

Internet and Email Policy

Policy

Waverley Family Healthcare (WFHC) recognizes the practice team requires access to email and internet to assist in the efficient and safe delivery of healthcare services to our patients. WFHC supports the right of staff to have access to reasonable personal use of the internet and email communications in the workplace using the devices and networks provided by the practice.

Purpose and objectives

This policy sets out guidelines for acceptable use of internet and email by the practice team, contractors, and other staff of WFHC. Internet and email are provided primarily to assist the team carry out their duties of employment.

Scope

This internet and email policy applies to the practice team, contractors and other staff of WFHC who access the internet and email on practice owned devices for any work and work-related purposes. Including but not limited to the following to perform their work:

- Email scrips,
- Email test results,
- Email medical certificates,
- Email referrals,
- Email response to patient's query, concern, suggestion and complaint,
- Search for medical condition or other health services,

Use of the internet by the practice team, contractors and other staff is permitted and encouraged where this supports the goals and objectives of WFHC. Access to the internet is a privilege and the practice team, contractors and other staff must adhere to this policy.

Violation of these policies could result in:

- disciplinary and/or legal action or
- termination of employment or
- the practice team, contractors and other staff being held personally liable for damages caused by any violations of this policy

All employees are required to confirm they have understood and agree to abide by this email and internet policy. New staff are required to read this policy and sign the induction form. Existing staff read this policy and sign the education form.

The practice team, contractors and other staff may also use the internet and email access provided by WFHC for:

- limited personal use.
- more extended personal use under specific circumstances (see below)

Limited personal use of email and internet

Limited personal use is permitted where it:

- infrequent and brief use,
- does not interfere with the duties of the practice team, contractors and other staff,
- does not interfere with the operation of your general practice,

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- does not compromise the security of your general practice,
- does not impact on your general practice electronic storage capacity,
- does not decrease your general practice network performance (e.g. large email attachments can decrease system performance and potentially cause system outages),
- does not incur any additional expense for your general practice,
- does not violate any legislation,
- does not compromise any confidentiality requirements of your general practice.

Examples of what could be considered reasonable personal use including:

- conducting a brief online bank transaction
- paying a bill
- sending a brief personal email, similar to making a brief personal phone call.

Unacceptable internet and email use

The practice team, contractors and other staff can not use internet or email access provided by WFHC to:

- creating or exchanging messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening;
- visiting web sites containing objectionable (including pornographic) or criminal material;
- exchanging any confidential or sensitive information held by your general practice;
- creating, storing or exchanging information in violation of copyright laws;
- using internet-enabled activities such as gambling, gaming, conducting a business or conducting illegal activities;
- creating or exchanging advertisements, solicitations, chain letters and other unsolicited or bulk email;
- playing electronic or online games in work time.

Responding to and sending emails

Patients are encouraged to communicate with the practice use the practice's email address wfhc@wfhc.com.au, including all of our doctors and staff. We do not have individual doctor's email. We aim to respond to patients' emails within 2 business days.

Our email service is currently not encrypted, and therefore we cannot guarantee the security of our email communications. There is a risk that emails and/or attachments could be read by someone other than the intended recipient (for example, as a result of widespread hacking, or because someone accesses patients' email accounts).

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of WFHC and current legislation requirements.

Reference

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), Standards for General Practices (5th Edition, 2019)