



TENANT GUIDE

2021

Antigonish Affordable Housing Society



Table of Contents

1. Tenant Guide..... 3

2. Benefits of living in AAHS housing..... 4

 Below market rents.....4

 Staff who support tenants4

 Opportunities to engage and influence AAHS and housing4

 A shared community room and onsite facilities.....5

 Tenant emergency support fund5

3. Tenants’ obligations..... 5

 a. Cannabis and Tobacco Smoking.....5

 b. Pets6

 c. Garbage, Recycling and Composting.....6

 d. Noise and Disturbances6

 e. Tenant Insurance.....7

 f. Laundry Room Use.....7

 g. Outdoor Yard Space.....7

 h. Parking and Vehicles.....7

 i. Pest Management8

 j. Being a crime free zone.....8

4. AAHS landlord obligations..... 8

 i. To ensure that our units are *affordable*. To do this, we rent units that are below the average rents in Antigonish.9

 ii. To ensure that living in AAHS housing *socially supports tenants*. To do this, we employ a community navigator. Each complex has a community room and outdoor common spaces. Such common spaces are intended to contribute to positive neighborliness and sense of belonging.9

 iii. To ensure that our units *minimize harm to the environment*. To do this, we build our housing to very high environmental standards. As well, tenants are provided with the opportunity to grow vegetables and dry clothes on clotheslines. The AAHS supports tenants’ environmental awareness and learning.9

5. Your staff – More information about the navigator’s role..... 9

6. Tenant Advisory Group responsibilities..... 10

7. Community room policy and procedure..... 11

8. How to apply for tenant support funds 12

Contact Information..... 12

Mailing Address..... 12

Welcome to your new home.

By moving into stable and secure housing built by the Antigonish Affordable Housing Society (AAHS), you will join a new neighbourhood. We hope that living at Riverside Estates or Appleseed Court will contribute to your sense of belonging and life satisfaction. Some tenants have returned to school or trained for a new job. Others have been able to afford new opportunities for children while others have found a good quality, safe place to call home. We hope your affordable rent and new community will contribute to your overall wellbeing.

1. Tenant Guide

This tenant guide is a companion document to your lease. The lease describes the terms and conditions agreed to by you (the tenant) and AAHS (the landlord). Provincial law sets lease requirements. This tenant guide explains additional agreements not described in the lease. The law states that *these additional agreements, opportunities and obligations described in the tenant guide are binding for you and for AAHS.*

Tenants' and landlords' rights and obligations are governed by the *Nova Scotia Residential Tenancies Act (NSRTA)* and regulations. A copy of the ACT is posted in each community room. The purpose of these laws is to illustrate good behaviours and to reduce disputes between tenants and landlords. The law is used to help settle disagreements when they do occur. You can find a link to the Act [here](#). You will also find a link to the Tenant Rights Guide; A General Guide to Rental Housing in NS put out by the Dalhousie Legal Aid Service. [Tenant Rights Guide 2019.pdf \(dal.ca\)](#) or your Rights as a Tenant in NS <https://arrivein.com/daily-life-in-canada/understanding-your-rights-as-a-tenant-in-nova-scotia/>

Either before or when you move in and are given the keys to your unit, you are required to state that you have read this AAHS Tenant Guide or it has been clearly explained so that you understand what is in the guide and you pledge to follow the expectations described.

This guide will be updated from time to time. Tenants will have an opportunity to suggest changes to the guide. When changes are made to the guide, tenants may be asked to read the revised guide and agree in writing to follow it.

2. Benefits of living in AAHS housing

Below market rents

Most landlords charge enough rent to make a profit. The AAHS doesn't do this. It is a non-profit, charitable organization. Our rents are below what you would pay in for-profit housing. This saves you money.

Staff who support tenants

The role of our full-time staff person is to support the tenants and the organization. Our employee is usually referred to as the 'navigator.' Their full job title is community navigator-property manager to reflect two main roles. The navigator is your first point of contact at AAHS housing. See section 5 for more information about how the navigator supports you and your new neighbourhood and helps maintain your new apartment.

Opportunities to engage and influence AAHS and housing

All tenants of AAHS affordable housing complexes are automatically able to participate in the Tenant Advisory Group. Through this group, tenants are able to identify issues, propose solution-oriented actions and raise interests. Topics addressed relate to the residences, common rooms and property, tenant's quality of life, community activities. For example, the Tenant Advisory Group informs guidelines for the use of common areas and hosts social and educational events. Discussions identify concerns and prioritize improvements for AAHS. The group brings the valuable perspectives of tenants to the attention of the board of directors and committees.

Participants at the Tenant Advisory Group select a tenant to be member of the board of directors. The group generally meets about once a month.

See section 6 for the Tenant Advisory Group terms of reference and information about the tenant representative to the board of directors.

A shared community room and onsite facilities

Riverside Estates and Appleseed Court each have a community room. The community room at Riverside Estates was built using funds from winning a national competition in

2017. AAHS was among 13 winners of the Aviva Community Fund to improve community development, health and resilience. The award was given help meet the social sustainability goal of the AAHS. A community room is also part of Appleseed Court.

The purpose of the community rooms is to provide a space where tenants can meet to discuss issues, socialize, or participate in educational and wellness activities. The rooms can be booked by individual tenants for meetings, social or family gatherings.

See section 7 for community room guidelines.

Tenant emergency support fund

AAHS has a special fund to support tenants experiencing emergencies and unexpected situations. The funds are made available by a gift from a donor. According to the donor's request, the funds are to contribute to the physical, mental or social wellbeing and dignity of the tenants. These situations may include unexpected medical and travel expenses, unusual care giver responsibilities, opportunities for child development, or providing a means for greater independence in the future.

See section 8 for information about how to apply for funds.

3. Tenants' obligations

By signing your lease and the statement that you agree to abide by the expectations in this community guide, you are agreeing to follow the following rules.

a. Cannabis and Tobacco Smoking

- i.** Smoking is not permitted inside units. Smoking must be done only in designated areas.
- ii.** Smoking is not allowed indoors, in stairways, the laundry room, or the community room. It is not allowed outdoors in shared yards, the playground or the parking lot.
- iii.** This rule focuses on the respect for non-smokers so the space for

smokers is limited.

b. Pets

- iv.** Tenants must be responsible pet owners. The following rules apply for tenants with pets:
- v.** Tenants may keep one pet per unit. Allowable pets are birds, fish, hamsters, cats or other small mammals.
- vi.** Only dogs provincially certified as a service animal are allowed.
- vii.** Tenants must register pets with the navigator when they move in or when they acquire a pet after move-in. This includes giving the navigator the contact information for someone who will look after their pet in the case of an emergency.
- viii.** All municipal by-laws apply to dogs owned by tenants.
- ix.** Pets are not allowed to roam. Pets shall not disturb or harm other residents. And, pet shall not create regular or frequent noise.
- x.** Cats and service dogs must be spayed or neutered and have appropriate vaccines.
- xi.** Residents must immediately clean up their pet's waste. Outdoors, this means carrying and using pet poop bags. Dispose of your pet's poop bag in the garbage. Indoors, this means frequently cleaning your cat's litter box and not allowing poop to stain a carpet or flooring.
- xii.** Damage caused by pets is the responsibility of the pet owner. This includes damage to landscaped areas, apartment interiors and other part of AAHS buildings. Any damage shall be reported to the navigator and must be fixed quickly.

c. Garbage, Recycling and Composting

- xiii.** Garbage, recycling and compost are to be placed in the appropriate master collection bins. Garbage, recycling and compost must be sorted correctly and in the correct colored bag.
- xiv.** For more information follow the link:
<http://www.antigonishcounty.ns.ca/garbage-collection/>

d. Noise and Disturbances

- xv.** Each resident and their neighbors are entitled to privacy and the quiet enjoyment of their homes.
- xvi.** Residents are required to make sure that household members and

guests live in a manner that does not have a negative effect on neighbors.

- xvii.** Out of respect for your neighbours, there should be no loud noise between 11pm and 7am.

e. Tenant Insurance

- xviii.** A landlord may request that you obtain proper liability insurance when renting a property and providing a copy of the insurance to the landlord. Tenants' insurance is designed to protect your personal belongings against theft or damage and cover costs if you have to temporarily move out due to fire or flood, for example. While a landlord can request you are properly insured, tenants' insurance is not mandatory in Nova Scotia. It is advisable to take out tenant insurance as it protects your belongings, living expenses, including moving costs, and liability claims if you cause accidental damage.

f. Laundry Room Use

- xix.** The common laundry room is a shared space that all tenants have a responsibility to maintain and keep tidy.
- xx.** The hours of operation are from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm.
- xxi.** Each tenant is responsible to use the machines carefully. Do not overload machines. Empty machines promptly when your laundry is finished. You are expected to wipe down washing machines after each use.

g. Outdoor Yard Space

- xxii.** All tenants have a responsibility to keep our property neat and tidy.
- xxiii.** You are responsible to keep the outdoor spaces assigned to your unit neat, clean and orderly. Clear lawn areas to allow mowing. Tenants are encouraged to use planters and pots for plants.
- xxiv.** A storage shed or locker is provided for each unit. You're expected to keep your goods inside your shed or locker.
- xxv.** Garden beds are assigned to tenants to grow their own food.

h. Parking and Vehicles

- xxvi.** Each unit is assigned one parking space. Visitors may park only in designated visitor parking areas. In addition:

- xxvii.** All vehicles on this site must be currently licensed and insured.
- xxviii.** No automotive parts are to be stored outdoors in view.
- xxix.** Any damage to the pavement caused by oil or gas leaks will be repaired at the vehicle owner's expense.
- xxx.** No vehicles are to be elevated and off the ground overnight.

i. Pest Management

- xxxi.** To help control pests, all tenants are expected to store food in airtight containers. Store garbage in sealed containers and put garbage out on regular garbage days.
- xxxii.** Tenants are to report pest infestations to the navigator as soon as pests are noticed. Tenants are to comply with instructions from the navigator and contracted pest management firms to complete all assigned pre/post-treatment activities considered. This includes preparing your unit for treatment.

j. Being a crime free zone

- xxxiii.** Tenants are required to obey the law. This is especially important in terms of not engaging in criminal activity on the property. (Criminal activity includes actions prohibited and punishable by law. Examples are actions that threaten or endanger the health, safety or welfare of people and harm property.)
- xxxiv.** AAHS will issue a notice to end tenancy if any resident or their guest engages in criminal activity on the property.

4. AAHS landlord obligations

AAHS commits to fulfill all obligations of landlords that are set out in N.S. law. This includes readying units for tenants to move in. AAHS maintains and insures buildings and property adhere to building standards.

In addition, as a non-profit housing provider, the AAHS strives to fulfill our charitable mission. The AAHS' mission is unusual in having three components:

- i. To ensure that our units are *affordable*. To do this, we rent units that are below the average rents in Antigonish.
- ii. To ensure that living in AAHS housing *socially supports tenants*. To do this, we employ a community navigator. Each complex has a community room and outdoor common spaces. Such common spaces are intended to contribute to positive neighborliness and sense of belonging.
- iii. To ensure that our units *minimize harm to the environment*. To do this, we build our housing to very high environmental standards. As well, tenants are provided with the opportunity to grow vegetables and dry clothes on clotheslines. The AAHS supports tenants' environmental awareness and learning.

The AAHS vision for the future is that residents of Antigonish town and county who live on low incomes have sufficient access to environmentally, socially and financially sustainable, community-supported affordable housing.

5. Your staff – More information about the navigator's role

The navigator supports tenants to improve their health, wellness and connection with community. The navigator is available to support each tenant individually to help access community and government services and resources. The navigator can help you find and assess potential services. The navigator will help you figure out if you are eligible for a service or program. The navigator will help facilitate applications and support you to schedule appointments. Sometimes the navigator coordinates or consults on a tenants' behalf with the community agencies and staff that supply services.

The navigator works with the Tenant Community Building Committee and Tenant Advisory Group to help build a sense of belonging among the tenants through social activities, community gardens, educational and wellness activities.

As property manager, the navigator meets and welcomes with all incoming tenants and makes sure that tenants understand their rights and obligations. The navigator collects rents, inspects units, buildings and property for safety hazards, damage or needed repairs. This includes inspecting each unit on a regular basis to determine needs and be sure that tenants are complying with commitments.

They perform maintenance duties or engage a contractor to make repairs.

6. Tenant Advisory Group responsibilities

The purpose of the Tenant Advisory Group is to provide a link and access to the Board of Directors by the tenants. AAHS is governed by a voluntary board of directors, who's role is to facilitate its work of the society. The board is comprised of working committees and each committee has a description called a 'terms of reference' that describes what the committee does, who is on it, when it reports, etc. You can find information about the board of directors in each community room or by asking the navigator.

The Tenant Advisory Group's roles and responsibilities are to

- collaborate closely with the Tenant Community Building Committee (TCBC)¹ to inform and influence TCBC's efforts to create positive well-being for tenants and the community of tenants.
- hold meetings in an accessible manner, e.g. promote meetings to tenants; apply respectful practices to encourage high participation by tenants; meet at times that are convenient for tenants.
- report to TCBC, and support and inform TCBC's reports to the board.
- report back to tenants through means of minutes available to tenants about TAG meeting discussions and decisions;
- report back to tenants about subsequent discussions and actions taken by staff, committees and/or the board of directors. (This can be done through the next month's TAG meeting minutes except in the circumstance when an issue is particularly time-sensitive).
- regularly monitor and evaluate the role of TAG.

To fulfill these responsibilities and duties, tenants choose a TAG representative to be a full member of the AAHS board of directors and represent tenant viewpoints to the board.

Participation by tenants in TAG is necessary for TAG to achieve its aims.

The full terms of reference for the Tenant Advisory Group are in each community room.

¹ See the TCBC terms of reference to understand TCBC's functions. See section V for more information about post-meeting reporting to TCBC and board and navigator expectations.

7. Community room policy and procedure²

The Community Room provides space for Tenant Advisory Group meetings, informal and formal educational activities of interest to the tenants, organized recreational activities, tenants' private gatherings such as a family party, meetings between the residents and the Community Navigator, and other scheduled events. The Community Room may also serve as a place to connect tenants with the larger Antigonish Community and thus build community outward. Tenants are responsible for ensuring the safe and reasonable use of all common areas by household members and guests.

Guidelines for Shared Management of the Community Room

As a common public space, there are liability issues connected to health and safety regarding the use of this common space. Therefore, explicit and clear guidelines have been developed in relation to the Community Room usage. Suggestions for amendments or changes to this policy and guidelines must come through the Tenant Advisory Group to the Governance Committee and be approved by the AAHS Board.

Responsibility and Oversight of the Community Room

The Tenant Advisory Group has the overall responsible for the oversight of the Community Room. The TAG can work in collaboration with the Community Navigator to ensure there is a clean, tidy space available to all when requested. An assistant can be assigned the duties of opening/closing the Community Room; ensure post use clean-up is taking place; ensure entrances/exits are free, clear and safe; keep washrooms clean and supplied; and ensure general cleanliness of the space and its appliances.

Food and Health Safety.

As a shared common area, it will be important to ensure that health standards are maintained in the Community Room. Any food brought into the Community Room should not be left in the room. Alcohol may be responsibly consumed but cannot be sold in the Community Room.

Residents are asked to leave the Community Room in an orderly and tidy fashion for others to enjoy. Basic cleaning and housekeeping supplies will be available to ensure

² This policy and procedure was developed for Riverside Estates and approved in August 2018. The same guidelines will apply to Appleseed Court upon its opening. Over time, it will be decided by tenants and the board of directors whether there is a reason to vary the policies and procedures of the two rooms.



the room is clean. Where utensils and dishes are used in the Community Room, they should be washed and put away before leaving.

Liability Insurance. As dictated by the liability Insurance, drugs and live flame candles are not permitted in the Community Room.

Building Security. Please ensure the lights are turned off and the Community Room doors are locked upon exiting. Community members are asked to pay extra attention to ensure that stoves are turned off before leaving the Community Room.

Community Room Rules will be posted in the Community Room.

8. How to apply for tenant support funds

The special support funds are to help tenants experiencing emergencies and unexpected situations. Approved uses of the funds may include unexpected medical and travel expenses, unusual care giver responsibilities, opportunities for child development, or providing a means for greater independence in the future.

Support funds are limited to a one-time use of up to \$500. This is for a non-recurring expense.

To apply for funds, contact the navigator to obtain an application form. If requested, the navigator will help you complete the application. The navigator will consult with the chair of the TCBC and decide if you meet the criteria for the funds. If the Committee would like additional information, they will contact you. Receipts for the expenses will be required.

Contact Information

Antigonish Affordable Housing Society
Community Navigator: Jaime Smith at:
affordable.antig@gmail.com
or (902) 318-3732

Mailing Address

Riverside Estates
12R Hope Lane
Sylvan Valley, NS
B2G 0G4