



MERCHANT TAYLORS' BOONE'S CHARITY
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Overnight Guests in the Almshouse Flats Policy

Policy approved by MTBC on 5th April 2022. This policy was reviewed and approved again by Trustees in February 2024.

Circulation status of the policy:

This policy is published as a public-facing policy.

1 Policy Statement

The Charity recognises that residents may wish to have overnight guests staying in their homes from time to time, and that this facility should be enabled and supported.

Equally, the Charity is entitled to take precautions against the risk of people moving in without successfully going through the formal application process, or residents hiring out their dwellings for commercial purposes.

This policy aims to strike an appropriate balance between those goals.

2 'Notifying the Charity' and 'Obtaining the Charity's permission in advance'

Where this policy talks about '**notifying the Charity**' it means **telling the Policy and Operations Officer (Almshouses)**.

(If there is no such Officer in post for the time being, it means telling the Head of Philanthropy.)

Where this policy talks about '**obtaining the Charity's permission in advance**' it means **obtaining permission in advance from the Policy and Operations Officer (Almshouses)**

(If there is no such Officer in post for the time being, it means obtaining permission in advance from the Head of Philanthropy.)

3 Overnight stays in a resident's flat

- 3.1 Residents are permitted to have overnight guest(s) in their home for up to an aggregate total of 28 nights in any period of 12 consecutive months. This is subject to all the other provisions in this policy.

This does not mean up to 28 nights per guest, it means 28 nights taking all guests into account.

Residents must take responsibility for keeping track of the aggregate number of nights on which they have guests.

- 3.2 Residents must be present overnight in their homes when they have overnight guests.

- 3.3 Residents must not hire out any part of their flat, or their whole flat, on Airbnb or similar services or do 'house swaps' for example while on holiday. The MTBC flats are for MTBC residents.

- 3.4 Guests are required to behave with consideration for all residents of Christopher Boone's Court.

- 3.5 Residents are responsible for the behaviour of their guests and any nuisance to other residents of Christopher Boone's Court may result in guests being required to vacate immediately.

3.6 The following provisions are subject to the aggregate total of nights in paragraph 3.1

3.7 Residents are permitted to have a maximum of two overnight guests for up to seven consecutive nights in their home.

3.8 No overnight guest may stay for more than seven consecutive nights unless the resident has obtained the Charity's permission in advance.

3.9 Residents need not notify the Charity of stays of three consecutive nights or fewer, subject to the following:

- The Charity must be notified in advance of any stays intended to last longer than three consecutive nights (even if in fact the guest stays no more than three consecutive nights).
- The Charity must be notified before the fourth consecutive night, if the visit was not originally intended to last longer than three nights but the resident now wishes it to last longer.

4 Safeguarding

The Charity takes safeguarding very seriously. One form of abuse is 'cuckooing'. It's when someone, usually younger, appears to befriend an elderly or vulnerable person. After gaining their trust, the 'friend' starts taking advantage of the person and/or bullying them. For example, this might involve persuading them or coercing them into handing over money. Sometimes it can involve talking the elderly or vulnerable person into letting the abuser stay in their home. Once in the home, the abuser exploits the home for their own purposes.

Please see the Charity's safeguarding policy for what to do if you have any concerns that any resident may be experiencing 'cuckooing' or any other form of abuse, so that appropriate steps can be taken. As the policy explains, these steps may involve Social Services and/or the police.

5 Security - politely challenging people you do not recognise

Christopher Boone's Court has good built-in security features, for example internal doors which can only be opened with an electronic key fob. However, it's

impossible to guarantee that opportunistic thieves will never be able to get in, for example by tricking a resident to let them in from the street. It's therefore important to challenge people you don't recognise. Please always follow two guidelines.

First, please use a friendly and polite manner when challenging people you don't recognise, because they may be another resident's guest. A good way to keep a friendly and polite tone is to smile and say something like: "Hello, I don't think we've met before. I'm Lisa [or whatever your first name is]" and wait for them to respond.

Second, if you have guests, please tell them they can expect other residents to challenge them in a polite and friendly manner, and they should not take offence. It's a measure to keep us all safe against intruders to the site.

6 Spirit of the policy

We ask residents to approach this policy in a spirit of 'fair play'. The following examples are given to enable residents to understand the spirit in which the Charity aspires to operate the policy. In all these examples, the Charity would take into account all relevant factors so it is not guaranteed that the policy would be operated like this in all cases.

Example: a resident's brother who lives in America is coming to London for a two week holiday before returning to America. The resident would like them to stay in the resident's flat for the whole two weeks. This would be a stay of more than seven consecutive nights so the resident would need to ask the Charity's permission in advance. The Charity would likely say yes. The two weeks would count towards the resident's total of up to 28 overnight stays in any 12 month period.

It would be helpful if, as a matter of courtesy, the resident could introduce the brother to One Housing Group and Merchant Taylors' staff at Christopher Boone's Court early in the stay, so that they could be aware the unfamiliar face was someone's guest rather than a stranger tailgating off the street.

Example: the resident invites his or her girlfriend/boyfriend to stay over for a night. This is a stay of no more than three consecutive nights so the resident does not need to notify the Charity. The night will count towards the resident's total of up to 28 overnight stays in any 12 month period.

Example: the resident invites a friend to stay for three nights. During that time, the resident invites the friend to stay on for a further three nights afterwards, taking the total consecutive nights to six. The total stay will not exceed seven consecutive nights so the resident does not need the Charity's permission. But

before the fourth consecutive night, the resident should notify the Charity about the change of plan.

Example: a resident's grown up daughter wants to leave her current accommodation and asks "if I can stay with you until I have sorted my situation out". The resident would need to explain this policy to the daughter. The resident might well decide it would be wiser to ask the daughter to stay somewhere else from the outset, rather than being put in an awkward position. The policy would mean the resident would need the Charity's advance permission for the daughter to stay more than seven consecutive nights. It would also mean the daughter could not stay for more than 28 nights in the next 12 months, and fewer still if the resident had already 'used up' some of the 28 nights on other guests.