



Communication & Visitation for Parents & Family Members

Policy Owner(s): Therapeutic School

Effective Date: September 25, 2013 **Revised Date:** March 10, 2026

1. Policy Objective

It is Heartspring's philosophy to provide parents, family members and other visitors with opportunities to visit and communicate with their child in person and on campus. This policy outlines visitor check-ins, appropriate visitation times and authorized methods of communication.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Heartspring Therapeutic School/Residential Program staff, students, their parents/guardians, other family members, and approved visitors.

3. Policy Statement

Parents, family members, and other approved visitors are always welcome to visit their child/student on campus. Family members and authorized visitors other than custodial parents/guardians 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. Heartspring believes this time is critical for the student to acclimate to their new environment and for Heartspring staff to get 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 with the student's team before calling.

Parents, family members, and other authorized visitors may take photos and videos of their own child (or the child they are authorized to visit), as long as *no other students or clients appear on camera*. It is recommended that photos and videos be done while visiting off-campus only, to prevent accidentally including another student.

All visitors, including custodial parents/guardians, siblings, authorized visitors, or other visitors who may accompany parents/guardians, must follow the [Visitor Procedures](#) and present a state-issued photo ID for scanning. If a state-issued photo is not available, the administrative staff will require the individual's birthday and first and last name.

As a best practice, the student's team encourages parents, guardians, family members, and other approved visitors to discuss upcoming visits with the team in advance. The team can provide recommendations to help ensure a successful visit and promote alignment with the student's established behavioral strategies, communication goals, prompting techniques, waiting strategies, and other individualized supports. Additionally, visits offer an excellent opportunity to request training sessions or meetings with one or more team members. Please note that such requests typically require advance notice to allow for appropriate scheduling and preparation.

3.1 Weekday Visits

Monday through Friday, the classrooms and group homes have a four (4) hour visitation limit.

- Visitation hours in the classrooms begin at 9:00 AM and end at 3:00 PM.
- Visitation hours for the group homes begin at 3:45 PM and end at 8:00 PM.
- This combination gives the parents up to four hours per day of visitation time with their child (up to two (2) hours in the classroom and up to two (2) hours in the child's group home). Families/visitors are not allowed to stay overnight on Heartspring's campus during their visit.
- Parents who bring sibling(s) or other children for the visit must ensure the sibling or child is well-behaved at all times. Heartspring staff can require the parents to remove the siblings/children from the environment for disruptive behavior.

3.2 Weekend and Holiday Visits

There is a four (4) hour limit in the homes on Saturday, Sunday, and holiday visits. This time frame usually works best if divided into two, 2-hour sessions.

- Visitation hours will be from 9:00 AM until 8:00 PM. This will allow students and staff to complete morning and bedtime routines.
- If parents/guardians would like to observe their child's morning or bedtime routine, they should make arrangements with their child's/student's team in advance.
- Families/visitors are not allowed to stay overnight on Heartspring's campus during their visit.

Times away from your child, such as team meetings, scheduled meetings with a team member, administration, parent training, or time spent with your child off campus, are not included in visitation hours.

3.3 Off-Campus Visits

- If parents/guardians/visitors desire more visitation time, they may take their child off-campus.

- Heartspring staff will not accompany any off-campus visits. However, if a student is off-campus and parents need assistance with a student's behavior, parents are encouraged to call the student team for support.
- Key fobs are available for parents/guardians who plan off-campus visits. The only access a fob provides is for the gate between group homes G3 and G4 to allow parents/guardians to enter the fenced area when picking up their student for the off-site visit and when returning to campus.
- Once inside the gate, you can head to your child's home and knock on the door, where a staff member will let you in. If you find it more convenient or otherwise necessary to enter the fenced area nearer your child's group home, you can call the group home, and a staff member will provide access. Letting the home staff know in advance of your anticipated arrival time may be helpful for a timelier entrance.
- When returning to Heartspring's Campus, parents should call their child's Group Home to notify Group Home staff of their expected arrival time.
- Fobs shall be returned to the student's group home staff.
- Heartspring reserves the right to invoice a lost key fob charge of \$25.00.

3.4 Other Recommendations

- Heartspring strongly encourages families and approved visitors 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 reasons. Ex. safety and behavior. The team may also provide additional recommendations based on the individual student's/family's needs.
- Heartspring recommends 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 Heartspring visitation requirement, but something that should be discussed with your child's teacher and/or your child's Local Educational Agency (LEA) (or school district), as some school districts may not want the child to miss any IEP services/minutes.
- Parents are advised to contact their child's Local Educational Agency (LEA) (or school district) to make sure they agree on the amount of time that the student is away from Heartspring. This is particularly important if the child will be going home for a visit, and he/she will be missing several days of school. Some school districts have very strict policies and limitations in place regarding how much time a student can be away from a residential school program. Therefore, always check in advance with the appropriate school district/LEA in these situations.
- When students have multi-family units involved (stepfamily, blended family, and/or complex familial relationships) it is advised that family visits are coordinated among all family members. Numerous visits and back-to-back family visits can be disruptive to programming and cause a reduction in or

lack of progress. Should this become problematic, the student's team and/or School Leadership Team members may become involved.

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 Leadership Team will contact the family member or visitor to discuss the matter.

5. Definitions

- Local Education Agency (LEA)—a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.
- Key Fob - a small, programmed electronic device that provides access to a physical object or system

6. Forms or Related Policies

- [Therapeutic School Parent Handbook](#)
- [Visitation and Communication Authorization Form](#)
- [Visit to Heartspring Form](#)
- [Visit to Heartspring Form \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Visitor Procedures](#)

7. Applicable Laws/Regulations

- CARF Medical Rehabilitation Standard 2.E.2
- [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)

REVISION RECORD

DATE	VERSION	REVISION DESCRIPTION
12/4/2023	v.2	The following section(s) were updated: sections 3, 3.1, 3.2 3.3, 5, and 7.
11/6/2024	v.3	Section 3.2 and Section 6 were updated.
3/10/2026	v.4	Section 3 and Section 3.4 were updated