

Subject: Visitor and Caregiver Policy	Policy ID: OM-02-01-39
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Next review date: October 3, 2024	Last Reviewed Date: October 3, 2023

PURPOSE

This policy is in place to guide all visitors of Victoria Gardens Long Term Care (the “Home”) and ensure that the following principles are being met: safety, emotional wellbeing, equitable access, flexibility, and equality. The Home respects residents’ rights and is committed to enhancing the quality of life of its residents through social and care visits.

The Home shall also ensure that all applicable laws, including any applicable directives, orders, guidelines, advice, or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or Public Health Unit, are complied with.

ACCESS TO THE HOME: MASKING & TESTING REQUIREMENTS

The Home must provide information and support to visitors. The Home must implement all required public health measures and infection prevention and control practices, such as physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, and the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment. All visitors must follow the infection prevention and control measures that are in place within the Home for the duration of their visit. This includes following physical distancing and the use of personal protective equipment.

Visitors are not required to wear a mask when visiting the home but are recommended to do so with close resident contact.

Visitors who test positive for COVID-19 should not visit the Home for 10 days after their positive test. If their visit is essential for a resident, the visitor should collaborate with a staff member to ensure all precautions are in place. The visitor should be asymptomatic or symptoms have been resolving for 24 hours.

There is a limit of 4 visitors (either Essential Caregivers or General Visitors) at one time for an indoor visit, unless otherwise approved by the Home. There are no limits on the number of outdoor visitors, providing there is adequate space.

TYPES OF VISITORS

There are several types of visitors to the Home: essential caregivers, essential visitors, and general visitors. The Home's staff, volunteers, and students are not considered visitors.

To protect the residents, staff, and other visitors, it is strongly recommended that all visitors to Victoria Gardens stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations.

Essential Caregiver Visitors (ECVs):

- Provide 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 or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis.
- Designated by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker (SDM) with authority to give that designation, if any. If younger than 16 years of age must receive approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver.
- The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is entirely the remit of the resident or their SDM and not the Home. A resident or their SDM may change a designation of an ECV either temporarily or permanently.
- If a resident is in isolation or the Home is in outbreak, the resident may only have one (1) ECV at a time, subject to any applicable laws.
- In cases where a resident is receiving end of life care, there are no restrictions on the number of visitors permitted.

The procedure for becoming an ECV includes:

- If a person meets the criteria to apply as a resident's ECV, the "Essential Caregiver Application" is to be completed and submitted to the Home.
- Once an application has been approved, the ECV must review and sign a "Memorandum of Understanding".
- Surge Learning E-Modules related to infection prevention and control will be assigned and to be completed by the ECV prior to entering the Home and on a monthly basis thereafter.
- The Home shall maintain a written record of the designation of a caregiver, as well as the approval from a parent or legal guardian to permit persons under 16 years old.

Essential Visitor:

- An essential caregiver (ECV)
- 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
- A government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.
- If a resident is in isolation or the Home is in outbreak, essential visitors remain permitted to enter the Home, subject to any applicable laws.

General Visitor:

- A person who is not an ECV and is visiting to provide nonessential services, including family or friends. This is different from direct care including care related to cognitive stimulation, meaningful connection, and relational continuity.
- General visitors may also include persons attending the Home for other purposes, which may include, but is not limited to:
 - o Personal Care Service Providers (e.g., hairdressing services)
 - o Recreational Service Providers
 - o Individuals who are touring the home to inform decisions regarding application for admission.
- General visitors are not permitted in the Home during outbreak situations or when a resident is on isolation.

ACCESS DURING AN EPIDEMIC, PANDEMIC, OR OTHER EMERGENCY

All applicable regulations or laws that are in place during an epidemic, pandemic, or other emergency are to be followed by the Home.

An emergency means an urgent or pressing situation or condition presenting imminent threat to the health or wellbeing of residents and others attending the Home that requires immediate action to ensure the safety of persons in the Home.

In these situations, general visitors to the Home would be paused, while essential visitors shall be allowed continued access to the Home. These are general guidelines and may vary depending on the situation or the guidance that the Home has received.

VISITOR LOGS

Visitor logs are completed via the “Visitor Log” binder and are to be maintained by the Home for a minimum of 30 days. This log is present at the entry door of the Home. The Visitor Log includes the name and contact information of the visitor, time and date of the visit, and purpose of the visit/who they are visiting. Passive screening questions are also part of the log. Visitor logs are in place to support safety within the Home and should not be a barrier to a visit.

During an outbreak, active screening may be in place for all visitors to the Home.

VISITATION HOURS

Unless prior arrangements have been made, general visiting hours are between the hours of 9:00 am and 8:00 pm. Should visitors visit early in the morning or late in the evening, staff will ensure that they are sensitive to the rights of other residents should the resident being visited not reside in a private accommodation.

NON-ADHERENCE

As per the Residents’ Bill of Rights under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act 2021, the Home must fully respect and promote a resident’s right to receive visitors including a resident’s right to ongoing and safe support from their caregivers. The Home will provide for residents to see visitors in accordance with applicable directives and will not place unreasonable restrictions on a resident’s ability to do so.

The Home is also required to ensure that the Home is a safe and secure environment for residents. The Home has the discretion to end a visit or prohibit a visitor, including ECVs, from visiting in response to repeated and flagrant noncompliance with a Home’s visitor policy and where a visitor’s behaviour may impact the Home’s ability to ensure a safe and secure environment.

Before ending a visit or prohibiting access by a visitor, the Home shall consider whether the visitor has been given sufficient time and information to comply with the Home’s visitor policy, the nature, severity, and frequency of non-compliance, the potential impact of the visitor’s noncompliance on the health and safety of residents, staff, and other visitors in the Home and the potential impact of discontinuing visits on the resident’s clinical and emotional wellbeing.

The Home will document when they have ended a visit due to non-adherence.

The decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor should be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted. The length of the prohibition and any additional requirements for future visits, must be stipulated, be documented by the Home and the Home must clearly identify what requirements the visitor should meet before visits may be resumed.

If the Home has temporarily prohibited an ECV, the resident or their SDM may need to designate an alternative individual as caregiver to help meet the resident's care needs.

COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW

This policy is to be made available via Surge Learning, in the Home's policy manual, be posted at the entry door of the Home, and via the Home's website. The policy may also be reviewed with the Resident Council and Family Council.

This policy shall be reviewed and updated yearly, at a minimum.

CROSS REFERENCE

IC-07-01-22: COVID-19 Immunization Policy

RESOURCES

Ministry of Long-Term Care

Public Health Ontario