RESIDENCE DON DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES 2016-2017

The responsibilities of a Residence Don are to promote the mission and goals of Residence Life here at St. Paul's, to ensure that the Policies and Guidelines are followed, and to serve as an advisor and leader to students on their floor(s) and throughout the St. Paul's community. The key to being an effective Don is maintaining a balance between firmness and friendliness.

Specific duties and responsibilities follow under the main categories of: Residence Life, Developing Community, Enforcing Regulations, Monitoring Residence Services, Advisor, and Daily and Weekly responsibilities.

All Residence Dons are expected to have (at the time of appointment in February and at the time of confirmation when final marks become available in May) and maintain an average of 75% during the term of their employment, and must be in good academic standing. Failure to achieve or maintain this average could result in the termination of your employment. All Residence Dons must be certified in Emergency First Aid and CPR by the time that they arrive for Residence Dons’ Training in August.

Residence Life

For students, the residence becomes a home away from home for almost eight months of the year. Most of the students that live at St. Paul’s are entering their first year and this is likely their first time away from home for an extended period of time. You will be asked to help facilitate their transition as best you can. In particular you are expected to do this by:

- Setting an example as a role model by attending classes regularly, passing in assignments on time, encouraging acceptable social behavior and by abiding by all St. Paul’s Policies and Guidelines
- Being sensitive to the needs of each student on your floor
- Encouraging mutual respect among residents
- Maintaining a positive mental attitude
- Initiating the planning and implementation of residence programs
- Encouraging participation in the academic, social and athletic activities of the residence
- Attending residence activities
Developing Community

One of the best ways to develop and maintain a healthy residence environment is by being of help to the students on your floor(s). You are expected to:

- Get to know each person by name on your floor(s) by the end of the first week, and by the end of September know everyone in the residence by name.
- Ensure that all students are fitting in and that they are making the transition to Residence and/or University life.
- Be around your floor(s) as much as possible and, in particular, at the times when most students are there.
- Provide input for residence programs based on what you feel the needs are on your floor(s).
- Make yourself aware of the resources that are available to assist you and the students on your floor(s).
- Take time to post resource information so that students who need help can find it easily.
- Be available, willing and able to help when needed.
- Be prepared to listen.
- Encourage acceptance and tolerance within the Residence.

Enforcing Regulations

This part of the job of Residence Don can sometimes demand much time and effort. However, if you invest some time in the first two responsibilities (Residence Life and Developing Community), you will find that you minimize your disciplinary role substantially.

- Set the standards at the beginning of the year along with the other Residence Dons, the Community Coordinator, and the Residence & Community Life Manager.
- At the start of the school year, very clearly explain to your floor(s) what the standards are and why they are important.
- Emphasize that Policies and Guidelines are designed to protect St. Paul’s students, and the property of students as well as those of the University, and to make the residence as safe and comfortable as possible.
- Explain that it is your job to enforce the standards of St. Paul’s College, the University of Waterloo, and the laws of our province and country.
- Be sure that students are aware of what is expected of them.
Emphasize that if students do not follow the Policies and Guidelines, then you will be obligated to inform the Community Coordinator or Residence & Community Life Manager.

Stress that if there are problems that get reported, it will be because they have not adhered to the accepted standard, and that you have a job to do.

Reiterate that if you report an incident involving a student, it will not be personal, it will not be because you do not like that student, it will be because it is your responsibility to ensure that Policies and Guidelines are maintained.

If a Policy and Guidelines is broken, remember that it is the particular action, not the entire personality of the student that has to be addressed.

Be consistent. Report each problem to the Community Coordinator or Residence & Community Life Manager.

After an issue with a particular student has been worked through, make an effort to speak to the individual so they are aware that you do not hold the actions against them personally.

Encourage residents to try to resolve problems on their own.

Be proactive in enforcement of the Policies and Guidelines. This will result in fewer problems.

**Monitoring Residence Services**

Part of your responsibilities involves reporting and monitoring the overall services provided to the residence. This involves:

- Reporting any concerns relayed to you by residents to the Community Coordinator or Residence & Community Life Manager, and by using the communication tools put in place.

- Reporting all maintenance and/or damage concerns promptly using an Action Form.

- Relaying to the Community Coordinator and Residence & Community Life Manager any information related to the custodial services or maintenance services and food services being provided to the residence.

- Relaying to the Community Coordinator and Residence & Community Life Manager any concerns related to local phone service, television cable service, or residence network (computer) service.

- Ensuring that proper residence check-in/check-out procedures are followed.

- Cooperating with the Community Coordinator and Residence & Community Life Manager to ensure that fire drills are carried out each year, and that students understand all policies related to fire safety and all evacuation procedures.
Advisor

As a Residence Don you are in part an advisor. Some problems you will be able to cope with yourself, but for others you will want help. First consult with the Community Coordinator and Residence & Community Life Manager. The Dean of Student Services and staff on campus including Counselling Services are additional resource persons.

- Maintain confidentiality. Ensure that residents feel that they can confide in you without the worry of others on the floor(s) becoming aware of their problems.

- Do not let resident’s problems become yours - get help. As mentioned above you should maintain confidentiality, however, if you feel the problem is very serious let someone else know. You are not a trained counselor and are not expected to deal with life threatening or serious medical concerns. If in doubt, consult with the Community Coordinator and Residence & Community Life Manager or the staff at Counselling Services.

- Do as much listening and as little telling or judging as possible.

- Be alert, and report to the Community Coordinator and Residence & Community Life Manager any residents exhibiting extreme behaviour changes or extreme behavior of any kind (e.g. withdrawal from contact with others, unusual aggressiveness, heavy drinking, excessive skipping of classes, severe depression or moodiness, hyperactivity).

- Ensure that any medical concerns or family concerns (deaths in the family etc.) are reported to the Community Coordinator and Residence & Community Life Manager so that the appropriate people are notified of any extended absences.

- Ensure students know that you are available to help them with any academic concerns i.e. course schedule, timetables, referrals to Academic Advisors, etc.

- You are the first and most logical contact for a student in trouble. Although you should not be expected to solve problems, your willingness to listen and be involved is often the first important step in the helping process.