

Questions & Answers for Parents and Caregivers

What should my child bring to Ledger?

- Comfortable clothing and footwear, slippers and a bathing suit
- Personal hygiene supplies (toothbrush/paste, shaving supplies, etc.)
- A few comfort items, such as their own pillow and/or stuffies

What should my child NOT bring to Ledger?

- Cell phones
- Owned or rented movies (we have our own movies)
- Music players that have internet or texting capacity
- Laptop or other personal computer

Will my child be able to come home on pass?

- **Children's Unit:** closes on Friday afternoon through to Sunday evening. All children on the Children's Program go home for the weekends.
- **Youth Unit:** youth often go home on weekends, although we ask that they stay for at least the first weekend, to settle into the program.
- 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.

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 30 days, although this varies based upon the reason for referral.
- We will hold regular meetings with parents, caregivers and the community team to discuss your child's progress and to plan for discharge.
- 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.
- Most medication is provided through the hospital pharmacy. If this is not the case for your child's medication, we will let you know.

Can my child phone family and friends?

Yes, children are welcome to phone family and friends on our phone. **If possible, please provide a phone card for long-distance calls.** Cell phones are not permitted at Ledger.



Questions & Answers for Parents and Caregivers *Continued*

Does Ledger have a school program?

- Yes. We have school available in the building, Monday through Thursday, for half-days. 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 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?

- No electronics that have internet or texting capacity are permitted at Ledger.
- No cameras are permitted at Ledger, to protect confidentiality.
- Your child can bring music on an MP3 player that does not have texting, internet, or camera capability. Music on CD's can also be brought to Ledger and will be piped from the office into your child's room.
- Handheld games are permitted as long as the games are rated "E" for everyone, and the devices do not have internet or texting capability. 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.



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.
- Friends who wish to visit must arrange this with staff. 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 is not permitted on **any** VIHA property - this includes all buildings, grounds and parking lots.

Can my child go for walks without staff?

- We encourage children to spend time outdoors and we engage in numerous outdoor activities at Ledger.
- Independent walks on the grounds can provide a good transition from hospital back to the community and day-to-day life. On occasion, when a youth is close to discharge and it is agreed that independent walks on the grounds might be of benefit, the doctor may permit walks without staff.
- Usually, when a child goes on an independent walk, it is for a limited amount of time during daylight hours.

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 250-519-6794 or 250-519-6720. We would be happy to answer your questions.