

Communication Policy & Procedures

Telephone Communication

1. General Overview

All incoming and outgoing telephone communication for clinical matters is handled directly by **Dr Tenell Holborow**. This ensures a high level of clinical oversight, consistent triaging, and adherence to privacy and safety requirements.

2. Call Answering

- All patient calls and after-hours calls are answered by **Dr Tenell Holborow**.
- The phone system message instructs callers:
“If this is an emergency, please hang up and call 000.”
- Calls are answered promptly and courteously.

3. Staff Communication

Practice staff may communicate with each other using:

- Telephone
- Email (refer to separate Email Policy & Procedure)
- Verbal communication

Internal communication must maintain professional standards and uphold privacy.

4. Patient Identification

For all clinical or administrative matters over the phone, **three-factor identification** is mandatory. Approved identifiers include:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Gender (as identified by the patient)

- Patient health record number, if applicable
- Individual Healthcare Identifier

No patient specific information is provided until identity is confirmed.

5. Privacy and Confidentiality

When discussing clinical issues over the phone:

- Privacy is always considered
- Conversations are conducted discreetly
- Information is disclosed only once identity has been confirmed
- Staff do not discuss sensitive matters within earshot of other patients or visitors
- Patient details are never spoken loudly or publicly

6. Call Triage

- **All incoming calls requiring clinical input are triaged exclusively by Dr Tenell Holborow.**
- Urgent matters are addressed appropriately, including arranging immediate care or directing the caller to emergency services.
- Nonurgent matters are managed or scheduled in a clinically appropriate timeframe.

7. Documentation

All telephone calls relating to patient care are documented in the patient's electronic medical record. Each entry must include:

- Date and time of the call
- Caller identity
- Purpose of the call
- Clinical information provided
- Advice given
- Follow-up arrangements

- Urgency category

No clinical advice is given by nonmedical staff.

Electronic Communication

8. Email

- The practice uses email for internal communication and limited external communication.
- A **separate Email Policy & Procedure** must be followed.
- Patients are advised that email is not secure and not suitable for urgent or sensitive clinical communication.
- No clinical documents or results are sent by secure SMS or HotDoc, as **the practice does not use these systems**.

9. Secure Messaging

- The practice **does not use**:
 - Secure SMS (HotDoc)
 - Secure results messaging
 - Live chat or any website-based messaging

10. Telehealth & Online Services

The practice does **not** use telehealth-specific platforms at this time unless clinically required and prearranged.

After-Hours Communication

11. After-Hours Service (24/7 Availability)

- T & A Holborow Pty Ltd provides **24/7 clinician availability**.
- All after-hours clinical calls are answered directly by **Dr Tenell Holborow**.
- Patients are reminded via phone message to call **000 in an emergency**.

Communication Standards

The practice ensures:

- Timely response to calls

- Consistent documentation
- High-quality patient communication
- Respect for confidentiality and dignity
- Clear pathways for emergency escalation