



<b>St Vincent's University Hospital Policy:</b>	Visiting Arrangements at St. Vincent's University Hospital ("National Visiting Guidance", HSE, 2006)
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<b>Policy Number:</b>	SVUH-Corp-Pol-01	<b>Version No:</b>	03
<b>Issue Date:</b>	February 2010	<b>Lead Author(s):</b>	Ms. M Parsons
<b>Review Date:</b>	December 2010		
<b>Reviewed &amp; Approved by:</b>	SVUH Executive Council	<b>Review &amp; Approval Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> February 2010
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Mr. Bill Maher	<b>Signature:</b>	Mr. Bill Maher
<b>Related Documents:</b>	"National Visiting Guidance", Health Services Executive, July 2006		

<b>Key Stakeholders:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
	Mr. Nicky Jermyn	Group CEO	SVHG
	Ms. Mary Duff	Director of Nursing	SVUH
	Ms. Mary Shore	Director of Quality Risk & Consumer Affairs	SVUH
	Mr. Frank Smyth	General Services Manager	SVUH
	Dr. Ristead O'Laoide	Chairman of the Medical Board	SVHG

<b>Method of Communication:</b>	Hospital Intranet and Internet Posters in all wards and public areas Patient Information Booklet
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<b>Method of Distribution:</b>	Via Nursing Department and General Services at SVUH Publish on hospital intranet and internet sites
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<b>Responsibility for Implementation:</b>	Security staff, ADON's and Ward managers	<b>Responsibility for Evaluation and Audit:</b>	ADON's
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Revision History:	Version	Issue Date	Change	Section No
	03	February 2010	New template	All
	02	23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2008	Documented process for patients who decline visitors.	1.0, 5.2, 5.4, 8.1.
	01	17 <sup>th</sup> December 2007	First Draft	N/A

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## 1.0 Policy Statement

All hospitals in Ireland welcome visitors. Visiting time is regarded as an important part of the patient's day. Unless otherwise indicated, it is assumed that patients are agreeable to receive visits from family and friends at the scheduled visiting times.

The welfare of the patient and other patients in the ward/unit must always be taken into consideration. Certain restrictions may be imposed on visiting if the patient is likely to become unduly upset or tired.

Patients are entitled to decline visitors should they so wish, and if the hospital staff are informed they will endeavour to ensure that patient's wishes are honoured in this regard.

Visitors of seriously ill patients, patients with special needs and those who are participating in the care of a patient, will be dealt with sympathetically.

The Health Service Executive has developed **National Visiting Guidance** to protect our patients, their families and friends, and our staff.

The patient's need for privacy and the potential for the spread of infection means that continuous visiting hours are **not** in the patient's interests, and from time to time visiting may be further restricted to prevent and control infection.

The guidance document reflects a balance between the needs of patients, their visitors, hospital staff and hospital procedures.

## 2.0 Purpose

To manage the visiting arrangements at St. Vincent's University Hospital so that a balance between the needs of patients and visitors, and the needs of hospital staff delivering treatment and care is achieved.

- To maintain a safe, secure and comfortable environment for patients and staff.
- To enhance patient confidentiality.

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### 3.0 Definitions

N/A

### 4.0 Scope & Responsibilities

This policy refers to visiting arrangements at **St Vincent's University Hospital**.

This guidance document should apply to **all patients and visitors** unless there is prior agreement from the **Nurse Manager** on duty.

### 5.0 Procedures and Guidelines

#### 5.1 Visiting in General Ward Areas

Visiting is permitted at the following times:

**2.00pm – 4.00pm**  
**6.30pm – 8.30pm daily**

Visiting within reason outside of these times must be discussed and agreed with the Nurse Manager on duty

Recommended visiting time is **twenty minutes**, and no more than two persons should visit a patient at any one time

Children under 12 years other than the patient's own children (by prior arrangement) should **not** be brought to visit. Children must be under the supervision of an adult at all times while in the hospital

Visiting hours may be extended for compassionate reasons or where relatives assist with patient care or to facilitate educational sessions with family members and staff.

The Ward Manager can request that visitors leave if the number present or the length of the visit is deemed excessive.

Additional restrictions will apply from time to time, e.g. during outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Certain areas may implement stricter and more controlled visiting policies to suit the needs of patients in that particular ward or unit

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Relatives and friends are requested not to visit if they have sore throats, flu, vomiting and/or diarrhoea or other infections, because of the risk of introducing infection to the ward.

Visiting hours may also be restricted for medical or emergency situations. All exceptions and restrictions are at the discretion of nursing staff on duty, arrangements should be made as far in advance as is possible unless it is an emergency situation.

Ward entrance doors shall remain closed outside of visiting hours. A ward patrol should be conducted after visiting time has expired to ensure the hospitals policy is adhered to.

## 5.2 Patients' right to decline visitors

On receiving a request for restricted / no visitors from a patient, next of kin, or nominated family member, the nursing staff will document this request in the nursing notes, and notes the dates or duration of such a request. At ward level, should a patient not wish to receive visitors, the nursing staff will close the curtains around a patient's bed during the visiting period to promote privacy. A sign will be placed at the bedside to advise of restricted visiting and to direct any visitors to the nurses' station.

The nurse will inform the reception staff at the Enquiries / Reception Desk.

Reception staff will maintain a record of such requests for the duration of the patient stay, unless the request is subsequently amended.

Should a visitor enquire at the desk, the reception staff will advise the visitor that it is not appropriate to visit. Visitors are asked to comply with this request.

## 5.3 Emergency Department

Visiting in the Emergency Department is restricted to immediate family members.

Due to space restrictions, only one visitor to attend with a patient at any time.

Children should not normally attend the Emergency Department. When permitted to attend children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian at all times.

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On occasion it may be necessary to restrict visiting in the Emergency Department.

In the case of night-time admissions to wards, visitors are requested not to go to ward areas.

Visiting arrangements for Zone 1 patients will be dealt with on an individual basis.

#### 5.4 Intensive Care Unit, Coronary Care Unit & High Dependency Unit

As many patients are seriously ill, visiting is restricted to immediate family members for short periods of time only, with a maximum of two people at any one time (local guidelines exist to guide families and staff in determining whether siblings should visit).

All visitors are required to use the intercom and/or bell and await a reply before entering these units.

Visitors may be requested to leave the unit during procedures. If so, please be sensitive to the needs of patients, medical and nursing staff.

#### 5.5 Visitors' Responsibilities

A copy of the **Visitors' Responsibilities** will be displayed in all wards and in public areas of the hospital.

Visitors to the hospital are asked to respect and follow the Visiting Guidelines. This applies to visiting both public and private patients at St. Vincent's University Hospital.

##### Visitors Please:

Observe the visiting times and arrangements **2.00pm – 4.00pm & 6.30pm – 8.30pm daily.**

Visiting within reason outside of these times must be discussed and agreed with the Nurse Manager on duty.

Recommended visiting time is **twenty minutes**, and **no more than two persons** should visit a patient at any one time.

**Children** under 12 years other than the patient's own children (by prior arrangement) should **not** be brought to visit. Children must be under the supervision of an adult at all times while in the hospital.

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A patient has the right to decline visitors. If this is explained to you, please respect the patient's wishes. If you are unsure about the arrangements for a particular patient please check with a relevant family members prior to visiting or with the hospital reception staff / nursing staff.

Visiting hours may be extended for compassionate reasons or where relatives assist with patient care or to facilitate educational sessions with family members and staff. The Ward Manager can request that visitors leave if the number present or the length of the visit is deemed excessive.

Additional restrictions will apply from time to time, e.g. during outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Relatives and friends are requested not to visit if they have sore throats, flu, vomiting and/or diarrhoea or other infections, because of the risk of introducing infection to the ward.

Visiting hours may also be restricted for medical or emergency situations. All exceptions and restrictions are at the discretion of nursing staff on duty, arrangements should be made as far in advance as is possible unless it is an emergency situation.

**Visitors, please observe the following:**

- Use hand hygiene facilities as available when entering and exiting hospital wards.
- Consider other patients' needs for rest and privacy.
- Have consideration for staff doing their job.
- Please comply with any request to leave the patient's room to facilitate care.
- Comply with any requests for no visitors or restricted visiting.
- Observe confidentiality – you may see or hear things of a private and confidential nature.
- Stay away if you might be an infection risk to others or if you feel unwell yourself.
- Help keep our hospital clean and inform staff of any cleaning concerns.
- Ensure any visiting children are well behaved and are never left on a ward unaccompanied.
- Be responsible for the safety and security of your belongings.

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- Comply with isolation policies and signage, especially if visiting multiple patients. When visiting an isolated patient this patient should be the last person visited rather than the first due to possible spread of infection.
- Refrain from touching dressings, drips, catheters etc.
- Always enter and exit the hospital through the main entrance doors or as specified.
- Follow hospital restrictions on the use of mobile phones.
- Do not sit/lie on beds.
- Do not bring in food/beverages for patients without prior consultation.
- Follow hospital policy in respect of gifts of flowers and fruit to patients.
- Do not access unauthorised areas, e.g. Ward Kitchens.
- Toilets in clinical areas are for patient use only, please ask to be directed to the nearest public toilet.
- Follow hospital car parking regulations.
- Do not visit while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Do not smoke on the campus.

## 6.0 Monitoring and Audit Procedure

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Security Staff of St. Vincent's University Hospital in conjunction with the relevant Assistant Director of Nursing and Ward Manager.

## 7.0 References and Related Documents

### 7.1 References

Health Service Executive, National Hospitals Office, Quality, Risk & Customer Service '**National Visiting Guidance**', 2006.

Refer to **HSE** reference and submission list.

### 7.2 Related Documents

SVUH Patient Information Booklet  
SVUH Health & Safety Statement & Infection Control Policy

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## 8.0 Appendices

### 8.1 St. Vincent's University Hospital - Visiting Poster

#### Visitors' Responsibilities

As a visitor to our hospital we ask you to respect and follow the Visiting Guidelines. This applies to visiting both public and private patients at St Vincent's University Hospital (SVUH).

#### Visiting times are from

**2.00pm – 4.00pm**  
&  
**6.30pm – 8.30pm**

Visiting within reason outside of these times must be discussed and agreed with the Nurse Manager on duty.

Recommended visiting time is twenty minutes, and no more than two persons should visit a patient at any one time.

Children under 12 years other than the patient's own children (by prior arrangement) should not be brought to visit. Children must be under the supervision of an adult at all times while in the hospital

A patient has the right to decline visitors, please respect the patient's and family's wishes.

Visiting hours may be extended for compassionate reasons or where relatives assist with patient care or to facilitate educational sessions with family members and staff.

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**Visitors, please observe the following:**

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Consider other patients' needs for rest and privacy.

Have consideration for staff doing their job.

Please comply with any request to leave the patient's room to facilitate care.

Observe confidentiality – you may see or hear things of a private and confidential nature.

Stay away if you might be an infection risk to others or if you feel unwell yourself.

Help keep our hospital clean and inform staff of any cleaning concerns.

Ensure any visiting children are well behaved and are never left on a ward unaccompanied.

Be responsible for the safety and security of your belongings.

Comply with isolation policies and signage, especially if visiting multiple patients.

When visiting an isolated patient this patient should be the last person visited rather than the first due to possible spread of infection.

Refrain from touching dressings, drips, catheters etc.

Always enter and exit the hospital through the main entrance doors or as specified

Follow hospital restrictions on the use of mobile phones.

Do not sit/lie on beds.

Do not bring in food/beverages for patients without prior consultation.

Follow hospital policy in respect of gifts of flowers and fruit to patients.

Do not access unauthorised areas, e.g. Ward Kitchens.

Follow hospital car parking regulations.

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Do not visit while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

Do not smoke on the campus.

Thank you for your co-operation.

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Nicholas C. Jermyn, Group CEO

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