



# Visitor Policy

## **STANDARD:**

Visitors are welcome in the home and the visitor policy respects the Residents' Bill of Rights and ensures essential visitors, including caregivers, continue to have access to the Home even during an outbreak or a pandemic.

The home realizes the role that families, friends, and visitors play in providing caregiving and emotional support that adds to the quality of life of our residents. The indoor visits are guided by the outlined principles from the Ministry of Long-Term Care, which are as follows:

**Safety:** Any approach to visiting a LTC home must consider, balance, and meet the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors to ensure risks are mitigated.

**Emotional Well-being:** Welcoming 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 the resident preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.

**Flexibility:** The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its workforce/human resources 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 consider when setting home-specific policies.

**Equality:** All residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.

Every resident has the right to ongoing and safe support from their caregiver to support their physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being and their quality of life and to assist in contacting a caregiver or other person to support their needs.

Every resident who is dying or who is very ill has the right to have family and friends present 24 hours per day.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

### **Types of Visitors:**

#### **1. Essential Visitors**

There are four types of essential visitors:

- **People visiting very ill or palliative residents** who are receiving end-of-life care for compassionate reasons, hospice services, etc.
- **Government inspectors with a statutory right of entry.** Government inspectors who have a statutory right to enter long-term care homes to carry out their duties must be granted access to a home. Examples of government inspectors include inspectors under the Fixing of Long-Term Care Act, 2021 (FLTC), the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Electricity Act, 1998, the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- **Support workers:** support workers are people who visit a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents. Essential services provided by support workers include but are not limited to:
  - assessment, diagnostic, intervention/rehabilitation, and counseling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians and nurse practitioners
  - Assistive Devices Program vendors — for example, home oxygen therapy vendors
  - moving a resident in or out of a home
  - social work services
  - legal services
  - post-mortem services or emergency services (for example, such as those provided by first responders)
  - maintenance services such as those required to ensure the structural integrity of the home and the functionality of the home’s HVAC mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems, and services related to exterior grounds and winter property maintenance
  - food/nutrition and water/drink delivery
  - Canada Post mail services and other courier services
  - election officials/workers

**Caregivers:** A caregiver is a type of essential visitor designated by the resident or the resident’s substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, who provides one or more forms of support or assistance, including direct physical support or provides social, spiritual, or emotional support, whether paid or unpaid. This can include family members, friends, or a person of importance to the resident. If the caregiver is under 16 years of age, the caregiver requires an approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a resident’s caregiver.

Examples of direct care provided by caregivers include but are not limited to the following:

- supporting activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and eating assistance
- providing cognitive stimulation
- fostering successful communication
- providing meaningful connection and emotional support
- offering relational continuity assistance in decision-making

Examples of caregivers include:

- friends and family members who provide a meaningful connection
- a privately hired caregiver
- paid or unpaid companions
- translator

**Note:** The Home is responsible for documenting and keeping a written record of

- the designation of a caregiver; and
- the approval from a parent or legal guardian to permit persons under 16 years of age to be designated as a caregiver.

2. **General Visitor** to provide nonessential services related to either the operations of the home or a 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.

The Home's staff, volunteers, and placement students are not considered visitors as their access to the Home is determined by the Executive Director and/ or Director of Care.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Any type of visitor and caregiver to the home must undergo proper screening follow the sign-in process and receive required education as per the home's policy.
2. The home maintains a visitor log for a minimum of 30 days which includes:
  - The name and contact information of the visitor
  - The time and date of the visit; and
  - The name of the resident visited.
3. The homes accept visitors anytime if it does not interfere with residents' rest and/or safety.
  - a) The home shall maintain a visitor log for a minimum of 30 days which includes at a minimum:
    - The name and contact information of the visitor
    - The time and date of the visit; and
    - The name of the resident visited.
4. All types of visitors are responsible for following the visitor responsibilities outlined by the home's polices and Resident's Bill of Rights.
5. The home fully recognizes how critical visits are to the resident's care needs and emotional well-being, and therefore the home will ensure to support all visitors in understanding the importance of adhering to the home's visitor policy. Every non-adherence to the requirements will be reviewed and dealt with based on the severity of the non-adherence.
6. The Home may temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and serious non-adherence with the home's visitor policy.
7. Before prohibiting a visitor, the home will consider whether the non-adherence
  - Can be resolved successfully by explaining and demonstrating how the visitor can adhere to the requirements

- 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 (continuously non-adhering over multiple visits)
  - The potential impact of discontinuing visits on the resident’s clinical and emotional well-being
  - Is within the legislative requirements
  - Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff, and other visitors in the home
  - Is by a visitor whose previous visits have been ended by the Home
8. Any decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor should:
- Be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted.
  - Stipulate a reasonable length of the prohibition depending on the severity.
  - Communicate to the visitor what requirements will need to be met before visits may be resumed (i.e., reviewing the visitor policy, Public Health Guidelines, etc.); and
  - Be documented by the Administrator or delegate.
  - Residents and Family Council should be consulted on procedures for addressing non-adherence by visitors.
9. Where the home has temporarily prohibited a caregiver, the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may designate an alternate individual as a caregiver to help meet the resident’s care needs.

**OUTCOME:**

1. The visitation approach considers balance and meets the health and safety, and emotional needs of residents, staff, and visitors.
2. The visitor policy is well communicated and is provided to the Resident’s Council and Family council and is posted in the Home and on the Home’s website and included in the resident information package upon admission.
3. The Resident’s Bill of Rights is being respected.

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:**

1. Fixing Long Term Care Home Act, 2021 and Ontario Regulations 246/2022
2. Resident’s Bill of Rights