

**MANUAL:** Infection Prevention & Control

**SECTION:** PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Pandemic: Resuming Visits in Long-Term Care

October 2022

## POLICY

It is the policy of Schlegel Villages to support the well-being of our residents, while ensuring the safety of those living in and working within the Villages. Directives and guidance for visitors to long-term care have been established by the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, the Minister's Directive and the COVID-19 guidance document for long-term care homes.

Schlegel Villages is committed to continuously monitoring transmission risk in the community and will adjust visiting requirements as needed.

### 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.

**Visitor Responsibility:** Visitors have a crucial role to play in reducing risk or infection for the safety of residents and team members by adhering to requirements related to screening, IPAC, PPE, and any precautions described in this policy.

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

## DEFINITIONS

**Essential Visitor** - a person visiting a home to meet an essential need-related to the operations of the home or residents that could not be adequately met if the person does not visit the home. Essential visitors are the only type of visitor allowed when there is an outbreak or when a resident is in isolation.

- i. **Caregiver** – an essential visitor 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. *[O.Reg 246/22, s.4]*
  
- ii. **Support Worker** – an essential visitor who visits 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 or rehabilitation and counselling services for residents by regulated health professionals such as physicians or nurse practitioners
  - Assistive Devices Program vendors (i.e., home oxygen therapy)
  - Moving a resident in/out of a home
  - Social work services
  - Legal services
  - Post-mortem services
  - Emergency services (such as those provided by first responders)
  - Maintenance services such as those required to ensure the structural integrity of the home and functionality of home’s HVAC mechanical, electrical, plumbing etc.
  - Food delivery
  - Canada Post mail services and other courier services
  - Election officials/ workers.

- iii. **Person visiting very ill or palliative resident** receiving end-of-life care for compassionate reasons, hospice services, etc.
- iv. **Government inspectors with statutory right of entry** – includes government inspectors under Fixing Long-Term Care Homes Act 2021, the Health Protection and Promotion Act, the Electricity Act, 1998, the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

**General Visitor** - a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide a non-essential service related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. There are two broad categories:

- i. Visitors providing non-essential services which include but are not limited to:
  - Personal care service providers (hairstylists, barbers, manicurist)
  - Entertainers (singers, musicians)
  - Recreational service providers
  - Animal handlers (ex. As part of therapy animal program)
  - Individuals touring the home to inform decisions regarding application for admission.
- ii. Persons 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 an essential visitor; however, they are not subject to the testing requirement.
3. Essential visitors are the only type of visitors permitted when a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, or living in a home or neighbourhood declared in outbreak. In this case, only 1 essential caregiver/ essential visitor may visit a resident at a time.
4. All visitors to the Village are required to follow IPAC protocols – active screening, hand hygiene and universal masking. Additional PPE may be required for essential visitors during an outbreak or when visiting a resident in isolation.
  - Medical masks are to be worn for the duration of indoor visits. Residents are encouraged to be masked, where tolerated. As of October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 visitors may remove their mask when visiting a resident alone in a room. Mask must be worn when any other resident or team member is present in the room.
  - Masks or face covering are recommended outdoors.



5. Indoor visitors will be required to participate in surveillance testing at the frequency determined and communicated by Schlegel Villages. Testing does not apply to children under the age of two years old.
6. For group sizes larger than four, please contact the Village prior to visit to ensure group can be accommodated. *Please note:* the local public health unit has the discretion to direct the Village on the number of visitors permitted.
7. This policy is available to visitors and includes links at the end to education on infection prevention and control protocols, masking and other procedures related to visiting. Resources may be shared by email or through paper format, and are available on the website.
8. All visitors must complete and pass active screening.
  - If a visitor does not pass screening they cannot enter the Village, they will be advised to go home immediately to self-isolate, and encouraged to be tested.
  - An exception is if they are visiting a resident at end of life. Access may be granted, but visitor must wear required PPE and stay physically distanced from other residents and team members.
9. In accordance with O.Reg 246/22, s.267(2), the Village is required to maintain visitor logs and retain this information for at least 30 days as per the to facilitate contact tracing. At minimum, the following information will be collected;
  - Name and contact information of the visitor
  - Date and time of visit
  - Purpose of visit (e.g., name of resident visited)
10. Caregivers and general visitors may
  - Support residents in the dining room, but are unable to join in the meal – they must remain masked at all times.
  - Join residents in an activity or event, provided there is capacity and space. Overcrowding and close contacts should be avoided. Masks must be worn at all times.

### **Essential Caregivers**

1. Residents and/ or their SDM may designate individuals as caregivers.
  - Caregiver designations need to be made in writing and are at the full discretion of the resident/ SDM, not the Village.
2. In the event the resident/ SDM needs to make a change to a designated essential 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 caregiver, either temporary or permanent.Please note: as per the Ministry, a resident and/or their SDM may not continuously change a designation in order to increase the number of people able to enter the home.



3. Essential caregivers are permitted when Village is in outbreak or the resident they are visiting is in isolation; 1 caregiver may visit the resident at time and must wear additional PPE as applicable.
4. Essential caregivers should not visit another home for 10 days after visiting an individual with confirmed COVID-19 or an individual experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. Please note: a caregiver may support up to two residents who are COVID-19 positive, provided the Village obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers). Caregivers may also support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations, provided consent is obtained.

### **General Visitors**

1. General visitors may visit indoors or outdoors with resident, provided the Village or neighbourhood is not in outbreak, the resident they are visiting is not in isolation or the local public health has not instructed otherwise.
2. Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult for all visits, indoors and outdoors.
3. Children under the age of 2 years old are not considered visitors, are not included in group size numbers and are not subject to masking and testing requirements.

### **Asymptomatic Surveillance Testing**

1. Asymptomatic surveillance testing is an important part of screening for COVID-19 and is required for all indoor visits. While Ministry has provided minimum guidelines for testing, Villages reserve the right to request higher frequency of testing (up to daily). Frequency will be communicated by the Village.
2. In the event of an emergency or palliative situation, the testing requirement for essential visitors may be bypassed as approved by Village.
3. If a visitor tested positive in the 90 days prior to visit, are past their isolation period and are not experiencing any new symptoms, testing is not required.

### **Requirements to Visit**

1. Visitors must adhere to directions and guidelines related to visitation, including the Visitor Code of Conduct. Non-compliance could result in discontinuation of visits for any non-compliant visitor.

### **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

- Guidance document: [Recommended steps: putting on personal protective equipment](#)
- Video: [Putting on Full Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- Video: [Taking off Full Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- Videos: [Hand Wash video](#); [Hand Rub video](#)
- Education package for visitors
- [Visitor Code of Conduct](#)