Purpose

This procedure describes access and visitation across the Queensland Children’s Hospital (QCH) and community facilities to be applied during the COVID-19 pandemic declared public health emergency period. Children’s Health Queensland (CHQ) is committed to family centred care principles. CHQ values the important role of families and carers as partners in care, and acknowledges the significance of family, friends, and other loved ones in a child or young person’s care journey.

CHQ recognises the importance of visitors to patient well-being and recovery and has a responsibility to ensure that visits are conducted in a manner that promotes the wellbeing of all patients. CHQ also recognises that during a pandemic, a revised approach to access and visitation is needed to ensure the safety of patients, family, carers and staff.

The implementation of this procedure will provide a consistent approach to family centred practices and healthcare delivery across the facility and community facilities to be applied during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Family and carer engagement is valued within CHQ, with parents and carers at the centre of the care team. The QCH and community facilities are designed to encourage and welcome the presence of a child and/or young person’s family members, carers and visitors. CHQ aims to acknowledge and respectfully consider the individual cultural, religious and spiritual needs of all patients and families.

Scope

The scope of this procedure applies to all CHQ sites, visitors, contractors, volunteers, CHQ staff and those who present for official Queensland Health business.
**Procedure**

In normal circumstances, the QCH enhances the care experience for children and/or young people by making a parent/carer bed space (or lounge chair) available for every inpatient overnight stay and encourages the presence of a parent/carer. Other family members and friends are welcome to visit. Visiting times are flexible and nominated by the patient and parent/carer according to their preferences, in consideration of the care requirements and wellbeing of the child and following discussion with staff. In shared spaces, visitors are required to be respectful of the needs of other patients and families.

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic declared public health emergency, QCH staff will need to restrict the number of visitors to ensure the safest environment for all patients, families and staff in line with the Hospital Visitors Direction issued by the Chief Health Officer.

**Restrictions on visitation**

1. **Inpatient and PICU**
   
   Visitation will be limited to up to two visitors (parents/carers) per inpatient.

2. **Emergency and Outpatient Department and Community facilities**
   
   Furthermore, QCH emergency, outpatient department and community outpatient/child health appointments will be limited to one parent/carer accompanying the patient. Accompanying patient siblings should also be limited wherever possible.

CHQ acknowledges that there may be situations in which individual consideration for relaxations to visitation restrictions may be required for some children, particular in relation to end of life support or siblings who cannot be cared for elsewhere. These instances will be approved if deemed appropriate by the Nursing Director responsible for the clinical area and/or cleared through the on-call Nursing Director via the Patient Flow Nurse Manager after hours. The NUM/Team Leader in PICU is authorised to approve relaxations to visitation restrictions.

**Restrictions on access**

While visitation is typically encouraged, in the interest of safety to all patients, families, carers and staff, all visitors, meeting the following criteria may be requested to not enter the QCH, Ellen Barron, Queensland Adolescent Extended Treatment Centre (Jacaranda Place) and community facilities unless under exceptional circumstances:

1. Visitors **diagnosed** with COVID (Excluding primary caregiver)
2. Visitors who are subject to a **direction** to self-quarantine;
3. Visitors who have **arrived in Australia** within the previous 14 days;
4. Visitors who have travelled from any **identified hot-spot** within the previous 14 days.
5. Visitors who been in **known contact** with a person who is COVID-19 positive;
6. Visitor who have **symptoms of acute respiratory infection** (cough, shortness of breath, sore throat);
7. Visitor who has a **temperature equal to or greater ≥ 37.5°C**.

*A hot-spot is defined as a Local Government area with 10 or more confirmed cases diagnosed in the previous two weeks.*
Screening

Please note, visitors will be screened by nursing staff in the form of the above exposure criteria (including checking temperatures) and may be excluded from entry by Security Officers. This restriction will be assessed having regard to the principle that a parent, guardian or carer is required to accompany a patient. In this case, the visitor will be issued with a surgical/procedural mask and asked to perform hand hygiene with Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) provided and escorted by a nurse to a single room at their destination within the facility. The child and visitor will be assessed by destination clinical team and if required managed in line with All COVID-19 Screening outside of Emergency in conjunction with CHQ-PROC-63002 Infection Control Guidelines for the Management of Coronavirus and COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Requirements.

All visitors will be expected to follow strict hand hygiene processes, social distancing and respiratory hygiene practices while visiting at QCH and community facilities.

For an overview of risk screening for inpatient and outpatients please view the screening flow chart.

Orientation to the unit

During orientation to inpatient wards, information will be provided to parents/carers regarding care principles and visitation procedures. Information provided will include Healthcare Rights, Ryan's Rule and Consumer Feedback. In the event that an interpreter is required to communicate with families and carers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, staff may use the Interpreter Services via the Interpreter Service Information System or contact the QCH Interpreter Services Coordinator.

Consultation

Key stakeholders who reviewed this version:
- Executive Director Clinical Support QCH
- Divisional Director Clinical Support

Key stakeholders who reviewed the previous version:
- Executive Director Allied Health
- Executive Director Clinical Services – QCH
- Executive Director Legal, Governance and Risk
- Senior Director, Communications and Engagement
- CHQ Infection Management and Prevention Service
- Children’s Hospital Foundation
- Consumer Engagement Officer
- PSQS Curriculum and Training Officer
- Planetree International

References

Audit/evaluation strategy

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<tr>
<th>Level of risk</th>
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<td>Review responsibility</td>
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<td>Key elements / Indicators / Outcomes</td>
<td>Successful implementation of visitation procedure across CHQ. Regular communication with leaders through daily huddles.</td>
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Procedure revision and approval history

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<th>Modified by</th>
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Keywords
- Visitation, Inpatient Areas, Engagement, Consumer, 64712, Access

Accreditation references
- NSQHS Standards (1-8): 2 Partnering with Consumers
- ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems: (4-10)