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Subject: Safe Visiting				Area of Focus: Resident Services
Effective: June 18, 2020	Last Revised: July 5, 2022	Supersedes: June 18, 2020	Next Review: July 5, 2023	Approved By: Executive Team

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1.0 POLICY:

To provide clear direction to SJV staff, visitors, contracted services and volunteers in keeping with current Ministry of Long-Term Care legislation, local Public Health, and SJV policies to help ensure safe visiting during the COVID pandemic.

The SJV Safe Visiting policy is governed by the current MLTC COVID-19 Guidance Document for LTC homes in Ontario and City of Hamilton Public Health guidelines. It is also driven by the following principles in order to support the best possible quality of life for residents in addition to positive mental and emotional well-being:

√ Safety: Any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety of residents, staff, and visitors, and ensure risks are mitigated.

√ Emotional Well-being: Welcoming visitors is intended to support the mental and 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 workforce or human resources 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 consider 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.

This policy is subject to change with short notice dependent on MLTC Guidance document changes, recommendations from the St. Joseph’s Villa Incident Management System (IMS) team, Province of Ontario or City of Hamilton Public Health.

2.0 Visitor Logs

In accordance with section 267(2) of O. Reg. 246/22, the Villa must maintain visitor logs of all visits to the home. The visitor log must include, at minimum:

- the name and contact information of the visitor
- time and date of the visit

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- the purpose of the visit (for example, the name of resident visited)

These visitor logs or records are kept for a minimum of 30 days and are readily available to the local public health unit for contact tracing purposes upon request.

The Villa will ensure that all visitors have access to the Villa's Safe Visiting policy.

3.0 Education

The Villa will provide education or training to all visitors about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, IPAC practices, and proper use of PPE. This can be done via posters, communications and through online videos. Visitors are encouraged to watch the recommended Public Health Ontario resources to support IPAC and PPE education and training as available on our website.

- poster - recommended steps: putting on personal protective equipment
- video: putting on full personal protective equipment
- video: taking off full personal protective equipment
- videos: how to hand wash and how to hand rub

4.0 TYPES OF VISITORS & DEFINITIONS:

a) Not Considered Visitors

Villa staff, volunteers and student placements are not considered visitors. Infants under the age of one are not considered visitors and are excluded from testing requirements.

b) Essential Visitors

There are no limits on the total number of essential visitors allowed to come into a home at any given time.

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when there is an outbreak in a home or area of a home or when a resident has failed screening, is symptomatic or in isolation.

Essential caregivers will be provided with photo ID, which MUST be worn at all times when present at the Villa. This will help screeners, staff, residents and other caregivers to identify who essential caregivers are.

As per [O. Reg. 246/22](#) under the [Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021](#), there are four types of essential visitors:

1. A caregiver, as defined under section 4 of [O. Reg. 246/22](#). Must be at least 16 years of age.

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- The designation is to be made in writing via the Essential Caregiver Designation Form (found on SJV website: www.sjv.on.ca) or contact the Villa's Executive Secretary at ldennis@sjv.on.ca for more information. The decision to designate an individual as a caregiver is the decision of the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker. Examples of essential caregivers include family members who provide meaningful connection, a privately hired caregiver, paid companions or translators.
 - In the case where a resident resides in an area of the home in outbreak, is symptomatic or isolating under additional precautions, only one caregiver may visit at a time.
 - A caregiver should not visit any other home for 10 days after visiting:
 - an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - an individual experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
 - Recognizing there are caregivers who want to volunteer to support more than one resident, in the event of an outbreak, caregivers may support up to two residents who are COVID-19 positive, provided the home obtains consent from all involved residents (or their substitute decision makers). Caregivers may also support more than one resident in non-outbreak situations, with the same expectation regarding resident consent.
2. A support worker who visits a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents including but not limited to physicians, nurse practitioners, lab and x-ray technicians and maintenance technicians.
 3. A person visiting a very ill resident for compassionate reasons including, but not limited to, hospice services or end-of-life care
 4. A government inspector with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties

c) General Visitors - 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. If the Villa or home area is in outbreak, general visitors are not allowed to enter.

d) Definition of an Outbreak

i) a **suspect outbreak** in a LTC home is defined as one single lab-confirmed COVID-19 case in a resident.

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ii) a **confirmed outbreak** in a LTC home is defined as two or more lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in residents or staff (or other visitors) in a home with an epidemiological link, within a 14-day period, where at least one case could have been reasonably acquired their infection in the home.

*Only the local public health unit can declare an outbreak and declare when it is over.

e) Fully vaccinated: A person is **fully immunized** against COVID-19 if:

i) They have received the total required number of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine approved by Health Canada (e.g., both doses of a two-dose vaccine series, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series); **and**

ii) They received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior.

5.0 VISITORS SHALL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR:

5.1. Abiding by all guidelines in this policy provided and or posted to support the safety of all Villa residents and staff and for signing off on each visit.

5.2. Exceptions to masking requirements are as follows:

- a) Children who are younger than 2 years of age;
- b) Any individual (staff, visitor, or resident) who is being accommodated in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005; and/or
- c) Any individual (staff, visitor, or resident) who is being reasonably accommodated in accordance with the Human Rights Code.

5.3. Completing the required IPAC and PPE training including their agreement to abide by all practices.

5.4. Essential caregivers must review SJV's safe visitor policy and required education materials prior to commencing their first visit as an ECG, then are encouraged to re-review monthly thereafter.

6.0 EQUIPMENT/TOOLS:

- Screening tools
- Procedure masks/face covering/other PPE as required
- **Essential Caregivers:** Public Health Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Training and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) education materials (LINKS BELOW):
 - 1) Poster on Recommended Steps for putting ON PPE
 - 2) VIDEO entitled "Putting ON Full Personal Protective Equipment"

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- 3) VIDEO entitled “Taking OFF Full Personal Protective Equipment”
- 4) VIDEO entitled “How to Hand-Wash”
- 5) VIDEO entitled “How to Hand-Rub”

7.0 DOCUMENTATION:

- Electronic documentation - Activity Pro, and Point Click Care
- Active Screening Tool & Attestation
- Risk Acknowledgement/Attestation Form
- Essential Caregiver Designation Form
- Tell Us How We Are Doing Form
- Swabbing log

8.0 ACCESS TO SJV:

All general visitors, including children under the age of five, can enter the long-term care home. General visitors, with the exception of the children under the age of five, will need to follow the SJV vaccination policy.

Up to four visitors (including caregivers) per resident may visit at a time for indoor visits.

There are no sector limits on the number of visitors permitted at outdoor visits, and homes can return to their regular practices on use of their available outdoor spaces in accordance with applicable guidance and laws.

Homes should not restrict individuals from outdoor visits based on vaccination status and should ensure physical distancing (a minimum of two metres or six feet) is maintained between groups.

All visitors to the home are required to follow all public health and facility IPAC measures (for example, active screening, surveillance testing, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and wearing PPE as appropriate) for the duration of their visit in the home.

Visitors younger than 14 years must be accompanied by an adult and are required to follow all IPAC measures in place at SJV. Failure to follow directions related to safe visiting could result in the visit being cancelled and requests for visits in future to be denied.

Restrictions during outbreaks or when a resident is isolating

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Essential visitors

Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when a resident is isolating or resides in a home or area of the home in an outbreak. Only one at a time.

General visitors

General visitors are not permitted:

- when a home or area of a home is in outbreak
- to visit an isolating resident
- when the local public health unit so directs

9.0 ACTIVE SCREENING & SURVEILLANCE TESTING:

Per section 8 of the Minister's Directive, licensees are required to ensure that the COVID-19 asymptomatic screen-testing requirements as set out MLTC Guidance Document. The routine testing of asymptomatic staff, students, volunteers, caregivers, support workers and visitors who have not been exposed to COVID-19 is different from COVID19 testing of individuals who are symptomatic, have had high risk exposure or are in an outbreak setting as directed by the local public health unit. Every licensee shall ensure that no staff member, caregiver, student placement, volunteer, support worker or general visitor enters the long-term care home, unless the requirements contained in this section have been met.

Individuals who receive a positive test result for COVID-19 as part of asymptomatic screen testing must follow further testing and isolation requirements as outlined in the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units or as directed by the local public health unit.

Staff, caregivers, student placements, volunteers, general visitors and support workers

entering the home must successfully pass the active screening (COVID-19 Screening Tool for LTC Homes with an exception: first responders who are permitted entry without screening in emergency situations) and be tested for COVID-19 according to one of the following:

- an antigen test at least three times per week, on separate days (if they enter 5 or more days per week)
- an antigen test at least two times per week, on separate days (if they enter 4 days or less per week)

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Where a staff member, student, or volunteer takes an antigen test at the long-term care home, the test must be taken as soon as possible after beginning a shift, and the individual may enter the home with appropriate PPE and following IPAC practices while waiting for the test results. Staff, student placements, and volunteers should not provide direct care to residents until a negative test result is received.

Must demonstrate a minimum of two covid-19 vaccinations to enter.

Where a caregiver, general visitor or support worker takes an antigen test at the long-term care home, the test must be taken with negative results before granting them full entry.

10.0 SUPPORT PERSONS (FOR THOSE WITH A DISABILITY):

Support persons help people with a disability perform daily tasks. Often, people who need the help of a support person are not able to do certain things by themselves. For example, a support person might help with communication, mobility or personal care.

A visitor may require a support person to help them visit SJV. A support person for any visitor should adhere to the Villa's Safe Visiting policy and follow the same screening, surveillance testing and IPAC requirements as visitors to the home. A support person for a designated caregiver does not need to be designated.

Visitors who need a support person are required to inform SJV in advance so that preparations can be made accordingly.

11.0 EXCEPTIONS

Consecutive days - if a staff, caregiver, student placement or volunteer only enters a long-term care home on two consecutive days within a seven-day period and demonstrates a negative test result from an antigen test or from a PCR test taken on the first day, they may enter on the second consecutive day without requiring a negative test.

Occasional entry No individual is required to attend the home for the sole purposes of meeting the testing requirements (for example, if they enter a home fewer than the number of times required to be tested per week).

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Repeat false positives If an individual receives three “false positive” antigen tests (takes an antigen test and the test result is positive for COVID-19 and subsequently receives a negative confirmatory PCR test result), within a 30-day period, starting from the day the first preliminary positive antigen test was taken, the individual does not need to follow the above testing requirements. Instead, the individual must demonstrate proof of a negative PCR that was taken in the last seven days prior to entry.

Previous COVID-19 If an individual has had a prior confirmed COVID-19 infection in the past 90 days, they do not need to be asymptomatic screen tested, but must immediately resume asymptomatic screen testing after the 90th day from the date of their confirmed COVID19 infection.

Palliative and emergency situations Asymptomatic screen testing for support workers, caregivers and general visitors is not required in an emergency situation or in situations where these individuals are visiting or attending to residents receiving end of life care.

Inspectors The testing requirements of this Guidance Document do not apply to inspectors with a statutory right of entry. Rather, inspectors from the Ministry of Long-Term Care and the Page 28 of 35 Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development have separate and specific testing protocols that have been established within their ministries.

Proof of negative test Where an individual is being granted entry based on an antigen test or a PCR test not onsite at the long-term care home, as outlined in the sections above, they must provide proof of the negative test result in order to gain entry to the home or take a new antigen test. The licensee shall ensure that a log is maintained documenting that such proof has been demonstrated

12.0 RESPONDING TO INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL NON-ADHERENCE BY VISITORS:

SJV recognizes the importance of and fully supports optimizing resident quality of life. meeting resident care needs and emotional well-being; however, if a visitor is non-compliant to any of the IPAC measures and guidelines put in place (including putting on and/or removing required PPE properly) and negatively impacts the health and safety of residents, staff and other visitors of the Villa, the visit may be discontinued, suspended for a period of up to 14 days, and future requests for visits being denied.

Before any action takes place, staff will educate/re-educate all necessary parties on the Villa’s “Safe Visiting” policy, IPAC measures and encourage compliance. The individual or resident has the option to initiate an appeal process by submitting a completed “Tell Us How We Are Doing” form. The appropriate manager will then review and strategize how visits can resume in a safe manner for all

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parties.

13.0 REFERENCES & RESOURCES:

- Fixing Long Term Care Act 2021
- MLTC COVID 19 Guidance Document, June 10 2022
- SJV COVID-19 Immunization Policy