

	<b>Policy:</b> IC-1300-10	
	<b>Last Reviewed:</b> June, 2022	
	<b>Last Revised:</b> June, 2022	
<b>Manual:</b> Infection Prevention & Control	<b>Approved by:</b> Admin/ ICN	
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**Policy:**

McCormick Home seeks to 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 in accordance with current legislation, regulations, standards and best practice guidelines. McCormick Home is responsible for establishing and implementing visiting practices that comply with Regulation 267(1) of The Fixing Long Term Care Act, 2021.

**Legislation/Regulations/Standards:**

- Ontario Regulation 267(1) made under The Fixing Long Term Care Act, 2021
- Public Health Ontario

**Note:** As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve/ stabilize, direction on long-term care visitors will be adjusted as necessary by the Ministry of Long-Term Care or at the direction of the Middlesex-London Health Unit, keeping the safety and well-being of residents and staff at the forefront.

**Guiding Principles:**

Long term care residents have a right to receive visitors. 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 based on the following guiding principles:

**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** - 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 their preferences and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.

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**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** -- 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 the home is appropriate.**

### **Definitions:**

Visitors to long term care homes include Essential Visitors and General Visitors. Staff, volunteers and placement students are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the licensee. Infants under the age of one are also not considered visitors and are excluded from testing requirements.

**Essential Visitors:** Essential visitors are persons visiting a home to meet an essential need related to the residents or the operations of the home that could not be adequately met if the person did not visit the home.

There are no limits on the total number of essential visitors allowed to come into a home at any given time.

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when there is an outbreak in a home or area of a home or when a resident has failed screening, is symptomatic or in isolation.

There are four types of essential visitors:

1. **Caregiver:** A caregiver is an individual who:
  - a. is a family member or friend of a resident or a person of importance to a resident
  - b. is able to comply with all applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health or a medical officer of health appointed under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.
  - c. Provides 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, spiritual or emotional support, whether on a paid or unpaid basis,
  - d. Is designated by the resident or the resident's substitute decision-maker with authority to give that designation, if any, and
  - e. In the case of an individual under 16 years of age, has approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver. direct physical support (for example, eating, bathing and dressing) and/or providing social and emotional support.

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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.
- Assisting with mobility
- Assisting with personal hygiene
- Providing cognitive stimulation
- Fostering successful communication
- Providing meaningful connection and emotional support
- Offering relational continuity assistance in decision-making

2. **Support worker:** A support worker is person who visits 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 counselling 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
- 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 operational systems such as Heating, Cooling and Ventilation (HVAC), mechanical, electrical, plumbing and telecommunication systems, and services related to exterior grounds and winter property maintenance, including septic and well water system maintenance
- food/nutrition and water/drink delivery
- Canada Post mail services and other courier services
- election officials/workers

3. **Person visiting a very ill resident:** A person visiting for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end of life care.
4. **Government inspectors:** 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 in accordance with the applicable legislation. Examples of government inspectors include inspectors under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007*, the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, the *Electricity Act, 1998*, the *Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000*, and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

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### Designating a Caregiver:

The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is **the responsibility of the resident or their substitute decision-maker** and not the home. The designation of a caregiver should be made in writing to the home.

- Caregivers must be designated and must be at least 16 years of age.
- A maximum of four caregivers may be designated per resident at a time. (Note: caregivers who were designated prior to December 15th, 2021, may continue to be designated as a caregiver even if this means the resident has more than four designated caregivers.)
- Only **one caregiver** may visit a resident who is isolating or in situations where a home or area of a home is in outbreak.

A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may change a designation in response to a change in the:

- resident's care needs that is reflected in the plan of care
- availability of a designated caregiver, either temporary (for example, illness) or permanent.
- A resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may not continuously change a designation in order to increase the number of people able to enter the home.

Homes should have a procedure for documenting caregiver designations. See **IC-1300-11**

All required education and Infection Prevention and Control education is required to maintain caregiver status.

**General Visitor** - means a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting the home to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents.

There are two broad categories of general visitors:

- visitors providing non-essential services which include but are not limited to:
  - personal care service providers (for example, hairdressers, barbers, manicurists, etc.)
  - entertainers (singers, musicians, etc.)
  - 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
- persons visiting for social reasons that the resident or their substitute decision-maker assess as different from "direct care" as described in the section on caregivers

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General visitors are not permitted:

- when a home or area of a home is in outbreak
- to visit an isolating resident
- when the local public health unit so directs

General visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult (someone who is 18 years of age or older) 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).

### Type of Visit and Process

There are two categories of visits:

- **Social visits**-include virtual visits as well as indoor and outdoor visits by General Visitors
  - **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.
  - **Indoor Visits (As of March 14, 2022):**
    - The limit on indoor visits will increase to four general visitors and/or caregivers per resident at a time.
    - All general visitors, including children under the age of five, can resume visits. General visitors, with the exception of children under the age of five, will need to follow the vaccination policy of the individual long-term care home.
    - Indoor visitors are required to pass active screening.
    - Vaccinated indoor general visitors entering McCormick Home must demonstrate that they have received a negative Antigen Test on the day of the visit or demonstrate proof that they have received a negative Antigen Test from the previous day, prior to being permitted entry to the home.
    - On days that testing is conducted, a negative result must be received prior to entry into the home and prior to having contact with residents.
    - All general visitors regardless of vaccination status, will be required to wait while the antigen test processes and yield a negative result prior to gaining entry to the home.
    - If a general visitor is entering the home to visit with a resident who is very ill or is palliative, they will not be subject to testing in the event of an emergency. If not an emergency, palliative visitors will be required to participate in Rapid Antigen Testing to reduce the risk to the Home.
    - Indoor visitors wear a medical mask provided by the home that covers their mouth, nose and chin **at all times** throughout the visit.
    - Physical distancing with the resident is not required.
  - **Outdoor Visits (As of April 27, 2022):**
    - Limits on outdoor visits will be lifted, and homes can return to their regular practices on use of available outdoor spaces.

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- Masking is no longer required when outdoors for staff, residents, students, volunteers, or visitors, but remains encouraged as an added layer of protection against COVID-19.
  - Outdoor visitors are required to pass active screening upon arrival.
  - Rapid testing prior to the visit is not required.
  - The Middlesex-London Health unit has approved the sharing of food or drink during an outdoor visit.
  - **Social Outdoor Visits (weather permitting)** – In-person visits offered in dedicated outdoor spaces at the front of the home, or use of outdoor garden space. These visits support the face-to-face connection. There is no limit on number of outdoor visitors.
  - We encourage visitors to call in advance and advise of the visit so the staff can assist with getting resident to the outdoor space if the outdoor visitor does not undergo requirements to gain access to the home.
- 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 the ministry of long term care and public health provides direction on safely resuming social visits within the home.
  - If the home or home area is in outbreak, approval for outdoor visits for well residents on the property can proceed so long as approved essential caregivers are masked and maintain physical distancing from other staff, residents or members of the public.
  - **To Book a Visit**
    - If you would like to book the East Garden for an outdoor gathering, please contact front reception by calling 519-432-2648 Ext. 2300 or emailing [admin.assistant@mccormickcare.ca](mailto:admin.assistant@mccormickcare.ca). As individuals would have to come through the home to access the gardens, rapid testing would be required. We will make every effort to accommodate all requests but ask for your cooperation in contacting in advance.
- **Care visits**-include visits by Essential Visitors, such as Caregivers and Support Workers
    - **Caregivers**-include family members who provide meaningful connections, privately hired caregivers, paid companions and translators.
      - Caregivers must pass active screening and adhere to the home’s testing requirements
      - Caregivers must follow the PPE requirements applicable to the resident’s room
      - Universal masking is required at all times while in the home.

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- 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 as much as possible
- Where a resident resides in an area of the home that is in outbreak, is symptomatic or isolating under additional precautions, only one caregiver may visit at a time
- Caregivers should not visit any other home for 10 days after visiting another:
  - resident who is self-isolating, including those experiencing symptoms of infectious diseases and are being assessed, or
  - home or area of a home affected by an outbreak
- Recognizing there are caregivers who want to volunteer to support more than one resident, in the event of an outbreak, caregivers may support up to two residents who are COVID-19 positive, provided the home obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers). Caregivers may also support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations, with the same expectation regarding resident consent.
- **Support Workers**-defined as persons who visit a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents
  - All support workers entering McCormick Home must demonstrate that they have received a negative Antigen Test on the day of the visit. If they undergo rapid testing, they are not permitted to proceed to the resident until the result is confirmed unless the individual is a member of a Regulated Health Profession.

### Visiting Restrictions:

Any visitor who fails active screening (for example, having symptoms of COVID-19 or having had contact with someone who has COVID-19) will not be allowed to enter the home, be advised to go home immediately to self-isolate, and encouraged to be tested. An exception is in place for visitors of imminently palliative residents. Visitors for imminently palliative residents must be screened prior to entry. If they fail screening, they must be permitted entry but homes must ensure that they wear a medical (surgical or procedural) mask and maintain physical distance from other residents and staff.

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when a resident is isolating or symptomatic. Visitors will be supported to implement and follow all required public health measures as well as infection prevention and control (IPAC) practices.

In the case where a resident is symptomatic or isolating under droplet and contact precautions, only one *caregiver* may visit at a time and no general visitors are permitted.

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In the case where a resident resides in an area of a home that is in an outbreak, as declared by the local public health unit, no general visitors are permitted.

In the case where a local public health unit directs a home in respect of the number of visitors allowed, the home is to follow the direction of the local public health unit.

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

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

Children under the age of 1 are not counted as a visitor, regardless of whether the visit is indoors or outdoors.

**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.

**Please note:** *As per COVID-19 Vaccination policy for McCormick Care Group, if McCormick Home declares a COVID-19 outbreak, unvaccinated caregivers or visitors will not be permitted entry unless the resident is actively receiving end of life care or at the direction of local public health officials.*

### **Visitor Immunization**

Please see **IC-1300-28 COVID-19 Immunization Policy**:

**Effective March 14, 2022** - The Ministry has eliminated third dose mandates for essential visitors. McCormick Care Group requires essential visitors and general visitors to have received two doses of vaccine, unless they have a valid medical exemption or are attending to a resident who is actively receiving end of life care.

Essential visitors and general visitors who are not vaccinated will be required to undertake daily rapid testing, wear PPE and restrict visits to resident rooms or outdoors. Essential visitors and general visitors who do not show proof of vaccination status, will be subject to daily rapid testing, PPE requirements and restricted visits within resident rooms.

McCormick Care Group will continue to evaluate, monitor and adjust measures in place based on ministry direction and consultation with our local public health over the next several months.

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Notwithstanding that an individual is vaccinated, they are still required to adhere to applicable testing and personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements established by the McCormick Care Group, even after testing and precautions are no longer mandated by applicable ministry and public health authorities.

Essential Caregivers will be encouraged to provide a copy of proof of vaccination or show a copy of vaccination certificate so the Home's records can be updated to reflect caregiver vaccination status.

***Acceptable Proof of Vaccination:***

The provincial enhanced vaccine certificate with a QR code is considered valid proof of vaccination. Any individuals who received their first or second dose out of the province of Ontario should contact their local public health unit to obtain proper documentation.

Failure to submit a copy or show proof of vaccination receipt (s) cannot be considered immunized.

All personal health information will be managed in accordance with privacy requirements.

**Other Documentation:**

Requirements include maintaining:

- Written records of designation of caregiver by residents or their substitute decision maker
- Approvals from a parent or legal guardian to permit persons under 16 years of age to be designated as a caregiver, if applicable
- Visitor logs for at least 30 days which include:
  - the name and contact information of the visitor
  - date and time of the visit
  - the resident visited
- Nursing department's progress notes to evidence 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.

**Education, Training and Guidance**

**Caregivers**

The home will provide training to all visitors about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE.

Retraining will be provided as requested, or if non-compliance is observed while visitors are in the home.

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Education components are posted on our home's website for families/friends to access at any time.

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](#)

Additional guidance from Public Health Ontario is 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>

#### **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;

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- 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.

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.

### **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.

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**Reporting**

The current version of this policy, as amended from time to time will be provided to the Residents' Council and Family Council.

All visitors will have access to this policy.

**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.