

RETTA DIXON HOME
HOME RULES SUPPLEMENT

LIST OF GENERAL RULES AND WORKING PRINCIPLES
FOR THE GUIDANCE OF COTTAGE PARENTS.

INTRODUCTION

The following "rules" are a supplement to the "Handbook of the Retta Dixon Home".

Workers are requested and encouraged to familiarise themselves with all subject matter and aspects contained in the "Handbook". This list of rules has been compiled to augment the issues contained and as a further directional for R.D.H. staff. In the main they have been formulated by virtue of experience over the last eleven years.

A HOME We seek to function as a home and not as an institution. Each cottage provides a segment or component of the complete Home unit. As in the case with a normal Christian Home, so too, our ambition and motivation is to bear testimony to the Glory of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. As a result the manifestation of mutual love and respect for those who constitute the Home (staff and family membership) should be apparent.

Where there is absence of these fundamentals we suffer gross loss and the witness and testimony of the Home is seriously impaired.

A fundamental is laid down by the Saviour Himself, when He declared - "a house divided against itself will fall."

The very vitals of the Christian concept of the Home will be sapped, should there be allowed to develop division and cliques, and unhealthy criticism or murmuring prevail.

While it is desired that as far as possible each cottage should be autonomous, there are areas of administration and concern which involve wider spheres, than the individual cottage (i.e. - the Home as a whole - the A.I.M. and its supporters, and administration). It must therefore be recognised that the Superintendent has a vital role and in which he must exercise a final authority. It is the duty of the Staff to respect such decisions even though in fact total agreement may not be reached.

In the Home cheerful obedience and the unity and fellowship of the staff as a whole is as important as it is in the smaller sphere of the individual cottage.

GENERAL - AT HOME

Cottages and environs should be maintained as to be a Christian witness and testimony in every way.

Cleanliness together with neatness and order in all things will reflect a general overall standard of efficiency, control and discipline of home and family. (Is your front door kept clean and clear? First impressions are lasting.) Training is involved, and the value of the cottage system apart from the added opportunities of providing an atmosphere of love and more individual care, sets the scene for the various skills which will enable the child to fit easily into the pattern of everyday (?) Social, Public and Domestic life.

It is expected therefore that the children will be taught in the Home to sew (by hand and machine), mend, cook and bake, set a table and wait - wash up and dry etc. They should learn laundry work - washing and ironing - cleaning and polishing as well as the care of household appliances - fridge, stove and washing machines, etc.

The Cottage grounds and home surroundings provide adequate scope for children to learn outdoor skills - e.g. gardening, digging, weeding, pruning, planting and mowing. Then there is opportunity for learning the care and general maintenance of outdoor machinery - rake heads to fit - shovels and hoes to sharpen - the care of mowers - push bikes and motor car.

SCHOOL

As the cottage parents will be directly responsible for the children in their care, and having oversight of set homework, matters of school, teacher-parent relationships are left in general to cottage parents. When difficulties arise, i.e. misbehaviour at school or policy problems, failure to co-operate etc., please confer with the Superintendent.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In general, sports and organised activities by the school are acceptable. Care is to be taken that such activities do not interfere with the child's health, or academic attainment. One school sport at a time will be found sufficient for a child to participate in. Too much time out for practice can result in fatigue and loss of interest in homework etc. and eventual flunking of exams.

SCHOOL CHARGES

All requests for extra school fees, book lists etc. should be directed to the office and in general payment is only made on receipt of a "Booknote". Children should present these early on returning home from school and are to be collected prior to departure of school bus next morning.

SCHOOL DRESS

SCHOOL uniforms are to be worn, and in general it should be seen that the child is neat and clean - uniform laundered, shoes and socks (not thongs) worn. Hair must be groomed and clean. Long hair for boys is not desirable, nor acceptable. Cuts and sores should be attended to and covered before leaving for school.

SCHOOL LUNCHES

Children must NEVER be sent to school without lunch unless some other provision is made for them (i.e. when visiting Dentist etc. and they can eat at home).

DRESS & GENERAL APPEARANCE

Children must be taught to take, and appreciate, a certain personal pride in appearance, in cleanliness, and suitability of dress.

An institutional child should not be recognised by his or her shabby or unsuitable attire.

It is required that Cottage Parents and children should at all times be proper in attire. A standard of dress that will at all times uphold our profession as Christians and our testimony as a Christian Institution should be maintained. Care and respect for others should be evident. Men and boys should wear a shirt - or at least athletic singlet; while Mini skirts, shorts and "uni-sex" attire is considered not consistent with acceptable Christian standards.

See "Other Standards" page 4, Handbook.

FIRST AID (See Handbook p.11. "Medical Attention")

There is a need for an ever watchful eye for sores, cuts and symptoms of sickness etc. Children are at times loath to disclose their needs. Prompt treatment may avert prolonged medication or even hospitalisation. Viz. Watch for running ears, eyes, ringworm. A useful range of medicine and dressings are available for minor treatment.

EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE (See Handbook p.11. "Property")

Equipment and furniture must be cared for and maintained in working order (sewing machines, strollers, mop buckets, electrical equipment, brooms etc.)

Articles must not be dumped, or disposed of, without permission. Often these articles are simply and easily repaired, and needless expense is avoided. Other articles which have become unserviceable to the cottage may be utilised in other areas.

EQUIPMENT REPAIRS

All household equipment must be maintained in good working order. Electrical faults must be notified immediately and smaller items of equipment brought to the office for repair. (Please bring these in a clean condition).

Breakages - Must be reported so that replacements may be made. Depending on the circumstances, responsibility for replacement may rest with the individual concerned.

FINANCE AND PURCHASING

Authority must be obtained from the Superintendent to make purchases on the Home Account, or in any way commit or involve the Home in financial obligations. When permission is given, official orders required by some firms are issued at the Office, as also are Sales Tax exemption forms. Unnecessary and sometimes exorbitant charges may be avoided if this procedure is adhered to.

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

The attention of the Christian public is drawn to the needs of House Parents and responsibilities of Retta Dixon Home through the efforts of A.I.M. Headquarters, deputation speakers and the publications of the Mission, or through personal interest or endeavour.

People in interested groups often send gifts in kind and donations in cash either directly through the office or to individual members of staff. It is important that all gifts and monies received by members of staff and which are not earmarked "Personal" be referred to the office for directive costing and accounting. Receipts will be issued from the office in respect of cash donations.

INTEREST PRAYER AND GIFTS

Some Christian groups seek to help and maintain a definite link or interest in the work of the Home. Such groups may be allotted a "Cottage" or Cottage Parents may "inherit" such interest from previous staff. It becomes the responsibility of the Cottage Parents to maintain this contact by correspondence with the supporting group.

Individual children may be allotted to a group for specific sponsorship in prayer interest and material support. Such children are to be encouraged to correspond with the group in response to personal letters or gifts.

VISITORS TO HOME AND COTTAGES (See Handbook p.10)

Permission may or may not be granted to visit. A penalty of \$200, or 6 months gaol is provided for entry without permission of the Superintendent to the Home.

As a general rule parents on visits are required first to contact the Superintendent before contact with the child. Times and frequency of visits may vary in accord with wishes of staff.

Parents visiting children may prove a source of real help for both child and Cottage Parent. On the other hand the opposite may well be the result.

Prior notification of a visit is usually expected.

Permission to take a child out for the day or weekend may be obtained from the Superintendent. Two days clear notification should also be given. These procedures may be relaxed if favourable relationships pertain, or unusual circumstances arise.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints by visiting parents regarding treatment of a child must be directed to the Superintendent by the parents (i.e. Cottage Parents must not be humiliated before the child or other children in the cottage).

Visiting parents are expected to behave in a regular manner before the children. i.e. not argumentative, profane, abusive or drunken. In the event of such the Superintendent should be notified immediately and measures should be taken to ensure that there will be no repetition.

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE (See Handbook p.4.)

On Sundays the general Christian attitude of observance of a "Day of rest" is desired.

Sport will not be played or attended either in the Home or outside by Home staff or children.

In general no ball games, no bikes, no "outings" or pleasure drives.

Children may play indoors or quietly in the back yards, but it will generally be found advantageous for children to literally rest or read quietly on their beds in preparation for the evening at church and the week ahead.

STAFF MEETING AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE. (See Handbook p.4)

Particular attention is drawn to these paragraphs.

While it is accepted that occasions may arise when it will be impossible to be present at staff or daily prayer meetings, regular Home duties do not exempt staff from attending. "You will be missed, because your seat will be empty".

Broken fellowship and loss of blessing all round is a dear price to pay for that little extra effort that is required to be present. Non attendance may well be the indication of an already estrangement in relationship with the Lord and/or His people. Absence will only tend to widen the gap if this is so and deprive the member and the fellowship of the blessing which we desire and which God is waiting to give.

Can we expect cheerful and willing obedience and good conduct from the children if we ourselves are not prepared to fulfil what is required of us!

At times, misunderstanding and inconvenience is created because of ignorance of issues that have been discussed openly and at length at staff meetings.

For the children attendance at relevant organised church functions is desired. e.g. Girls' Brigade, C.E., Sunday School, Church meetings, etc. It is not sufficient excuse for absence to assert "they are not interested!" (They may not be interested in day school either, but they go!) The enthusiasm, interest, and encouragement of Cottage Parents is vital. Become involved in some way! Punishments which deprive the child from attendance at these functions or organised outings (e.g. Show attendance) is misdirected and must not be.

CHILDREN VISITING

Children visiting, going to town or to school socials is a point on which common sense and reason dictate procedures.

As a general rule only those who merit trust should be permitted to go shopping on their own or at night, and a time limit that would accord with bus schedules should be stipulated.

School socials may be attended if requested from the child. Again a time limit is set usually for 10.00 p.m., and children should be conveyed to and from these by a member of Home Staff.

No permission should be granted for a child to leave the Home if the reason is not clearly stated or, if in the opinion of the Cottage Parent there may be some ulterior motive.

COURTING

Children under 16 years of age are to be advised that they may not "date" or "keep company" till that age is attained. If the cottage is well managed the "climate" should be tactfully produced so that the growing child will be fully prepared to accept this safeguard long before any particular crisis arises.

MANAGEMENT AND FACILITIES

VEHICLES

We are privileged to possess vehicles that are both suited and well maintained, and which may be at the disposal of staff. Should they be used by the cottage groups for picnics, outings etc. it is the responsibility of the group who use it to clean the vehicle and fill the petrol tank.

The condition and cleanliness of the vehicle should uphold our Christian witness and profession.

A few simple rules should be recognised:

1. Please obtain permission to use a vehicle. (Others may have already booked it).
2. If planning an outing it will be wise to book in advance.
3. Children should be seated and doors locked when vehicle is in motion and road rules observed.
4. Food (i.e. School lunches) is not to be eaten in vehicle.
5. Dogs are NOT permitted in Home vehicles.
6. Please report abnormalities or defects - or accidents promptly.
7. Keys should be promptly returned to the office on return of vehicle.
Should the office be closed, slide the keys well under the office door.
8. When proceeding on an outing with the children, whether in a private vehicle or a Home one, inform the Superintendent of your plans and the time you expect to be home.

MAIL SERVICE AND PROCEDURE

A posting receptacle is provided at the corner of the Office. This is cleared each morning. If the office is open mail for posting may be deposited directly in the bag. Mail is usually posted daily with a daily collection. The mail service is the responsibility of the Superintendent who may delegate duties of posting, collection and sorting. Mail will not usually be handed to children unless special circumstances prevail, i.e. when they are specially sent by Cottage Parent or a special direction is given by a Cottage Parent. Children must not walk into the Office to collect mail from the boxes.

All due care is taken with mail, but no responsibility for loss or damage or delays is accepted.

Cottage Parents are requested to obtain their own stamps, but in an emergency there may be stamps available at the Office.

TELEPHONE

The telephone is provided for the execution of the business, function and convenience of the Home. As far as is practicable this utility is extended to staff for their convenience in business and personal calls. In consideration of all concerned, persons using this facility should oblige by making only necessary calls and by being brief in conversation. Instruct your friends to call only when necessary, and when possible to leave a message rather than have to be found and called to the telephone.

In general children will not be called to or may not use the telephone. Provision may be extended to older children if the call is of an administration nature i.e. school, sports, at the discretion of the staff and Superintendent.

Personal calls must be paid for promptly or noted for payment.

Please pay prompt attention to paging and let it be known that you have heard!

FOOD STORE

The importance of a strict hygiene and cleanliness of this facility cannot be too strongly emphasised. The store may be subject to periodic inspection by Officers of the Department of Health.

The storeman and the staff using the store should be mindful to maintain the standard of cleanliness required i.e. avoid spillage, turn off taps, wash utensils, tidy up, etc.

Order books are used for the supply of a weekly order. Cottage staff are required to tick off the needed articles and present the books as notified to the storeman. Don't over order.

Good, sustaining, well balanced meals are essential to a growing family and no effort is spared to ensure that provisions for these are available. Much is left to the discretion and imagination of the Cottage Parent as to how foodstuffs are utilised, and presented on the table. (No child should ever be deprived of a meal by way of penalty or punishment).

The Cottage Parents will be aware that tea and coffee contain drugs which can be addictive. In general children are not introduced to these till the age of 12 years.

Available "floor" foodstuff as pumpkin, potatoes, onions, bananas are to be collected from the store as required. Other extra commodities needed from the shelves may be obtained by permission.

When fruit is in season, i.e. bananas, mangoes, the discerning House mother will use such for preference in deserts etc. rather than the relatively expensive tinned items.

Children are not permitted in the foodstore unaccompanied. The door should be kept closed when not in use, and in general locked.

DUTY WEEK

It is the responsibility of the cottage on "duty week" to ensure that all duties are carried out, efficiently and on time.

Duties comprise:

Taking responsibility for the daily prayer meeting including setting out the chairs, and leading the devotional etc. (If the staff member is unable to be present by reason of other commitments, organise for another to take over, giving them ample time to prepare.)

Preparation of the Hall for Sunday School (Saturday's job).

Collection of kitchen scraps daily (except Sunday) after 4.00 p.m.

GARBAGE BINS

Collections of garbage are made by the City Council twice weekly, i.e. Monday and Thursday. Bins are to be placed in the appointed place on the evenings of these days. Bins must be clean and not rusted through or broken as to endanger employees. Food scraps or burnable rubbish must not be placed in bins. Empty tins should be rinsed before placing in the bin and thus keep odours to a minimum.

INCINERATORS

An incinerator is provided for each cottage. These are for ridding of papers, etc. - not tins or bottles. Incinerators should be cleaned of ash periodically. If ash is allowed to accumulate the drum will quickly rot. Extreme care should be exercised in the dry season that the fire does not get away - (only light in the late evening when the wind has dropped - dampen the ground around with water).

RECREATION HALL

Permission must be obtained for children to use the Hall other than for organised functions. In general only older groups would be granted permission for specified purposes. The Hall is to be kept locked when not in use.

INDOORS

In general 7.00 p.m. has been stated as time for the children to be indoors. This time may vary a little seasonally. No children are permitted to wander or play outside after dark. On Girls' Brigade nights the 7.00 p.m. rule applies as presence of others playing around on the lawns could prove a source of distraction.

OUT OF BOUNDS

Certain areas have been declared "Out of bounds" to the children for play purposes. The reasons mostly will be obvious as pertaining to that particular place. These areas are: Laundry, Workers' Cottages, garage, fowl yard, banana patch, office area, roadside lawn and fence, and the entrance gate.

When Cadets or similar functions are in session children are asked not to play on the lawn area adjacent to the Hall.

Bikes must not be ridden after dark without a light, or raced around the Home road.

Footballs must not be kicked, or cricket played with hard balls on the centre lawn.

Climbing of trees in the lawn area is forbidden as is also climbing on roofs and motor vehicles.

The use of shanghias (catapults), slug guns, is forbidden and such items will be confiscated.

CINEMA, PICTURE SHOWS, DANCE HALLS, etc.

It is expected that House Parents will be aware of the material and spiritual danger and degradation of the cinema, movies, and the dance, etc. "Come ye out from among them and touch not the unclean thing" is a Scripture that might apply. Such worldly amusements are not in keeping with a separated life and are therefore not accepted.

T.V., READING MATERIALS, COMICS

With the advent of T.V., the cottage parents have responsibility for what is viewed. The world which is enmity with Christ can so easily take possession of your lounge and the thoughts and appetites of those who view.

As with television so with the reading material and comics that enter your home. Great care and discretion must be exercised as to what will occupy the time, thoughts and attention of those people concerned if a Christian standard is to be maintained.

HOLIDAY CAMPS, HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

It is expected that children of acceptable age will attend the holiday camp as arranged. Due care must be taken by Cottage Parents to see that all provision will be made for the child when away - i.e. adequate clothing, bedding, such items to be well marked with the children's initials and cottage number. Individual care such as medicines and instruction to be given to camp leader.

CHILDREN RETURNING TO PARENTS FOR SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Carefully check that the child has sufficient serviceable clothes for the expected vacation, but as well ensure that the clothes are appropriate (i.e. children returning to a camp situation won't require their best turn out, or best shoes and socks. Inevitably they will be "lost" and needless expense will be incurred to fit the child out on return to the Home. Check the case for "extras" that might find their way in!

Ensure that the child leaves the Home neatly and appropriately dressed, and with feet shod and belongings in a tidy case.

Personal property of children i.e. clothes they may have come in with, toys, books etc. should be carefully accounted for and returned to them if required.

A little personal note from the Cottage mother to the parent as to welfare, school progress, school reports might be a help to the child and reassurance to the parent.

PETS

Permission must first be obtained from the Superintendent before purchasing or receiving a pet.

Pets might very easily become pests. Whilst acknowledging that children love animals and appreciate them, they should not be inflicted on the community. They should be controlled and controllable. They should be kept clean and healthy. Dogs should not be allowed indoors. They constitute a very definite health hazard to children.

Cats if indoors in the day should never be allowed to stay indoors at night. Pets, especially in the North, are subject to diseases and vermin not encountered so much in the South.

Extra care therefore will be needed to keep them healthy. Learn yourself and teach the children how.

Dogs are not permitted in the food store.

No cottage will maintain more than one animal. (Litters must be disposed of at earliest convenience.)

Animals may be fed on kitchen scraps, but the Home does not undertake to feed them. i.e. no allowance is to be made when ordering meat or milk, etc. Feed the animal outside and at the rear of the cottage, i.e. the front or side entrance to your Cottage is not the place for the dog's dish.

Bones and excreta deposited by animals in the back yards and lawns can be a danger and an embarrassment. Pet owners must be prepared to accept responsibility to keep yards and lawns clear and clean.

Ensure that a healthy attitude is maintained by the children and yourself concerning your pet. Don't let it become an obsession.

Should an animal become dangerous or a meance to life and health, the Superintendent reserves the right to order its control, confiscation or removal.