



# 19250 Visitor's Policy

Manual: 18000 & 19000 Infection Control	Section
Reviewer: Kevin Mckay	Original Date November 1, 2021
Approver: Terry Collins	Next Review Date November 6, 2026

## 19250 Visitor's Policy

### POLICY STATEMENT

Union Villa Home Society (UHS) is committed to ensuring the health safety and security of its staff, residents, students, volunteers and visitors, while striving to reduce the risk of the spread of potential infectious diseases. This policy aims to provide guidance on visitors' access and the expectations of visitors in accordance with the requirements set out in Fixing Long-Term Care Act 2021 (FLTCA) Directive's as well as Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) and Public Health Units (PHU) recommendations and ensure that UHS practices align with these requirements.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all residents, students, volunteers and visitors here-in referred to as individuals. Although this policy may not directly impact staff, it is necessary for staff to be familiar with this policy in the course of their duties.

### POLICY

As the prevention of infections and the safety of individuals in our facilities is our first priority, this policy sets out expectations and restrictions with regards to visitors' access and the tools and resources provided to ensure that all are informed and prepared to adhere to all expectations and guidelines set out here-in.

Where the organization deems it necessary, and as government and other authoritative bodies direct, UHS may at its own discretion, impose further restrictions on visitation in order to protect residents, staff and visitors i.e. in the event of an outbreak.

Where it is required to restrict visits UHS will communicate its decision to all individuals and provide the reasons for the decision.

UHS visitor policies are to be developed in accordance with the following principles as outlined in Ministers Directive COVID 19 guidance document for LTCH for Ontario and revised as necessary when changes occur.

We Strive to ensure:



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- **Safety** – any approach to visiting must balance the health and safety needs of residents, staff and visitors and ensure risks are mitigated.
- **Mental health & 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 or 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 or their substitute decision-makers have the right to designate caregivers.
- **Autonomy:** Residents have the right to choose their visitors. Residents also have the right to designate their caregivers. If a resident is unable to do so, substitute decision-maker(s) may designate caregivers.
- **Visitor Responsibility:** Visitors have a crucial role to play in reducing risk of infection for the safety of residents and staff by adhering to requirements related to screening, IPAC, PPE, and any precautions described in this policy or the visitor policy of the home.
- **Immunization:** the protective effect that immunizations have had on the number of COVID-19 cases and outbreaks in homes.

## Requirements for Visitors

All visitors must follow all applicable public health measures that are in place at UHS (for example, passive screening, physical distancing is encouraged, hand hygiene and masking) for the duration of their visit. All visitors will be required to follow all posted directions and instructions and must comply with all the requirements set out within this policy.

Aspects of this policy will be posted at strategic locations within the facility and on our website.

When in Outbreak, all visitors regardless of type will receive a new face mask upon entry that must be worn at all times. PPE (gowns, gloves, and eye protection) will be available to essential visitors as required during outbreak/isolation precautions.

Visitors who are feeling unwell are strongly encouraged to stay home and seek testing or medical attention if necessary. Ill visitors may be denied access to the facility.



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Where a visitor is visiting an ill resident, they are to check in at the nursing station before entering the ill resident's room. PPE and instructions for IPAC protocols will be provided.

## **Visitor signing in and signing out**

All visitors will be required to review passive screening prior to entering the facility. Keeping records of those who visit the organization will allow infectious disease surveillance of individuals and the resident population. Surveillance findings as required by law and as an essential component of our Outbreak Management Program, will help detect, prevent, manage and control infectious disease outbreaks.

Individuals who fail passive screening or testing will not be permitted entry into the facility.

Visitors who are visiting palliative residents and fail passive screening, will be permitted entry and must wear a medical (surgical or procedural) mask, maintain physical distance from other residents and staff and remain in the resident's room at all times.

Should the visitor report positive COVID-19 test within 10 days or fail passive screening, they will not be permitted to enter the home, unless resident they are visiting is imminently palliative.

## **Visitor logs**

All Visitors to Union Villa will be required to sign in on arrival, and sign out when leaving. Being aware of who is in the building is pivotal to resident and staff safety. Knowing who is in the building may be required for evacuation purposes during an emergency. For this reason, we are requesting the following information:

- the name and contact information of the visitor
- time and date of the visit
- attestation to not having any respiratory or gastric symptoms

These visitor logs or records will be kept for a period of at least 30 days and be readily available to the local public health unit for contact tracing purposes upon request.

## **Types of Visitors**



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UHS staff, volunteers and student placements are not considered visitors as their access to the home is determined by the UHS

**Essential visitors** - essential visitors are persons visiting a home to meet an essential need-related to the operations of the home or residents that could not be adequately met if the person does not visit the home. Essential visitors are the only type of visitors allowed when there is an outbreak if directed by York Region Public Health.

There are four types of essential visitors:

1. **people visiting very ill or palliative residents** for compassionate reasons, hospice services, end-of-life care, etc.
2. **government inspectors with a statutory right of entry**. Government inspectors who have a statutory right to enter long-term care homes to carry out their duties.
3. **support workers**: support workers are persons who visit a home to provide support to the critical operations of the home or to provide essential services to residents.
4. **caregivers**: A caregiver is a type of essential visitor who is visiting the home to provide direct care to meet the essential needs of a particular resident. Caregivers must be at least 18 years of age and must be designated by the resident or his/her substitute decision-maker. (for example, eating, bathing and dressing) or providing social and emotional support.

Examples of caregivers include:

- o family members who provide meaningful connection
- o a privately hired caregiver
- o paid companions
- o translator

## 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.

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



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## Personal Protective Equipment

All visitors must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by public health, any Ministry Directives or as advised by the home.

## Non-compliance with UHS' visitor policy by visitors

UHS has the discretion to end a visit by any visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the home's visitor policy.

Non-compliance with this policy may result in a discontinuation of visits for the non-compliant visitor. Every effort will be made by UHS and its staff to educate the visitor on the importance of complying with these guidelines prior to discontinuing visits. Additional training for the visitor may be provided as needed.

When a person's ability to visit has been discontinued, UHS will notify the individual of the reason for the discontinuation in writing.

Where a Caregiver has been temporarily prohibited, the resident or their substitute decision-maker may need to designate an alternate individual as a caregiver to help meet the resident's care needs.

Visitors denied access to the facility or who have been provided notification of discontinuation of visits may contact the Administrator to lodge a complaint.

## Restrictions during outbreaks or when resident is isolating

In the event a resident is on ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS (droplet and contact precautions) the home will provide education and personal protective equipment to any visitors who have decided to visit provided York Region Public Health has not directed any visiting restrictions to the resident. During an outbreak, the home will be directed by the local public health unit (YRPH). Currently Union Villa is recommending that a maximum of 1 visitor or as directed by YRPH, at a time are present in the room and may be asked to leave the room for care if required by staff to ensure physical distancing when a resident is on additional precautions. Adhering to masking and PPE usage is mandatory while a resident is on additional precautions.

## Training, Education & Communication



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On admission our social work team will provide education and regarding physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand-hygiene, how to safely provide direct care, infection prevention and control practices and proper use of PPE.

The home strongly recommends reviewing the following education tools;

- a) Putting on PPE guidance document:  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>

The home also strongly recommends watching the following videos:

- a) Putting on full PPE: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-on>  
b) Taking off full PPE: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-fullppe-off>  
c) How to wash hands: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>  
d) How to use alcohol based hand rub (ABHR): <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handrub>

York region also provides education which the home strongly suggests is reviewed to maintain a safe space for your loved ones and the co-residents who live in a common space with them.

The attached link will forward you to the "Training for Essential Caregivers, Visitors and Families At Group Living Homes".

[Training for Essential Caregivers, Visitors and Families at Group Living Homes | York Region](#)

Union Villa will provide education as needed related to any outbreaks via the Administer Update/Bulletin. This goes out the first Thursday of the month and bulletins will be sent out as needed.

**References:** Public Health Ontario; Ministry of Long-Term Care Infection prevention and control (IPAC) program; Ministers Directive COVID 19 response measures for LTC, Regions of York, Peel and Simcoe pandemic plans

<b>Dates Reviewed:</b>	
<b>Revised Dates(s)</b>	November 2021; December 2021; January 2022, July 2022; April 13, 2022



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