

Leamington Mennonite Home
Long Term Care

**INFECTION CONTROL
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

CATEGORY: Social & Recreation Department	SUBJECT: Pet Therapy Program & Animal Visitation	SECTION: L POLICY: 3
DATE: July 12, 2022	Administrator's Signature: _____ <i>J. M.</i>	
REVISION DATES: March 2024	IPAC Lead's Signature: _____ <i>L. Coppola, R.N.</i>	

PET THERAPY PROGRAM & ANIMAL VISITATION

POLICY:

The importance of pets is recognized, and residents shall be provided with the opportunity for interaction with pets and animals. Appropriate infection control measures are implemented at The Leamington Mennonite Home to prevent transmission of pet-related communicable disease or infection.

PROCEDURE:

Administrative Approval:

- Administrative approval for animal visitation shall be granted on an individual basis. Consideration shall be given to the type of animals, the effect on safety, other residents, staff, and the environment.
- The Home shall have the right to review, at any time, the acceptability of any animal and shall have the right to have the animal removed from the premises if the animal is found unacceptable.
- The Home shall ensure the animal owner is aware of the terms and conditions of this policy.

Restrictions:

- The following animals are not allowed to visit the Home (dependent upon provincial/regional requirements) (these examples are not all-inclusive):
 - a. Reptiles and amphibians (lizards, snakes, iguanas, turtles, frogs, and salamanders)
 - b. Nonhuman primates
 - c. Rodents (hamsters, gerbils, mice, rats)
 - d. Wild (exotic) animals whose behavior is unpredictable
 - e. Hedgehogs, prairie dogs, or any other recently domesticated animal species
 - f. Other animals not litter trained or for which no other measures can be taken to prevent exposure of residents to animal excrement
 - g. Other animals with behavioural or disease risks such as raccoons, skunks, ferrets, and bats

- h. Young animals (under 1 year of age) due to unpredictable behavior and
- No animals are allowed in areas where food is being prepared or served. No animals are allowed in the Chapel or Hair Salon, medication rooms, or resident bathrooms.
- Residents who do not wish to have contact with the visiting animals shall have documentation in their plan of care to indicate their choices.
- Every reasonable and practical effort will be made to keep visiting animals away from residents with allergies, phobias, or dislikes.
- Animal visits will be scheduled for not longer than one hour to reduce animal fatigue.
- Incorporating young animals (under 1 year of age) into the pet therapy program is not encouraged because of issues regarding unpredictable behaviour and fecal/urinal elimination control. Also, the immune systems of very young puppies and kittens are not completely developed, placing the health of these animals at risk.

Infection Prevention & Control Measures:

- Animals will not visit the Home if they are experiencing the following symptoms from onset to at least one week beyond the resolution of:
 - Episodes of vomiting or diarrhea
 - Urinary or fecal incontinence
 - Episodes of sneezing or coughing of unknown origin
 - Open wounds
 - Ear/eye infections
 - Skin infections/lesions
 - Enteric parasites
- The Director of Social and Recreation Services will provide support to animal handlers and ensure all procedures are met by the owner/handler during each visit.
- The animal handler should be in good health, know the animal/s and their behaviour, and be trained in the pet therapy activity.
- The animal handler should be provided with a bottle of alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) to carry with him/her during the animal visit to encourage residents and staff to perform proper hand hygiene before and after contact with animals.
- It is recommended that animals be registered with a recognized pet therapy program.
- Animals should be observed on a continuous basis by the Director of Social and Recreation Services to ensure the animal is well-trained and well-behaved. If there is any evidence of aggressive behavior, the animal will be removed from the Home.
- Animals will be always kept on a leash during the visit.
- Pets are restricted from visiting residents in isolation rooms, and with residents who have open draining wounds, pneumonia, or blood stream infections.
- Visiting animals will not be fed food treats by the residents. This is the responsibility of the animal handler.
- Where possible, the animal handler will make every attempt to discourage the visiting animal from licking the resident's skin. If an animal licks a resident, ensure the affected area is wash and hand hygiene occurs.
- Staff, residents, family members, visitors, and volunteers will report any bite or scratch sustained from the animal and obtain appropriate first aid.
- Injuries caused by an animal shall be assessed and first aid delivered by a medical staff. Injuries shall be reported to the local Public Health Unit.
- Incidents of injuries will be reviewed by the Home's Administrative Staff.

The Animal Owner/Handler will:

- Abide by the terms and conditions of this policy.
- Only visit with the Resident
- Provide proof of the animal's yearly check-up and documentation from a veterinarian before entering the Home. **All visiting animals entering the home must be registered at the front office.** Documentation will verify that the animal has been:
 - a. Fully vaccinated for zoonotic diseases, including rabies, accordingly to provincial regulations and preventative medications (e.g., heartworm prevention) as determined by a licensed veterinarian
 - b. Examined and found to be free of hookworm and other parasites, fleas, and any skin lesions that could be associated with bacterial, fungal, or viral infections.
 - c. Declared to be healthy and free of diarrhea
 - d. Found to be obedient, good tempered, and house trained.
- Ensure that the animal is clean (e.g., bathed within 24 hours of a visit) to remove allergens in saliva, dander, and/or urine and well-groomed to remove dead hair to minimize allergic responses.
- Remove the animal immediately should any difficult and/or negative animal behaviours occur.
- Remove the animal at the resident's request.

*Caregivers will be notified upon resident admission into the Home of the Animal Visitation policy and their responsibility to register any visiting animals with the front office.

*LMH's Administrative staff will maintain an up-to-date list of all animals that have been registered with the Home and this list will remain accessible to Registered Staff for reference.