

MANUAL:	Infection Prevention & Control
SECTION:	PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS
SUBJECT:	COVID-19 Pandemic: Resuming Visits in Long-Term Care & Co-located Retirement Homes

POLICY

It is the policy of Schlegel Villages to support the well-being of our residents, while ensuring the safety of those living and working within the Villages. The requirements for visits to long-term care and retirement homes during the pandemic is established in Directive #3 issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. As per the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA), retirement homes co-located with a long-term care home will adopt the long-term care visitor policy if more restrictive.

Effective November 16th, 2020 the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) based visiting rules on the Ontario government COVID-19 Response Framework which categorizes public health regions into five levels: Green-Prevent, Yellow-Protect, Orange-Restrict, Red-Control, and Grey-Lockdown.

Effective December 23rd, 2020 the MLTC directed homes to follow level grey restrictions when there are stay at home orders.

Effective March 15th, 2021 rapid antigen testing was introduced and new testing guidelines released.

In the event of an outbreak, or when a Village is located in an area identified in Orange, Red or Grey, only essential visitors are permitted.

Guiding Principles:

- **Safety:** Any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, team members, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.
- **Emotional Wellbeing:** Allowing visitors is intended to support the emotional wellbeing 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 Village, 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 taken into account when setting the visiting policies.
- **Equality:** Residents have the right to choose their visitors. In addition, residents and/ or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.



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

*The local Public Health Unit may designate additional restrictions which are to be followed by the Village in that region.

DEFINITIONS

Essential Visitor - a person performing an essential support service (such as food delivery, inspector, maintenance, or health services) or a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident. Essential visitors include support workers and caregivers, however, do not need to be a support worker or caregiver as long as they meet the definition under Directive #3.

- i. **Support Worker** – a type of essential visitor who visits to perform an essential support service for the home or a resident. Examples include physicians, nurse practitioner, registered dietitian, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, maintenance worker, or person delivering food, provided they are not a team member of the home.
- ii. **Caregiver** – a type of essential visitor who is designated by the resident and/or SDM to provide direct care to the resident. Examples include supporting ADLs, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection and assistance in decision-making. Caregivers may be a family member or friend providing meaningful connection, privately hired caregiver, paid companion and translator. It is recommended privately hired caregivers and paid companions only work in one single healthcare site.

General Visitor - a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide a non-essential service (person may or may not be hired by the Village or the resident and/or their SDM), or is visiting for social reasons (i.e., family or friends).

PROCEDURE

1. Team members, volunteers, student placements and agency team members are not considered visitors as their access is determined by the Village, and as such are excluded from this policy.
2. Government inspectors are support workers, are not subject to the new testing requirement – they will show proof of PCR on entry.
3. Essential visitors are the only type of visitors permitted when a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, or the Village is in an outbreak.
4. Rules for visitors will vary based on which public health region the Village is located in. Additionally, the local public health may provide direction on visitors to the home during an outbreak, and/or with a suspected case of COVID-19, which may differ from this policy, depending on the situation.



5. Restrictions on visits will be communicated to residents and families.
6. All visitors to the Village are required to follow public health measures – active screening, physical distancing, hand hygiene and masking for source control – for the duration of their visit. Additional PPE may be required for essential visitors during an outbreak or when visiting a resident in isolation.
7. Caregivers and general visitors need to review the policy and required education prior to their first visit and when there are changes. Education on infection prevention and control protocols, masking and other procedures related to visiting are included at the end of this policy. Resources may be shared by email, are available through the website and in paper format at the screening table. Visitors must attest to reviewing the policy and education prior to their first visit and at least monthly thereafter.
8. General (non-essential) visits will be booked online or by calling the Village. Essential caregivers do not need to schedule their visit.
9. Villages will maintain and have available at the screening station a list of designated caregivers and a daily schedule of general visitors.
10. Visitors will complete active screening, which includes a temperature check when arriving at the Village. Screening must be passed to gain entry to the Village. Caregivers and general visitors will also need to attest to not visiting another home in outbreak or resident who is in isolation in the 14 days prior to visit. With the exception of general outdoor visits, anyone entering the Village will complete active screening on exit as well.
11. Visitors are required to wear a surgical/ procedure mask (supplied by Village) for the duration of the indoor visit. For outdoor visits, cloth face masks or face coverings are required to be worn and should be brought by the visitor.
12. General visits may only be supervised by the Village to monitor flow of visits, ensure safe physical distancing can be maintained, or to support residents during the visit. The rights of residents will be respected; the resident has the right to;
 - a. Communicate in confidence,
 - b. Receive visitors of their choice, and
 - c. Consult in private with any person without interference.

Essential Caregivers

1. Residents and/ or their SDM may designate up to two individuals as caregivers at a time who, when visiting will assist with direct care.
 - Caregivers must be at least 18 years old.
 - Caregiver designations need to be made in writing and are at the full discretion of the resident/ SDM, not the Village.
2. If the local public health unit is in the Green-Prevent or Yellow-Protect level and the home is not in outbreak, up to two caregivers may visit at a time with each resident. Caregivers may only visit/ support the resident they are designated to.



The Village reserves the right to limit this to one caregiver at a time for residents in shared accommodation where safe physical distancing cannot be maintained.

3. If the local public health unit is in the Orange-Restrict, Red-Control or Grey-Lockdown level, or the Village is in outbreak, a maximum of 1 caregiver may visit per resident at a time.
4. If a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, a maximum of 1 caregiver may visit the resident at a time and must wear applicable PPE.
5. Caregivers may not visit any other resident or home for 14 days after visiting another resident who is in isolation or home in outbreak.
6. In the event the resident/ SDM needs to make a change to a designated caregiver, they may do so in writing if there is a change in the:
 - Resident's care needs, that is reflected in the plan of care, or
 - Availability of the designated, either temporarily or permanently.

General Visitors

1. General (non-essential) visits can be scheduled for either indoors or outdoors in designated area(s). To ensure equity, a minimum of 1 visit per week of at least 30 minutes will be supported for each resident.
2. A maximum of 2 general visitors may visit with resident at a time, subject to the direction from the local public health unit, provided;
 - i. The resident is not self-isolating or symptomatic,
 - ii. The Village is **not** in outbreak,
 - iii. The local public health unit is in the Green-Prevent or Yellow-Protect level.

The Village reserves the right to limit this if safe physical distancing cannot be maintained.

3. Visitors under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult, be able to stay with the adult and be able to follow all IPAC protocols (e.g., active screening, physical distancing, hand hygiene, masking for source control).
4. If a resident requires support with communication or emotional well-being during the visit and the visitor has attested to a negative COVID-19 test, they may engage in close physical contact if both the resident and visitor are wearing a mask. If the resident cannot tolerate a mask, physical distancing must be maintained.

Dedicated Space for General (Non-essential) Visits

1. Villages will identify dedicated areas for indoor and outdoor visits to occur. In-suite visits are not available at this time.
2. When identifying dedicated visiting locations, the Village will consider available space and accessibility.



3. For outdoor visits, the need for shade and protection from the elements will be considered when identifying locations and equipment needed to support visits. For indoor visits, furniture used needs to be able to be routinely disinfected before/after visits.
4. Access to Village by general visitors may be limited.

Scheduling General Visits

1. General/ non-essential visits must be pre-arranged/ scheduled.
 - Visitors can either book through the online tool or call the Village for assistance with booking a visit.
 - Visitors need to choose either an indoor or outdoor visit at time of booking. Availability for outdoor visits will be dependent on weather and resident wishes.
 - Village reserves the right to cancel a booking if needed.
2. Village will determine the times of day when visits can be supported as well as how many visits/ visitors can be accommodated at a time. Staffing levels, shift exchange and meal times will be considered when determining schedule.
3. Schedule will accommodate time between visits to residents can travel to/ from the visiting area and to ensure the visiting area can be sanitized between visits.
4. Daily visitation schedule and list of visitors will be available at the screening location.
5. The Village will strive to honour the visiting schedule, however there may be times where visits may need to be cancelled. (i.e., in the event of an emergency; due to inclement weather, outbreak etc.)

Testing

1. The Village will ensure all team members, students, volunteers, essential caregivers, essential support workers and any general visitors are regularly tested for COVID-19 as per the chart below.
2. In the event of an emergency or palliative situation, the testing requirement for essential caregivers and essential support workers may be bypassed as approved by Village.
3. Effective November 30, 2020, anyone who has not met the requirements for testing may not enter the Village.



INDIVIDUAL	LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT LEVEL				
	Green – Prevent	Yellow – Protect	Orange – Restrict	Red – Control	Grey - Lockdown
Team members; agency; contracted team	Rapid test 1-2x per week	Rapid test 2-3x per week			
Volunteers; student placements					
Essential Caregivers*					
Essential Support Workers*	Negative rapid test every other day				
General Visitors*	Negative rapid test every other day		Not applicable; visits not permitted		

**Unless the support worker or visitor needs immediate access in an emergency or palliative situation*

Requirements to Visit

1. Visitors may only visit the resident they are scheduled to visit, and must not stop to visit with other residents who are enjoying the Village space.
2. Visitors must adhere to directions and guidelines related to visitation. Non-compliance could result in discontinuation of visits for any non-compliant visitor.

Summary of requirements

	Essential Visitor	Essential Support Worker	Essential Caregiver	Non-Essential General Visitor
Schedule visits	No	No	No	Yes
Number of Visitors: Green-Prevent & Yellow-Protect	# determined by Village	# determined by Village	Max 2 per visit (1 if space is a factor)	Max 2 per visit
Orange-Restrict, Red-Control & Grey-Lockdown	Yes, # as per Village	Yes, # as per Village	Max 1 per visit	No
Outbreak or Resident in isolation	Yes, # as per Village	Yes, # as per Village	Max 1 per visit	No
Active screening including temperature check	Yes, on entry/ exit	Yes, on entry/ exit	Yes, on entry/ exit	Indoors: entry/ exit Outdoors: entry only
Attest to not being in another home in outbreak or visiting a resident in isolation in last 14 days	No	No	Yes	Yes
Attest to reading visiting policy	No	No	Yes	Yes
Length of visit	No restriction	No restriction	No restriction	Minimum 30 min visit
PPE required	Surgical/ procedure mask; additional PPE (gloves, gowns and eye protection-face shield or goggles) as required.			<i>Indoor:</i> Surgical/ procedure mask) <i>Outdoor:</i> Cloth mask/ face covering



Responding to Visitor Non-Adherence

Schlegel Villages has developed its visitor policy to ensure the safety of those living in, working in and visiting our Villages. In the event there is a concern raised related to visitor non-adherence, the following guidelines are in place.

1. Education and support will be provided to help the visitor understand policy and protocols that have been established.
2. If non-adherence continues, the concern will be escalated to a member of the leadership team who will speak with the visitor. They will provide additional education and reinforce the impact and importance visits have in supporting a resident's care needs and emotional well-being.
3. If non-compliance continues even after the leader has explained applicable requirements and the visitor has the resources and time to adhere to the requirements, the leader may end the visit and ask the visitor to leave the Village. If a visit has been ended by the Village, this decision must be documented. Any decisions to end a visit will be communicated to the leader-on-call and will be reviewed by the leadership team.
4. After reviewing circumstances related to the situation, the general manager or assistant general manager will contact the visitor to review concerns and determine next steps which may include additional education to be taken.
5. In the event where there is repeated or flagrant non-adherence by a visitor, the Village may decide to temporarily prohibit visits if;
 - i. The non-adherence negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, team members and other visitors,
 - ii. It is demonstrated continuously by the visitor over multiple visits, and they have had previous visits ended.
6. Decisions to temporarily prohibit a visitor will be made only if all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during a visit have been exhausted. In this case, the following will be documented and communicated to the visitor;
 - i. Length of time for prohibition;
 - ii. Requirement's visitor must meet before visits may be resumed.
7. Should additional support be required, the Village may reach out to the local Public Health for further direction.

RESOURCES

- Education package for visitors
- Visitor Code of Conduct
- Public Health: [Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- Public Health: [Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- [Hand Wash video](#)