

Family Medical Practice internet and email policy

Current as of: 08/12/2021

Introduction

Family Medical Practice recognises the practice team requires access to email and the internet to assist in the efficient and safe delivery of healthcare services to our patients. Family Medical Practice 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 Family medical practice. 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 Family Medical Practice who access the internet and email on practice owned devices, including, but not limited to desktop computers and smart phones to perform their work.

Use of the internet by the practice team, contractors and other staff is permitted and encouraged where this supports the goals and objectives of Family Medical Practice. 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.

All employees are required to confirm they have understood and agree to abide by this email and internet policy.

Policy content

The practice team, contractors and other staff may use the internet and email access provided by Family Medical Practice for:

- any work and work-related purposes
- 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
- 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 (eg large email attachments can decrease system performance and potentially cause system outages)
- does not violate any legislation
- does not compromise any confidentiality requirements of your general practice

Unacceptable internet and email use

The practice team, contractors and other staff may not use internet or email access provided by Family Medical Practice 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.

Communication with Patients via electronic means

Communication done with patients by using email is conducted with appropriate regard to the privacy Laws relating to health information and confidentiality of the Patients health information or the risks associated with electronic communication in that the information could be intercepted or read by someone other than the intended recipient.

Staff and Patients using email/SMS or other forms of electronic messaging

Staff and Patients should be aware that it is not possible to guarantee that electronic communications will be private. All personal health information or sensitive information sent by email must be securely encrypted.

Family Medical Practice do not encourage to use email for communication regarding clinical purpose. In case of a situation where email is used for correspondence between patients and clinical staff, the email conversation should be documented in patient file.

Patients can request information to be sent via email (without encryption) however, Patients must be informed this form of communication is not secure. Consent must be obtained from the client to release the information in this format.

When an email message is sent or received in the course of a person's duties, that message is a business communication and therefore constitutes an official record.

Internal or external parties, including Patients may send electronic messages. Messages from Patients or those of clinical significance require a response to confirm receipt and should be documented in the client medical record if appropriate. Employees should be aware that electronic communications could, depending on the technology, be forwarded, intercepted, printed and stored by others. Electronic mail is the equivalent of a post card. Staff members have full accountability for emails sent in their name or held in their mailbox and are expected to utilise this communication tool in an acceptable manner.

The Family Medical Practice reserves the right to check individual email as a precaution to fraud, viruses, workplace harassment or breaches of confidence by employees. Inappropriate use of the email facility will be fully investigated and may be grounds for dismissal.

The Family Medical Practice uses an email disclaimer notice on outgoing emails that are affiliated with the Health Service.

The disclaimer is as follows:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

This email is intended only for the addresses(s) and is subject to copyright. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately, do not use or disclose the contents and delete the message and any attachments to this email. We cannot accept any liability for any loss or damage caused by software viruses.

There is an auto message sent to all incoming email stating

'This email service is used only for administrative purposes.

For Clinical matters please call the clinic at 02 98903848 and book an appointment to see the doctor.

The emails are checked every fortnight.

In case of an emergency, please call '000'.

Accessing the Internet

The Internet is a vast computer network, comprised of individual networks and computers all around the world that communicate with each other to allow information sharing between users. It is important to adopt secure practices when accessing and using the Internet.

The Internet can be accessed by all members of staff; however, excessive use of the Internet is not acceptable. Staff members are encouraged to use the Internet for research activities pertaining to their role, however, should be aware that usage statistics are recorded and submitted to management as required. The Family Medical Practice reserves the right to check individual's internet history as a precaution to fraud, viruses, workplace harassment or breaches of confidence by employees. Inappropriate use of the internet facility will be fully investigated and may be grounds for dismissal.

The Family Medical Practice Website

In complying with the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000, our practice provides the following advice to users of our website about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

The aim of this advice is to inform users of this site about:

- what personal information is being collected;
- who is collecting personal information;
- how personal information is being used;
- access to personal information collected on this site; and
- security of personal information collected on this site.

The Family Medical Practice privacy policy is posted on the website and available for download. The website is continually monitored to ensure it is kept current and up to date. It contains the minimum information required on the Family Medical Practice information sheet. Any changes to the Family Medical Practice information sheet are also reflected on the website.

Social Media Policy

We do not use social media.

We have registered to Google business to make our business available to the community. It will not be used to post or advertisement. It is used only to update hours and working days. The practice doesn't respond to the feedbacks given on google. The google business page will be updated when needed.

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed yearly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of Family Medical Practice and current legislation requirements.