

	<b>Policy:</b> IC-1300-10-02	
	<b>Last Reviewed:</b> September 9, 2020	
	<b>Last Revised:</b> December 1, 2020	
<b>Manual:</b> Infection Prevention & Control	<b>Approved by:</b> Admin/ ICN	
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**Policy:**

McCormick Home is responsible for supporting residents to safely receive visitors while mitigating the risk of exposure to COVID-19. McCormick Home will balance the need to promote safety and mitigate risks to residents, staff and visitors, with the mental, physical and spiritual needs of residents for their overall quality of life.

**Background:**

McCormick Care Group provides staff and families direction on visitor policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with current legislation, regulations, standards and best practice guidelines. McCormick Home is responsible for establishing and implementing visiting practices that comply with Directive #3.

**Legislation/Regulations/Standards:**

- Ontario Regulation 79/10 made under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007
- Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007
- Ministry of Long-Term Care- COVID-19 Visiting Policy (November 23, 2020)
- Public Health Ontario

**Note:** As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves, direction on long-term care home visits will be adjusted as necessary by the Ministry of Long-Term Care, keeping the safety and well-being of residents and staff at the forefront.

**Guiding Principles:**

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

Rules for long-term care home visits continue to be 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 well-being.

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

**Emotional Well-Being** - The practice of allowing visitors is intended to support the emotional wellbeing of residents and their families/friends 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, and its current status with respect to availability of Personal Protective Equipment, staffing availability, and any other key factors must be considered.

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

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***Visitors should consider their personal health and susceptibility to the virus in determining whether visiting the home is appropriate.***

**Definitions:**

As outlined in the Ministry of Long-Term Care Visitor Policy and Directive #3, the types of visitors within long-term care homes as of the November 23, 2020 Visitor Policy are as follows:

***Not Considered Visitors*** - Home staff, volunteers and placement students are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee.

***Essential Visitors*** - Include a person performing essential support services (e.g., food delivery, inspector, maintenance or health care services (e.g. phlebotomy) or a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident).

Government inspectors are essential visitors under Directive #3; however, they are not subject to this policy.

***Essential Visitors*** - Also include support workers or caregivers, but do not need to be a support worker or caregiver, as long as they meet the definition under Directive #3.

***Support Worker*** - Is defined as a type of essential visitor who is visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home, provided they are not staff as defined in the LTCHA. Examples include:

- Physicians
- Nurse Practitioners
- Maintenance Workers
- Delivery personnel

***Caregiver*** is a type of essential 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, relations continuity and assistance in decision-making). Caregivers must be at least 18 years of age.

***General Visitors*** - A general visitor is defined as a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting:

- a) To provide non-essential services that may or may not be hired by the home or the resident and/or their substitute decision makers; and/ or
- b) For social reasons, such as, family members or friends whom the resident or their substitute decision-maker assess as different from direct care providers, including care related to cognitive wellbeing.

General visitors younger than 14 years of age should be accompanied by an adult and must follow all applicable infection prevention and control precautions that are in place at the home.

General visitors are classified as an outdoor or indoor visitor.



**McCormick  
Care Group**  
Advancing dementia care

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**Procedure:**

The options and responsibilities relating to each component of the Visitor Policy during the COVID pandemic are outlined below. These include **social visits** (virtual, indoor/outdoor “General visitors” and **care visits** (support workers, caregivers, and essential visitors).

**Social Visits:**

At McCormick Home, families are caregiving partners and play an important role in resident wellbeing, including through the social connections and emotional support that are crucial for optimal quality of life.

McCormick Home’s ***Social Visiting Program***, led by the life enrichment department and social work, was established to ensure there are options available to support these connections based on resident and family needs and comfort, all while abiding by Directive #3. Social visiting includes virtual, indoor and outdoor visits.

Outdoor/indoor general visitors will be provided with instructions at screening and/or through the ***“Family Visitor COVID-19 Guidelines and Education Requirements”*** around requirements for the visit, PPE, and hand hygiene. The screener will document the active screening.

With the exception of virtual visits, which can continue uninterrupted at all times, general visitors will not be permitted during an outbreak. Indoor and outdoor visits will be paused and rescheduled once the outbreak has been declared over and public health provides direction on safely resuming social visits within the home.

All social visits are scheduled by families contacting the administrative assistant at the front reception desk by contacting [admin.assistant@mccormickcare.ca](mailto:admin.assistant@mccormickcare.ca) or 519-432-2648, ext. 2300.

***Virtual Visits*** - Offered with assistance by the life enrichment staff or social work to ensure resident access to connections with family and friends if they are not receiving visitors in person, or family/ friends who live a distance from the home.

***Social Outdoor Visits*** – In-person visits offered by appointment in dedicated outdoor spaces at the front of the home. These visits support the face-to-face connection of up to two family members/friends with a resident. Visitors must pass active screening, maintain social distancing and wear a mask or face covering throughout the visit. These visits do not require COVID-19 testing.

***Social Indoor Visits*** – In-person visits offered by appointment in dedicated indoor spaces within the home, which may or may not include the resident’s rooms based on the need for adequate space to maintain social distancing, privacy, etc. Up to two visitors are allowed at a time, each required to pass active screening and provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test within the previous 14 days, provided the home is designated as **Green-Prevent** or **Yellow- Protect**. Visitors must maintain social distancing and wear a surgical mask provided by the home throughout the visit.

No general visitors are permitted to visit in any of the following situations:

- The home has an outbreak
- The resident is self-isolating or symptomatic
- The local public health unit is in the Orange-Restrict, Red-Control or Grey-Lockdown level.

**Documentation requirements:**

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- Active Screening Log completion and a signature from the general visitor confirming agreement with requirements listed in the *Family Visitor COVID-19 Guidelines and Education Requirements* package.
- Life enrichment staff/social work to document visits in the resident’s electronic health record through point-of-case and/or progress notes.

**Scheduling and Limiting Visits:**

Homes have the discretion to require visits by general visitors to be:

- Scheduled in advance
- Limited in time, provided the visit is at least 30 minutes, starting from the time the visitor and resident have arrived in the visiting area
- Limited in frequency, provided a resident receives at least one visit per week (where the home is not in outbreak and the resident is not self-isolating or symptomatic)
- In any appropriate area of the home (e.g., dedicated outdoor area, specified indoor area, resident room, etc.)

**Care Visits:**

*McCormick Home recognizes that all family members are essential to their loved one’s wellbeing. For clarity, Care Visits are referenced in alignment with the ministry definitions of Support Worker, Caregivers and Essential Visitors.*

As part of our visiting programs, care visits were developed to support family participation in care, integrated into the plan of care process, and communicated to the interdisciplinary care team. This program is scheduled according to the resident’s plan of care. The determination of a “Caregiver” or “Essential Visitor” will be through a care assessment completed through the interdisciplinary team led by the Director of Resident Care and/or delegate.

**Support Workers:**

A support worker is defined as a type of essential visitor who is visiting to perform essential support services for the home or for a resident at the home, provided they are not staff as defined in the LTCHA. Examples include:

- Physicians
- Nurse practitioners
- Maintenance workers
- Delivery personnel

Where a support worker requires immediate access to the home in an emergency situation, the home does not need to ask for a negative COVID-19 test result.

Support workers are encouraged to attend McCormick Home’s designated COVID-19 staff surveillance testing to obtain their COVID-19 test. Dates of upcoming testing will be communicated to support workers to alert them of testing dates available within the home.

Support workers will provide their written consent and authorization to have the COVID-19 test completed on site and results submitted to the home for tracking purposes. McCormick Home requires support workers to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test as per the latest Ministry Directive with the Updated Long-Term Care Sector Surveillance Testing Strategy updated November 22, 2020. The most current testing guidelines are as follows:

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	LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT LEVEL				
	Green-Prevent	Yellow-Protect	Orange-Restrict	Red-Control	Grey-Lockdown
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tested every two weeks</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tested weekly</li> </ul>		
Students					
Volunteers					
Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past two weeks</li> <li>Verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive*</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past week</li> <li>Verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive*</li> </ul>		
Support workers					
General Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test result in the past two weeks</li> <li>Verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive*</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable; visits not permitted.</li> </ul>		
*Unless the support worker or visitor requires immediate access in an emergency or palliative situation.					

**Designating a Caregiver:**

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver (essential visitor) is entirely that of the resident and/or their substitute decision maker.

- A **maximum of two caregivers** may be designated per resident at a time.
- A maximum of two caregivers per resident may visit at a time.
- Caregivers do not require scheduled visits and are not restricted to the length or frequency of visits.
- Caregivers must be at least 18 years of age.
- Homes should have a procedure for documenting caregiver designations. See [IC-1300-11](#)
- A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may change a designation in response to a change in the:
  - Resident’s care needs that are reflected in the plan of care.
  - Availability of a designated caregiver, either on a temporary (e.g. illness) or permanent basis.

Examples of caregivers include family members who provide meaningful connection, privately hired caregivers, paid companions and translators.

**Caregivers:** The objective is to ensure residents have access to the support of their family as part of the care team. Caregivers typically support activities of daily living such as feeding, personal hygiene, and/or emotional needs, such as anxiety, one-on-one behavioural support, etc. Caregivers must pass active screening and provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test as per

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the latest ministry guidelines contained in the *COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open* prior to the visit based on the public health region designation, and follow the PPE requirements of the resident/resident's room. At a minimum, universal surgical masking is required at all times while in the home. Maintaining social distancing from the resident is not required by the caregiver during the provision of care, but must be maintained with other residents and staff within the home.

Caregivers must verbally attest to not subsequently testing positive.

#### **Visiting Access:**

Homes must follow the policy laid out below regarding visitors. The *COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open* categorizes public health regions into five levels: Green-Prevent, Yellow-Protect, Orange-Restrict, Red-Control, and Grey-Lockdown, being a measure of last and urgent resort. Rules for visitors will vary based on the level of the local public health unit region in which the home is located. Additionally, the local public health unit may provide direction and/or restrictions on visitors to the home, depending on the specific situation.

All visitors to the home are required to follow public health measures (e.g., active screening, physical distancing, hand hygiene, masking for source control) for the duration of their visit in the home.

#### **Essential Visitors**

Visits for essential visitors are permitted as follows, subject to direction from the local public health unit:

- Any number of support workers may visit a home.
- If the local public health unit is in the Green-Prevent or Yellow-Protect level and the home is **not** in an outbreak, **a maximum of two caregivers per resident** may visit at a time.
- If the local public health unit is in the Orange-Restrict, Red-Control or Grey-Lockdown level, or the home **is** in an outbreak, **a maximum of one caregiver per resident** may visit at a time.
- If a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, a maximum of one caregiver may visit that resident at a time.

A caregiver may not visit any other resident or to the home for 14 days after visiting another:

- Resident who is self-isolating or symptomatic; and/or
- Home in an outbreak.

All types of visitors would be required to wear the required PPE as it relates to Infection Control guidelines.

**Note:** During an outbreak, and/or suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the local public health unit will provide direction on visitors to the home, depending on the specific situation.

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**Education Requirements:**

1. Caregivers, prior to visiting any resident for the first time, participate in education that addresses how to safely provide direct care, including putting on and taking off required PPE and employing proper hand hygiene.
2. Retraining will be provided as requested, or if non-compliance is observed while visitors are in the home.
3. Education components are posted on our home’s website for families/friends to access at any time.
4. Education and refreshers will be provided through administrator updates via Zoom for families.
5. Caregivers are required monthly to verbally attest to the home that they have read/re-read the home’s visitor policy.
6. The **Family Visitor COVID-19 Guidelines and Education Requirements** are available in hard copy from the screener, or located on our website for your review and future reference at [www.mccormickhome.ca](http://www.mccormickhome.ca). The following link will connect you to the policies and education requirements as they relate to COVID-19.

**McCormick Home Website Link**



**Expectations of the Caregiver:**

- Must be identified by the resident and/or SDM and caregiver designation should be submitted in writing to the home.
- Must be willing to participate in training and provide the care requested.
- Caregiver must be physically, cognitively, emotionally able to provide care elements identified.
- Prior to participation, it will be mandatory for all caregivers to complete educational training on the following:
  - Infection Control practices, physical distancing, PPE use, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, etc.
  - Read, understand and agree to the Caregiver Program Guidelines. Please see **IC-1300-11-01**
- Caregivers must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 as per the latest ministry guidelines contained in the *COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open* prior to the visit.
- The caregiver must provide essential caregiver support to a resident in one long-term care home at a time (i.e., not in more than one health care location/site).
- Caregivers will be actively screened for signs and symptoms of illness, including COVID-19, prior to every entry into the home.

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- Caregivers with signs or symptoms of illness or who fail the screening will not be permitted into the home.
- Caregivers must wear a surgical mask and other PPE, if required, appropriately. The home strongly encourages all visitors to replace their mask with a fresh mask, medical grade, upon entry to the home. These masks will be provided by the home.
- Caregivers shall go directly to the resident’s room or designated area, remain there for the duration of the visit and exit the home directly afterwards
- Caregivers will only provide care to their loved one and provide care according to the care plan for the resident.
- Caregivers will be required to sign a “Caregiver Program Guidelines” document that identifies the training that has been provided and that the caregiver will adhere to all standards outlined.
- Violations of any of the above expectations may result in cancellation of the caregiver’s privileges within the home.

**Appeal Process for Residents, Families and Caregivers:**

- In the event that a resident, and/or substitute decision maker, and/or caregiver disagree with a determination of the clinical team’s decision to remove or decline access the following process will be followed:
  - Resident, SDM or caregiver to submit a written letter outlining the disagreement to a decision to any member of the leadership team.
  - The notice will go to the Administrator to review the details of the concern and make every attempt to rectify the concern. The Administrator may include the Medical Director, Social Worker, BSO representative, Family Council representative, Resident Council representative as resources to support solution finding and decision making.
  - If no resolution is found, the concern will go to the McCormick Care Group CEO, who will make the final determination regarding the concern and communicate to all the parties involved.

**Essential Visitors:** The objective is to ensure residents have access to the support of their family at all times during times of acute illness or end of life. The essential visitors program will be initiated by the nursing department if the resident has been clinically assessed as critically ill or at end of life. It will be offered to the family of the resident through the substitute decision maker. Essential visitors must pass active screening and participate in the PPE requirements of the resident/or resident’s room. At a minimum, universal surgical masking will be worn at all times while in the home. The home is responsible for providing surgical masks, gloves, gowns and eye protection for essential visitors as required in Directive #3. Essential visitors are not required to attest to a negative COVID-19 test result given the urgency of the situation. Essential visitors may visit a resident who is in isolation, and may visit while the home is in outbreak.

**Scheduling Visits for Essential Visitors:**

Homes have the discretion to manage these visits as appropriate to balance the safety of residents, staff and visitors with the needs of the home and its residents.

If the resident is not self-isolating or symptomatic, a maximum of two caregivers per resident may visit at a time. McCormick Home allows two essential visitors for palliative residents at a time, unless death is imminent or exceptional circumstances apply. Designated essential

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visitors for palliative or very ill residents will be provided to the screeners by the nursing department.

**Documentation Requirements:**

- Active Screening Log completion and a signature from the visitor confirming agreement with Family Visitor COVID-19 Guidelines and Education Requirements.
- Signature for understanding the guidelines for Essential Visitor Sign-Off Form within the Home [IC-1300-12-01](#).
- Nursing department to document discussion in progress note to communicate the family caregivers’ participation in the resident’s plan of care as an essential visitor. This will include the care being provided, the scheduling and any other special instructions.

**Responding to Non-Adherence by Visitors:**

1. The home will provide ongoing strategies and communication related to understanding and adhering to the home’s visitor policy. Communication will be distributed through One Call Now updates and family Zoom calls.
2. If a visitor is observed to be non-compliant with policy during a visit, the visitors will be approached by a staff member and expectations communicated, e.g. wearing PPE properly.
3. Education and coaching will be provided to explain the rationale and consequences to the resident/ staff/visitor as a result of the action.
4. If the violation is severe or ongoing, visits will be temporarily suspended and a meeting/ teleconference will be scheduled to discuss the concern.
5. Re-education will be required by the visitor prior to any visits resuming in an effort to protect residents, staff and visitors in the home from the risk of COVID-19.
6. If necessary, consultation with Residents’ Council and Family Council representative’s will occur for input on addressing non-adherence by visitors.

**Ending a Visit:**

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) to the visitor;
- The visitor has the resources to adhere to the requirement(s) (e.g., there is sufficient space to physically distance, 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 requirements.

Homes should document where they have ended a visit due to non-adherence.

**Temporarily Prohibiting a Visitor**

Homes have 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, homes should consider whether the non-adherence:

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

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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;
- Clearly identify what requirements the visitor should meet before visits may be resumed (e.g., reviewing the home's visitor policy, reviewing specific Public Health Ontario resources, etc.) and,
- Be documented by the home.

Where the home has temporarily prohibited visits, a caregiver, the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may need to designate an alternate individual as caregiver to help meet the resident's care needs.

#### **Education:**

1. McCormick Home's *Family Visitor COVID-19 Guidelines and Education Requirements* are available in hard copy from the screener, or located on our website for your review and future reference at [www.mccormickhome.ca](http://www.mccormickhome.ca).
2. Resources from Public Health Ontario are available through links on our website:
  - Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>
  - Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>
  - Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>
  - How to Hand Wash- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>

#### **Outcome:**

Enhancing the quality of life of residents of McCormick Home through social and care visits.

#### **Accountability:**

All staff are to be aware of the types of visitors that can visit McCormick Home.

#### **References:**

- Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007
- Ministry of Long-Term Care- COVID-19 Visiting Policy (released November 23, 2020)
- Frequently Asked Questions COVID-19 Visiting Policy - Ministry of Long-Term Care released November 23, 2020