

Number: Label **Date Approved:** April 2022 **Date Revised:** August 2024
Last Reviewed: Shannon Whale on May 22, 2026

DEPARTMENT: Community Services
DIVISION: Pioneer Ridge
SECTION: Visitors
Risk Management
SUBJECT: Visitor Policy

STATEMENT:

Pioneer Ridge respects the rights of residents to receive the visitors of their choice while also considering the following guiding principles: safety, emotional well-being, equitable access, flexibility and equality.

The goal of the home is to limit visitor restrictions to reduce the risk of social isolation.

The home may implement visitor restrictions based on identified risks related to the health and safety of a particular resident and/or other residents of the home.

Access to the home may also be limited or restricted during the implementation of emergency measures, including but not limited to outbreaks/pandemics/endemics, fire and evacuation.

Visitors are expected to comply with the facility policies during their time in the home. Issues of non-compliance will be reported to Management.

All visitors are asked to enter and exit the home through the Main Entrance and sign the "Visitor Register Log" on the home area upon arrival.

****All policies are subject to change based on directives, guidance recommendations received from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long Term Care or Public Health authorities****

PROCEDURE:

Guest Hours

Recommended hours for guests to visit are 8:00am to 8:00pm daily. Any changes to these hours will be communicated to residents and families and posted at entrances.

The home is secured by locked entrances after the above hours.

**** Visitors will be permitted access to the home after hours based on individual cases, for compassionate reasons, such as hospice, clergy, end-of-life, critical illness and/or emergency services. In these cases, access will be determined and granted by the RN in charge after hours.**

Types of Visitors

The home defines visitor types in order to provide clarity regarding access to the home if the home were in a declared outbreak of a communicable disease, a pandemic, endemic or other public health emergency, including any other applicable emergency.

When the home is in an outbreak or other emergency situation, restricting access to the home is to protect the well-being of residents, employees and general public. It permits the home to effectively manage and control the urgent event.

There are 2 different types of visitors:

- General visitors
- Essential visitors

General Visitors

A **general visitor** is a person who is visiting the home for non-essential, non-urgent reasons and/or services. This may include, but not limited to, the following:

- Contractors providing non-urgent services such as telephone or cable installation
- Entertainment or others attending the home for recreational purposes
- Individuals coming to tour the home
- Individuals who want to access the business office for non-urgent matters
- Individuals coming for social visits with residents, not to provide them with support or assistance to meet their needs.

General visitors must follow all applicable infection prevention and control (IPAC) precautions that are in place at the home that may include: (Masking, screening, testing, PPE etc.).

General visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

If a resident is self-isolating or symptomatic, or the home is in an outbreak general visitors are NOT permitted.

Essential Visitors

Essential visitors are those who provide essential services and care for residents in the home.

Essential Visitors will be permitted to visit if the home is in an outbreak or the resident is self-isolating or symptomatic.

Essential Visitors may be required to confirm their vaccination status in the event of an outbreak.

Those who cannot demonstrate required vaccine status may have their visits restricted to the resident room only.

There are 4 types of Essential Visitors:

- Caregivers
- Support workers
- Compassionate care providers
- Government inspectors

A **caregiver** is defined as a family member, friend or person of importance to a resident. This individual must meet the following requirements to be designated an 'essential' caregiver:

1. Be designated by the resident or substitute decision-maker. If this person is under the age of 16, they must have approval of a parent or legal guardian to be designated.
2. Provide one or more forms of support or assistance to meet the needs of the resident.
3. Must be able to comply with the home's policies and any directives, orders, guidance, advice, or recommendations issued by public health, emergency and other LTC authorities.
4. Must be able and willing to complete education/training on infection control measures, including the use of personal protective equipment as outlined in IPAC training manual for ECG's (essential care giver)

Support workers are individuals who provide services that support the home's operations and essential services to residents. These may include employees of the home, emergency response personnel, allied health professionals who provide contract services, contractors coming to provide urgent services.

Those who provide **compassionate care** may include individuals visiting very ill residents or those at end of life, providing hospice or clergy services.

Government inspectors are those with a statutory right to enter a long-term care home to carry out their duties. These may include inspectors from the ministry of LTC, ministry of labor or public health inspectors.

Access to the home

All visitors are permitted entry to the home during visiting hours as long as the home is not in outbreak or managing any emergency in which the home is required to impose such restrictions.

Residents in isolation/symptomatic

Residents and their substitute decision-makers will be notified as soon as possible if a resident's condition requires them to self-isolate to their room by home area staff.

In these cases, additional measures may be in place to protect those entering their room. Visitation may be limited to essential visitors who have training in infection prevention and control measures.

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Outbreaks

If a **resident home area** is in outbreak, general visitors will not be permitted entry to that home area. During a localized outbreak, movement of all people in and out of the outbreak area is limited to Care givers, support workers, compassionate care providers and government inspectors. All care givers, in order to visit the effected home area must comply with essential care givers points 1-4 as listed above. During an outbreak (of any kind) essential care givers will be limited to **2** persons per visit to minimize spread of any infectious agents.

In the event of a **facility-wide outbreak**, general visitors will not be permitted entry into the entire home. Only essential visitors such as employees, emergency personnel, support workers, compassionate care providers and government inspectors. who provide essential care and services may enter the home. Outbreak Communication:

Residents and their substitute decision-makers will be notified as soon as possible if an outbreak or other emergency is declared on a resident's home area, by home area staff.

During outbreaks or other emergencies, email communication will be sent to resident's substitute decision-makers and/or caregivers if they joined the home's mailing list. The home encourages those who receive direct notification to inform other family or friends who plan to visit.

Restricted Access

While the home strives to avoid such action, there may be extenuating circumstances when access to the home is limited to employees or emergency personnel.

This type of restriction would be limited to events that pose a considerable risk to the general public, residents and/or employees of the home. This type of restriction would be time-limited with the goal of providing essential visitor access as soon as feasible, to reduce the risk of social isolation for the residents of the home.

These events may include emergencies such as an active fire under direction of the Fire Marshall, response to public health emergencies such as outbreaks, pandemic, endemic, etc. under the direction of the ministry of health and LTC or public health authorities.

Response to Non-compliance

Pioneer Ridge expects all individuals entering the home to be respectful of all residents, the home environment, employees, students and volunteers. All visitors are expected to follow the home's policies, including but not limited to the resident's bill of rights, zero tolerance for violence, infection prevention and control, as well as emergency response measures.

If an employee notices a visitor not following the home policies, they should provide a friendly and respectful reminder to the visitor.

If non-adherence is related to infection prevention and control measures, such as improper use of personal protective equipment, the employee should offer to demonstrate or assist.

If the same individuals continue to ignore the home's policies or direction from staff after multiple attempts to remedy the situation, the employee shall report this finding to a member of the Management team to follow up with the visitor. Consequences of non-compliance may range from mandatory educational sessions up to suspension of visitation.

Recognizing that visits are critical to supporting a resident's care needs and emotional well-being, any decisions to end or suspend visitation will be made after careful consideration of the impact on the resident's well-being and only after exhausting other options.

Resources:

* Ontario COVID-19 Guidance Document for long-term care homes

* FLTCA, 2022.