

In response to the Premier's announcement on Monday 11 May, 2020, it is recommended that residential service facilities reintroduce visiting in a phased approach.

As Victoria remains in a State of Emergency, some restrictions to visiting will remain, in order to protect the health and wellbeing of residents, families and staff.

The visitation guidelines aim to ensure consumers health and wellbeing are being met whilst minimizing any risk of COVID-19.

From Monday 18th May, 2020 the Loddon Mallee Health Network and Boort District Health recommends the following guidelines for our aged care facility Loddon Place as we reintroduce visiting for residents:

- For the purpose of these guidelines a visitor includes any person a **resident** chooses to see including their family, family of choice, friends, religious or spiritual advisors. It is not up to the aged care home or its staff to determine who is or is not eligible to be a *visitor*. The presence of a Guardianship order, Power of Attorney or involvement of the Next of Kin does not automatically preclude other people from visiting, though may be informative when prioritising who to let visit when multiple people are requesting visits for the same *resident*. However, medical and allied health staff, Community Visitors Scheme volunteers, aged care advocates, legal representatives, or carers privately contracted by the *resident* or their family carers are not *visitors* for the purpose of these guidelines. They are considered workers (including volunteers) under the various State Emergency and Health Directives. Such workers will be required to comply with Boort District Health practices including the BDH infection prevention and control measures¹.
- All visits should be pre-booked with the either Mubarak the Nurse Unit Manager, Donna the Director of Clinical Services or the Nurse In Charge out of hours – this allows for pre-screening of potential visitors and to check that the resident consents to the visitor.
- All visitors will be screened prior to entering BDH as has been the practice so far to date (and when booking the visit). Questions BDH will ask include:
 - Have you travelled overseas in the last 14 days
 - Have you had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case in the last 14 days
 - Do you have any symptoms of an acute respiratory infection such as shortness of breath, cough, or sore throat
 - Do you have a fever (without immediate apparent cause)
 - Are you self-isolating for any other reason
 - Where have you come from (this is important to screen visitors who may be coming from an area with a confirmed cluster).

Unfortunately, if any of the screening criteria is not met, entry will be denied and alternative communication will be supported, such as phone calls, zoom, email and window visits.

- On entry to the facility visitors should be asked to:
 - Attend hand hygiene and provided with hand hygiene information.
 - If they bring a gift or non-perishable food into the facility, it must be in a container that can be wiped clean and meet the service policies re food from outside facilities. All gifts or food must be wiped prior to being given to the resident.
 - Maintain a 1.5m social distancing throughout the visit and not have any physical contact.
- General visits should ideally occur throughout the day avoiding residents preferred rest periods and meal times (unless prearranged).
- Visits for 10-15 minutes, do not require personal protective equipment (PPE), however visits for 30 minutes require the visitor to wear PPE at all times, including a mask and plastic apron. This is consistent with the definition of a close contact - A close contact is defined as a person who has spent at least 15 minutes face-to-face OR at least 2 hours in the same closed space as the confirmed case during their infectious period.
- If a resident has a visitor with a long term care giving history (such as coming in daily to assist the resident with meals) consideration for continuing this care must be given. Visits of longer than 15 minutes must use PPE as outlined above.
- The visit should be limited to 1 to 2 visitors at a time (1 person preferable) and no more than 2 total visits in a day.
- All visitors must provide evidence of immunisation prior to entrance. Once this initial evidence has been provided you will not be required to provide it for subsequent visits.
- Visitors must not have travelled overseas or been on a cruise ship in the past 14 days.
- Visitors must not have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- The visitor must not currently or in the last 7 days been unwell or have any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever, night sweats or chills
 - Cough
 - Runny nose
 - Sore or scratchy throat
 - Shortness of breath
- The visitor must not attend if they have been in close contact with or caring for someone who is currently unwell with any of the symptoms above.
- Children under the age of 16 are not be allowed in the Facility, consistent with Directives from Deputy Chief Health Officer (Communicable Diseases) [Care Facilities Directive No. 3 \(DHHS\)](#)
- It is important to continue to focus on our residents' wellbeing, and enabling choice for our residents. However where a resident is offsite a reasonable, proportionate and a risk based-approach to infection prevention and control measures will be followed (e.g. wearing of PPE)

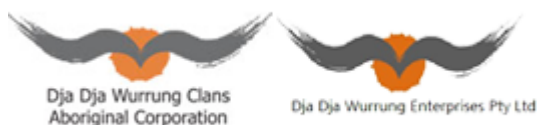
while offsite, screening on return, and assessment of level of likely interaction with possible suspected cases of COVID-19)¹.

- Residents maintain the right to access medical and related services (e.g. repair of hearing aids or glasses, urgent dental care, mental health support).
 - With the re-opening of the community some residents may wish to go shopping, to a café or the local pub. It must be remembered that residents have the same rights as the rest of the community, however as visitors can now deliver goods this may prevent our residents needing to do unnecessary shopping.
 - Residents should always be encouraged to utilize all of the facilities within the BDH, including gardens, common areas and surrounding grounds.
 - Residents do not have to self-isolate in their rooms following an offsite visit.
- 'Please be advised if a COVID-19 positive case is confirmed within the facility these guidelines will no longer be applicable.'
 - We advise you that if BDH has a COVID-19 positive case in a resident or staff member BDH will cease all visitation.

Palliative care residents have, and will always be, an exception to any visiting restrictions. Longer visits will also be considered under certain circumstances.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the [Industry Code for visiting Residential Aged Care Homes during COVID-19](#).

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