

SUBJECT: COVID-19- Managing Visitors and Visitation	SECTION: Environment-Infection Control-Pandemic
POLICY NO: E-ICP8	RHRA-27
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 22, 2022	REVIEWED/REVISED DATE: July 20, 2021

Policy:

If anything in this policy conflicts with applicable legislation or regulations or any other provincial requirements, those requirements prevail, and retirement homes must follow all applicable provincial legislation, regulations and requirements.

On May 20, 2021, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, [announced](#) its [Roadmap to Reopen \(O. Reg 344/21\)](#), a three-step plan to reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures based on the provincewide vaccination rate and improvements in key public health and health care indicators.

As the pandemic situation continues to change, the Residence's visitor policy will be reassessed and revised to allow for increased or decreased restrictions as necessary, as circumstances change in the community, within the Residence and with new directives.

This update provides measures that take into consideration the context of high immunization rates achieved in retirement homes. These measures will be updated periodically as the Province and public health experts continue to monitor evolving evidence on COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness, the third wave and subsequent waves of the pandemic, and the increasing variants of concern in Ontario. For the purposes of this document, an individual is considered fully immunized when they have received the total number of required doses of a vaccine approved by Health Canada and it has been at least 14 days since they received their final dose.

All visitors are responsible for adhering to applicable directives including Directive #3, MSSA guidelines and the home's visitor policies to ensure the safety of all residents, staff, students and visitors, and allow for the continuity of visits that support the mental, physical and spiritual needs of residents for their quality of life while also supporting residents in receiving the care they need and maintaining their emotional well-being.

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

Any non-adherence to the rules set out in the visitor policy may be the basis for discontinuation of visits.

Guiding Principles

The visiting policy is guided by the following principles:

Safety: Any approach to visiting in the Residence must consider balance and meet the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.

Mental Health and Emotional Well-being: Allowing visitors is intended to support the emotional well-being of residents and their families/friends, through reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.

Equitable Access: All residents must be given equitable access to receive visitors, consistent with their preference and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents, staff and visitors.

Flexibility: Any approach to visiting in the Residence must consider the physical/infrastructure characteristics of the retirement home, its staffing availability, whether the home is in outbreak or in an area of widespread transmission, and the current status of the home with respect to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) levels for staff and residents.

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

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

Immunization: Flexibilities for absences and activities reflect both the high rates of COVID-19 immunization as well as the protective effect that immunizations have had on the number of COVID-19 cases and outbreaks in retirement homes. This update reflects the evidence available so far across Canada and abroad and are subject to change as the knowledge of COVID-19 vaccines evolves.

It is with compassion that we recognize the need for residents' connection with loved ones, and it is through in-person visits that this can be best achieved. We will take all reasonable steps to help facilitate visits within the parameters of Ministry directives. Per Ministry guidelines, the Residence will follow the requirements for the minimum visit frequency and seek to accommodate more visits where possible.

Where it is not possible or advisable for visits to occur in person, the Residence will continue to provide virtual visiting options.

St. Andrew's Residence also recognizes the concepts of non-maleficence (i.e. not doing harm), proportionality (i.e., to the level of risk), transparency and reciprocity (i.e., providing resources to those who are disadvantaged by the policy). These concepts will inform the Residence's decision making with regards to the scheduling and/or refusal of visits as appropriate.

Prior to Accepting Visitors

As per Ministry of Health (MOH) Directive #3 and MSAAG guidelines, the following baseline requirements must be met prior to accepting visitors:

1. The Residence must not be in an outbreak. Where a symptomatic staff or resident is awaiting COVID-19 test results, visitation will only continue at the guidance of the Public Health Unit.
 - a) In the event the Residence begins accepting visitors and enters into an outbreak, all *non-essential* visitations will end, and the Residence will follow all Chief Medical Office of Health (CMOH) directives for Residences in outbreak and follow directions from the local public health unit (PHU).
2. The Residence has developed procedures for the resumption of visits and associated procedures, and a process for communicating procedures with residents, families and staff, including but not limited to infection prevention and control (IPAC), scheduling and any setting-specific policies.
 - a) This process must include sharing an information package with visitors on IPAC, masking and other operational procedures such as limiting movement around the Residence, if applicable, and ensuring visitors' agreement to comply. Residence materials must include an approach to dealing with non-adherence to Residence policies and procedures, including the discontinuation of visits. (See [Visitor Information Package](#))
 - b) Dedicated areas for visits.
 - c) Protocols to maintain the highest of IPAC standards prior to, during and after visits.
 - d) A list of visitors will be maintained. The list will be available for relevant staff to have access.
 - e) Protocols for record keeping of visitations for contact tracing purposes.
 - f) A process for any person to make complaints to the Residence about the administration of the visiting policies.

PLEASE NOTE: Residents who are self-isolating for 14 days under Droplet and Contact precautions may not receive non-essential visitors (i.e. general visitors or personal care service providers). Additional factors that will inform decisions about visitations in the Residence include:

- **Adequate Staffing:** The residence must currently not have staffing shortages that would affect resident or staff safety and not be under a contingency staffing plan. There must be sufficient staff to implement the protocols related to visitors. Additionally, staffing levels must be sufficient to ensure safe visiting as determined by the home's leadership.

- **Access to adequate testing:** The Residence must have a testing plan in place, based on contingencies informed by local and provincial health officials, for testing in the event of a suspected outbreak.
- **Access to adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** The Residence must have adequate supplies of relevant PPE.
- **Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) standards:** The Residence must have essential cleaning and disinfection supplies and adhere to IPAC standards, including enhanced cleaning.
- **Physical Distancing:** Where appropriate, the Residence must be able to facilitate visits in a manner aligned with physical distancing protocols

Type of Visitors

There are three types of visitors, Essential Visitors, General Visitors and Personal Care Service Providers. Each type of visitors is outlined in Appendix A-E-ICP8-A COVID-19-Managing Visitors-Types of Visitors.

Note that the Residence staff, students and volunteers are not considered visitors as their access to the Residence is determined by the licensee.

Discontinuation of Visits

1. Non-compliance with the Residence's policies could result in the discontinuation of visits for the non-compliant visitor.
2. If required, St. Andrew's staff will remind visitors to follow the physical distancing and proper mask use protocols.
3. If the situations continue, management will be notified to enforce the protocols, and the Indoor Visitor may be asked to leave the premises.

References and Related Policy and Procedures:

1. Appendix A – E-ICP8-A-COVID-19-Managing Visitors-Types of Visitors
2. Appendix B- [Information Package for Visitors](#)
3. [Ministry of Health \(MOH\) Directive #3](#)

[Ref. Infection Prevention and Control Section]

[Ref. E-IC6-Routine Practices]

[Ref. E-IC7 Additional Precautions]

[Ref. E-ICP3 COVID-19]

[Ref. E-ICP4 Outbreak protocol for COVID-19]

[Ref. E-ICP8.1-COVID-19 Outdoor Visits]

St. Andrew's Residence, Chatham

Operations Manual



[Ref. E-ICP8.2-COVID-19 Indoor Visits-General Visitors]
 [Ref. E-ICP8.3-COVID-19 Designated Caregivers]
 [Ref. E-ICP8.3a-Caregiver Designation Form]

Revision Table:

Date	Revision	Effective
May 5, 2021	Updated the Policy section to reflect Directive # 3 and the new RHRA policy. Added Immunizaion to Guiding Principles, added the requirement for the Residence to have a process in place to receive complaints with reference to the Visiting Policies. Updated Appendix A wording. Updated Appendix B to include the link to the new policy to follow Directive # 3, to include information to contact administration and if needed RHRA for concerns. Added a new updated Screening Tool.	May 21, 2021
June 6, 2021	Added a Note to Policy on page 1-indoor visiotrs require Negative COVID test unless there are special circumstances.	June 11, 2021
July 20, 2021	Update policy to follow the new Retirement Homes Policy to Implement Directive # 3. Update links, Removed the requirement to have a negative Covid test.	July 22, 2021

Approval:

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