


EASTHOLME NURSING DEPARTMENT 	SECTION 22
COVID-19 PANDEMIC POLICY	EFFECTIVE DATE: June 27, 2023
APPROVED BY: INFECTION CONTROL COMMITTEE	REVISED: Dec 01 ,2022 / April 01, 2023 / June 2023
TITLE: MANAGING VISITORS	Page 1 of 6

INTRODUCTION

This policy is effective on **June 27, 2023**. All previous versions of the visiting policy have been revoked and replaced with this version.

COVID-19 policy for Long-Term Care Homes under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health establishes requirements for visits to long-term care (LTC) homes.

To the extent that anything in this policy conflicts with a Directive from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Directive prevails and Eastholme will follow the Minister's Directive.

As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves, this policy will be adjusted as necessary, keeping the safety and well-being of residents and staff at the forefront. Additionally, the local public health unit may provide further directions and/or restrictions on visits to the home, depending on the specific situation.


A copy of this policy will be available at the front entrance of the home.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The home visitation policy for Eastholme continues 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.

These rules are in addition to the requirements established in the Fixing LTCA and Ontario Regulation 246/22. The requirements include:

- **Safety** – Any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.
- **Emotional Well-Being** – Allowing visitors is intended to support the 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.
- **Flexibility** – The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the home, its staffing availability, whether the home is in an outbreak and the status of the home with respect to personal protective equipment (PPE) are all variables to take into account when setting home-specific 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.

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Types of Visitors

Not considered visitors: Long-term care home staff (as defined under the Act), volunteers and student placements 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.

Essential Visitors: There are four types of essential visitor's as per O. Reg. 246/22 under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021,

- (a) a caregiver,
- (b) a support worker who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents,
- (c) a person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care, or
- (d) a government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties.

General Visitors: A general visitor is a person who is not an essential visitor and is visiting to provide non-essential services related to either the operations of the home or a particular resident or group of residents. General visitors include those persons visiting for social reasons as well as visitors providing non-essential services such as personal care services, entertainment, or individuals touring the home.


POLICY

There are currently no restrictions related to visitors accessing the home when not in an outbreak however, Eastholme is required to follow the directions of the local public health unit during an outbreak, and this could include advising general visitors to postpone all non-essential visits.

Essential visitors, which include caregivers, support workers, persons visiting for compassionate reasons, including for end-of-life care, and inspectors, continue to have access to the home during an outbreak.

Eastholme does not require scheduling of visitors neither do we restrict the length or frequency of visits by caregivers. There are also no longer limits to the number of essential visitors that can assess the home during an outbreak or when a resident is isolating.

Visitors and essential caregivers who are visiting Eastholme are required to fill in the register at the entrance and use a visitors tag on entry.


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INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPAC) PRACTISES TO BE FOLLOWED BY ALL VISITORS:

- **Respiratory etiquette** requires visitors to cough or sneeze into a tissue, or if a tissue is not available, into their elbow. Hand hygiene must be performed immediately afterwards. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or other parts of your face.
- **Hand hygiene** is required to be performed frequently. For example,
 - ~ upon entry/exit to the home,
 - ~ entry/exit to the visiting area,
 - ~ any time hands are soiled,
 - ~ before/after handling your mask.

Note: Alcohol based hand rub is the preferred method for hand hygiene unless hands are visibly soiled. All surfaces of the hands must be rubbed for a minimum of 15 seconds.

- **Masks** are recommended, but not required, in all areas of the home. If a mask is used, ensure to:
 - ~ Perform hand hygiene before and after handling masks.
 - ~ Handle mask by the ear loops to avoid contamination.
 - ~ Change mask if they become wet, soiled, or difficult to breathe through.
 - ~ Masking is no longer required for staff, volunteers and students, however, Eastholme will accommodate any resident or substitute decision maker who requests that staff members wear masks while providing care, in accordance with their right to participate fully in making any decisions concerning any aspect of their care.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** should be worn if there is any risk of exposure to droplets or other body fluids as well as if a resident is in isolation or an area of the home is in outbreak. Visitors will be provided with any personal protective equipment required during their visit (mask, gloves, gown, eye protection).
The order of donning and doffing PPE is important in ensuring that the wearer is protected from potential infection. If required, registered staff will provide instruction to visitors on the proper steps for donning and doffing.
- **Privacy curtains:** In case of COVID infection or any other respiratory illness, privacy curtains must be drawn always if the resident has a roommate.
- **Communal dining:** Caregivers and visitors may accompany a resident for meals to assist them with eating or to join in for the meal. However, IPAC practices such as hand hygiene should continue to be followed in communal dining settings.
- **Group activities:** Visitors and caregivers may join residents for group activities, however IPAC practices must be followed to promote safety and well-being.
- Visitors are required to self-screen at home and avoid visiting when sick.

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- **Positive COVID test:** Visitors should continue to avoid visiting the home for 10 days after symptom onset or positive COVID test result which ever comes first.
- Visitors are encouraged to follow all infection control guidelines instituted by the home.

Promoting awareness of the benefits of vaccination

Vaccination remains the best defense against COVID-19. Vaccination has been shown to be very effective against severe illness and outcomes. Staying up to date with recommended doses restores protection that wanes over time. More specifically, booster doses help increase protection against symptomatic infection and severe outcomes, such as hospitalization and ICU admission.

All individuals entering long-term care homes, including residents, staff, caregivers and visitors, are encouraged to get vaccinated and stay up-to-date with recommended doses as per the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance](#) (PDF). All vaccines provided as part of Ontario's vaccine rollout are safe and effective.

For more information on infection prevention and control, general visitors are encouraged to review the following sources of information:

Hand washing 1:42

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9hjmges72I&t=15s>

Hand rubbing using alcohol-based hand rub 00:51

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDUJ4CAYhpA>

Putting on Full PPE 1:55

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2z1uM1fXN8>


Taking off Full PPE 1:19

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crGIUX3_4DA

Essential Caregivers will be required to review this content using Eastholme's online learning platform at the following frequency: prior to being added to the caregiver list, any time the home identifies a need for education, upon direction from the Ministry of Long-Term Care or Public Health.

Virtual Visits

Virtual visits will be available by appointment, dependent on staff availability to facilitate visits, for friends and family who are unavailable to visit in person.

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1. Virtual visits (Skype, Facetime, patio) may be limited to 30 minutes in length.
2. Visitors are asked to call ahead to book an appointment time if planning a virtual visit.
 - a. South 3 extension 510
 - b. South 2 extension 509
 - c. North 3 extension 507
 - d. North 2 extension 508
 - e. Extension 409 to leave a voicemail.

ESSENTIAL CAREGIVER DESIGNATION AND TRAINING

- Essential caregiver(s) will be designated in writing by the resident or the POA using the Essential Caregiver Designation form (Appendix 1). Blank forms can be obtained at the administration office.
- Completed forms will be forwarded to Eastholme’s Education Co-ordinator.
- The essential caregiver will be contacted by Eastholme’s Education Co-ordinator with login information for Surge Learning (Eastholme’s online learning platform) and direction on how to complete the required online learning modules on Infection Prevention and Control will be provided.
- If the essential caregiver does not have Internet access, an appointment will be booked with the Education Co-ordinator to have training completed at Eastholme.
- After the modules are complete, an appointment will be booked with the Infection Control Practitioner or designate to highlight Eastholme’s expectations and to answer any questions. This appointment can be done in-person or by telephone.
- The resident and/or substitute decision maker may change the designation of a caregiver in response to a change in the resident’s care needs that is reflected in the plan of care, or if the designated caregiver is unavailable temporarily (e.g., illness) or permanently. The change must be made for a duration of at least one week and no more than one change will be permitted in a month.

NON-ADHERENCE BY VISITORS

- In accordance with the Minister’s Directive, Eastholme must ensure that a caregiver, support worker (other than a support worker who requires immediate access in an emergency) or visitor, does not enter the home unless the individual demonstrates compliance with the Minister’s Directive.
- Eastholme recognizes that non-adherence may not be intentional and will provide an opportunity for the visitor to correct their actions.

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- If any staff member of the home observes non-adherence to the visitor policy, the requirements of the policy will be described. The specific breach will be identified, the visitor will be asked to correct the breach and will be reminded that they must comply with the policy.
- The non-adherence will be immediately reported to Registered Nursing staff and will be documented in the resident's progress notes.
- If the visitor continues to disregard the requirements, the Infection Control Practitioner, or supervisor on shift, will ask the visitor to leave Eastholme's property in order to protect the health and safety of the residents, staff and other visitors in the home. The staff member ending the visit will inform the visitor that Eastholme's Administrator will follow up with them.
- If the visitor disregards the request to leave the home, police will be called to assist.
- When a visit has been ended due to non-adherence, it will be documented in the resident's progress notes by Registered nursing staff and communicated to Eastholme's Administrator.
- If staff witness non-adherence, the management team will review on a case-by-case basis, reviewing documentation from previous visits, if any, to determine if the visitor will be prohibited from coming into the home.
- Any decision to temporarily prohibit a visitor will be discussed with the visitor and the details of the decision will be provided in writing.



EASTHOLME

East District of Parry Sound Home for The Aged

Date: _____

Name of Resident: _____

Name of POA/SDM: _____

I attest that I am the Power of Attorney (POA) for Care or Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) for the resident named above and that where possible, the resident has been involved in deciding the names of the Essential Caregivers below.

I have reviewed the information provided regarding Essential Caregivers at Eastholme. Please accept the names listed below as Essential Caregivers for the resident named above.

	Essential Caregiver Name	Essential Caregiver Email	Essential Caregiver phone number
Caregiver #1			
Caregiver #2			
Caregiver #3			
Caregiver #4			

The resident and/or substitute decision maker may change the designation of a caregiver in response to a change in the resident's care needs that is reflected in the plan of care, or if the designated caregiver is unavailable temporarily (e.g., illness) or permanently. This must be requested in writing and will be approved at the discretion of the infection control practitioner or designate. Approval depends on the reason for the change, and Eastholme's ability to arrange for training of the temporary essential caregiver. This will be permitted at a maximum frequency of once per month. The replacement Caregiver will remain in that role for a minimum of one week.

Signature: _____

Office Use Only:

- Copy provided to POA
- Copy of form forwarded to education co-ordinator
- Online education completed
- In person review with Infection Control Practitioner or designate completed
- Added to PCC profile
- Charted in progress notes
- Updated list provided to door screener