

**Date:** March 18, 2020  
**Memo:** Coronavirus Visitor Protocols for Residential Services Update  
**From:** President, CEO - Dr. Michelle K. Murray 

Nexus is highly committed to family participation. An important element to building and maintaining family relationships is ongoing face-to-face visits. We believe that nothing can replace the power of family contact and care, and we continue to be committed to supporting high levels of family involvement.

With the Coronavirus (COVID-19) being declared a pandemic, the safety of our youth and families is of the utmost importance. As a result, we must balance youth and family face-to-face contact with community safety. The purpose of this memo is to respond to the rapid changes and new announcements regarding state emergency responses to “flatten the curve” of COVID-19 contamination. We do not intend for this protocol to keep children and family members apart, we are simply creating temporary safety protocols to help prevent the spread of illness into our facilities. We ask for your support and participation in successfully implementing these protocols.

This memo is in effect starting Thursday, March 19, 2020 until we can cancel these protocols or provide new updates.

For residential services we are implementing the following practices:

- We are limiting visitors to our facilities unless those visitors are specifically providing medical, emergency or mental health services to our clients. We are asking visitors to postpone visitation until further notice and replace face-to-face time with phone calls and video conferencing when at all possible.
- For our residential programs in the state of Illinois (to include Onarga Academy and Indian Oaks Academy), the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is requiring Residential Monitors or a local representative to complete in-person visits to observe the environment and assure physical safety. As a result, we will be following this mandate for our Illinois programs.
- We are also limiting overnight home visits and will be encouraging increased phone calls and video conferencing when at all possible.
- Special onsite visits and home visits will be granted in the event that a visit is necessary to maintain the emotional well-being of a youth and their family, or if special treatment circumstances require immediate visits (Examples, an end of a life situation, medical care, continuance of effective discharge plans, court order, etc.).
- The agency Executive Director will be consulted and will approve all special circumstances regarding onsite visits and home visits and will approve individualized decisions and requests.
- We are asking visitors and family members to help us in exercising caution and care when requesting special permission for onsite visits and home visits so that we can prevent the spread of COVID-19 into our facilities.
- In assessing if an onsite visit or home visit should occur, we have a question and answer screening tool that will be used to assess travel history and the existence of COVID-19 symptoms. If a visitor or a family member that is requesting the home visit answers yes to any of

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the questions on the screening tool, we will be requesting that the visit be postponed until visitors and family members can answer “no” to all questions.

- In situations in which a visit does occur onsite, the agency will designate a space for visits that is away from other client areas.
- Visitor(s) and the youth will need to wash hands prior to entering the visiting room, and will need to wash their hands again after the visit before a youth returns to their treatment program.
- Visits will be kept to immediate family only and will be limited to 1 to 2 people per visit; social distancing will be encouraged. The designated visiting space will be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after each visit.
- For medical appointments (dental, medical, urgent care, etc.) the agency nurse will approve attendance of appointments in consultation with health care providers.
- If youth have clinical appointments (occupational therapy, equine therapy, outside treatment plan meetings, etc.) the agency Clinical Director will consult with the treatment team and make the final decision on approval of attending such appointments.
- Our agencies will implement a plan for postal workers and delivery personnel to leave mail or boxes in an entry way area for staff to retrieve the items without making person to person contact.
- For large care deliveries (food, medical supplies, etc.) we are reminding our vendors to ensure that delivery personnel are free from illness and that they practice social distancing upon entering our facilities.
- In the unfortunate event that an employee or client has a confirmed case of COVID-19, we will notify the youth, their family members, referral agents and employees so that increased precautions can be implemented.

For questions regarding these protocols, please contact your agency leader as provided below.

**Nexus Agency Contacts**

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