



Regional Municipality of Durham
Social Services Department
 Long Term Care (LTC) and Services for Seniors

Title: Visitation to Long-Term Care

Policy #: IC-05-13-04

Reviewed/Revised: Mar/2021, May/2021, Jun/21, Jul/21, Jan/22, Feb/22, Jun/22, July,22, Oct/22, Nov/22, Mar/23, Apr/23, Jun/23, Nov/23, Nov/24, Oct/25, Sept/26

Approved by Director of Long-Term Care and Senior Services

Date: September 29, 2026

1. Policy

The Long-Term Care and Services for Seniors (LTC&SS) Division will provide an organized process to allow for safe and secure visits to our Homes. The Homes will comply with applicable laws including any 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 Promotions Act*.

All visitors will have access to information and education through the Home's Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Practitioner or designate about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and any other applicable education. Visitors can ask for this information at reception.

2. Purpose

1. To ensure there is a safe and organized process for those who visit residents in our Homes.
2. To provide meaningful, equitable, flexible, and safe visits for all residents and to support their emotional wellbeing.

3. Definitions

General Visitor

A person who is visiting a resident within the Home to provide non-essential services or for social reasons, who may or may not be hired by the Home or the resident and/or the Substitute Decision Maker (SDM).

Essential Visitor

An essential visitor is a caregiver who:

- Is a family member, friend, or person of importance to a resident
- Provides one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident including providing direct physical support such as activities of daily living or providing social, spiritual, or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis
- Is designated by the resident or the resident's SDM with authority to give that designation, if any, and in the case of an individual under 16 years of age, has approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.

An essential visitor could also be:

- A Support Worker who visits the Home to provide support to the critical operations of the Home or to provide essential services to residents.
- A person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to hospice services or end-of-life care, or

- A government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home (LTCH) to carry out their duties.

Non-Visitor

Long-term care home (LTCH) staff, volunteers, and placement students are not considered visitors. Access to the Home will be determined by the LTC&SS Division.

4. Procedure

4.1 Essential Visitor

The Home recognizes the important role of essential visitors in supporting residents' physical, emotional, social, and psychological well-being. Essential visitors shall be designated by the resident and/or their Substitute Decision-Maker (SDM) (refer to Appendix 1) and documented in the resident's electronic health care record. The designations shall be reviewed as needed.

When a person under 16 years of age is being designated as an essential visitor, written approval from the individual's parent or legal guardian must be obtained and documented prior to designation.

Essential visitors will be permitted access to the Home during a Home-wide outbreak and/or when a resident home area is in outbreak but will be subject to applicable infection prevention and control measures and public health requirements. There is no limit to the number of essential visitors that may be designated for a resident. All essential visitors are expected to comply with the Home's visitation, screening, and infection prevention and control requirements

4.2 General Visitors

The Home may restrict the number of general visitors per resident during outbreak based on Public Health guidance and taking into consideration the available indoor space.

General visitors are not permitted to visit in any of the following situations:

- As per direction set out by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) or Durham Region Public Health (DRPH).
- The Home is in outbreak. If only a portion of the Home is in outbreak, residents in areas unaffected by that outbreak may still have general visitors both indoors and outdoors.

All Visitors will:

- Adhere to the Visitor Code of Conduct (see Appendix 2). Refer to ADM-01-01-23 Public Code of Conduct for more information.
- Sign in/out of the visitor log at every visit providing the requested information, including, visitor name and contact information, time and date of the visit and name of the resident visited or reason for visiting the home. Records will be kept by the Home for 30 days.
- Conduct passive self-screening for symptoms before visiting the Home (refer to Appendix 3)
- Adhere to personal protective equipment (PPE) use when directed. Refer to IC-05-07-01 Routine Practices and Additional Precautions.
- Register visiting animals with the Home and refrain from visiting a resident home area (RHA) that is in outbreak. Refer to IC-05-12-01 Animal Ownership and Visitation policy.
- When requested, be provided with information on IPAC practices.

4.3 Outdoor Visits

- There are no limits on the number of individuals permitted to visit outdoors.

4.4 Education and Information

All visitors and staff will have access to the following information and education. Information on how to access it is provided at reception or from Infection Control/designate.

- [Personal protective equipment guidance](#)
- [Putting on personal protective equipment video](#)
- [Taking off personal protective equipment video](#)

- How to [hand wash](#) and [hand rub](#).

4.5 Non-Compliance with Visitor Guidelines (See Appendix 4)

- Staff will refer any visitor who does not comply with the visitor guidelines to a manager/supervisor and follow the process outlined.
- Assist the visitor to understand the importance of complying with the visiting guidelines.
- If a visitor has been temporarily prohibited from visiting, clearly identify the reasons why and identify the requirements that the visitor would have to meet for visits to be resumed.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Nursing will:

- Ensure that all visitors are following the Home's and Public Health's direction when it comes to visitation and protecting themselves (i.e. masking).

IPAC Practitioner will:

- Ensure that IPAC information is available to all visitors.

Environmental Services Will:

- Ensure there is hand sanitizer and disinfectant available throughout the Home.
- Ensure there are masks available for all visitors.
- Ensure the designated public indoor washrooms are cleaned and disinfected daily.

Administrator/designate will:

- Ensure that visitors follow the outlined rules and the visitor code of conduct.
- Ensure there is an outdoor and indoor space available for visiting.
- Ensure there is regular communication with residents and families regarding any changes to the visitor policy and IPAC protocols and requirements.

6. Related Information

1. IC-05-07-01 Routine Practices and Additional Precautions
2. IC-05-12-01 Animal Ownership and Visitation
3. ADM-01-01-23 Public Code of Conduct
4. Durham Region Public Code of Conduct Policy

7. References

1. Fixing Long Term Care Act and Regulations, 2021, O Reg 246/22 s 102

8. Attachments/Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Essential Visitor Designation and Authorization Form
2. Appendix 2 – Visitor Code of Conduct
3. Appendix 3 - Self-Screening Questions
4. Appendix 4 – Visitor Compliance Escalation Process

**Appendix 1****ESSENTIAL VISITOR DESIGNATION AND AUTHORIZATION FORM****Resident Name:** _____**Room Number:** _____**Date Completed:** _____

SECTION A: Essential Visitor Designation

An essential visitor is considered a caregiver who is a family member, friend or person of importance to a resident designated by the resident and/or their Substitute Decision-Maker (SDM) who provides direct physical support and/or social, spiritual or emotional support to the resident.

Essential visitors will continue to have access to the home during an outbreak of a communicable disease, an outbreak of a disease of public health significance, an epidemic, a pandemic or another emergency, subject to any applicable laws and will be supported during their visits to ensure adherence to applicable precautions and restrictions.

Resident/SDM

I hereby designate the following person(s) as essential visitor(s) for the resident named above:

Essential Visitor #1

Name: _____

Relationship to Resident: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Essential Visitor #2

Name: _____

Relationship to Resident: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Essential Visitor #3

Name: _____

Relationship to Resident: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Essential Visitor #4

Name: _____

Relationship to Resident: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Authorization

I understand that designated essential visitors will be required to comply with all applicable visitor, screening, and IPAC requirements established by the home and governing authorities and the Visitor Code of Conduct.

Resident/SDM Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SECTION B: Authorization for Essential Visitors Under 16 Years of Age

Persons under the age of 16 may be designated as an essential visitor and visit the resident when authorized by a parent or legal guardian and in accordance with the home's visitor policies.

Minor Visitor Information

Name of Child: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Relationship to Resident: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Authorization

I am the parent/legal guardian of the above-named child and authorize them to visit the resident identified on this form.

I understand that:

- The child must comply with applicable visitor and IPAC requirements.
- The home may require supervision of the child while visiting.

Legal Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SECTION C: Record of Changes

The status of designated essential visitors will be reviewed as needed.

Date	Change(s) Made	Resident/SDM Initials

Appendix 2 – Visitor Code of Conduct

A Community of Care and Respect (Visitor Code of Conduct)

Welcome

If you are a visitor here, you can contribute to our community by:

- ◇ Speaking and acting with respect and consideration for all people in the home.
- ◇ Respecting the residents' right to privacy and dignity.
- ◇ Cooperating with the home's policies in all matters of safety and resident care.

The Health and Safety of our Residents, Staff, and Volunteers are of great importance. This Home has zero tolerance for violence. The following will not be tolerated, and you will be asked to leave the building if you:

- ◇ Continue to speak aggressively after having been asked to speak in a respectful manner.
- ◇ Behave in a threatening, or violent manner.
- ◇ Appear to be impaired or intoxicated from drugs or alcohol.
- ◇ Possess weapons.
- ◇ Take pictures or videos of residents/staff without their consent.
- ◇ Visit the home when you are ill with a transmittable condition.
- ◇ Refuse to comply with home policies.

**Thank you for helping to create a community of care and respect.
We encourage you to share this with anyone who may be visiting.**

I have read and understand the community of care and respect document.

Name (Printed)

Signature

Date



Self-Screening Questions

1) In the last 10 days, have you experienced one or more of the listed symptoms that are **NEW OR WORSENING**?

- **Fever and/or chills** - Temperature of 38 degrees Celsius/100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- **Cough or barking cough (croup)** - Not related to asthma, post-infectious reactive airways, COPD, or other known causes or conditions you already have
- **Shortness of breath** - Not related to asthma or other known causes or conditions you already have
- **Decrease or loss of smell or taste** - Not related to seasonal allergies, neurological disorders, or other known causes or conditions you already have
- **Muscle Aches/Joint Pain** - Unusual long lasting (not related to sudden injury, fibromyalgia, or other known causes or conditions)
- **Fatigue** - Unusual tiredness, lack of energy (not related to depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction, or other known causes or conditions)
- **Sore throat** - Painful or difficulty swallowing (not related to post-nasal drip, acid reflux, or other known causes or conditions you already have)
- **Runny or stuffy/congested nose** - Not related to seasonal allergies, being outside in cold weather, or other known causes or conditions you already have
- **Headache** - New, unusual, long-lasting (not related to tension-type headaches, chronic migraines, or other known causes or conditions)
- **Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea (gastro)** - Not related to irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety, menstrual cramps, or other known causes or conditions you already have
- **Rash** – new onset (flat red spots)

2) In the last 10 days, have you been in "close contact" of someone who is experiencing symptoms above?

Question 1: If you answer YES to any above symptoms, please remain out of the home until symptoms improve as follows: no fever for 24 hours, no gastro for 48 hours, all other symptoms greatly improved for 24 hours.

Once symptoms improve and you meet the above guidance, you may return to the home and wear a surgical mask for the remainder of the 10 days from onset of symptoms.

Question 2: If you answer YES, please wear a mask for 10 days from last date of exposure and monitor for symptoms.

If you have any questions, please speak with the IPAC Practitioner(s).
Thank you!

Appendix 4 – Visitor Compliance Escalation Process

