

Infection Control: Pandemic	Policy Number:
Category: Absences	Implementation Date: September 21, 2020
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POLICY and PROCEDURES: Resident Absences

1. Policy Statement

The Pines Long-Term Care Home will implement processes to allow for resident absences based on COVID-19 Directive #3 for Long-Term Care Homes under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 (Directive #3), revised June 3, 2021. This policy outlines standards and procedures on how residents may leave the home's property for a short term or temporary absence.

- Short term absences are for health care-related, social, compassionate/palliative, and essential or other reasons and do not include an overnight term, with the exception of single-night emergency room visits.
- Temporary absences are for personal reasons and for one or more overnights.

2. Short-Term Absences

A. Definition

Residents may leave the home's property for a short-term absence for health care related, social, or other reasons. As of July 16, 2021, all residents are able to leave the home for absences listed below. All short term absence does not include an overnight term, with the exception of single-night emergency room visits (see below).

Upon return to the home, residents must be actively screened but are not required to be tested or self-isolate. Residents must be provided with a medical mask to be worn at all times when outside of the home (if tolerated) and reminded about the importance of public health measures including physical distancing.

- **Medical absences:** Absences to seek medical and/or health care. Outpatient medical visits and a single visit (less than or equal to 24 hours in duration) to the Emergency Department do not require testing or self-isolation upon return. All other medical visits (e.g., admission/transfers to other health care facilities, multi-night terms in the Emergency Department) require testing and isolation (if applicable) upon return.
- **Compassionate/Palliative absences:** include, but not limited to, absences for the purpose of visiting a dying loved one.

HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Long-Term Care Services

70 Pine Street, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1N3

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THE PINES

Long-Term Care Home

98 Pine Street, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1N5

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- **Short-term (Day) absences:** absences that are less than or equal to 24 hours in duration. Testing or self-isolation of residents is not required upon return. There are two types of short-term (day) absences: **Essential absences** include absences for reasons of groceries, pharmacies, and outdoor physical activity. **Social absences** include absences for all reasons not listed under medical, compassionate/palliative, and/or essential absences that do not include an overnight stay.

If the resident is admitted to the hospital at any point, or the emergency room visit takes place over two or more nights, this will be considered as a readmission under Directive #3.

B. Standards and Procedures for Short Term Absences

1. As of June 9th, residents do not need to seek approval from the home to go out on a short-term (day) absence as long as they meet the criteria above.
2. Residents will be provided with a medical mask to be worn at all times when outside of the home (if tolerated) and must observe all public health measures including physical distancing during the absence.
3. In the sole discretion of The Pines Long-Term Care Home, the home reserves the right to cancel any future requests for short term absences should it be deemed that the resident or the responsible family member are not following public health standards for COVID-19 and putting the resident at risk for being exposed to COVID-19.
4. Residents returning from a short term absence must be actively screened but are not required to be tested or self-isolate. However other possible public Health regulations and protocols may be implemented, e.g. social distancing in dining room.
5. All short term absences will be cancelled in the event that The Pines Long-Term Care Home has a COVID-19 outbreak.
6. Any resident who is in isolation during the period of the short term absence request will not qualify for this absence.

3. Temporary Absences

A. Definition

All Residents may leave the home's property for a temporary absence that involve two or more days and one or more nights for non-medical reasons. Residents who leave the home for an overnight absence must follow the *Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units* related to testing and isolation requirements.

The resident or POA/SDM must request a temporary absence and The Pines Long-Term Care Home must approve all temporary absences prior to. The home will attempt to accommodate these requests wherever operationally feasible.

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B. Standards and Procedures for Temporary Absences

1. Requests for temporary absences must be made in advance by contacting the **charge nurse at ext. 4825**. No temporary absences will be allowed without going through this process, and other staff members are not authorized to coordinate or implement temporary absences. Family members cannot come to the home to take a resident out on a temporary absence without going through the approval process.
2. All requests for temporary absences will be reviewed by the Charge Nurse and will be considered based on any disease diagnoses, health conditions and their overall wellbeing.
3. Family members and residents (where appropriate) will be informed of a decision in a timely manner and in the case of any requests for temporary absences that are not approved, the family member and resident (where appropriate) will be informed of the rationale for denying the request.
4. For those residents who are able to make their own decisions about taking a temporary absence, they must agree to the temporary absence.
5. For those residents who are not able to make their own decisions about taking a temporary absence, the official SDM or POA for care must approve the temporary absence on behalf of the resident.
6. Family members or residents will be provided with a medical mask to be worn at all times when outside of the home (if tolerated) and must observe all public health measures including physical distancing during the absence, frequent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Family members will be required to provide additional PPE's as required during the temporary absence.
7. In the sole discretion of The Pines Long-Term Care Home the home reserves the right to cancel any future requests for temporary absences should it be deemed that the resident or the responsible family member are not following public health standards for COVID-19 and putting the resident at risk for being exposed to COVID-19.
8. The Pines Long-Term Care Home will work with family members and residents to meet the needs of residents with respect to temporary absences and *attempt to accommodate* any special requests or situations that do not meet all of the standards above where possible and practical.
9. Residents who leave the home for an overnight absence must follow the *Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Long-Term Care Homes and Retirement Homes for Public Health Units* related to testing and isolation requirements.
10. No visits will be allowed during this time for isolated residents, except for essential caregivers and for end-of-life purposes.
11. All temporary absences will be cancelled in the event that The Pines Long-Term Care Home has a COVID-19 outbreak.
12. Residents will be charged their regular accommodation rate during any temporary absence.

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