Visitation Policy for Children’s Service Programs

Revised August 31, 2020

The purpose of this document is to provide family visitation guidance consistent with state guidance to facilitate safe and successful visits at program locations.

Our goal for family visitation is to ensure that we can continue to facilitate reunification with family members that align with recommendations from public health agencies.

**Designated Outdoor Area**

- All visits must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance.
- Visitors will be permitted in the outdoor area at the house (i.e.: yard, front porch, patio). A covered area will be made available; however, families and loved ones may walk around the area or use the existing play structures/activities during the visit.
- Visitors will not be allowed entry into the home or facility for any reason.
- No other staff or residents can be outside in the visitation area during scheduled visits.
- If inclement weather is forecasted or in progress, the visit will need to be terminated/ re-scheduled.

**Guidance on Visitors and Consumption of Food or Drink**

- Visitors will be limited to a maximum of 4 family members at a time.
- Only one visit can occur at a group home at one time.
- Visits will last in duration for one hour maximum. Program staff reserve the right to terminate the visit prior to the one hour duration in the event of a health or safety concern.
- Visitations will not be permitted with anyone who is currently under isolation because they are presumed or confirmed COVID-19 positive or quarantined because of close or household contact or due to travel quarantine restrictions in effect by MA.
- Homemade or store bought items can be brought for consumption by the resident only during the visit. In the event items are opened and consumed during the visit, any leftovers must be disposed of or taken by the visitors.
- Any unopened food or snacks bought for the individual can be given to staff who will disinfect the exterior packaging prior to bringing the item(s) into the residence.
- Food, drink, plates or utensils cannot be shared between family members during the visit.
Visitation Times

- Visits can be scheduled: Monday through Friday between 3 pm and 8 pm; Saturday and Sunday between 10 am and 12 pm, and between 3 pm and 8 pm.
- These times were identified to be respectful of other residents of the home and their ability to access the outside location for their own recreation and enjoyment as well as for other programmatic needs.

Scheduling Visits in Advance

- Program visits will be coordinated in advance with Kimberly Duhanyan, Senior Director of Residential Services.
- Only one individual per residence can have a visit at a time.
- A minimum of 24 hours’ notice is required for all visits; 72 hours is desired.
- While our outdoor space is limited, visit requests will be accommodated as much as feasible.

Visitor Screening

- All visitors must be screened prior to visiting with their loved one.
- The screening tool must be completed with staff, one per visitor, as well as their temperature taken and recorded.
  - Visitors are not permitted to visit if they have symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, or new loss of taste or smell.
  - Anyone with a fever (100.0 F or higher) will not be permitted to visit the home.
    - Thermometers must be disinfected after each use, per the manufacturer instructions.
  - Visitors are not permitted to visit if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days or if they have been ordered by a health care professional or public health official to quarantine due to exposure or traveled as indicated by MA ordinance.
- This screening tool must be kept in the visitor log.

Face Masks

- All visitors are required to wear a face covering or mask during the visit.
  - Visitors are instructed to bring their own face covering or mask. If they arrive without one, a surgical mask will be provided.
- Students will also be encouraged to wear face coverings if they can tolerate it and do so safely.
Social Distancing and Supervision

- Limited physical contact will be allowed, avoiding all face to face contact and kissing. Hugs will be allowed with faces in opposite directions, hand holding with hand sanitization following the contact.
- Close physical contact will be less than 15 minutes.
- Adults are required to maintain social distancing with staff to the maximum extent possible during the visit.
- A program staff member trained in resident safety and infection control measures must remain with the resident at all times during the visit.
- The resident will immediately wash their hands and change their clothes following the visit.

Visitation Log

- The visitation log will be completed prior to and at the conclusion of each visit documenting:
  - Visitors names
  - Date and time of visit
  - Staff assigned to visit
  - Visit duration (not to exceed 60 minutes)
  - Staff initials confirming visitors completed screening tool, temperature and met the criteria to visit
  - Staff initials indicating the visitation area was cleaned both before and after the visit
- Programs will continue to support alternative electronic methods for communication between students and their families, such as Skype, FaceTime, WhatsApp or Google Duo.

Disinfecting the Visitation Area

- The designated outdoor area must be disinfected using an EPA-approved disinfectant for use against SARS-CoV-2 after each visit.

Cancelling/Terminating a Visit

- Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in the termination of the visit.
- If there is inclement weather expected (heavy rain, thunderstorms), the visit will be cancelled. Any cancelled visits will be rescheduled for the next available time that works for the program and family.
Visits will not be permitted with anyone who is currently under isolation because they are presumed or confirmed COVID-19 positive or quarantined because of close or household contact or travel guidance.

**Visitation Bins**
- Visitation bins will be present at each residence that include:
  - Visitation log
  - Gloves
  - Hand sanitizer
  - Surface disinfectant (bleach solution)
  - Tissues
  - 2 surgical masks in case needed by visitors
- Any individual who participates in a visit with a resident and develops signs and symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, or new onset loss of smell or taste within 2 days after the visit must immediately notify the program of the date of the visit, the individuals they were in contact with, and the locations where the visit occurred.

All staff members will be trained in the above procedures prior to participating in any family visitation.

*Melmark reserves the right at any time to change policies surrounding visitation to maintain the health and safety of our residents and staff.*

**OFF-SITE VISITATION**
Individuals may go with family for an off-site visit for the day, between the hours of 11 am and 7 pm with visits ranging between 4 and 6 hours. At this time, there will be no overnight visits allowed.

- Program must be notified of the intention for offsite visit at least 72 hours in advance to ensure proper communications and screening process is employed.
- The student is not currently under isolation because they are presumed or confirmed COVID-19 positive or quarantined because of close or household contact.
- The student and visitor(s) must not have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and must not have a temperature of >100.0 degrees.
- The family member or loved one must sign an attestation form, attesting that:
All individuals who the resident plans on visiting are free from any symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, or new loss of taste or smell, and have not been in close contact with anyone with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Students will not travel during off site visits to states subject to a mandatory quarantine. All individuals who the student plans on visiting have not traveled to any states other than the states not subject to a mandatory quarantine (exceptions: CT, VT, NH, ME, NY, NJ, HI) in the last 14 days.

Close contact will be prevented with anyone who has not been screened for symptoms of COVID-19.

A face mask or covering will be worn by all visitors, and by the student if they can do so safely, while unable to socially distance, indoors including in the family home, and in other enclosed areas such as a car.

Medical attention will be sought by family and the residential program will be notified if the student starts displaying symptoms of illness or comes into contact with a COVID-19 positive person while away on visit.

Infection control protocols will be followed during the entirety of the visit.

- For home visits, family or loved ones will be asked to provide the names and contact information for any person the student is anticipated to come into contact with on the visit in case contact tracing becomes necessary. Family or loved ones should communicate modifications to this section of the form upon return.
- Additionally, family or loved ones should inform Program staff if the student traveled out of state during the visit.
- Families or loved ones must monitor themselves and the student for COVID-19 symptoms during the visit. Program staff will screen the student for COVID-19 symptoms and fever before they return to the residential program.
- To the extent possible, off-site visits and activities should occur outdoors where student and visitors are able to maintain social distancing. Time spent in highly populated, public areas or other areas where the ability to social distance may be limited should be minimized and the resident is required to wear a mask, if tolerated.
- If the student shows symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell, the family must seek medical attention and contact the residential program to discuss where the student may be safely isolated. The student may not be able to return to the residence until they are free of symptoms.
• Off-site visits will not be permitted for any student who is currently under isolation because they are presumed or confirmed COVID-19 positive or quarantined because of close or household contact.

• Any individual who participates in a visit with a student and develops signs and symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle pain, chills, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, or new onset loss of smell or taste within 2 days after the visit must immediately notify the program of the date of the visit, the individuals they were in contact with, and the locations where the visit occurred.
  o Programs should immediately screen any student and staff who had contact with the visitor for the level of exposure and follow up with the program’s medical staff or the resident’s care provider.

• Once the student returns to the home, he or she will immediately shower and change their clothes, and the clothes they returned in will be laundered.

• Once the student returns to the home, he or she should be proactively monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19 each day for fourteen days.

Future off-site visitation may be terminated by the program if health and safety concerns are present for the student or staff members.

For any questions or to review the revised visitation protocols, please contact Kim Duhanyan at KDuhanyan@melmarkne.org