4.04/Communication & Visitation for Parents & Family Members

Policy Owner(s): Residential/Day School
Effective Date: September 25, 2013 | Revised Date: May 20, 2022

1. Policy Objective
   It is Heartspring’s philosophy to provide parents and family members with opportunities to visit and communicate with their child. This policy outlines appropriate visitation times and authorized methods of communication.

2. Scope
   This policy applies to all Heartspring residential/day school staff, students, and their family members or approved visitors.

3. Policy Statement
   Parents and family members are always welcome to visit their child on campus. Family members/approved visitors (other than parents) must be listed on the Heartspring Visitation and Communication Authorization form. The first 30 days after the student’s enrollment day are reserved for “no physical” visitations. We view this time as the student becoming acclimated to Heartspring and Heartspring staff getting to know the student. Parents may call, email, or have video calls with their child. It is helpful if phone calls and/or video calls are scheduled prior with the student’s team.

3.1 Weekday Visits
   Monday through Friday, the classrooms and group homes have a 4 hour visitation limit.
   - Visitation hours during the weekdays in the classrooms begin at 9:00 AM and run until 3:00 PM.
   - Visitation hours for the group homes begin at 3:45 PM and run until 8:00 PM.
   - This combination gives the parents up to four hours per day of visitation time with their child. If parents desire more visitation time, they can take their child off-campus. Off-campus visits will not be accompanied by Heartspring staff.
3.2 Weekend Visits
There is a 4 hour limit in the homes on Saturday and Sunday visits, including holidays. This time frame usually works best if divided into two 2-hour sessions.
- The visitation time frame will be from 9:00 AM until 8:00 PM. This will allow students and staff to complete morning and bedtime routines.
- If parents want to observe their child’s morning or bedtime routine, please make arrangements with the team in advance.

Times away from your child, such as team meetings, scheduled meetings with a team member, administration, or parent training time, do not count toward the visitation hours.

3.3 Other Recommendations
- Families are strongly encouraged to follow the recommendations of the student’s team (if applicable) when planning visits to Heartspring. There may be times when the team may recommend that visits remain on-campus for safety/behavior (or other) reasons. The team may also provide additional recommendations based on the individual student/family needs.
- It is recommended that students attend school while parents visit to limit program/routine disruptions and ensure that IEP services/minutes are provided as scheduled. This is not a mandatory visitation requirement but something that should be discussed with your child’s teacher.
- Parents should contact their child's Local Educational Agency (LEA) to make sure that they agree on the amount of time that their child is away from Heartspring.

4. Policy Violations
Any employee found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. If family members/approved visitors are found to be in violation of this policy, a member of the School Administration Team may reach out to them and discuss it.

5. Forms or Related Policies
- Day School/Residential Parent Handbook
- Visitation and Communication Document

6. Applicable Laws/Regulations
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
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