

COVID-19 Policies & Procedures

Title: Highland Wood and Hyland Crest COVID-19 Visiting Policy

Effective Date: April 3, 2023

Approved By: COVID-19 Steering Committee

Revised Date: March 30, 2023

1. PURPOSE

Direction for long-term care home (LTCH) visits is in place to protect the health and safety of residents, staff and visitors, while supporting residents in receiving the care they need and maintaining their emotional wellbeing. These rules are in addition to the requirements established in the Fixing Long-Term Care Homes Act (LTCHA) 2021 and Ontario Regulations 246-2022

2. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to Highland Wood and Hyland Crest.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

There is an ongoing need to protect LTC home residents and staff from the risk of COVID-19, particularly as LTC home residents are more susceptible to infection from COVID-19 than the general population due to their age and medical condition.

Rules for LTC home visits continue to be in place to protect the health and safety of residents, staff and visitors, while supporting resident in receiving the care they need and maintaining their emotional well-being.

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

Visitors should consider their personal health and susceptibility to the virus in determining whether visiting a LTC home is appropriate. Homes will maintain a list of visitors that is available for staff to access.

4. DEFINITIONS

Support Worker

A support worker is a type of visitor who is visiting to perform support services for the home or for a resident at the home. Examples of support workers include physicians, nurse practitioners and physiotherapists, provided they are not staff of the LTCH as defined in the LTCHA.

Essential Caregiver

A caregiver is a type of visitor who 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 and assistance in decision making)

General Visitor

A general visitor is a person who is not a caregiver or support worker and is visiting:

- a) To provide non-essential services, who may or may not be hired by the home or the resident and/or their substituted decision-maker; and/or,
- b) For social reasons (e.g. family members or friends) that the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker assesses different from direct care.

LTCH staff, volunteers and placement students are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by HHHS.

Active screening

Active screening requires some form of attestation or confirmation of screening. This can be achieved through pre-arrival submission of online screening or in-person.

Passive screening

Passive screening means that those entering the setting review screening questions themselves, and there is no verification of screening (for example, signage at entrances as a visual reminder not to enter if symptomatic).

5. PROCEDURE

Visitors/ Essential Caregivers Entering LTC:

Step	Description
1	Passive screening questions will be posted at all entrances and it is a requirement that those entering HHHS review these screening questions themselves each time they enter. Note that active screening prior to entering LTC is no longer required.
2	Rapid testing will remain available for anyone who requests it, but must be completed on your own (self-testing) in the designated area of Highland Wood or Hyland Crest. Note that (Asymptomatic) Rapid Testing prior to entering LTC is no longer required.
3	Resources on proper IPAC etiquette while in the home (i.e., putting on a medical mask and hand washing) will continue to be available to all that enter, including Public Health Ontario Resources.
4	Anyone that visits or works in LTC homes must continue to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 as per public health guidelines (see link) and stay away if you are experiencing any symptoms or have had close contact with someone with COVID-19. https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-self-monitor.pdf
5	Information on what steps to take if you fail the passive screening questions will be available at the entrance to LTC.
6	Upon entry, complete Visitor Sign In/Out logs as it is important to know who is in the building in the event of an emergency.
7	Indoor masking requirements remain in place while in the LTC home.
8	Masking when a family member or friend is visiting with a resident in their bedroom is still strongly encouraged.
9	Visitors are not permitted to eat or drink in common areas during their visit due to masking requirements.
10	Visitors and Essential caregivers are not required to mask outdoors although wearing a mask outdoors continues to be recommended for staff when they are close to a resident.
11	Please note that in the event of an outbreak, the home will follow the guidance of the Public Health Department as related to specific protocols that may be reinstated.
12	Compassionate exceptions to visitor restrictions are made for those visiting a resident at end-of-life.
13	Daily temperature checks or screening of residents returning from an absence/ visiting outside of the home is no longer required.

14	The limit of one caregiver at a time during a COVID-19 outbreak, or when a resident is symptomatic or isolating, has been lifted unless otherwise recommended by Public Health.
15	Physical distancing for social and physical activities is no longer required.
16	Proof of vaccination is not required to enter Highland Wood or Hyland Crest.

Non-compliance for ALL visitors:

Non-compliance with the home’s policies could result in discontinuation or termination of a visit(s) for the non-compliant visitor. In the event of non-compliance by a visitor:

Step	Description
1	The home will review the Visitor Policy with the non-compliant visitor including the Infection Prevention and Control measures.
2	Home management, including approval of Director of Care (DOC) or Administrator, will use their discretion to end a visit after repeated non-compliance to the Visitor Policy, provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The home has explained the applicable requirement(s) to the visitor; b. The non-compliant visitor has been given resources to adhere to the requirement (e.g. there is sufficient space to physically distance; the home has supplied PPE and demonstrated how to properly put PPE on); and c. The non-compliant visitor has been given sufficient time to adhere to the requirement(s).
3	Home management, including approval of the Administrator, will use their discretion to temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to a repeated or flagrant non-compliance, including determining a reasonable length of time for the prohibition. Temporary prohibitions will be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Repeated attempts to explain and demonstrate how the visitor can adhere to the requirements are not successful. b. Visitor refusal to follow the requirements of the Visitor Policy. c. The visitor has negatively impacted the health and safety of residents, staff and/or other visitors in the home. d. The visitor demonstrates non-compliance continuously over multiple visits. <p>Note: The visitor will be required to re-read the Visitor Policy and review the Infection Prevention and Control measures before visits are resumed.</p>

6. COMMUNICATION

This policy and any updates from time to time will be communicated to resident families electronically at the email address on file and where no email is on file by regular mail. This policy will also be posted to the home’s website.

7. RELATED PRACTICES AND/OR LEGISLATIONS

Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007
Ministry of Long-Term Care “COVID-19: Visiting Long-Term Care Homes”
New Fixing LTC Homes Act 2021

8. REFERENCES

Ontario COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open