

BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY
Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: Student Housing

NUMBER: 3:6

Office: Office of Enrollment Management

Source: [SDBOR Policy 3:6](#); [BHSU Policy 3:1](#); [Residential Standards of Living](#)

1. Purpose

This policy and its procedures set forth the requirements and expectations for student housing and the guidelines for residence hall security at the University.

2. Policy

- a. During the first two (2) years from the time students were or would have graduated from high school, all unmarried students who have enrolled in six (6) credit hours or more at the University are required to enter into a housing agreement and designated meal plan for the specific living environment with the University, unless special permission to reside or dine elsewhere is granted by the University.
- b. When occupancy allows, Family Student Housing apartments are available to any married student or any student who has legal dependents and any full-time single graduate student.
- c. During Summer sessions, residents do not have to be enrolled in classes, but must be pre-registered for Fall classes. Students who do not enroll in at least one (1) Summer session and/or who are not engaged in an otherwise academic active (e.g. internship), may be provided housing if space permits. Students who might wish to request an exception to these stipulations should seek special permission from the Office of Residence Life.

- d. To be released from the University on-campus living requirement, students must submit an online Housing Appeal (<http://www.bhsu.edu/Student-Life/Residence-Life/Appeals#Appeal-Form-72>) to the Office of Residence Life.

The following exemptions will be reviewed for consideration by the University's Office of Residence Life:

- i. **Marriage Exemption:** Students requesting a release because they are married must submit a copy of a valid marriage license to the Office of Residence Life before a release can be approved or housing charges cancelled. The release date will not be earlier than the date of the marriage. Releases are granted only if there are no vacancies in Family Student Housing.
- ii. **Legal Dependent Exemptions:** Students requesting a release because they reside with a legal dependent must submit a copy of the dependent's birth certificate to the Office of Residence Life before a release can be granted. Releases are granted if there are no vacancies in Family Student Housing.
- iii. **Commuter Exemption:** Student requesting a release of this nature must live within a 35-mile drive of the Spearfish main campus at the legal residence of a parent or legal guardian.
 1. Examples of communities within the 35-driving mile radius include: Lead, Deadwood, Belle Fourche, St. Onge, Sturgis, Tilford, Whitewood (SD), Beulah, Sundance (WY), etc.\
 2. Examples of communities outside the 35-driving mile radius include: Newell, Piedmont, Summerset, Black Hawk, Rapid City (SD), Gillette, Hulett, New Castle (WY), etc.
 3. BHSU Residence Life utilizes the directions feature on Google maps to determine driving distance from the main BHSU campus.
 - a. BHSU utilizes the following address for the main Spearfish campus: 1200 University St., Spearfish SD, 57799

- iv. Financial Hardship Exemption: Students requesting a financial hardship exemption release based on verifiable, extenuating circumstance must complete and submit a FASFA through Student Financial Services. Releases are not granted upon an assertion that living off campus may be less expensive. A release will be considered only when:
1. The student has a significant, verified need for financial aid as indicated by the University's Financial Aid Office and that need is not fully funded by financial aid, or
 2. A student can demonstrate a substantial change in their financial situation, thereby creating extenuating circumstances, defined as "situations over which the applicant has had no control," such as loss of parental support due to death, divorce, loss of employment, catastrophic health issues, bankruptcy, etc., which create a financial hardship and which occurred after the housing contract was signed.
 3. If "a significant, verified need for financial aid" is not present before a student signs a housing contract, or if both "a significant, verified need for financial aid" and a substantial change in financial situation as outlined in items 1 and 2 above are not present after having signed a housing contract, the student may not cite this as a reason for release.
- v. Medical/Mental Health Exemption: Students requesting a release based on this criterion must provide information from the attending physician or certified mental health care provider stating the specific verifiable condition for which it is medically necessary for the student to be released and how the specific off-campus housing would provide better living conditions in regard to this medical/mental condition. Students must complete a [Supplemental Medical Need Verification Form](#), which can be obtained from the Office of Residence Life.

1. Students requesting a release based on behavioral health or emotional needs must provide a specific psychological recommendation from a licensed behavioral health provider.
 2. Students requesting a release under Medical/Mental Health reasons should consider seeking accommodations through the Office of Disability Services.
- vi. Below Six (6) Credit Exemption: Students requesting a release based on carrying less than six (6) credit hours for the semester must already be registered for five (5) or less credit hours in order to cite this reason. By citing this item, the student agrees to stay below six credits for the duration of the release period. The Office of Residence Life will periodically verify the credit level of students released for this reason.
 - vii. Students registered for internet courses only or a combination of internet and less than six credits on campus may be released from the residency requirement.
 - viii. Students who are enrolled in classes only at Black Hills State University – Rapid City or Ellsworth Air Force Base may be released from residency requirements.
- e. Minor students (students under the age of 18), regardless of age, are welcome to reside in the residence halls. Minor students must adhere to the live-on requirement (Item 2.a; [SDBOR Policy 3:6](#)). To ensure their success, minors students have the following options:
- i. Apply for an exemption from the live-on requirement (as explained in Item 2.c) to reside off campus with a parent or legal guardian.
 - ii. Minor students under the age of 16 may live on campus under the care of a legal guardian. Accommodations will be in the Yellow Jacket Apartments, where the student and legal guardian will share a 2-bedroom unit.
 - iii. Minor students over the age of 16 may reside on campus in the

residence hall of their choice. These students, and their legal guardian(s), will engage in a conversation with the Dean of Students and the Director of Residence Life to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the legal guardian and the University.

- f. To be released from the student meal plan requirement, students must submit an online meal plan appeal (https://dinebhsu.sodexomyway.com/my-meal-plan/mp_contract) to Campus Dining Services. Dining Services may allow exception for the following reasons:
 - i. Financial Hardship. Appeal for financial hardship are only granted:
 - 1. when they have been verified by the Financial Aid Office and the student is not eligible for aid consistent with the level of financial need.
 - 2. when the student has not filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the family income will need to be verified through official family documentation such as recent tax returns.
 - 3. When financial circumstances are created by situations over which the student has no control (e.g.: death of a parent, parent divorce, etc.).
 - ii. Physical/Mental Health. Students requesting a release based on this criterion must:
 - 1. provide information from the attending physician or certified mental health care provider stating the specific verifiable condition for which it is medically necessary for the student to consider options other than purchasing a Yellow Jacket Dining meal plan in order to dine at the Black Hills State University student dining facility. Students must complete the Supplemental Qualifying Medical Condition Verification Form.
- g. Each student, together with the student's spouse, dependents or household members, who applies, or is required to apply, to reside in a University operated

housing facility must disclose on the application form whether the student or spouse or any dependent or household member is required to register as a sex offender pursuant to law, or whether any such person has a criminal history that includes conviction, guilty plea, no contest plea, or suspended imposition of sentence that has not been discharged involving a felony offense, together with details identifying the jurisdiction, date of the offense, circumstances of the offense, the sentence or parole conditions and other facts or circumstances that the student believes to be relevant.

- i. Students, spouses, dependents, or household members are not required to respond to the felony question if their only felony offenses resulted in adjudication as a delinquent child or as a child in need of supervision.
 - ii. Where the application process reports a felony offense involving use or sale of illegal drugs or involvement in a crime of violence which did or could have resulted in injury to a person, the individual may not reside in any University operated housing facility.
 - iii. Where the circumstances of the offense otherwise reasonably suggest that placement within a University operated housing facility may place the individual into settings that are similar to those in which the original offense occurred, the University may deny the individual the privilege of residing in any of its housing facilities.
 - iv. No person who is required by law to register as a sex offender may reside in any University operated housing facility.
- h. Any person, other than a registered sex offender, who has been denied residence in a University operated housing facility may request a review of the determination and will be provided an opportunity to submit such writings as the person deems necessary and helpful to explain why the University should permit the person to reside in one of its housing facilities.
- i. Students' individual residence hall rooms and individual apartments constitute private places to which the general public does not have an unrestricted access

right. The following measures are in place to establish and enhance residence hall security at the University:

- i. Notification of areas restricted to residence and areas that are open to the public will be posted, as appropriate.
- ii. Education programming to inform residents of security measures and provide them with information to report security concerns will be provided during student orientation, and any concerns will be addressed on an ongoing basis.
- iii. Exclusive locks to individual rooms will be maintained, and the security of these rooms will be enhanced through the rights of privacy policies, along with the current solicitation, lock core replacement, and room key check out policies specified in the [Residential Standard of Living Handbook](#).
- iv. Resident Assistants will generally be available in each building seven (7) nights per week. The number of Resident Assistants in each building will depend on the number of students present in the building.
- v. Designated Resident Assistants will be on duty between 9 PM to midnight Sunday through Thursday and from 9 PM to 1 AM Friday and Saturday. A Night Assistant will be on duty from Midnight to 5 AM on Thursday through Sunday. Rounds will be conducted around the building hourly and then on an as needed basis as determined by the Department of Residence Life.
- vi. The main entrance doors of each residence hall will be monitored during primary traffic hours each day by either a Resident Assistant or Night Assistant within the residence hall.
- vii. Video surveillance via security cameras are used to increase the level of security in Bordeaux Hall, Heidepriem Hall, and Thomas Hall. Security cameras cover common spaces within these buildings. Video footage can be reviewed by staff members in Residence Life and Public Safety. Generally, video footage is kept private, and not released publicly.

- viii. Alarms will be used for fire protection only.
- j. Students will follow the guidelines regarding the residential hall conduct and visitation as outlined in the [Residential Standards of Living](#). Alleged violations of these guidelines will be processed as set forth in [University Policy 3:1, Student Conduct Code](#).
- k. The University does not carry insurance covering loss or damage to students' personal effects and does not assume responsibility for such loss or damage. It is recommended students investigate the purchase of renter's insurance.
- l. The University will assist students who are unable to leave the campus during official University vacations, including summer vacation, to locate housing alternatives.

3. Procedures

- a. Students who do not qualify for an approved exemption must obtain a housing contract for on-campus living through the online Housing Application process.
 - i. The effective dates of the contract range from the first day of fall semester classes through closing for summer following final exams week in May.
 - ii. The BHSU Residence Halls close for several University recognized breaks. Students are required to vacate the Residence Halls during these times. Closure periods are below:
 - 1. Thanksgiving Break in late November.
 - 2. Winter Break in December-January
 - 3. Spring Break in March
 - 4. Summer Break in May - August.
 - iii. Should a student choose to stay in their assigned residence hall during a break period, they must contact the Office of Residence Life to ensure residence hall access and pay a charge per night for their stay.

- iv. The Yellow Jacket Apartments and Wenona Cook Hall do not close during University Break periods. Students assigned to these spaces have access from August – May.
- b. Students who wish to be released from on-campus living requirements and who meet at least one (1) of the approved exemptions should file a housing appeal online (<http://www.bhsu.edu/Student-Life/Residence-Life/Appeals#Appeal-Form-72>) through the Office of Residence Life. Students will have at least 30 days to submit all necessary information for a review of the request. Students whose requests are incomplete as instructed, late (submitted after the closing date), or granted as extension will be discarded.
 - i. Students are to submit exemptions under one status at a time.
 - ii. Students are allowed two (2) exemption submissions before appealing to the Director of Residence Life.
 - iii. Students can appeal an exemption denial by the Director of Residence Life by submitting a written appeal to the Vice-President for Enrollment Management Life within five (5) business days of receipt of the denial.
 - iv. Students whose request is denied can appeal the outcome for the following reasons within five (5) business days of the decision:
 - 1. Relevant information has been obtained that was not available at the time of the original request;
 - 2. The student can demonstrate that the process for obtaining a release was not properly followed; or
 - 3. The student's circumstances have substantially changed thereby altering the basis of the initial request.
 - v. The Office of Residence Life will typically respond to an appeal within ten (10) business days. Failure to respond to an appeal with the ten (10) day window does not constitute approval of the appeal.
 - vi. Students whose requests for an exemption to the residency requirement has been approved will have five (5) business days to communicate

acceptance to the Office of Residence Life. Students who do not accept a release within the five (5) day window will continue to hold an assignment and be charged the residence hall rate accordingly.

- c. Applicants, excluding sex offenders, who have been denied residence in a University operated facility will have five (5) business days to submit a written request for reconsideration. This request should be directed to the Director of Residence Life and should include all information necessary to explain why the University should rescind its denial of residence in a University housing facility.
4. Responsible Administrator
The Vice President for Enrollment Management, or designee, is responsible for the ad hoc and annual review of this policy and its procedures. The University President is responsible for approval of this policy.

SOURCE: Adopted by President on 9/22/2021. Revised 2023.07.10