

## **COVID-19 GENERAL VISITOR POLICY & PROCEDURES**

### **POLICY:**

The Pines LTC Home is committed to the safety and well-being of all residents, staff and visitors. The aim of managing visitors is our way of finding a balance with meeting the needs of our residents, identifying how the pandemic has potentially affected socialization for all and the importance of mitigating risk. We are prepared to follow all provincial guidelines in relation to general visitors at our home so that we can continue to strive to meet the spiritual, mental and physical needs of our residents.

Our general visitor policies will include the following and may be amended from time-to-time:

- The Pines will continue to remain informed of the ongoing COVID-19 situation within our community at large, and be flexible with reassessing visiting at the home as circumstances change;
- Our approach at The Pines is based on principles such as safety, emotional well-being, and flexibility, and addresses concepts such as compassion, equity, non-maleficence, proportionality (i.e. the level of risk), transparency and reciprocity (i.e. providing resources to those who are disadvantaged by the policy);
- The Pines will make available, education about physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, infection prevention and control practices (IPAC) and the proper use of PPE (donning/doffing);
- Our home will communicate allowances and limitations regarding visiting options, and will include criteria for defining the number and types of visitors allowed per resident when the home is not in outbreak. If the home is in outbreak, only essential visitors will be permitted;
- Screening protocols will be outlined and will specifically address the fact that visitors will be screened prior to the beginning of their visit for symptoms and exposures to COVID-19, including temperature checks and not be admitted if they do not pass the screening;
- The Pines will maintain these screening records which identifies whether the visitor is experiencing any of the typical or atypical symptoms;
- The policies and procedures will state that non-compliance with the home's processes could result in a discontinuation of visits for the non-compliant visitor;
- Policies and procedures will include the specific process for the gradual resumption of visitors;
- Communication by the home to all residents, staff and visitors, will be an ongoing priority and will remain transparent, informative and consistent.

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### **HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT Long-Term Care Services**

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### **THE PINES Long-Term Care Home**

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## **PROCEDURES:**

The role that families, visitors, and loved-ones play in providing caregiving and emotional supports is important in the quality of life for long-term care residents. To support long-term care residents, the ministry is proposing a gradual, staged resumption of visits guided by specific principles.

The Pines LTC Home has prepared the following guidelines and expectations in line with the ministry's principles:

**Safety:** Any approach to visiting The Pines must consider balance and meet 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 and their families/friends, through reducing any potential negative impacts related to social isolation.

**Equitable Access:** All individuals seeking to visit a resident will be given equitable visitation access, consistent with resident preference and within reasonable restrictions that safeguard residents. The Pines will provide meaningful and equitable access to visits for all residents.

**Flexibility:** The physical/infrastructure characteristics of the long-term care home, its staffing availability and current status of the home with respect to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) levels for staff and residents.

**\*\*Visitors should consider their own personal health and susceptibility to the virus in determining whether visiting a long-term care home is appropriate. Where it is not possible or advisable for in-person visits, homes should continue to provide virtual visiting options.**

As the pandemic situation evolves in Ontario, the directives regarding visits at long-term care homes will be adjusted as necessary, while we strive to continually keep the safety and emotional well-being of residents and staff at the forefront.

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**General Visitor Outdoor Procedure:**

- Outdoor visits commenced on May 31, 2021;
- The Pines will create dedicated areas outside the building where visitors can meet with their loved ones;
- Children under the age of two years are not required to wear a mask;
- General visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult;
- Staff will support the transfer of residents out of and into the home, if required;
- Visitors may only visit the one resident they intended to visit, and no other residents;
- Visitors are to arrive 10-15 minutes prior to their scheduled time for screening at the front entrance to the home & protocol review;
- Visits will be time-limited, but can be up to 60 minutes each depending on the number of visits being accommodated and monitored;
- Designated visit times (if booking through activity staff) will be 9:00-11:30am & 1:00pm-3:15pm, Monday – Friday, Weekends as posted;
- Visits not coordinated through the essential caregivers will be pre-arranged by the activity team at Ext. 4873 or 4872;
- Physical distance of two metres must be maintained between general visitors and residents;
- Effective June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, brief hugs are permitted between all residents and visitors regardless of immunization status;
- Where both the resident and the visitor are fully immunized, close physical contact, including hand holding is permitted;
- Visitors must show proof of vaccination status when completing the screening process in order to participate in physical contact above;
- Verification must take place daily to ensure the home is not in outbreak;
- Visitors are not permitted to visit residents if the entire home is in outbreak or the resident is symptomatic or self-isolating. If only a portion of the home is in outbreak, residents unaffected by the outbreak may still have outdoor visits. Please contact the home to verify;
- An information package will be made available to all visitors which includes, but is not limited to: infection prevention and control (IPAC), masking, visitor's mandatory compliance with processes, hand hygiene, maintenance of the highest level of IPAC standards prior to, during and after visits;
- The Pines will create and maintain a list of visitors and this list will be made available for relevant/appropriate staff members to access;
- Prior to each visit, all visitors must pass an active screening questionnaire administered by home staff, which includes a temperature check;

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- All visitors must comply with The Pines IPAC protocols, including the proper use of face or surgical/procedural masks;
- The Pines has identified outdoor visit space(s) with seating;
- Visitors are asked to come prepared for the weather – sun hat, sun screen, sweater/jacket, etc. and to ensure that food and fluid is consumed prior to/following your visit;
- If the weather is inclement (rain, thunder storm, heat alert, etc.) please reschedule your visit;
- Please ensure that off-site washroom facilities are utilized prior to/following your outdoor visit;
- All visitors are to use a face covering if the visit is outdoors;
- Visitors are responsible for bringing their own face covering for the outdoor visits (home will supply one (1) if the visitor does not have one);
- Any non-adherence to these rules will be the basis for discontinuation of visits

**General Visitor Indoor Procedure:**

- Effective July 7, 2021, Indoor visits are allowed for all residents;
- Maximum of two general visitor and two essential caregivers indoors at a time;
- An information package will be made available to all visitors which includes, but is not limited to: infection prevention and control (IPAC), masking, visitor's mandatory compliance with processes, hand hygiene, maintenance of the highest level of IPAC standards prior to, during and after visits;
- The Pines will create and maintain a list of visitors and this list will be made available for relevant/appropriate staff members to access;
- Prior to each visit, all visitors must pass an active screening questionnaire administered by home staff, which includes a temperature check;
- Visitors must show proof of vaccination status when completing the screening process in order to meet the requirements below;
- A badge will be provided to identify who has been fully vaccinated. This badge must be worn and visible at all times while in the home;
- Visitors are subject to antigen testing based on their vaccination status in accordance with the Minister's Directive: *COVID-19 Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes*;
  - Fully immunized visitors will not be required to complete rapid antigen testing upon entry to the home, but must show proof that they are fully vaccinated.
  - Partial immunized or unimmunized visitors will be required to participate in rapid antigen testing. General visitors must demonstrate that they have received a negative Antigen Test on the day of the visit or demonstrate proof

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that they received a negative Antigen Test taken on the previous day before granting full entry into the home;

- Physical distance of two metres must be maintained between general visitors and residents;
- Effective June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, brief hugs are permitted between all residents and visitors regardless of immunization status;
- Where both the resident and the visitor are fully immunized, close physical contact, including hand holding is permitted;
- Where both the resident and the visitor are fully immunized, visitors may accompany a resident for meals including for the purposes of either having a meal themselves or to assist a resident with feeding;
- Verification must take place daily to ensure the home is not in outbreak;
- Visitors are not permitted to visit residents indoors if the entire home is in outbreak or the resident is symptomatic or isolating. If only a portion of the home is in outbreak, residents who are unable to participate in an outdoor visit and who are unaffected by the outbreak may receive a maximum of one visitor, in addition to one essential caregiver. Please contact the home to verify;
- General visits that are scheduled outdoors, will not be held indoors due to inclement weather;
- Children under the age of two years do not count toward the general visitor, do not require rapid antigen testing and are not required to wear a mask;
- General visitors younger than 14 years of age must be accompanied by an adult;
- All visitors must comply with The Pines IPAC protocols, including the proper use of face or surgical/procedural masks;
- Visitors may only visit the one resident they intended to visit, and no other residents;
- Any non-adherence to these rules will be the basis for discontinuation of visits

**Essential Caregivers Procedure to Arrange for Outdoor General Visitors:**

- Essential caregivers are able to arrange for general visitors on their own;
- Essential caregivers must follow the policy and procedure above;
- Essential caregivers must ensure that they report any general visitors to the screener upon entry to the home so that the general visitors can be screened upon arrival to the front entrance;
- Please ensure that the resident is signed out on the resident home area prior to taking the resident for the outdoor visit;
- Residents are encouraged to wear masks if able and the screener can assist with supplying a mask if required.

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**Essential Caregivers Procedure to Arrange for Indoor General Visitors:**

- Essential caregivers are able to arrange for general visitors on their own;
- Essential caregivers must follow the policy and procedure above;
- Essential caregivers must ensure that they report any general visitors to the screener upon entry to the home so that the general visitors can be screened upon arrival to the front entrance;
- Residents are encouraged to wear masks if able and the screener can assist with supplying a mask if required.

**Ending a Visit:**

- The Pines has the discretion to end a visit by any essential caregiver/visitor who repeatedly fails to adhere to the rules, policies, and procedures, provided:
- The Pines has explained the applicable requirements to the essential caregiver/visitor;
- The visitor has the resources to adhere to the requirements; and,
- The essential caregiver/visitor has been given sufficient time to adhere to the requirements;
- The home will document all non-compliance, as well as any/all follow-up actions associated with the non-compliance and re-entry.

**Responding to Non-Adherence by Visitors:**

- Failure to follow this policy, the home will provide additional clarity to support essential caregivers and rationale for adhering to all rules, policies, and procedures.
- Any non-compliance with rules, policies, and procedures will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and may require that individuals complete additional Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) education before being allowed re-entry into the home.

**TEMPORARILY PROHIBITING A VISITOR**

- The Pines has the discretion to temporarily prohibit an essential caregiver/visitor in response to repeated non-adherence with the home's rules, policies, and procedures.
- The Pines will reinstate the visits:

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- If the essential caregiver/visitor can demonstrate how they plan to adhere to the requirements;
- And in consideration any negative impact on staff and resident's health and safety when prohibiting a visit has been alleviated;
- And consideration on the previous non-compliance of the individual(s) when prohibiting a visit is not expected to recur;
- Decisions to prohibit an essential caregiver will:
  - Be made only after all other reasonable efforts to maintain safety during visits have been exhausted;
  - Stipulate a reasonable length of the prohibition;
  - Identify what requirements the visitor should meet before visits may be resumed; and,
  - Be documented by the Home.

Where the home has temporarily prohibited an essential caregiver/visitor, the resident and/or their substitute decision-maker may need to designate an alternate individual as a caregiver to help meet the care needs of the resident(s).

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