

COVID-19 Measures and Program Updates at WDDS

Find out what's happening with our supports and services and learn about our current COVID-19 measures, including visits, staff safety, and office protocols.

****Please note:** Like other organizations within our sector and many businesses within the province, WDDS is experiencing staffing shortages. We continue to look for ways to improve this situation however, we do recognize that this has had an impact on the supports and services that we are able to provide. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we continue to work through these challenges.

COVID-19 Measures

The following measures are in place as directed by Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Training and Skill Development and MCCSS. We are legally obligated to follow the directives provided to us.

Online screening measures are in place at all our sites. Our staff are trained and continuously supported in infection prevention and control safety measures, cleaning, and disinfection protocols.

Rapid Antigen Testing

As of December 24, 2021, all staff and volunteers working in any WDDS program must do Rapid Antigen Tests three times a week. WDDS provides the tests, which staff self-administer at home prior to arriving for their shift.

Staff Vaccination Status

All staff who provide direct support or work in an environment where individuals are supported are encouraged to maintain their vaccination status against COVID-19 by receiving booster dosages when they are eligible. Unvaccinated employees may experience restrictions on where they are able to work as recommended by Ministry of Health and SWPH.

Isolation

Although the Chief Medical Officer of Health recently announced some people no longer have to follow the mandatory 5-day isolation period after testing positive for COVID-19, this does NOT apply to those working and living in High-Risk Settings. WDDS is considered a High-Risk setting - so people living and working at WDDS must continue to follow the isolation requirements as directed by Southwestern Public Health. The requirements are communicated to WDDS and staff on a case by case basis.

Visits to WDDS Residences

In keeping with provincial guidelines, indoor visits to most WDDS sites are not permitted because physical distancing of 6ft from everyone in the home cannot be maintained due to the size of the home. Where 6ft physical distancing can be maintained, indoor visits must be pre-scheduled with as much notice as possible. You can book your visit by contacting the staff directly working in the home or the main office 519-539-7447. Only visitors who are able to show proof of a negative Rapid Antigen COVID-19 test within 24 hours prior to the visit, will be permitted for indoor visits. Visitors can arrange to complete a Rapid Antigen test provided by WDDS, at the main office prior to their scheduled visit. **Note: There may be restrictions on unvaccinated visitors, as recommended by the Ministry of Health, SWPH and/or MCCSS. All visitors will be required to wear a Medical/ Procedural mask provided by WDDS and practice physical distancing throughout the visit.

Outdoor visits are permitted at all sites. Medical/ procedural masks are required to be worn at all times if physical distancing of 6ft cannot be maintained. A Rapid Antigen Test is not required to be completed prior to outdoor visits, however, visitors must pre-schedule the visit with the staff at the site. Specific WDDS sites may be subject to further restrictions beyond these guidelines. Please consult with the site supervisor or manager with questions regarding site-specific restrictions.

Should changes to these rules be necessary or mandated by the provincial government, we will implement them without delay and notify you immediately.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Supervisor of the location or the main office 519-539-7447.

WDDS Offices

Medical/ Procedural Masks continue to be mandatory while at our offices. Staff are asked to please respect capacity limits posted outside many of our rooms and maintain physical distancing.

Staff will continue to be screened upon arrival at our sites.

All Visitors must complete a Rapid Antigen test upon arrival or show proof of a negative test within 24 hours prior to the visit.

Our offices remain closed to the public.

Events Across WDDS

On the advice of Southwestern Public Health authorities and in compliance with MCCSS directives, restrictions on gatherings and permitted events, we have cancelled all scheduled in-person events across the organization.

Program Updates

Community-Based Supports

(Individualized Supports, Family Supports and Supported Independent Living)

Many individuals supported or affiliated with WDDS live independently in the community with some or infrequent services from WDDS. We have recommended that people living independently heed Public Health advice around indoor visits, masking, and vaccination. We have provided PPE to households or visiting staff where physical distancing is not possible.

Community Participation Supports (CPS)

We are currently supporting small groups at our main building.

We are scaling up cautiously and offering limited spaces to people living in the community. People in our supported living programs are already receiving community participation supports facilitated by the staff in their homes.

We will contact you directly if a space becomes available to you.

If you have any questions, please call 519-539-7447 ext 251

Employment Supports

As much as possible, our employment supports continue to match individuals seeking work to opportunities. We also continue to support people who are working in WDDS-facilitated placements.

Group Homes

People living in WDDS's group homes have been receiving meaningful virtual and in-person day supports in their homes.

We are ensuring that all group homes have the technology to keep the people we support happy and connected to their families and friends. Please contact your site supervisor to arrange phone calls, visits, FaceTime chats, or other virtual connections with your loved ones.

Individualized Passport Supports

WDDS staff have continued to support people with their Passport funding throughout the pandemic. With the help of technology, staff have been providing virtual supports to many. Staff have also been providing in-person supports when possible while following public health guidelines. Passport Intake is ongoing, and we continue to meet with individuals from both the community and from WDDS residential services.

As our communities begin to re-open and activities become available, we will resume community participation supports as possible.

Respite (Adult)

Adult overnight respite continues to be temporarily closed in response to the ongoing pandemic.

Virtual Offerings

If you were previously attending WDDS's in-person day supports, you can access our virtual day support activities. Please contact us at 519-539-7447 ext 235