



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Department of Youth Services

***Modifications to Visitation Protocol and Procedures for DYS
Residential Settings to include Family Members during
COVID 19***

This protocol establishes the guidelines and provides procedures that all DYS state and provider-operated residential locations must follow as DYS resumes providing youth the opportunities to visit in-person with family and/or legal guardians during COVID 19. DYS reserves the right to revoke or modify this protocol and these procedures at any time, if it determines that the public health and/or safety of youth and staff are at risk, or to comply with state and federal guidance.

The Department of Youth Services acknowledges the challenges experienced by our youth and families who have not been able to have in-person visits at any location during the pandemic. At this time, consistent with guidance from CDC and DPH, DYS plans to resume limited in-person visits for families and/or legal guardians beginning June 30, 2020, subject to very specific requirements essential to maintain the health and safety of our visitors, youth and staff. Family engagement activities and group visits remain suspended at all DYS residential locations. Virtual visits will continue to occur for all youth and families. DYS caseworkers, DCF social workers, clergy and attorneys may continue to visit locations in accordance with the previously established protocol for those visits.

General Requirements:

- Visitations will not be permitted with anyone who is currently under isolation because they are presumed or confirmed COVID-19 positive or quarantined because of close contact.
- Supervised in-person visits will be permitted in a DYS approved designated outdoor space at each location, weather permitting. No visits shall occur in an enclosed area. If tents are used to provide shade, they must have open sides to allow for proper airflow.
- If needed, access to a rest room can be allowed when appropriate safety precautions are followed.

- The visiting space used must be visually inspected by staff prior to and immediately following each visit, to ensure that the safety and security of the space has not been compromised and/or contraband left in area.
- A youth may have two family members/guardians visit at a time. DYS will be evaluating the process and may increase the number of individuals allowed and/or the frequency of visits based on health and safety outcomes related to this protocol and CDC and DPH guidance.
- Youth who are parents may formally request a visit with their child. An approved family member/or legal guardian will be granted permission to bring a youth's child to visit. Prior to the scheduling of a child visit, the youth must be advised and agree that they will not have physical contact with their child during the visit.
- All visits will be scheduled in advance with Program Management. Blocks of one hour per youth will be available. Each site may have varied visit times to ensure that appropriate staffing levels and ratios are adhered to. In addition to scheduling, Program Management will be responsible for ensuring the appropriate level of supervision.
- Each visitor must call the program the day of their scheduled visit to confirm they are still coming, that they are not sick and that they do not have a fever. The visitor will also be advised that they will be required to answer a series of screening questions and have their temperatures taken prior to entering the visiting area. Each visitor's information will be logged in the visiting log as required per DYS policy 03.04.04(c) Residential Visitation Incorporating Family Engagement Principles.
- Each visitor will leave the visiting location with an informational sheet that outlines how to notify the program, should they experience COVID-19 symptoms after having participated in a visit.
- Visitors, youth and staff must continue to adhere to the vision and spirit of the DYS Policy 03.04.04(c), Residential Visitation incorporating Family Engagement Principles, in particular, sections E, regarding denial or limitations of Visits; Section F, regarding supervision requirements and conduct during visits; and Section G, regarding Safety and Security Measures.

- Staff must continue to adhere to DYS Policy 03.01.02(a), Searches in Secure Facilities (Hardware Secure) or DYS Policy 03.01.03(a) Searches in Residential Facilities (Staff Secure).
- Visits are subject to cancellation at any time per DYS policy.

Screening for all Visitors:

Staff and visitors will adhere to the Department of Youth Services Single Point of Entrance (SPE) and Screening Question Protocols for all entry to DYS sites to gain access to outdoor grounds for visits.

STANDARD PROCEDURE

1. All individuals seeking admittance to the outdoor visiting space must be screened per the DYS COVID-19 Screening Protocol.
2. Visitors arriving by personal automobile should park in one of the approved parking areas and walk directly to the Single Point of Entry (SPE). Visitors without a car or approaching on foot should proceed directly to the SPE to be screened.
3. Once at the SPE, the visitor will be greeted by a Screener.
4. The Screener will begin by verbally reviewing the COVID 19 Screening Questionnaire. If the person being screened satisfactorily answers the questions asked, a temperature screening will then take place. The results of the questionnaire and the temperature screening are to be documented in the COVID-19 sign in log.
5. Verbal screening for symptoms of COVID-19 and contact with COVID-19 cases include the following questions:
 - a) Today or in the past 24 hours, have you had any of the following symptoms?
 - Fever, felt feverish
 - Chills/shaking
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - New loss of smell/taste
 - New muscle aches or pain
 - Gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea?

b) In the past 14 days, have you had close contact with a person known to be infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) or with COVID19-like symptoms, or who was in quarantine for COVID-19?

6. Individuals with any of the conditions described in the questionnaire are not allowed to visit. Individuals with body temperature 100.0F or higher are not allowed to visit. Additionally, any person refusing to answer the screening questions shall not be allowed to visit.

Face Covering and Social Distancing:

- All visitors are required to wear a mask during the entire visit as well as during the screening procedure unless a safe distance (>6 feet) can be maintained from others.
- The Facility or Program will provide each visitor with a cloth mask for the first visit at the SPE. Both the youth and visitor must wear a mask for the entire visit. The visitor will be asked to clean the cloth mask and to bring it for use in future DYS visits.
- Youth and their visitors will maintain social distancing during visits by remaining at least 6 feet apart. Chairs will be arranged to support social distancing. Visitors may not move the items in the visiting space. Any form of physical contact such as hugging, kissing, handshaking or handholding is strictly prohibited to ensure the health and safety of everyone.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Visitation Area Protocol:

The SPE and any area used for visits, as well as the items in that area such as chairs and tables will be disinfected using [EPA-approved disinfectant for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) after each visit.