

Visitor policy Q&A

What is the new visitor policy?

Visitors to Community Hospital and Westland House must be 14 years of age or older.

Why are people under 14 being prevented from entering the hospital and Westland House?

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, H1N1 influenza is more likely to occur, and to be more serious, among children and young people. People can be infectious even before symptoms appear, so we are taking this extra precaution to protect patients, visitors, and staff.

Are there exceptions?

Exceptions will be made only in limited circumstances, primarily when a visit is deemed critical because of the patient's condition.

What if people aren't aware of the policy and arrive with visitors who are under 14?

We will explain the policy and ask that younger visitors be taken home. Visitors younger than age 14 will not be allowed in the hospital or Westland House.

Are you still treating patients who are younger than 14?

Yes. As always, we will provide care to anyone who needs it, regardless of age.

Does the restriction apply to the Emergency department?

No. We strongly recommend that patients coming to the Emergency department make arrangements for childcare, but we know that can't always be done in emergency situations. Everyone who enters the Emergency department will be screened, and those with flu-like symptoms will be provided with a mask to wear.

Does the restriction apply to all other Community Hospital facilities?

It only applies to the hospital and to Westland House.

How do you enforce it?

It is the responsibility of all staff members to enforce the policy and they will approach visitors who appear to be under the age of 14. Members of our Security staff will be at the entrance to the hospital to make sure visitors are aware of the policy. We hope that the public understands that we are restricting visitors for the safety of our patients, staff, and all visitors, and to ensure that we have a healthy workforce of caregivers during this special flu season. People who would like to request special visiting privileges because a loved one is critically ill should contact the administrative supervisor at the main hospital or the charge nurse at Westland House to obtain permission prior to coming to the facility. If the request is approved, the administrative supervisor will notify Security.

How long will the policy be in place?

We will evaluate the need for the age restriction throughout the flu season and rescind it when it is no longer considered necessary.

Are other hospitals doing this?

Many other hospitals are restricting visits by children during this flu season.