



# GLEN HILL TERRACE

A DURHAM CHRISTIAN HOMES COMMUNITY

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Visiting policy during a COVID-19 Pandemic</b>	<b>POLICY #:</b>	<b>V-E-10.31</b>
<b>MANUAL:</b>	Infection Prevention and Control	<b>PAGE:</b>	1 of 6
<b>ORIGINAL ISSUE:</b>	June 2006	<b>REFERENCES:</b>	
<b>PAST REVISIONS:</b>	2020/April 2021/July 2021	<b>APPROV. AUTH:</b>	CEO
<b>REVIEW/REVISION:</b>	August 2021/Sept. 2021/Feb. 2022/ March 2022	<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	All Employees
		<b>DISTRIBUTION:</b>	Glen Hill Terrace Glen Hill Strathaven

## **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 4 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 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.

- 4) Government inspectors are essential visitors under Directive #3; however, they are not subject to this policy.

## 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 be required to be scheduled 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, vaccination requirements, physical distancing, hand hygiene, masking for source control).

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **Designating an Essential Caregiver**

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is entirely 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) The maximum number of designated essential caregivers per resident is 4 (unless designated before December 15<sup>th</sup> at which time any number of caregivers can be designated).
- 4) Caregivers must be at least 16 years of age.
- 5) Upon designation, essential caregivers will receive education that addresses how to safely provide direct care including, at minimum, PPE use, donning and doffing and hand hygiene along with review of the home's visitor policy.

#### **Immunization Requirements for Essential Caregivers**

- 1) Essential Caregivers are required to be fully vaccinated (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose) and boosted (3<sup>rd</sup> dose). At times when the home is in outbreak, a resident is in isolation or as may be directed by the Ministry of Health or Public Health, fully vaccinated essential caregivers may be the only visitors allowed to visit the home. Essential Caregivers must be fully vaccinated by February 21, 2022 unless a valid medical exemption has been provided to the home or the caregiver is visiting a resident who is receiving end of life care.
  - a. For those eligible, proof of third dose is required by March 14, 2022
  - b. For those eligible on or after March 14, 2022, proof within 30 days of being eligible.
- 2) Documentation must be provided to the Home, including the QR code, indicating vaccination status in order to qualify as a fully vaccinated Essential Caregiver.

#### **Immunization Requirements for General Visitors**

- 1) General visitors are strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose) and boosted (3<sup>rd</sup> dose), unless a valid medical exemption is in place. While the home supports the residents right to receive visitors, there may be times when only fully vaccinated essential caregivers may be allowed to visit, such as when the home is in

outbreak, the resident is in isolation or at the direction of Public Health or Ministry of Health.

Fully immunized visitors:

- May have close contact with a fully immunized resident – masks must be worn at all times
- May support in dining room, join in activity

Partial/ Unimmunized Visitors:

- Physical distancing of 2m is required when not providing direct care, however brief physical contact (hugs) are permitted
- Unable to join in dining room/ activities
- Travel directly to the resident's room and remain in the resident's room for the duration of their visit
- Required to wear masks and face shields (provided by the home) for the duration of their visit in the home
- Receive education related to the use of required PPE
- Sign an attestation to acknowledge having received and understood education related to the use of PPE
- Sign an attestation to declare awareness of and abide by policy requirements including consequences of being unable to visit if the policy is not adhered to

### **Visiting**

#### **FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR VISITS, RESIDENTS MAY RECEIVE UP TO 4 VISITORS AT A TIME.**

The home will comply with all Minister Directives, guidance documents and Public Health recommendations, related to visiting, in order to support the COVID-19 response in the home and the community.

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. Visiting may also be restricted based on vaccination status of visitors as per the most current directives.

Notwithstanding the above provisions for visitor access to the home:

**General Visitors** are NOT permitted to visit if:

- a. The Home or area of the home is in outbreak
- b. The resident is self-isolating or symptomatic

**Essential Caregivers** are allowed to visit ONE at a time, per resident, if:

- a. The home or area of the home is in outbreak;
- b. The public health unit is in a restricted level under the Provincial guidance document COVID-19 response framework: keeping Ontario safe and open which will indicate **one** essential caregiver per resident may visit at a time.

1. Active Screening - All visitors will be actively screened for symptoms and exposure history for COVID-19 before any visit whether inside or outside the home. Any visitor who fails active screening (i.e., having symptoms of COVID-19 and/or having had contact with someone who has COVID-19) will not be allowed to enter the home, will be advised to go home immediately to self-isolate, and be encouraged to be tested.
2. The home will use the most current Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Screening Tool for Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes, effective December 7, 2021 or as current, for minimum requirements and exemptions regarding active screening. Any visitor failing the screening will not be permitted entry into the home with the following exceptions:
  - a. First responders must be permitted entry without screening in emergency situations
  - b. Fully vaccinated essential visitors, who have received a COVID-19 vaccination or Influenza immunization within 48 hours may be permitted entry if they answer "yes" to the following symptoms ONLY:
    - o Headache
    - o Fatigue
    - o Muscle ache/joint painPresenting with any other symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of smell or taste or nausea would be considered failing the screen.
  - c. Visitors for palliative end-of-life residents will be screened prior to entry. If they fail screening, they will be permitted entry, but the home will ensure that they wear a medical (surgical/procedural) mask and maintain physical distance from other residents and staff;
3. The list of essential caregivers will be maintained by the home and available at the screening desk. At such times when essential caregivers are the only visitors permitted in the home, the screener will check the list to ensure the visitor is a designated essential caregiver prior to allowing entry.
4. The vaccination status of essential caregivers and general visitors, as required, will be maintained by the home and available at the screening desk. At times when visitors are required to be fully vaccinated, the screener will check the list to ensure the visitor is fully vaccinated prior to allowing entry OR the screener will request the visitor provide documented proof, including QR code, to the screener who will note it for future visits.
5. The home will maintain a visitor log for all indoor and outdoor visits and retain the information for at least 30 days. The screener will ensure the visitor signs in on the visitor log and indicates their full name, date and time of visit, the resident they are visiting and that they passed the active screening
6. Prior to entering the home, visitors will be reminded of physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.
7. Visitors will wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as outlined by Ministry Directives. The Home will supply appropriate PPE for indoor visits, including eye

protection as may be required. Visitors may supply their own mask for outdoor visits. Residents will be encouraged to wear a mask provided by the Home if tolerated.

8. The screener will direct the visitor for surveillance testing as required by the most current directive.
  - All individuals visiting in the home (indoors or outdoors), over the age of one, must follow the testing requirements as stated in the Minister's Directive. Parental consent is required for minors (individuals under 18 years of age) that undergo testing. If consent is not given and/or testing is refused, the individual is not permitted to enter the home
  - For Essential Caregivers - An Antigen Test at a frequency of 2 tests per week, at a minimum, if fully vaccinated, or at a frequency of 3 tests per week, at a minimum, if not fully vaccinated is required.
  - For General Visitors – An Antigen Test is required on day of visit unless they were tested the previous day.
  - For all visitors, the test result must be obtained prior to entry into the home.

#### **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 COVID-19

#### **Reference(s)**

- Ministers Directive 3 – Dec 24, 2021
- Ministers Directive – COVID-19 Long Term Care Home Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes – December 17, 2021
- Ministry of Long-Term Care Guidance Document for Long Term Care Homes in Ontario, as of February 7, 2022
- Ministry of Long-Term Care "Long-Term Care Visitor, Absences & Social Gatherings Snapshot as of February 7, 2022.