

CFS Practice, Adoption and Group Care Practice

This document outlines the precautions implemented in regions that are designated Critical (red) per the Province of Manitoba's Pandemic Response System. These precautions will remain in effect until further notice.

While practice guidelines may change, the priority is always safety, family connection and healing in order for families to care for their children. These decisions will also be made within the context of public health advice.

Areas of practice that are affected

1. CFS General Practice
2. Home Visits
3. Foster Care Service Delivery
4. Group Care Service Delivery
5. Adoptions

CFS General Practice

- All mandated child protection services will continue. CFS response will be triaged based on immediate urgency.
- All after-hours work, ongoing case management, and intakes will be responded to on an urgent basis.
- The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and screening questions are required to continue.
- When possible, alternatives like using the phone or digital online contact should be used to connect with families and collaterals.
- Clinical or other essential support offered by CFS should continue when appropriate with the use of PPE and enhanced screening. Non-essential support should be reduced or put on hold and periodically reassessed.
- School attendance is supported in accordance with Manitoba Education pandemic response guidelines.

Family Visits

- If visits are critical and must occur in an office, screening tools, social distancing, required PPE and hand sanitizing must be followed by all visitors. Visits can occur away from the office if an adequate space is available, the legal guardian agrees and all safety precautions are followed.
- Virtual family visits should be utilized in place of cancelled in-person visits.
- Agencies can move to virtual tools to connect with children in care for a period of 30 days. Case documentation should reflect the 30-day face-to-face method used.

Considerations On Reserve

- All public health orders must continue to be followed.
- Due to travel restrictions, visits in the community should be suspended and replaced by virtual visits.
- First Nation communities may have travel restrictions , which would limit some support and services from outside the community to those considered essential.

Foster Care Support

- Visits to foster homes may occur virtually or through phone contact.
- Foster home licenses can be given a conditional renewal.
- Virtual home study visits should occur in place of in-person contact or placed on hold.
- Essential respite services will continue with the use of personal protective equipment, screening and limiting the movement through homes if possible.

Group Care

- Community care providers are encouraged to limit the movement of workers between facilities when possible.
- Face to face visitation should only occur under the permission of the guardian agency and must follow public health guidelines. When possible, virtual options should be used.
- Family visits within a group care facility will not occur. On an individual basis, the CFS guardian agency will identify critical on-site visits with the group care operator. Some examples include therapeutic supports, or a visit needed due to severe mental health concerns and risk mitigation.
- All outside access to the group home should be restricted to essential staff and occupants only.
- Virtual visits are encouraged to support family connections.
- In all regions of the province, altered service delivery is needed to ensure licensing standards are met. This includes virtual site visits.

Adoptions

- An adoption home study requires one home visit to assess the safety of the home. These are currently on hold, until in-person visits can resume.
- Virtual home visits can still occur, but finalization of the home study cannot occur at this time.
- Virtual educational seminars can continue, but in-person education seminars are currently on hold.