



Manual: Administration Manual	Section: Organization
	Subject: Visits During Pandemic

## POLICY

The Dearness Home will provide an organized process to ensure a safe environment for visits that follows provincially mandated direction and Public Health infection control protocols. This policy must be read in conjunction with the appended education material and guidance documents.

## PURPOSE

Within the ongoing and changing constraints of the pandemic, to seek to maintain emotional well-being by the provision of meaningful, equitable and safe access for visitors.

## VISITOR TYPES

### Essential Visitor:

Essential Visitors are the only visitors allowed to visit when a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, or when the Home is in outbreak.

Types of Essential Visitor:

1. Person performing essential support services (i.e. food delivery, inspector, maintenance workers, or health care services – phlebotomy etc.) or as defined by MLTC and MSAA policies, as appropriate
2. Person visiting a very ill or end-of-life resident:
  - End of life period is determined by the physician and communicated to the Power of Attorney/Substitute Decision Maker (POA/SDM for care) by Dearness Home
  - Maximum of 6 people may be designated as Essential Visitors for end of life by the SDM/POA
  - A maximum of 4 visitors may be present in the resident’s room at any time, which can be either:
    - 4 end of life visitors, or
    - 2 end of life visitors and 2 Essential Caregivers
    - End of Life Spiritual Care support from the community can also be arranged (2 General Visitors may also be present for 1 hour during their scheduled visits)
  - The end of Life visitor:
    - Will wear the provided butterfly sticker in a visible area of their upper bodies at all times
    - Does not have to observe visiting times
    - Must wear a mask at all times

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- Essential Support Worker:

Type of essential visitor who is visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home (i.e. physicians, nurse practitioners, maintenance workers)

**Essential Caregiver (EC):**

- Type of essential visitor who is designated by the resident and/or their POA/SDM 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).

(For full details, in Appendix see Essential Caregiver Information Package and Guidelines)

**General Visitor:**

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

In addition, general visitors may include persons attending the home for other purposes which may include but are not limited to:

- Personal care service providers (for example, hairdressers, barbers, manicurists, etc.)
- Entertainers
- Recreational service providers
- Animal handlers (for example, as part of therapy animal program)
- Individuals who are touring the home to inform decisions regarding application for admission
- General Visits include outdoor, window and virtual options, and must be scheduled with the Home by the resident or their POA/SDM
- General visitors who are screened will be asked to verbally attest they read this policy every month

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- General Visits to the specially constructed, covered visiting area are limited by the available space to 2 per visit, whereas visits in the grounds are subject only to any limitations set by the Province
- A maximum of 2 General Visitors may be scheduled to visit inside the Home, and the unimmunized will be rapid tested for COVID-19 and must receive a negative result before proceeding to the resident’s room
- 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, physical distancing, hand hygiene, masking for source control). Those under 18 must have a parent present or bring a note from their parent consenting to the COVID-19 test.

(For more details, in Appendix see “Visitor Information, Outside Visit”, “Visitor Information, Inside Visit” and “Virtual and Window Visits at Dearness Home”

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Government COVID-19 Restrictions:

Access to the Home and restrictions to freedoms within and outside the Home will vary according to the current regulations put in place by the Province.

### Communication:

Dearness Home will communicate evolving visiting information and policy:

- For Residents: via posting information on noticeboards and/or TV screens and channels, in-person conversations, and/or Resident Council minutes binder
- For POA/SDM for care: via robo-calls, e-mails and posting information on the Dearness Home website
- For Other potential visitors; via robo-calls and posting information on the Dearness website

**Note:** Whenever practically possible, visiting changes will be implemented following either discussion with, or prior notice to, both the Resident Council and the Family Council.

### Temporary Suspension of General Visits:

If Dearness is in suspected or confirmed outbreak, all non-essential visitations to the Home area(s) involved will be temporarily cancelled.

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Visits will also not occur when:

- The resident has suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- When the resident is currently observing droplet/contact isolation precautions
- When government restrictions prohibit general visits, or when a Stay-At-Home Order is in effect (as per O. Reg 265/21)

With the support of the Resident and Family Councils, and with consideration of any government or Public Health Unit guidance, Dearness Home may suspend visits for temporary periods where it becomes apparent that the risk of transmission in our community is high.

**Shortages of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- If Dearness is not able to supply surgical/procedure masks or other PPE required to ensure infection control, visitors will not be permitted in the Home
- Essential Visitors who wish to enter Dearness on their employer’s instructions may do so if they have appropriate PPE supplied by their employer

**RESPONSIBILITY**

The Manager, Community Life will monitor and oversee the Family Visits during a Pandemic.

The Director of Care will direct infection control in relation to visits to the Home.

The Administrator will have overall responsibility and draft policy and related guidelines.

**PROCEDURE FOR VISITS TO THE HOME:**

- The Manager, Community Life will monitor and oversee scheduling visits during the times allotted on designated visit days, and ensure immunization records are maintained for visitors
- The outside visiting areas will be cleaned and disinfected between every visit
- The Home will create and maintain a lists of General Visitors and Essential Caregivers, and of Essential Visitors at the end of life. These lists will be available for relevant/appropriate staff members to access
- All visitors seeking access to the Dearness Home and to the Dearness Home outside visitor area will attend at the main entrance and must pass an active screen in order to proceed
- After screening, all visitors entering the Home (aside from Ministry inspectors from MLTC or MLSTD) all unimmunized General Visitors must go to the Dearness COVID-19 testing centre for rapid testing
- Details of screening questions and staff responsibilities will vary according to applicable government and Public Health Unit guidance, and circumstances in the Home. Required processes will be detailed in internal documents that must be followed by screeners and relevant Dearness Home employees

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**Determining Priority for Arranging General Visits**

Dearness will consider the following:

- How well the resident is doing psychosocially dealing with isolation from family/friends
- Pre-COVID-19 visiting frequency of the family
- Resident decline in condition
- Extenuating family circumstances (i.e. spouse is also isolated)
- Resident/family has not had virtual visits due to the family not having the appropriate technology (i.e. internet, iPad, etc.)

**Scheduling General Visits**

- Dearness Home will work with the resident, the POA/SDM for care to arrange visits
- Each individual will be scheduled for a visit by the designated staff member
- Every attempt will be made to accommodate a minimum of one visit for each resident per week for at least 60 minutes (if so desired), depending on available staffing resources and physical limitations (Dearness Home accommodates 243 residents and resources are stretched during pandemic)
- Once scheduled, the visitor will be provided with this policy in person, via email, or be asked to view it on our website, or be able to view it upon arrival
- The individual visiting a resident will be asked to not arrive any sooner than 15 minutes before their scheduled visit so that they are not crossing paths with other visitors

**Visitor Requirements (including screening, testing and PPE instructions)**

- For Outside Visits, General visitors must follow provisions in “Visitor Information for Outside Visits” and the relevant guidance from the “Education Presentation – COVID-19” (see Appendix)
- For Inside Visits, visitors must follow provisions in “Visitor Information for Inside Visits” and the relevant guidance from the “Education Presentation – COVID-19” (see Appendix)
- Essential Caregivers must follow provisions in: Essential Caregivers, Information Package and Guidelines and in the Education Presentation – COVID-19 (see Appendix)

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## NON-ADHERENCE BY VISITORS

The home has the discretion to end a visit by any visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home’s visitor policy, provided:

- The home has explained the applicable requirement(s) for the visitor
- The visitor has the resources to adhere to the requirement(s) (e.g., the home has supplied the PPE and demonstrated how to correctly put on PPE, etc.); and
- The visitor has been given sufficient time to adhere to the requirement(s)

The home must document when a visit has been ended due to non-adherence.

## TEMPORARILY PROHIBITING A VISITOR

Dearness Home has the discretion to temporarily prohibit a visitor in response to repeated and flagrant non-adherence with the home’s visitor policy. In exercising this discretion, Dearness will consider whether the non-adherence:

- Can be resolved by successfully explaining and demonstrating how the visitor can adhere to the requirements
- Is within requirements that align with instruction in Directive #3 and guidance in the visiting policy by the Ministry of Long-Term Care
- Negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff, and other visitors in the home
- Is demonstrated by the visitor over multiple visits
- Is by a visitor whose previous visits have been ended by the home

Any decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor will:

- Be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted;
- Stipulate a reasonable length of the prohibition;
- Clearly identify what requirements the visitor should meet before visits may be resumed (e.g. reviewing the home’s visitor policy, reviewing Public Health Ontario resources, etc.); and
- Be documented by the home

### Appendices:

- Education Presentation – COVID-19
- Virtual and Window Visits at Dearness Home
- Essential Caregiver Information Package and Guidelines
- Visitor Information for Inside Visit
- Visitor Information for Outside Visit

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