

Infection Control: Pandemic	Policy Number: IC - 7 - 006
Category: Absences	Implementation Date: September 8, 2020
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ABSENCES – SHORT STAY AND TEMPORARY (LONG-TERM CARE)

Purpose

This policy supports resident absences while adhering to the current directives from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care and Public Health Ontario Guidelines and all other applicable guidelines.

The Elliott Community recognizes that being able to connect with friends and family is essential to resident's emotional health and well-being so our visits are 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 individuals seeking to visit a resident must be given equitable visitation access, consistent with resident preference and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents.

Flexibility: The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the long-term care home, its staffing availability, 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.

As the pandemic situation evolves in Ontario, the direction regarding visits at long-term care homes will be adjusted as necessary, keeping the safety and emotional well-being of residents and staff at the forefront.

Definitions

Short Term Absence: A short term absence from the Home for health related, social or other reasons. A short term absence does not include an overnight stay (with the exception of emergency room visits).

Temporary Absence: An absence from the Home for one or more nights for personal reasons.

Requirements for Short Absence

- Residents may leave the Home for short term absences for health related, social or other reasons.
 - Short term absences do not include overnight stays (with the exception of an emergency room visit, as outlined below).
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- Staff will remind residents of the importance of public health measures including physical distancing.
- Residents must be actively screened by the registered staff when leaving the home and upon their return.
- The Registered staff will provide the resident with a medical mask that is to be worn at all times when outside the home (if tolerated) when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Residents returning from a short absence will not require isolation or testing upon return.
- Emergency room visits that take place over a single night are considered a short term absence and do not require isolation or testing upon return. If the resident is admitted or if the emergency room visit is more than one night, homes should follow the process for readmission as per Directive #3.
- Outpatient medical appointments are considered a short term absence.
- Residents leaving and returning from an appointment will not be screened out and in at reception.

Requirements for Temporary Absence

Residents may leave the property for a temporary absence of one or more days for personal reasons

- Upon return, residents will be required to self-isolate for 14 days
- All requests for a temporary absence will be reviewed and approved by the Infection Control Coordinator (or delegate) on a case by case risk assessment considering the following:
 - The Home's ability to support self-isolation upon return
 - Local disease transmission and activity
 - The risk associated with the planned activities
 - The resident's ability to comply with local and provincial policies and safety protocols
- If the Home denies a request for a temporary absence this will be communicated in writing, including the rationale for the decision.

Guidelines for a Short Stay or Temporary Absence

- The Home must not be in outbreak
 - The resident must not be on self-isolation
 - Visitors must show proof of a COVID-19 negative test result within 2 weeks of the visit.
 - The Home requests at least 48 hours' notice for short term absences and temporary absences; this will allow the staff to prepare for the residents absence.
 - Family / Persons that wish to schedule an outing must call directly to the Charge Nurse / Team Leader responsible for the home area that the resident resides on.
 - Wellington / Fountain 226-203-7137
 - Eramosa 226-203-0482
 - Paisley 226-203-0143
 - Absences that are not pre-booked in advance will not take place although may be considered under extraordinary circumstances (i.e. funeral of a family member).
 - Absences will be accommodated between the hours of 8:30-4:00 Monday to Friday.
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- Registered staff will provide all residents leaving the Home with a medical mask and will review the public health guidelines outlined in the COVID safety information poster.
- Family members must sign the resident out when leaving the Home Area and sign the resident in upon their return
- Residents must be actively screened by registered staff prior to leaving the resident home area and upon returning to their home area.
- Visitors accompanying residents will be screened at the main entrance prior to leaving and upon their return.
- If a Visitor does not pass the screening or does not comply with the homes protocols, the absence will be cancelled.
- Visitors will be provided with a medical mask to be worn at all times when outside the home when physical distancing cannot be maintained. For example, when a resident rides in the car with a visitor, the resident and visitor are to wear the mask until they reach their destination and when physical distancing can be maintained.
- Visitors are required to inform the screener where they are taking the resident. keep a detailed log of places visited and people they were in contact with for the purpose of contact tracing should the resident become ill.
- All goods or items that are purchased or obtained can be directly brought to the resident's room.

Guidelines for Independent Absences

- Resident to inform the registered staff of their wish to leave the premises.
- Registered staff to inquire with the resident:
 - Where they are intending to go
 - If they are going independently or with other people
- Registered staff to inform resident that outings need to be conducted between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm.
- Registered staff to consider safety of resident's plan and ability to go independently off premises. If risks/concerns arise, consult with SDM (as appropriate) or Director of Resident Care (or delegate).
- Registered staff will screen resident out and provide residents leaving the Home with a mask and will review the public health guidelines outlined in the COVID safety information poster.
- Registered staff will document the residents plan for absence and any other relevant details.
- Resident signs out on home area sign in/sign out book
- Upon return, resident is screened in by registered staff.
- All goods or items that are purchased or obtained can be directly brought to the resident's room.

References

COVID – 19 Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007
 Date of Issuance: August 28, 2020
 Center for Disease Control and Prevention – [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)
