



GLEN HILL TERRACE

A DURHAM CHRISTIAN HOMES COMMUNITY

SUBJECT:	Visiting Policy	POLICY #:	V-E-10.31
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MANUAL:	Resident Care	REFERENCES:	
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INTRODUCTION

This visiting policy is guided by the following principles:

- Safety – any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated;
- Emotional well-being – allowing visitors is intended to support the mental and emotional well-being of residents by reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation;
- Equitable access – all residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents;
- Flexibility – the physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its staffing availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the current status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to take into account when setting home-specific policies;
- Resident rights – residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.

POLICY

Residents have a right to receive visitors. The Home will provide an organized, safe and secure process to allow for visitation within the Home that meets the principles of safety, emotional well-being, equitable access, flexibility, and resident rights. At all times, the Home will follow any applicable legislation, directive or guidance as set forth by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care and/or Public Health as applicable.

DEFINITIONS

Types of Visitors:

1. Not considered visitors

Long-term care home staff (as defined under the Act), volunteers and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee. Government inspectors are essential visitors; however, they are not subject to the requirements in this document with respect to homes' visitor policies.

2. Essential Visitors

Essential visitor is a person who:

Is visiting to perform essential support services that meet an essential need of the resident or operations (e.g., food delivery, inspector, maintenance, or health care services such as phlebotomy)

There are 3 Types of Essential Visitors:

- 1) People visiting very ill or palliative residents who are receiving end of life care for compassionate reasons, hospice services, etc.
- 2) A support worker is a type of essential visitor who is visiting to perform essential support services for the Home or for a resident at the Home.

Examples of support workers include physicians, nurse practitioners, maintenance workers, legal services, assistive devices program vendors, Canada Post, election workers, post-mortem services, social work services, or a person delivering food, provided they are not staff of the LTC Home as defined in the LTCHA.

- 3) An Essential Caregiver (ECG) is a type of essential visitor who is at least 16 years of age and is designated by the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker and is visiting to provide direct care to the resident (e.g. supporting feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity, social and emotional support, and assistance in decision-making).

Examples of ECGs include friends and families, privately hired caregiver, paid companions, translator.

Essential caregiver visits DO NOT need to be scheduled. The length or frequency of the visits will not be restrictive.

3. General Visitors

A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting:

- to provide non-essential services, who may or may not be hired by the home or the resident or their substitute decision maker.
- for social reasons (for example, family members or friends) that the resident or their substitute decision-maker assess as different from direct care, including care related to cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection and relational continuity.

General visits, either indoor or outdoor, may require scheduling at the discretion and availability of the home's staff to support the visits. Where scheduling is required, the home will provide a platform for booking general visits.

General 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 at the home (for example, active screening, physical distancing, hand hygiene, masking for source control).

PROCEDURE:

Designating an Essential Caregiver

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is entirely at the remit of the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker.

- 1) The designation will be made in writing to the home.
- 2) Caregivers may change a designation, in writing to the home, in response to a change in the resident's care needs and/or the availability of a designated caregiver on a temporary or permanent basis, but may NOT continuously switch designations to allow more visitors in the home.
- 3) There is no maximum number of designated essential caregivers per resident.
- 4) Caregivers must be at least 16 years of age.

Immunization Requirements for All General Visitors including Essential Caregivers

All general visitors and essential caregivers are strongly encouraged to be up to date with vaccinations against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, unless a valid medical exemption is in place.

Visiting

FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR VISITS, RESIDENTS MAY RECEIVE VISITORS at a location within the home that is space appropriate for the number of persons in attendance. Visitors who are anticipating a large group at one time should consult with the home to determine the appropriate and designated visiting space.

The home will comply with all Minister Directives, guidance documents and Public Health recommendations, related to visiting, in order to support the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) response in the home and the community.

While there are no restrictions on the type or number of visitors, visiting may be restricted, or the type of visitors allowed into the home may change, at any given time, in accordance with the most current directives.

Subject to Public Health Recommendations, Visiting during an outbreak may be restricted. Visitors will be informed if Public Health has placed restrictions on visiting during an outbreak.

Notwithstanding the above provisions for visitor access to the home:

1. **Passive Screening** – All persons entering the home are required to self-monitor and screen for any signs and symptoms which may indicate infection or illness. Visitors who do not pass the passive screening, as posted in the home, should postpone their visit until they are well.
2. **Visitor Logs** - The home will maintain a visitor log for all visitors entering the home for safety and accountability purposes in the event of an emergency.
3. **Visitor Education** - Visitors are to remain mindful of physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.
4. **PPE** - Visitors will wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as outlined by Ministry Directives and the outbreak/isolation status of the home and/or the resident(s) being visited. The Home will supply appropriate PPE for indoor visits as may be required. Residents may be encouraged to wear a mask provided by the Home if tolerated.
5. Masking is required in all public areas in the home.
6. Masks may be removed when visitors or caregivers are alone with a resident in their room. Residents and their guests can enjoy food/drink in the resident's room. For residents living in shared rooms, privacy curtains are to be closed while visitors are in the room without masks. Areas of the home have been designated where it is safe to remove masks for the purpose of eating/drinking.
7. Masking is not required for outdoor visits.

Non-Adherence by Visitors

Non-compliance with the home's policies will result in a discontinuation of visits for the non-compliant visitor.

Procedures for responding to non-adherence by visitors in the home:

- Provide strategies for supporting visitors in understanding and adhering to the home's visitor policy;
- Recognize visits are critical to supporting a resident's care needs and emotional well-being;
- Consider the impact of discontinuing visits on the resident's clinical and emotional well-being reflect and are proportionate to the severity of the non-adherence.

Where the home has previously ended a visit by, or temporarily prohibited, a visitor, specify any education or training the visitor may need to complete before visiting the home again in order to protect residents, staff and visitors in the home from the risk of infection.

Any visitor may request a copy of the homes visiting policy at any time.

Reference(s)

- Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021,
- COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes in Ontario – March 31, 2023
- Minister’s Directive: COVID-19 response measures for long-term care homes – August 30, 2022
- Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units – March 31, 2023
- COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, and Other Congregate Living Settings for Public Health Units Version 10 – March 31, 2023