



POLICY IFC-88: Visitor Policy

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Policy

Visitation policy will be in place to protect the health and safety of Residents, Staff and Visitors while supporting Residents in receiving the care they need and maintaining their emotional well-being.

The home must support Residents in receiving visitors while mitigating the risk of exposure to communicable diseases or an outbreak of a disease of Public Health significance, an epidemic or pandemic. The home is responsible for implementing and following visiting practices that comply applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

All visitors to the home are required to follow public health measures (e.g. passive screening, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette) for the duration of their visit in the home.

Norview will maintain a visitor log of all visits to the home. The visitor log includes visitor name, contact information, date, time of visit and the Resident that they are visiting. These records will be kept for a minimum of 30 days and be readily available for contact tracing upon request.

Definitions

Caregiver

Is a type of essential visitor designated by the Resident and/or their Substitute Decision Maker and is visiting to provide one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the Resident. (e.g. Support feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making). Examples; Family members, privately hired caregivers, paid companions, translators, friend or a person important to a Resident.

- If a caregiver is under the age of 16 years old, the individual must have approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.
- A Resident or SDM may change a designation in response to a change in the Resident care needs, availability of a designated caregiver either temporary (e.g. illness) or permanent.
- The Resident and/or SDM contacts the home and requests to document their designated Caregivers on the “Consideration for Essential Caregiver Program” form.
- A list of caregivers is maintained by the Supervisors of Programs and Volunteer Services or designate.
- There is no limit to the number of caregivers designated by the Resident or SDM.
- Caregivers may support more than 1 Resident in non-outbreak situations provided there is consent from all involved Residents or their POAs.
- Caregivers may volunteer to support more than 1 Resident, in the event of an outbreak.
- Caregivers may support up to 2 Residents who are COVID-19 positive, provided all Residents/POAs have given consent.

Support Worker

A person in the home performing essential support services for the home or a Resident at the home. They are not staff of the LTC home as defined in the LTCHA.

A Support Worker is a type of essential visitor as they are performing essential support services.

A list as follows, but not limited to:

- Health Care Service Provider: e.g. Phlebotomy testing, X-Ray services, Respiratory Therapy
- Food Delivery
- Hairdressing
- Maintenance workers/Contractors
- Physiotherapy Staff
- Social Work Services
- Legal Services
- Canada Post
- Courier Services
- Emergency Services
- Election Officials/Workers
- Physician / Nurse Practitioner
- Assistive Device Program Vendors
- Foot care

Essential Visitor

A person visiting a very ill Resident for compassionate reasons including but not limited to hospice services or end of life care. This also includes Post Mortem Services.

General Visitors

A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or particular Resident or group of Residents.

General visitors include those persons visiting for social reasons as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.

Ministry of Health/Labour and LTC Inspectors

Government Inspectors are considered an essential visitor with a statutory right of entry to carry out their duties must be granted access to the home.

Vaccine Requirement

Norview Lodge continues to recommend all visitors stay up-to-date with their vaccine eligibility, although vaccination against COVID-19 is not required to enter the home.

Vaccination has shown to be very effective against severe illness and outcomes. Staying up-to-date with recommended doses restores protection that wanes over time. More specifically, booster doses help to increase protection against symptomatic infection and severe outcomes such as hospitalization and ICU admission.

Access to the Home and Screening

Visitors to the home will enter and exit via the main entrance and passively screen using the signage in the vestibule and perform hand hygiene prior to entry.

All persons entering the home must sign into the visitor logbook located at the front entrance. The visitor log can be used for contact tracing and is retained for 30 days.

Visitors who fail passive screening should not enter the home when ill and should leave the home immediately and self isolate at their own home and follow Public Health guidance.

Masking is recommended for all visitors but not required.

When a Visitor tests positive for COVID-19

Visitors who test positive for COVID-19 and/or have symptoms compatible with COVID-19 should self-isolate at their own home until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms) and no fever is present.

Visitors should notify the home of their recent illness/positive test.

Visitors for a total of 10 days after the date of specimen collection or symptom onset, (whichever is earlier/applicable), should avoid non-essential visits to anyone who is immunocompromised or at a higher risk of illness and avoid non-essential visits to highest -risk settings (such as hospitals and long-term care homes)

Exceptions to individuals who fail screening:

1. Visitors for imminently palliative Residents

- If the visitor fails screening, they must be permitted entry, but the home ensures that they wear a medical mask and maintain physical distance from other Residents and staff.

2. Visitors who test positive for COVID-19

- Visitors should continue to avoid visiting a long-term care home for 10 days after symptom onset or positive test result.
- Where visits cannot be avoided and where the visitor is essential to the Residents overall health and well-being (eg. Essential visits) The visitor is able to visit the home within the 10-day timeframe if asymptomatic or symptoms have resolved but they must follow measures to reduce the risk of transmission for 10 days from their symptom onset/positive test.
- **Measures to reduce risk:**
 - Visitors should wear a medical mask
 - Maintain physical distancing to other Residents and staff
 - Should notify the home of their recent illness/positive test.
 - It is recommended during this visit; the Resident also wear a mask (with the exception of imminently ill or end of life Residents)

Caregiver (Wear Green Badges)

- Caregivers are permitted 7 days a week.
- No limit on time and are not required to schedule a visit.
- There is no limit on how many Caregivers can visit a symptomatic Resident on isolation or during an outbreak although appropriate PPE must be worn in these circumstances.
- Caregivers can attend a Resident in the dining room to assist with meal service, join the Resident for dining and share a meal or beverage in communal areas.

Support Workers

Any number of support workers may visit the home.

Essential Visitors (Palliative/End of Life)

- There is no limit on the number of essential visitors allowed to come into the home at one time.
- Essential Visitors must only visit the one Resident they are intending to visit.

- Essential visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult and must follow all applicable public health measures that are in place in the home.
- Essential visitors, which includes caregivers, support workers, persons visiting for compassionate reasons, including end of life care, and inspectors, continue to have access to the home during an outbreak.

General Visitors

- General visitors younger than 12 years of age must be accompanied by an adult (someone 18 yrs. of age or older) and must follow all applicable public health measures that are in place in the home.
- General visitors can attend a Resident in the dining room to assist with meal service.
- General visitors should postpone non-essential visits to Resident's who are symptomatic and/or self-isolating or when the home is in outbreak.

Direction from the Public Health Unit

In the case where public health directs the home in respect of the number of visitors allowed, the home is to follow the public health direction.

Personal Protective Equipment

Masking:

- Masking is recommended but not mandatory.
- In outbreak situations, or if a Resident is on Additional Precautions, all individuals are required to comply with masking and other personal protective equipment.
- Visitors who prefer to wear a mask beyond minimum requirements may continue to do so. Masks will continue to be provided.
- POA or Substitute decision makers, may request that a staff member wear a mask when providing care in alignment with the Residents' Bill of Rights, including the right to participate fully in making any decisions concerning any aspect of their care.

Mask Etiquette:

- Clean hands before putting on your mask.
- Avoid touching your face and the outside of your mask.
- Clean hands before touching your face and if you touch the outside of your mask.
- Avoid hanging your mask under your chin.
- Double masking is not advised.

In outbreak situations and/or for Residents who are on additional precautions the exceptions to the masking requirements are as follows:

1. Children who are younger than 2 years of age;

2. Any individual who is being accommodated in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 or the Ontario Human Rights Code

Addressing the exception for Visitors

- The individual will wear a face shield into the home.
- The face shield must cover their mouth.
- Face shields will be provided as requested.

Additional PPE for symptomatic Residents on Additional Precautions and/or

Outbreaks

- Additional PPE (mask, eyewear, gown) is required for Caregivers, Support Workers and Essential Visitors when the Resident is on Additional Precautions or resides in the home or an area of the home in an outbreak.
- The Caregiver, Support Worker and Essential Visitors will follow proper procedure for Donning and Doffing as instructional signage is located outside of each Resident's door.

Hand Hygiene

All Visitors are encouraged to perform hand hygiene upon entry and exit to the home and as per the Just Clean Your Hands Program (4 moments).

Moment #1 – Before initial Resident/Resident environment contact

Moment #2 – Before aseptic procedures (ex. Oral care)

Moment #3 – After body fluid exposure risk

Moment #4 – After Resident/Resident environment contact

- Alcohol based hand rub (70-90%) can be used when hands are not visibly soiled.
- Use soap and water when hands are visibly soiled.

Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette

The following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for all individuals.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Use in the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of tissue after use.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Perform hand hygiene (i.e., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-base hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Education for Caregivers

To provide support to all Caregivers, the Caregiver will meet with a designated Norview Lodge Employee and review the Essential Caregiver Program Guidelines prior to entering the home for their first visit as a Caregiver.

Educational Caregiver package contains:

- Visitor Policy
 - Communal dining (COVID-19) Policy
 - COVID-19 Vaccine
 - COVID-19 Screening and Screening Outcomes for Visitors
 - COVID-19 Immunization Policy for Visitors
 - Infection Prevention and Control tips for visiting all health care and Congregate Settings (Public Health Ontario)
 - Passive Screening and Sign in Instructions
 - COVID-19 Screening Tool for LTC Homes
 - COVID-19 Guide for Caregivers, Household Members and Closet Contacts (Public Health Ontario)
 - COVID-19 How to protect yourself from COVID-19 (Public Health Ontario)
 - How to put on PPE
 - How to remove PPE
 - Respiratory etiquette - Cover Your Cough
 - How to use hand sanitizer
 - How to wash your hands
 - How to apply and remove a surgical mask and eye protection
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- Caregiver Sign off Form (that the Caregiver signs once they have reviewed the Educational Package)
 - Caregivers will receive retraining or re-education annually, with quarterly Family Council meetings or more frequently to respond to emerging public health issues and/or new evidence.

Education for General Visitors

Emergency Plan/Policies and Infection Control/COVID-19 updates are available on the Norview Lodge Website

A binder is kept in the Great Room/Reception containing the following hard copies for all visitors to the home:

- Visitor Policy
- Communal dining (COVID-19) Policy
- COVID-19 Vaccine
- COVID-19 Screening and Screening Outcomes for Visitors
- COVID-19 Immunization Policy for Visitors
- Infection Prevention and Control tips for visiting all health care and Congregate Settings (Public Health Ontario)
- Passive Screening and Sign in Instructions
- COVID-19 Screening Tool for LTC Homes
- COVID-19 Guide for Caregivers, Household Members and Closet Contacts (Public Health Ontario)
- COVID-19 How to protect yourself from COVID-19 (Public Health Ontario)
- How to put on PPE
- How to remove PPE
- Respiratory etiquette - Cover Your Cough
- How to use hand sanitizer
- How to wash your hands
- How to apply and remove a surgical mask and eye protection

There is signage in the entrance to the home (vestibule), throughout the home, in each Resident home area and at the sign in desk which include the following:

- Passive screening questions/instructions
- Sign in instructions
- How to Hand wash
- How to Hand rub
- How to Apply and Remove a Mask (Public Health Ontario)
- Respiratory Etiquette (Public Health Ontario)
- How to apply and remove PPE

Communication with Visitors/Residents

A current version of this policy is provided to the Resident's Council and Family Council

- Posted in the home on the Resident/Family Information Board
- In a binder in the Great Room
- Included in the Resident Information package upon admission to the home.
- Posted on the home's website.

References

Ministry of Long-Term Care COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes and other Congregate Living Settings for Public Health Units – June 26, 2023

Ministry of Long-Term Care COVID-19 Guidance Document for Long-Term Care Homes in Ontario, Nov 7, 2023.

Fixing LTC Act 2021.

Infection Prevention & Control (IPAC) Standard for Long-Term Care Homes (April 2022).