



# Office of Children and Family Services

KATHY HOCHUL  
Governor

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Commissioner

## Memo

**To:** Facilities Managers, Facility Directors, Assistant Directors, and CMSO Regional Supervisors

**From:** Felicia A. B. Reid, Esq., *Deputy Commissioner*  
Robert M. MacGiffert, *Associate Commissioner*  
Dr. Joseph E. Tomassone, *Acting Associate Commissioner*

**Date:** July 19, 2022

**Re:** **Visitation at OCFS Facilities: Summer 2022**

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Review the following protocols thoroughly; there are several changes from past visitation guidance. These are highlighted in blue. Facilities and CMSOs should review the expectations of this guidance with families and visitors.

### I. Definitions

- A. Known Case of COVID-19:** Any youth or staff who tests positive for COVID-19 **and** has been at the facility within **two days prior** to the positive test or to the development of COVID-19 symptoms.
- B. Contact Tracing:** The process of identifying individuals possibly impacted by contact with or proximity to a known case of COVID-19. Facilities will contact trace to determine if any units at the facility or groups of individuals should be medically quarantined or isolated. Contact tracing will include both discussion with the COVID-19 positive staff and video review.
- C. Close Contact:** The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines a close contact as anyone who is within six feet of an infected person for a **total** of 15 minutes or longer over a 24-hour period. Facilities will offer close contacts of a known case of COVID-19 a rapid test and must report those contacts to OCFS Personnel for further direction.
- D. Televisit:** Youth contact with non-OCFS individuals by phone and/or video and according to **Video Visitation with Youth at OCFS Facilities** (June 29, 2020).
- E. Visitor:** Does **not** include OCFS staff, contracted psychiatry or dental providers, emergency responders, law enforcement, personnel responding to safety and security issues, Parole Board representatives, or individuals that Executive Law § 519 permits. Individuals responding to facility maintenance or to make repairs are not visitors. If these excluded persons seek to make a visit to a facility and the facility is on televisiting status, the facility should make those persons aware.
- F. Family:** Immediate or extended family according to PPM 3455.00, *Visits to Youth in OCFS Facilities*, a youth's caregiver/release resource, and/or a person with whom the youth is a co-parent.

## II. Facilities With a Known Case of COVID-19

- A. Following identification of any known case of COVID-19, the Deputy Commissioner and Associate Commissioners for DJJOY, in consultation with the DJJOY Medical Director and OCFS Human Resources, will review the information provided by the facility about the case and contact tracing. They will determine whether the facility will modify visitation to televisitation-only status and/or the extent to which an impacted facility may permit visits to units not impacted by COVID-19—e.g. to residential units not on quarantine/isolation status.
- B. The facility medical team will refer to **Summary of Guidance Documents COVID Testing and Program Placement** (March 3, 2022) for rapid/PCR testing and quarantine/isolation guidance.
- C. Visitors and family (as defined above) may not visit youth on quarantine/isolation status without the express permission of the Deputy Commissioner.

## III. Facilities Permitting In-Person Visitation

Facilities will continue to have available and offer all visitors masks and face coverings.

### A. Family

- i. The facility will coordinate visiting families so that the families are cohorted with units, either in location or by time of day/week so that possible cross-unit exposure is minimal.
- ii. Where weather, staffing, security, and camera coverage permit, facilities are encouraged to conduct visitation outdoors and/or any other location that can accommodate social distancing.
- iii. Facilities will continue to give youth extra televisits **whenever program permits**. CMSOs will continue to offer televisit facilitation to families.

### B. Outside Vendors and Service Providers

- i. If a youth or unit is not on quarantine/isolation protocol, there is no prohibition on that youth or unit taking off-campus trips for recreation and/or to outside vendors and service providers. Youth and staff must comply with those vendors' and service providers' own COVID-19 precautions.
- ii. Vendors and service providers may resume a regular visitation schedule based on a facility's scheduling ability. These may include multiple visits per week to a facility that is not on televisitation status.
- iii. Service providers' and vendors' movement throughout the facility must be limited to only those areas where their provision of service or programming requires that they be.
- iv. Facilities should preemptively encourage outside service providers and vendors to explore televisiting capabilities if the facility must shift to televisitation status.

### C. Youth Attorneys and Non-Facility Based OCFS Staff

- i. Youth attorneys and non-facility OCFS staff can resume regular in-person visitation. They may not have in-person visitation with youth on quarantine/isolation status.
- ii. Facilities will continue to make televisitation available to youth counsel and non-facility based OCFS staff.

## IV. Miscellaneous

- A. All facility staff must complete their own informal self-screening prior to reporting to the office and must not report to work if they are currently experiencing any of the symptoms listed below or have had close contact to someone with COVID-19.
  - Fever (above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit)
  - Chills

- Cough (new or worsening)
- Shortness of Breath (new or worsening)
- Troubled Breathing (new or worsening)
- Muscle Pain or Body Aches (new or worsening)
- Headache (new or worsening)
- New Loss of Taste or Smell
- Sore Throat (new or worsening)
- Congestion or Runny Nose
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Diarrhea

**NOTE:** The above symptoms may occur with pre-existing medical conditions, such as allergies or migraines. Only if your symptoms are new or worsening should you stay out of work. If you are experiencing symptoms, you should contact your health care provider or seek diagnostic testing for COVID-19.

**Personnel will contact symptomatic employees for more information and will discuss next steps with the employee and supervisor.**

- B.** Facilities must verbally conduct the COVID-19 screening and a temperature check for all in-person visitors before granting them entry to the facility in accordance with screening guidance. To the extent possible, facilities should inform visitors, before they arrive to the facility, that they will be subject to a COVID-19 screening and temperature check.
- C.** Each facility will continue to be regularly cleaned and disinfected using approved disinfectants, particularly targeting high contact surfaces and high-traffic and common areas. Hand sanitizer will remain available for staff and youth, and facilities will continue to encourage regular hand washing.
- D.** In collaboration with OCFS' health and safety team, facilities will continue to adjust programming and facility movement to keep youth and staff safe.
- E.** In accordance with guidance from the NYS Department of Health, OCFS facilities will continue to take proactive measures to contact trace. Facilities will continue to designate a specific person or persons to communicate with local departments of health about COVID-19 cases.

cc: S. Poole                      T. Boniface                      H. Martinez                      J. Guo  
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