

## Questions & Answers for Youth/Parents/Caregivers

### **What should my child bring to Ledger?**

Comfortable clothing and footwear, slippers and a bathing suit (Children's unit)  
(please initial/label clothing to ensure it does not get lost)

Personal hygiene supplies (toothbrush/paste etc.) We are a scent free environment please leave the perfume/cologne at home

A few comfort items, such as their own pillow and/or stuffies, a foamy mattress (this is optional but some find the hospital beds are hard)

Indoor shoes/slippers/sandals – no bare feet on the unit for safety reasons

Quiet activities such as books/puzzles are encouraged.

Feel free to bring a few pictures to put up on the wall to make it feel more like your own room. Please do not bring any pictures in glass frames.

It would be best to leave things of value at home, we don't want anything to get lost or broken. We are not responsible for lost/broken items

Drugs and alcohol are not permitted on the unit or the grounds

Any weapons or toys that simulate weapons should stay at home as safety is our main goal for everyone here

### **What kind of food will my child eat?**

Meals are prepared by the hospital cafeteria and brought to the unit at meal times

Children's unit, the morning unit staff prepare breakfast for the children.

Youth unit: the youth are expected to prepare their own breakfast, a variety of options are provided (cereal, toast, eggs etc.) staff are available to help the youth if required

Please advise staff of any dietary restrictions/allergies upon admission to ensure these accommodations are made

Children and youth are welcome to bring snacks from home if they would like (i.e individual KD, ramen noodles, popcorn etc.) it is expected that the youth/child will prepare their own snack but will have staff support if required. High sugar snacks can be eaten at specific times in the day.

It would be best to leave the high caffeine energy drinks and pop at home

### **Will my child be able to come home on pass?**

**Children's Unit:** closes on Friday afternoon through to Monday morning. All children on the Children's unit go home for the weekends. Pick up happens by 8PM on Friday afternoon and Drop off after 8 AM on Monday morning.

**Youth Unit:** Passes on weekend with family are generally encouraged and youth will often go home on weekends. However; some youth may stay on the weekend depending on individual needs.

Prior to a pass, unit staff will meet with you and your child for pass planning. Upon return from pass, it is essential that parents meet with staff for a discussion of the pass. **Please allow time for these meetings when you plan a pass for your child.**

Pass planning includes reviewing goals your child/youth is working on and a discussion around potential strategies to help should a specific situation arise that may cause distress

> We encourage healthy community activities during admission and passes for these types of activities can be arranged (ie. Dance, sports, music etc.)

### **How long will my child be at Ledger?**

Services at Ledger are developed to meet the individual needs of each child. The average length of stay is approximately 5 weeks, although this varies based upon the reason for referral. A discharge date will be discussed upon admission, which will be reviewed throughout your child's stay.

We will hold regular meetings with Members of our multidisciplinary staff and can be available for parents, caregivers and the community team to discuss your child's progress and to plan for discharge. The direct care team members, that provide the daily support for your child on the unit itself, are the staff members who will be the most familiar to you and your child and most readily available for debriefing progress and issues.

Our goal is to complete a comprehensive assessment, initiate treatment, and provide follow up recommendations for children and youth. We do not expect all of your child's difficulties to completely resolve during admission to the Inpatient Program at Ledger.

### **Will my child be given medication at Ledger?**

Not all children who come to Ledger take medication.

When the use of medication is recommended, the Inpatient Psychiatrist will discuss this with you and your child.

If your child is currently taking prescribed medication, please bring it with you on the day of admission so that you can discuss the matter with the Psychiatrist.

Medication should be in the original labelled bottles or bubble packs

Most medication is provided through the hospital pharmacy. If this is not the case for your child's medication, we will let you know.

If your child requires an EPI pen, please ensure they have one with them when they arrive

### **Can my child phone family and friends?**

Yes, children are welcome to phone family and friends on our phone. Cell phones are not permitted at Ledger.

We encourage children and youth to use the phone between appointments or structured activities such as school hours, as well as prior to the scheduled bed times on the unit.

### **Does Ledger have a school program?**

Yes. We have school available in the building, Monday through Friday. Our school staff are provided by School District 61. With your permission, they will be in touch with your child's community school regarding programming. At Ledger, we strongly support school attendance, however, if your child is not well enough to attend the classroom, the educational program may be brought to him/her on the unit.

### **Will my child have access to the Internet at Ledger?**

There is supervised Internet access through the Ledger school at the classroom teacher's discretion and only during school hours.

Staff may take the older children to a local public library to check their email and keep in touch with friends.

### **What electronic devices are permitted at Ledger?**

Screen time is limited as there are many appointments and activities that your child/youth will be encouraged to participate in without the distraction of electronic devices.

Electronics that have internet or texting capacity are **NOT** permitted at Ledger, this includes cell phones, music players that have internet or texting capacity, Laptops or other personal computers.

Cameras are **NOT** permitted at Ledger, to protect confidentiality.

Your child can bring music on an older style MP3 player that does not have texting, internet, or camera capability.

Handheld games are permitted as long as the games are rated "E" for everyone, and the devices do not have internet or texting capability. Time with these games will be limited and the games will be kept in the staff office for safe keeping when not in use

We have Wii and Xbox game systems at Ledger and, depending upon their age, children can have a limited amount of e-time per day. Please do not bring video games from home as there is a selection at Ledger your child will be able to choose from

Movie time occurs on the unit in the evenings. The unit has a selection of movies to choose from, so no need to bring your own.

### **Can my child have visitors at Ledger?**

Families are welcome to visit. Please let us know when you are coming so that appointments can be arranged accordingly. Our social workers can provide information for families looking for local accommodations.

Pets are welcome to visit on the grounds but are not able to come onto the unit.

Extended family members and professionals from the community who have a relationship with your child are also encouraged to visit if appropriate. Consent from the family will need to be given for these visits. Youth are also asked to give their consent as well.

Although arrangements for friends to visit can be requested, it is preferred that this occur during outings and passes with family. Friends who wish to visit must arrange this with staff. If visits with friends are arranged it is subject to the availability of staff for supervision and has to occur off of the unit to maintain the confidentiality of other children and youth. Visits occur off the unit to maintain confidentiality for the other children.

### **Can my child smoke at Ledger?**

No. The legal smoking age in BC is 19 years old. As a health care provider, VIHA is committed to ensuring a healthy environment for everyone.

\*Smoking by anyone is not permitted on any VIHA property - this includes all buildings, grounds and parking lots. We ask that parents/caregivers/visitors refrain from smoking while on VIHA grounds.

### **Can my child go for walks without staff?**

There is daily physical activity on the units

We encourage children to spend time outdoors and we engage in numerous outdoor activities at Ledger. Outside time is supervised by staff, and can be either in a group or if a youth chooses to go for a walk by them self they must be accompanied by staff.

### **What happens if my child leaves Ledger without authorization?**

Ledger programs are voluntary, unless your child is certified under the Mental Health Act. Whenever a voluntary client expresses a desire to leave the program, all efforts are made to plan with the child and family prior to leaving. Ledger units are locked and children are expected to collaborate with staff prior to leaving. Should your child leave without authorization, staff will contact parents and the Saanich Police Department.

This does not imply that the Police or VIHA staff have the authority to have the child returned involuntarily unless the child is certified under the Mental Health Act, or if the child is deemed to be at risk for harming her/himself or another person.

### **What if I have any further questions?**

Please call Ledger Intake at 250-519-6720. We would be happy to answer your questions.