



## HOMES AND SENIOR SERVICES

**POLICY & PROCEDURE NUMBER:** 1.9

**DEPARTMENT:** *Infection Control*

**POLICY:** *Ethical Framework  
Infection Prevention and Control Program*

**APPROVAL DATE:** November 2022

**REVISION DATE:**

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### Policy:

#### **Ethical values and principles:**

Trust and Justice are the two key guiding values that underpin ethical framework for Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) program decision-making. The ethical principles and procedural considerations that follow contribute to upholding and promoting trust and justice. Given that it may not be possible in some circumstances to uphold all values and principles equally, it will be important for decision makers to explain how they prioritised them, and to justify the trade-offs made in each situation.

### Procedure:

Ethical framework: to inform decision-making, and to guide decision-making to help mitigate some unintended and unavoidable situations.

Ethical framework for the IPAC program includes the following key principles: (which have been discussed and developed in collaboration with the interdisciplinary IPAC team, the home's leadership team (where not already represented on the interdisciplinary IPAC team), the continuous quality improvement committee (once established), and the Residents' Council or Family Council, if any):

- o Fairness;
- o Equity;
- o Transparency;
- o Consideration of available evidence;
- o Consideration of impacts of decisions on residents and staff;
- o Resident quality of life as a primary driver;
- o Risk relative to reward of key decisions; and
- o Safety.

***An example tool to use to explore ethical decision making is outlined in 1.9a) Ethical Decision-Making Framework - Form***



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Example of Ethical Framework for IPAC:

What is meant by escalation and de-escalation of practices? The decision to apply the precautionary principle can include making a risk-based decision to transition from routine practices to additional precautions (escalation).

The precautionary principle helps to inform decisions about managing risk and preventing harm. Applying lessons learned from previous outbreaks can support early decision-making in the future.

Precautionary Principle will also be implemented:

- deemed appropriate with use of the most current medical evidence
- guided by the key principles as set out in the ethical framework.
- consider recommendations including those of a provincial scientific table, and the Chief Medical Officer of Health appointed under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, where available.

Resources:

De-escalation of COVID-19 Outbreak Control Measures in Long-term Care and Retirement Homes; PHO; 05/04/2021

Precautionary Principle—Applications Relevant to Public Health Emergency Preparedness; PHO; October 2022: [https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/P/2021/precautionary-principle-emergency-preparedness.pdf?sc\\_lang=en#:~:text=The%20precautionary%20principle%20helps%20to,to%20humans%20and%20the%20environment](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/P/2021/precautionary-principle-emergency-preparedness.pdf?sc_lang=en#:~:text=The%20precautionary%20principle%20helps%20to,to%20humans%20and%20the%20environment).

Thompson AK, Faith K, Gibson JL, Upshur REG. Pandemic influenza preparedness: an ethical framework to guide decision-making. BMC Med Ethics. 2006;7(1):12. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6939-7-12>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse/ethics-framework-guide-use-response-covid-19-pandemic.html>

Minister's Directive: COVID-19 response measures for long-term care homes; August 30, 2022  
Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021,  
O. Reg. 246/22