



## FOSTER CARE VISITATION GUIDELINES

### CASEWORKER/CHILD/FOSTER FAMILY VISITATION:

The following guidelines are being implemented in accordance with the **Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)** and the **Restore Illinois plan** corresponding to the established phase of the Northeast Region and therefore subject to change in pursuant to updated public health guidance and changing public health conditions.

#### Prioritization of visits:

Court Ordered  
Closest to discharge/stepdown  
Visits with identified foster parents  
Visits with siblings

### PURPOSE OF EXPECTATIONS (THE WHY)

- Allendale fully supports and encourages in-person visits between youth, siblings, family members and caregivers so they may spend time together whenever possible and when it can be done safely for all parties
- It is important for youth transitioning to foster homes have visitation opportunities as part of sound discharge planning practice
- These expectations are intended for the protection of the youth in our care, their families, caregivers, other providers as well as the safety of the Allendale staff
- Violation of these rules *could* result in suspension of visits due to safety reasons at which time the CFT would reconvene to review expectations discuss next steps

### A. Pre-Visit Expectations<sup>1</sup>

1. A CFTM will take place with the youth, family, caregiver, caseworker and involved providers prior to in-person visits resuming to review expectations **for the visit**, such as:
  - Access for any health and safety risk factors of the youth, caregivers or other household members
  - Recommendation that there be no additional visitors in the home, throughout the duration of the visit
  - Maintain 6 ft. physical distancing, as much as possible and particularly when in public
  - Reinforce the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and ensure they have sufficient access to PPE

<sup>1</sup>Allendale guidelines will be implemented to coincide with guidance and recommendations provided by DCFS and IDPH.



2. Masks/face coverings must be worn throughout duration of visit when 6ft physical distancing cannot be maintained. Face coverings should **not** be used under the following conditions:
  - Children under the age of two
  - Individuals who cannot remove the covering without assistance
  - Individuals who have difficulty breathing
3. A written reference handout summarizing safety measures, expectations and guidelines will be provided to the youth/family/caregiver along with the home visit medication packet
4. Only one visit will occur per day. Caseworkers will not see more than one family per day.
5. **Pre-Visit Questionnaire** will be completed to assess risk exposure

Pre-Screening questions are as follows:

1. Have you or anyone in your home experienced symptoms: sore throat, body aches, coughing, shortness of breath, loss of sense of taste/smell or a fever of 100.4 °F or higher within the last 14 days?
2. Within the last 14 days, have you or anyone in your home been in close contact (closer than 6 ft. for at least 15 minutes without use of a mask) with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?
3. Have you ever been tested for COVID-19 and confirmed to be positive? If yes, what date was the test administered?

*\*Any YES answers may lead to visit cancellation or reschedule*

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## **B. Visitation Guidelines**

1. Virtual visiting (video) shall continue until further guidance is issued from the Department and/or a court order mandates visitation occur in person
2. It is recommended that there be no additional visitors in the home, throughout the duration of the visit
3. CDC and IDPH recommended physical distancing of at least 6 ft. throughout duration of visit
4. Reinforce the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and ensure they have sufficient access to PPE
5. Masks/face coverings must be worn throughout duration of visit when 6ft physical distancing cannot be maintained. Face coverings should not be used under the following conditions:
  - Children under the age of two



- Individuals who cannot remove the covering without assistance
  - Individuals who have difficulty breathing
6. A written reference handout summarizing safety measures, expectations and guidelines will be provided to the youth/family/caregiver along with the home visit medication packet
  7. There are meeting spaces or rooms which have been specifically designated for visits and to minimize exposure
  8. These areas will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected both prior to and immediately following it their use
  9. Utilization of outside areas will be encouraged when possible, with expectation to remain within these specific areas throughout the visit to minimize exposure to other youth/staff
  10. Children will be required to use hand sanitize throughout visit
  11. Plans will be reviewed and confirmed with foster families and their requests be taken into consideration, prior to visits occurring

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## **C. Transportation (should Allendale staff be transporting youth)**

1. There will be one (1) driver designated to conduct the transport
2. Driver will clean/disinfect vehicle before transport
3. Caseworkers will be supplied with disinfectant wipes and transport cleaning kits which will be stored safely within the vehicle (i.e. trunk)
4. Driver and passengers must wear masks while in the vehicle
5. Larger vehicles (e.g. FC van) will be used whenever possible in order to increase physical distance
6. Throughout travel vehicle windows will remain opened at a minimum level to ensure sufficient air ventilation and to adequately disperse respiratory droplets
7. Staff and passengers must wear masks when in the vehicle and utilize larger vehicles (e.g. van) as able in order to increase physical distance
8. Staff shall maintain recommended physical distancing and utilize PPE while supervising visit and/or refrain from entering home, if visit is unsupervised
9. Vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected by the driver following each transport (see recommendations for disinfecting as outlined by DCFS)



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## D. Licensing/Monitoring Visits

1. Allendale Licensing staff will continue to conduct routine foster home licensing/monitoring visits virtually via secure Go-to-Meeting technology
2. Visits for new home-studies visits can be conducted in-person for the purpose of expediting new home licensing
3. Safety checks, licensing violation visits, and investigation visits will once again be in-person (see guidelines and safety protocol for Caseworker/Child visits)
4. Change of Address visits will occur in person to facilitate updating licenses
5. Licensing Representative will only visit one home, per workday

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## E. Court Proceedings/Permanency

1. All court orders/guidelines/re-opening shall be followed in accordance with local county and/or circuit court jurisdiction
2. County guidance is being updated daily on our internal Foster Care Drive as well as on DCFS DNET website and is regularly reviewed in team meetings
3. All caseworkers attending court hearings in person should follow the previously outlined PPE/Safety/Sanitization guidelines for visitation

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## F. Agency-Based or On-site Visits

All visitors, meetings, trainings, CFTMs and consultations shall continue via phone and/or video conference, until Allendale re-opens its locations in accordance with agency-developed protocols pursuant to the **Restore Illinois plan** for the Northeast region. Upon entering the appropriate phase, visits and in-person meetings may resume at Allendale's Foster Care offices located at Bradley Counseling Center following agency-established protocols.

## FURTHER MITIGATION EFFORTS

As outlined in the Restore Illinois plan, the five-phase plan will carefully re-open various businesses and services guided by health metrics, testing accessibility and medical resource availability, recognizing regional variation of COVID-19 impact across the state. Many of the youth served in our therapeutic residential programs originate from communities throughout Illinois and therefore likely



to have varied or distinct restriction levels depending upon the geographic location and that area's determined phase.

As Allendale is unable to account for or influence these local restrictions or the degree to which established health safety requirements are being followed, these additional efforts and internal controls are designed to further mitigate the elevated risks.

- **ALL** employees will continue to monitor symptoms and log their temperatures daily through infrared thermometer. Completed temp log sheets will be forwarded to nursing department
- **ALL** will have their temperature taken daily during morning medication administration by the nurse
- Continued vigilance and monitoring of staff wearing face coverings, hand-hygiene, and physical distancing
- Prior to all visits, the county or region will be reviewed via IDPH website <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/covid19-statistics> to assess level of COVID-19 exposure in the identified area