

Document name
Visitors policy – residential care homes

This document is relevant to:	
Central support services	
Education	
Therapy and wellbeing	
Residential	✓

Senior manager responsible	Louise Harman
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Associated documents	Visitors policy – school & college Safeguarding policy Health & safety policy Fire safety policy Trespassers policy Mental capacity policy

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## **1. Introduction**

St. John's acknowledges that maintaining contact with friends and relatives is an important element in developing and sustaining a positive quality of life. All Children, Young People and Adults (CYP/A) have the right to maintain relationships and be visited by anyone they wish to see, subject to carefully limited exceptions.

Visits should be encouraged as one way to maintain and to strengthen the CYP/A's network of relationships and community connections.

The residential provisions are not fully DDA compliant, and all efforts will be made to facilitate visits. However, should the building not be accessible to visitors, arrangements will be made, where possible and appropriate, to arrange a visit at alternative venue.

Residential staff should read this policy in conjunction with the Visitors Policy for the School & College.

## **2. Facilitating visiting**

Generally, visiting times are by arrangement. CYP/A participate in a wide range of external activities. There are also times when CYP/A require personal space and privacy such as mealtimes or when receiving personal care and visitors should therefore be asked to contact the Manager, Team Leader, Lead Residential Support Worker or nominated shift leader in the relevant house, prior to any visit to check if the resident will be available. This will avoid disappointment to all concerned should the resident be otherwise engaged. Subject to the above, all St. John's facilities will offer flexible visiting times and comfortable surroundings.

Visiting times will conclude at 20:30pm Monday through to Sunday. This includes when CYP/A are returning to the house from their family home. Additional changes to the return time may be made in exceptional circumstances but will require 24 hours' notice so that the impact on other residents within the house can be kept to a minimum. These changes are at the discretion of the Manager/On-call Manager and Head of Learner Services.

At no time will visitors be permitted to stay overnight in any of the residential houses.

Many of our residents have a diagnosis which means that they communicate through behaviours which may challenge. In these circumstances a CYP/A may cause injury to themselves, others and damage to property. Visitors are advised that they only enter the premises if safe to do so by the nominated shift leader. Once in the premises, visitors maintain their presence at their own risk and St. John's does not accept any liability for injury sustained to individuals who do not reside within the accommodation.

Residential staff have a responsibility to ensure that any visitors to the residential houses do not have unsupervised access to any other CYP/A than the person that they are visiting, unless they have the legal right to do so e.g. inspectors, doctors etc.

**All visitors are requested to adhere to the following:**

- To ring the doorbell on the front door of the building and not to use another other means to enter the premises.
- To not enter the house unless it has been deemed safe by the nominated leader on shift.
- To respect the privacy and dignity of all residents at all times.
- To respect that fact that they are visitors in another person's home.
- To display an acceptable level of behaviour towards both residents and staff at all times.
- To adhere to the visiting times outlined above.
- To advise staff on their arrival and departure from the house. This is important for fire, health and safety reasons.
- To enter their name, time of arrival and time of departure into the visitors' book provided.
- To take responsibility for their own personal possessions.
- To abide by smoking policy (No smoking on site for all adult houses & only smoke in the designated smoking area on the school site)
- To notify staff of any cash or valuable property, which they wish to give to the resident.
- Not to bring to or be under the influence of any illicit drugs or alcohol when entering a St. John's premise.
- To park in designated areas only – this may be on road parking which may require the purchasing of a parking ticket.

**3. Grounds for excluding/restricting or removing a visitor**

Any decision to prohibit or terminate a visit by a person whom the CYP/A has requested to visit or agreed to see, should be regarded as a serious interference with the rights of the individual and will be taken only in exceptional circumstances. This should only occur after all other means to deal with the problem have been exhausted.

Any decision to restrict visiting should be reviewed regularly and at least weekly.

There are four principal situations that may justify the exclusion/restriction or removal of a visitor:

- Clinical grounds/resident's well-being/impact on other residents.
- On the grounds of security.
- Bullying and harassment of staff or residents.
- Restriction due to court of protection or court order.

**3.1 Exclusion, restriction, or removal of visitors on clinical grounds/resident's wellbeing.**

On rare occasions it may be the case that a visit or the behaviour displayed by a resident's relative, or friend is judged by staff as potentially detrimental to the

psychological and emotional wellbeing of the learner they are visiting or other CYP/A within the home.

St. John's is committed to ensuring that all CYP&A needs are met including:

- The need for physical and emotional security (a stable home life and safe environment to live in).
- The need for privacy.
- The need for a sense of autonomy and control.
- The need for unconditional positive regard.

There may also be occasions where there is concern for the potential safety of a visitor into an area where CYP/A are experiencing or displaying behaviour that may challenge. In this case, every effort must be made to provide an alternative environment for the visit. It is only where this is not possible that the planned visit will be postponed.

The responsibility for any decision to exclude/ restrict visiting to a St. John's Care Home rests with the Manager or Manager on-call after consultation with the Head of Learner Services and Chief Executive, this should be clearly documented in the learner's daily log (further details of any restrictions for visits would be found in the individual learner support plan). The Manager will provide an explanation to the resident and the person concerned, both verbally and in writing.

### **3.2 Exclusion, restriction or removal of visitors on security grounds**

The behaviour of a particular visitor may be or have been in the past, disruptive to a degree that exclusion from St. John's premises is necessary as a last resort. St. John's will not tolerate any form of violence/aggression including verbal aggression, or any other behaviour that may place CYP/A or staff at risk.

Examples of such behaviour include:

- Smuggling of illicit drugs or alcohol onto St. John's Premises.
- Unacceptable aggression or violence towards staff or residents, including verbal aggression and threats.
- Behaviour which impacts on the physical or emotional security of residents and infringes upon their Human Rights.
- Incitement of a negative behaviours from resident or members of staff.

St. John's will strive to maintain the premises free from illicit drugs. All incidents regarding the presence of illicit drugs will be reported to the police. Visitors found to be bringing illicit drugs onto St. John's premises are liable to be reported to the police with the intent being to seek prosecution.

### **3.3 Exclusion, restriction or removal of visitors for bullying and harassment of staff and residents**

St. John's will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment by visitors towards staff or residents. St. John's recognises that our staff need a working environment that is free from harassment and bullying in all forms.

St. John's also recognises that it has a legal responsibility to protect its staff and residents from all forms of discrimination, intimidation and abuse.

People who work in a hostile environment or who are fearful or resentful do not work effectively. Teamwork will suffer and this will affect the quality of care given to residents.

If the conduct of a visitor is not reasonable, the person in charge of the shift will, in the first instance, advise the visitor of the required code of conduct.

If the visitor's behaviour doesn't improve, the person in charge of the shift should ask the visitor politely but firmly to leave the premises (see Appendix 1.). If the visitor then refuses to leave, the Manager/Manager on-call or the Head of Learner Services should be notified and if it is considered necessary, the police called to provide assistance.

## **4. Decision to exclude/restrict or remove a visitor**

A decision to exclude/remove a visitor on the grounds of his or her behaviour should be fully documented and explained, using his or her preferred method of communication. Whenever possible the reason for the decision should also be communicated directly to the person concerned in writing.

Nominated shift leaders may intervene or terminate any visit if they have good reason to believe that this is harmful to the resident or meets the reasons described above.

Any decision to exclude/restrict or remove a visitor on the grounds of his or her behaviour should be reported via the Manager/On-call Manager who will in turn log the incident.

The procedure to be adopted to temporarily exclude disruptive visitors is outlined in **Appendix 1.**

### **4.1 People with a right to visit**

People who have a legal right and responsibility to see learners in the residential provision unannounced:

- Social Workers who have a direct responsibility for a resident CYP/A in the house accommodation.
- People visiting on behalf of the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted.
- Independent advocates linked to learners in the house.
- Police or other emergency services.
- Legal representatives.
- Other multi-disciplinary professionals and regulatory bodies.

- Independent doctors or nurses treating a resident.

## **5. Children visiting their siblings at the residential accommodation**

**See Appendix 2 for Guidance and procedure.**

## **6. Monitoring**

Any decision to exclude a visitor should be fully documented and available for independent scrutiny by the Care Quality Commission or funder as required.

### **References:**

Mental Health Act 1983  
Mental Health Act 1983 Code of Practice (2008)  
Mental Capacity Act 2005

## **Appendix 1.**

### **Procedure to be adopted to temporarily exclude disruptive visitors**

#### **Aim**

To maintain a safe and therapeutic environment for residents, staff and visitors.

#### **Procedure**

1. Staff should immediately inform the person in charge if they become aware that a visitor is displaying inappropriate behaviour or not adhering to the appropriate visiting times.
2. The person in charge will speak with the visitor concerned, away from the resident(s) and identify behaviour that has been highlighted as being unacceptable. The person in charge will attempt to defuse the situation while reminding the visitor that the visit will be terminated if the behaviour persists.
3. If at all possible, the manager/head of learner services and chief executive will immediately be advised of the situation by the shift leader and advice sought.
4. If the situation continues and the person in charge is unable to calm the situation, the visitor should be politely and firmly be asked to leave the premises.
5. If the visitor refuses to leave, they should be informed that the police will be contacted if they do not comply.
6. If the visitor does not comply, then the person in charge should advise the Manager/On-call Manager and contact the police.
7. It may be necessary for the staff to arrange for residents to be removed from the vicinity of the visitor while waiting for the visitor to leave.
8. The visitor must not be allowed to visit again until a full case review.
9. Any decision to exclude/restrict or remove a visitor on the grounds of his or her behaviour should be reported via the Manager/On-call Manager who will in turn log the incident.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Procedure to be adopted when children visit the residential accommodation**

#### **Aim**

To maintain a safe and therapeutic environment for residents and staff.

#### **Procedure**

##### **5. Child visiting**

###### **5.1 Principles of good practice.**

St. John's is committed to facilitating visits by children to our facilities. However, the welfare of the child will be paramount, and the visit should only take place if no risk is posed to the visiting child and residents. Principles of good practice relating to child visiting include:

- Arrangements for visits from the children or child relatives of learners should be included in the service user's support plan
- All visits should be prearranged, and risk assessed
- Assessments should consider the desirability/benefits of contact between children and residents, to identify concerns and assess any risks of harm to the visiting child or resident
- All decisions regarding child visiting should be documented
- No child under the age of 16 should visit unaccompanied

###### **5.2 Factors to be considered in assessing the appropriateness of children visiting residents**

Concerns about the desirability of children visiting may arise in a number of areas. These could include:

- Consideration of the visiting child's best interests.
- The resident's history and family situation.
- The resident's current mental state.
- The response by the visiting child to the resident or their learning disability.
- The wishes and feelings of the visiting child if they are of sufficient age and understanding to make their own decisions.
- The age and overall emotional needs of the visiting child.
- The views of those with parental responsibility.
- The nature of the facility and the resident population.



- Any other relevant consideration.

A range of options may present themselves when concerns are identified in any of these areas. This need not automatically result in the refusal to allow the visit or other forms of contact. If the concerns relate to the environment of the facility or nature of the resident population at the time the visit is proposed, arrangements might be made for visits to take place elsewhere, which could involve not being in the house.

The Manager must aim to obtain a balance between the management of risk and the best interests of the individual resident and visiting children. In some situations, it may be appropriate for visiting to take place with the support and supervision of staff or indeed, other agencies. In other situations, alternative forms of contact such as by letter, SKYPE or telephone may be more appropriate.

### **5.3 Procedures**

- a) The Manager should be given all relevant information before taking a decision on whether a visit by a child is appropriate.
- b) When a visit by a child is anticipated, the Manager should speedily identify any risk to the child visiting a resident.
- c) In the vast majority of cases where no concerns are identified, arrangements should be made to support the resident and visiting child and to facilitate contact.
- d) Staff should think creatively about how to make the visit a positive experience. They should also be sensitive to the need for privacy.
- e) Should a child become upset or upset a resident during any visit, the person responsible for the child will be offered a space away from the learners for safety reasons until the situation calmed. It may even be suggested that the visit is ended. For the majority of visits, this would not be an issue and those responsible for the child would be aware of the risks and such actions would be agreed as part of the planning process.

### **5.4 Decisions to refuse child visiting**

Decisions to refuse visits, will only be taken exceptionally, following consultation with the head of learner services and chief executive. The reasons will be given in writing and verbally, supported by clear evidence of concerns.

## **8. Covid 19 Addendum**

During the Covid 19 pandemic, arrangements for visits and contact have had to be reviewed in order to maintain safety of CYPA, staff and all visitors.

Unless there is an incidence of covid within a particular house, visiting arrangements should not be affected. However this will be guided by national and local legislation for residential homes.

If a resident within a home tests positive for covid, it is likely that we will seek to make alternative arrangements for visitors of other residents in order to protect and safeguard visitors from contracting covid, this could include, meeting offsite or outside of the house in the garden etc. If meeting offsite/outside is not a viable option we will seek to enable visits in a designated space within the house and is likely to be limited to one visitor at a time.

### **8.1 Preparation for visits**

- Visitors will be asked to complete a questionnaire declaring that they are free from symptoms and have not travelled abroad to any high risk areas within the last 2 weeks. If visitors are unsure if they symptomatic or if they have been in contact with another person who is symptomatic/tested positive we ask that they defer the visit for 2 weeks.

### **8.2 During Visits**

- We ask that where possible that social distancing is maintained, although we do appreciate and understand that this may be very difficult for some CYPA.
- Contact should be brief and close contact should not be for extended periods of time.
- Sanitise/wash hands immediately before, during and after any visit or contact
- We advise that face coverings are worn if able to do so

### **8.3 Supporting contact**

- If a visit is not a viable option, the care teams will work with families to seek alternatives ways of maintaining contact, such as Zoom, Facetime, Skype or telephone calls.

## 8.4 Dynamic Risk Assessment

We will continue to assess the risk and work in line with government guidance and that of the local Health Protection Team and as such if there is a declared outbreak in a care home then the visiting guidance will need to be restricted for a period of time until the care home has been assessed to be in recovery

### Visitor Screening Questionnaire

**If possible, please complete and return to the care manager/senior team prior to your visit**

<b>Visitor Name</b>	<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Name of Resident</b>		
<b>Contact Number:</b>	<b>Email:</b>	
<b>1. Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
• A temperature of 38 c or higher		
• A new, continuous cough		
• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breadth		
• A loss or change to your sense of smell and/or taste		
• Fatigue or feeling of being generally unwell		
<b>2. In the last 14 days have you:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
a. Travelled abroad and if yes to which country:		
b. Been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>3. Have you or anyone in your household shown any signs of COVID-19 in the past 7 days</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Name (please print):</b>	

**If you have answered Yes to any of the above questions, please delay your attendance**