
- Keep the bedroom and hallway floors clear of clothing, suitcases, etc. so floors can be swept easily
- House parents will walk-through the house before everyone leaves for program

### Dining Room Covenant

Review the Dining Room covenant

**House Meeting (Sunday Night), continued**

**Living at Fahs: The Covenant**

- Build relationships with younger and older campers—sit with kids outside of your group during mealtime, make connections at Circle Group and during activities. Younger kids especially love to connect with older campers!

**Camp Schedule**

**Review the daily schedule:**

- Activity sign up is before breakfast. Campers sign up for two activities.
- Attending breakfast is mandatory for all campers and staff!
- Worship is immediately following breakfast.
- **Cabin clean up** time is after worship. Explain the house procedures for clean up. Please complete your job as quickly as possible so everyone can get to program on time. If you signed up for swimming, change into your swimsuit, and bring your towel and water shoes. You will not be back to the cabin before activity time.
- Cabin Time: 5:00 – 6:00 (5:45 for Cruisers)
  - All campers **MUST** report to the house. House parents will check to be sure you have reported in.
  - If you leave the house, you must get permission from the house parent and from where you are going. Bring a buddy, and sign out, noting where you are going. If you change your location, report **BACK** to the house to inform the houseparent. If you are not where you have reported to be, visiting privileges during Cabin Time will be revoked.
  - Visitors are welcome, but limited to common areas **ONLY**.
  - **Only campers assigned to a house are allowed in the bedroom areas.**

**All Camp Evening Activities**

- **All campers and staff attend the all-camp activity** every evening after dinner.
- Younger campers will return to their cabins after the all-camp activity/campfire.

**Late Night Activities**

**All Youth 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade report to the late night activity.** After 30 minutes you may return to your house with a buddy. However, once there, you must stay there. **At least one house parent must stay at the late night activity.**

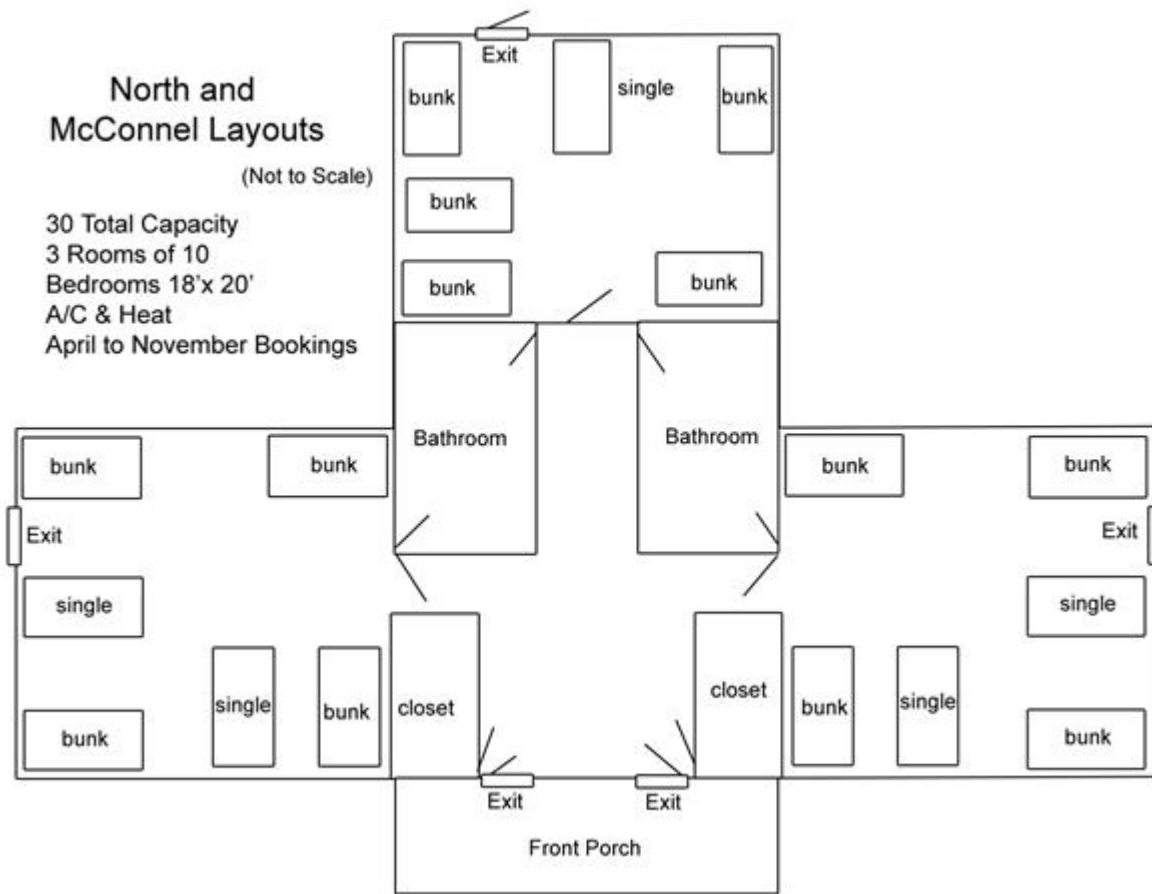
. House Rules **Be Safe. Be Kind. Be respectful**

## Appendix: House Plans

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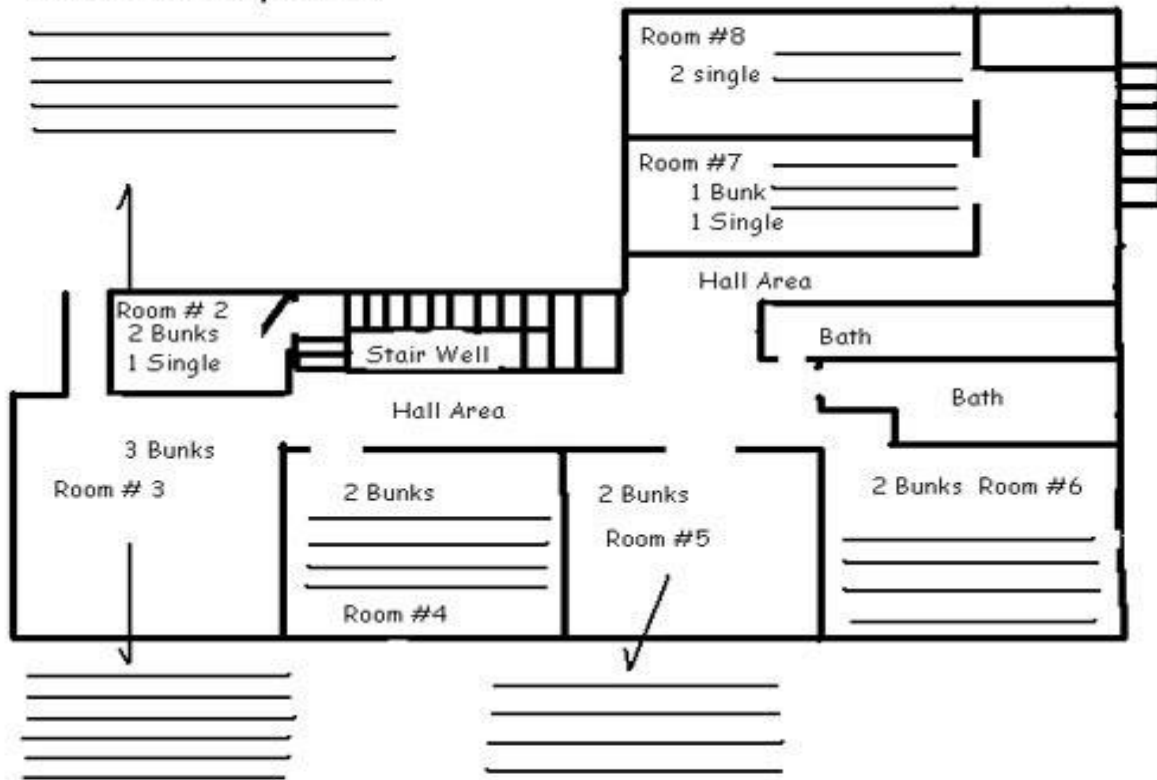
### North & McConnell:

Each of these buildings sleep 30 people, each has three rooms. Bathrooms connect the bedrooms and are off a central meeting room.

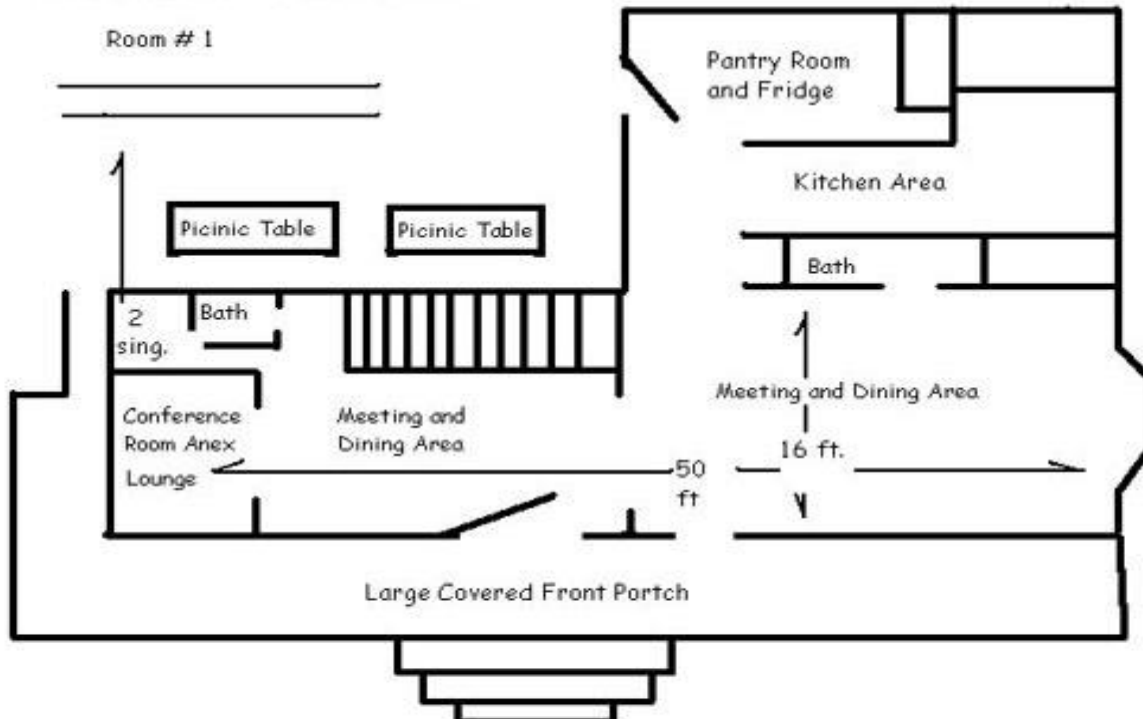




Jesse Lee - Upstairs

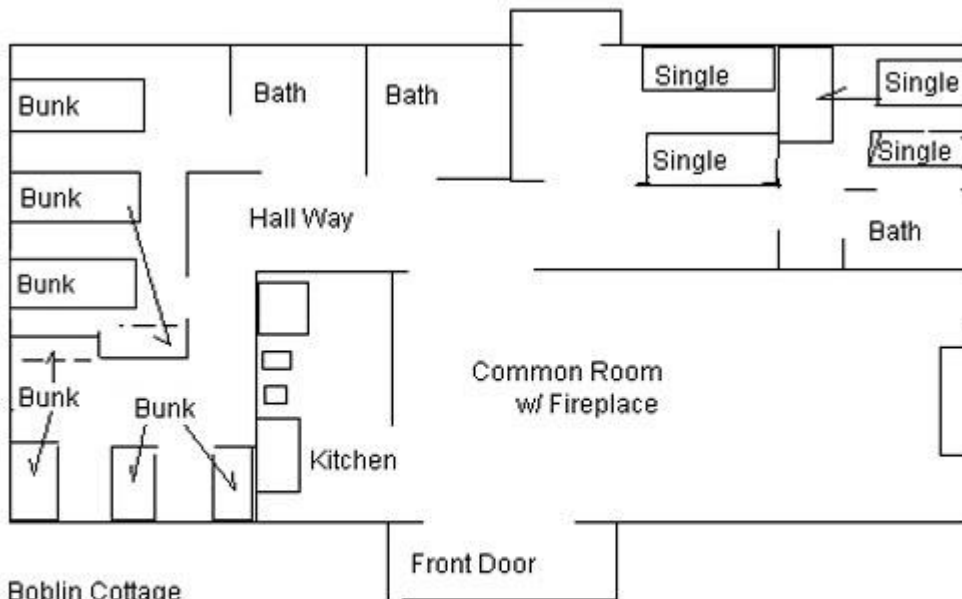


Jesse Lee - Downstairs



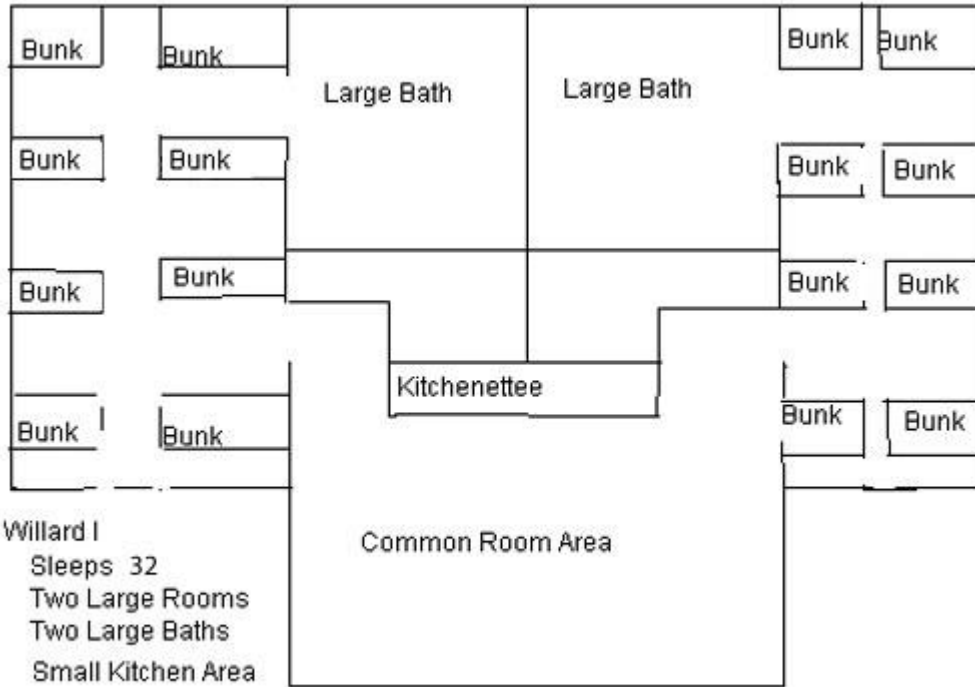
**Boblin:**

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Boblin Cottage  
Sleeps 19 in 4 Bedrooms  
3 Full Baths  
Full Kitchen

## Willard 1 and Willard 2:



## Willard Lodge:

