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Section: Administration	Policy Name: Nursing Home Visitors
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Effective Date: April 25, 2025	Revised: April 25, 2025

Finlandia Nursing Home is open to residents, their family members, and significant others seven days a week.

We recognize that visitors play a vital role in the health and happiness of residents. Their presence offers far more than companionship — it directly supports emotional and spiritual well-being, cognitive function, and overall quality of life.

Policy

Generally accepted visiting hours are 8 am to 9 pm. For ill or palliative/end of life residents, visiting by caregivers, family members or significant others 24 hours per day will be supported.

To ensure safety, no individual other than a resident, employee, Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) Inspector or designated physician/Nurse Practitioner may enter the home between the hours of 12 midnight and 5:30 a.m. unless prior arrangements have been made with Administrator or designate.

The Administrator or designate reserves the right to alter the visiting practices of the home during an outbreak and at other times under the direction of the local Medical Officer of Health, or Chief Medical Officer of Health appointed under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, in compliance with any applicable laws including any applicable directives, orders, guidance, advice or recommendations.

Guiding Principles

This visiting policy is guided by the following principles:

- 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 current 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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Visitors should consider their personal health and susceptibility to illness in determining whether visiting a long-term care home is appropriate.

Procedure

Upon admission to the home, the resident, family members and significant others will be provided with a copy of the home's visitors policy.

A copy of the home's visitor policy will be provided to both the Resident and Family Councils, posted in a public location within the home for ease of reference and posted on our website.

All visitors must familiarize themselves with education and training on Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) measures including respiratory hygiene, IPAC practices and proper use of Personal Protective Equipment. These resources are provided on admission.

All visitors to the home will be required to sign in and sign out of the visitor log sheet and provide their name, contact information, time and date of the visit, purpose of the visit and the name of the resident or home area visited. Visitor logs will be maintained by the home for a minimum of 30 days.

There are no limits to the number of visitors permitted for indoor or outdoor visits. Capacity is determined by the available space and following applicable guidance and laws.

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

The following apply to specific visitors:

a. Essential Visitors

Essential visitors continue to have access to the home during an outbreak of a communicable disease, an outbreak of public health significance, an epidemic or pandemic or another emergency subject to applicable laws. An emergency is defined as an urgent or pressing situation or condition presenting an imminent threat to the health or well-being of residents and others attending the home that requires immediate action to ensure the safety of persons in the home.

- i. There are no limits to the number of essential visitors allowed to come into a home at any given time.
- ii. Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when there is an outbreak in a home or area of the home.



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b. General Visitors

- i. General visitors are not permitted to visit when a home or area of a home is in outbreak, or when the local public health unit so directs.
- ii. General visitors younger than 14 years of age should be accompanied by adult and must follow all applicable public health measures that are in place at the home

c. Essential Visitor Designation

- i. The decision to designate an individual as an essential visitor is at the discretion and request of the resident and/or substitute decision maker. The home will not partake or interfere in this decision-making process.
- ii. All essential visitors are noted as “Contact # 1” in the Point Click Care database for the resident. Other essential visitors will be noted in this area if there is more than one.
- iii. Essential visitors must be at least 16 years of age. In the case of an individual under 16 years of age, they must have written approval from a parent or legal guardian to be designated as a caregiver. This written approval must be kept in the resident’s chart.

Restriction of Visitors

Staff will respect the resident's right to have privacy during visits.

Staff who have concerns regarding a visitor to the home are to immediately inform their immediate supervisor.

The supervisor is to immediately inform the home's Director of Care or designate of the expressed concern.

Following investigation of a concern should the home determine that there are safety risks associated with a person visiting the home, visitation to the home can be either restricted or terminated. Visiting will only be restricted or terminated where there is risk or safety concerns for residents, other visitors or staff and is a last resort if no other options to safe visiting can be determined or negotiated.

Restrictions that may be imposed include but are not limited to:

- Visitation during the hours that administration is in the home;
- Supervised visitation with another family member being present;
- Set hours for visitation; or
- Other visitation restrictions as decided by the administration of the home.

The Director of Care (DOC) or designate will meet with persons who are having visitation restricted to outline the reason for the restriction and the home's expectation regarding their visitation.

The DOC or designate will inform all pertinent team members of visitors who have visitation restrictions.



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Visitation restrictions will be reassessed on a monthly basis.

In the event a restricted visitor violates the conditions of visitation, the DOC or designate will contact police for assistance.

The home will comply with all current 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* relating to access to the home by visitors at all times.

References

1. Fixing Long-term Care Act, 2021, S.O.2021. O Reg. 246/22 General
2. Resuming Visits in Long-term Care – Ministry of Long-term Care September 2020
3. Visitors Tool: Key Considerations for Long-term Care Homes- AdvantAge Ontario, July 2021