



PATIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY

Purpose

GreenHills Health Hub is committed to providing safe, respectful, equitable and patient-centred healthcare.

The practice recognises that a positive healthcare relationship is based on **mutual respect and shared responsibility** between patients, practitioners and other members of the practice team.

This policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of patients and the expectations of the practice team in maintaining a respectful, supportive and collaborative healthcare environment.

The practice expects patients to be treated with **warmth, empathy, dignity and consideration**, while also recognising that patients and members of the practice team have a responsibility to treat one another respectfully.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All patients and their families, carers, support persons and advocates.
- Visitors to the practice.
- Assistance animals accompanying patients.
- All GPs and other clinical practitioners.
- Nursing staff.
- Reception and administration staff.
- Practice management.
- Contractors, students and GP Registrars.
- All other members of the practice team.

Patient Rights

Patients have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity, respect, warmth, empathy and courtesy.
- Receive healthcare without discrimination, harassment or unfair treatment.
- Have their identity, cultural background, beliefs, values, gender and personal circumstances respected.
- Receive care in an environment that promotes their safety, privacy and dignity.
- Have their personal and health information handled confidentially and in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and practice policies.
- Participate in decisions about their healthcare.
- Receive clear and understandable information about their diagnosis, proposed treatment, expected benefits, material risks and available alternatives.
- Ask questions and seek clarification about their healthcare.

- Have additional time or support provided where reasonably practicable when circumstances are complex, distressing or difficult.
- Refuse recommended treatment, advice, procedures or referrals where they have decision-making capacity, after being informed of relevant risks and consequences.
- Seek a second opinion or obtain care from another healthcare provider.
- Cease receiving care from the practice or choose to obtain ongoing care from another healthcare provider, subject to appropriate arrangements for continuity of care.
- Request a practitioner of a particular gender where reasonably practicable.
- Have access to an interpreter or other appropriate communication assistance where required.
- Have a support person, carer or advocate involved in their care where appropriate and with the patient's consent.
- Have an assistance animal accompany them where permitted by applicable legislation and appropriate to the circumstances of the healthcare being provided. The practice will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate assistance animals and will discuss any specific clinical or safety considerations with the patient.
- Have their health record maintained accurately and kept current, subject to the requirements of applicable privacy and health record legislation.
- Request access to their health information in accordance with applicable privacy requirements.
- Make a complaint or provide feedback without being disadvantaged in their care.
- Receive reasonable assistance to access appropriate ongoing healthcare where the practice is unable to continue providing care.

Patients in Distress

The practice recognises that patients may become distressed, upset, anxious or overwhelmed while attending the practice.

Where a patient is distressed and requires privacy, the practice will, where practicable:

- Offer the patient a spare consulting room or other suitable private area where they can wait or compose themselves.
- Notify an appropriate member of the nursing or administration team that the patient is distressed and is being provided with a private area.
- Notify the patient's GP or another appropriate clinician where there is a concern regarding the patient's wellbeing or immediate health needs.
- Respect the patient's dignity and privacy while they are distressed.
- Offer appropriate support and assistance.
- Arrange for a member of the practice team to undertake regular welfare checks while the patient is waiting in the private area.
- Escalate concerns to a clinician where there is a concern regarding the patient's immediate health or safety.
- Contact emergency services where clinically necessary.

The practice will use appropriate communication and, where reasonably practicable, allow additional time when dealing with patients who are distressed or experiencing difficult circumstances.

Patients who are distressed will be treated respectfully and without judgement.

Patient Responsibilities

Patients are expected to:

- Treat practitioners, staff, other patients and visitors with dignity, respect and courtesy.
- Communicate openly and respectfully with the practice team.
- Provide accurate and relevant information about their health, medications, allergies and medical history.

- Inform the practice of any changes to their contact details or personal circumstances relevant to their care.
- Maintain an accurate and current health record by providing relevant information and advising the practice of significant changes where appropriate.
- Follow agreed treatment and management plans where possible.
- Ask questions if they do not understand information provided by the clinical team.
- Inform their treating practitioner if they decide not to follow recommended treatment or intend to seek another clinical opinion where appropriate.
- Attend appointments on time and provide reasonable notice when cancelling or rescheduling.
- Behave appropriately while on practice premises.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of other patients and practice team members.
- Ensure assistance animals accompanying them are appropriately controlled and do not create a risk to other patients, staff or clinicians.
- Not engage in threatening, abusive, discriminatory, aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Not attend the practice under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances where this creates a safety risk.
- Pay any applicable fees for services provided, unless the service is bulk billed or otherwise covered.

Respectful Behaviour and Zero Tolerance

GreenHills Health Hub is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for patients, visitors and members of the practice team.

Patients, visitors and practice team members are expected to treat one another with dignity, respect and courtesy.

GreenHills Health Hub has a **Zero Tolerance Policy** addressing violence, threats, aggression, abuse, harassment, discrimination and other unacceptable behaviour.

The Zero Tolerance Policy applies to all patients, visitors and members of the practice team and outlines the practice's approach to preventing and responding to unacceptable behaviour.

The practice recognises that illness, distress, anxiety or frustration may affect a person's behaviour. These circumstances will be considered when determining an appropriate response; however, behaviour that places patients, visitors or members of the practice team at risk will not be tolerated.

Patients who have concerns about the behaviour of a member of the practice team are encouraged to raise their concerns through the practice's complaints process.

Related documents:

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy

Refusal of Treatment and Informed Decisions

A patient with decision-making capacity has the right to refuse recommended treatment, advice, procedures or referrals.

Where clinically appropriate, the practitioner will explain:

- The recommended treatment or intervention.
- The expected benefits.
- Material risks and potential consequences.
- Reasonable alternatives, where available.

The patient's decision will be respected, subject to any applicable legal or clinical requirements.

The practitioner will document the refusal, relevant discussion, risks explained and any action taken in the patient's health record.

Second Opinions and Alternative Care

Patients have the right to seek another clinical opinion and to choose another healthcare provider.

Where appropriate, the treating practitioner may offer to provide a referral or relevant information to another healthcare provider.

A patient's decision to seek an alternative opinion or provider will be respected and will not affect their right to receive respectful care.

Where a patient chooses to cease care with GreenHills Health Hub, the practice will make reasonable efforts to support continuity of care and facilitate appropriate transfer of relevant health information, subject to consent, privacy and applicable requirements.

Complaints and Feedback

Patients are encouraged to provide feedback or raise concerns about their care or their experience at the practice.

Complaints will be managed respectfully, fairly and confidentially in accordance with the practice's complaints management process.

A patient will not be disadvantaged simply because they have made a complaint or provided feedback.

Patients who wish to raise concerns about discrimination or inappropriate behaviour by a member of the practice team are encouraged to use the practice's complaints process.

Presence of a third party during a consultation

Patient consent is required for a third party to be present during their consultation. Third parties can be interpreters, carers, relatives, friends, medical, allied health or nursing students on placement, general practice registrars or chaperones.

Our processes ensure the patient is informed and can consent to or refuse the presence of a third party. The patient is informed in the following ways:

- At the time of booking their appointment
- Signage at reception
- Verbally informed by the receptionist
- Verbally informed by the nurse/GP

The patient may decide if they will allow the third party to be present at any time prior to the commencement of the consultation. The patient's decision is noted in their health record with the date of the associated consultation. The patient must be asked for each separate consultation for which a third party may be present. If the patient declines, this information must be noted in the patient's health record and made obvious in the appointment book to inform the practitioner and avoid any discomfort for all parties.

Chaperone

There are certain situations where the patient, as well as the healthcare provider, may benefit from the presence of a chaperone, for example:

- the patient requests a chaperone

- during an intimate examination
- the patient appears particularly reluctant or distressed to be examined
- the doctor is uncomfortable in examining the patient without a chaperone

The patient must consent to having a chaperone and must agree to the individual who will serve as the chaperone.

If a chaperone is not available, or if the patient is not comfortable with the choice of chaperone, the healthcare provider should offer to postpone the examination until an appropriate chaperone is available if this does not impact on the patient's healthcare. A healthcare provider should ensure the patient does not feel compromised or pressured into proceeding with an examination if a chaperone is not available.

If the healthcare provider has concerns about a particular patient and would like to have a chaperone present, but the patient does not consent, the healthcare provider does not have to perform the examination. The healthcare provider may wish to defer the examination or refer the patient to another healthcare provider.

Where a chaperone is provided, the chaperone must:

- be qualified or appropriately trained, e.g., a registered or enrolled nurse who understands the support role they are performing on behalf of the patient
- be of a gender approved by the patient or the patient's support person e.g., parent, carer, guardian or friend
- respect the privacy and dignity of the patient

The doctor must be careful not to reveal confidential patient information in front of the chaperone.

The healthcare provider must record the chaperone's name and qualifications in the patient's healthcare record.

Presence of a third party requested by the patient

When the patient requests the presence of a third party, this is documented in the patient's file.

Presence of medical student requested by practice

Each patient has and rights concerning the presence of a medical student at their consultation.

The patient is advised that a medical student is with their healthcare provider:

- at the time of booking their appointment (if possible)
- via signage at reception
- verbally, when informed by the receptionist
- verbally, when informed by the nurse/GP

The receptionist, nurse or GP will verbally confirm the patient's decision prior to the medical student entering the consulting room. The patient's decision will be documented in their health record.

If the medical student was allowed to be present during the consultation, the patient will be thanked for enabling the learning opportunity.

The patient may choose not to have the student present during their consultation; this is recorded in the patient's record.

The presence of a third party observing or being involved in clinical care during a consultation occurs only with the *prior* consent of the patient.

Accessibility of services

Ease of access to our practice's building and services is an important part of patient care. For patients with a disability or special need, we provide a range of support and services, including:

- picture-based signage to assist patients with an intellectual disability or visual impairment
- car parking close to the practice, designated, signed disabled parking
- uncluttered, wide passageways from front door to reception and consultation rooms
- unisex wheelchair-accessible toilet
- height adjustable beds
- home visits by request and based on individual circumstances
- telehealth for patients with a disability.

We adhere to the *Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and legislation on providing access to general practices. Further information is available on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website.

Patient Transport Service (PTS)

Patient Transport Service is a NSW Health service for people who require transport to, or from, a health facility such as a hospital, rehabilitation unit or aged care facility, but do not need a time-critical emergency ambulance.

Eligibility for PTS

A person must be assessed by a medical practitioner or registered nurse as medical unsuitable for community, public or private transport. A person must be assessed as having a low risk of deterioration before being eligible for PTS.

PTS is suitable for people who:

Require stretcher transport.

Are assessed by a medical practitioner or nurse as having a condition that requires the skills of PTS staff during the journey.

Have a medical or other condition that a medical practitioner or registered nurse would assess as a condition that has affected a person's appearance, or one that has caused incontinence.

PTS is not suitable for people who:

Who have a life-threatening condition that requires emergency transport.

Are assessed as likely to deteriorate.

Can take another mode of public transport (train, bus, ferry, taxi or rideshare).

Can walk and live independently in the community.

Are behaviorally unstable requiring mechanical restraint.

Are assessed by medical practitioner or registered nurse and unsuitable to be transported by PTS.

Booking PTS

If a patient is deemed eligible for PTS, our practice can make a booking by calling 1300 233 500 before midday the day before the required transport date. This includes all bookings from medical practices where the patient is not being transferred to a NSW Health public hospital facility.

Patient fees and charges may be incurred when using the PTS.

For further information visit:

Patient Transport Service (nsw.gov.au)

Practice Responsibilities

The practice team will:

- Provide respectful, warm, empathetic and patient-centred care.
- Respect patient rights and individual circumstances.
- Provide care free from discrimination.
- Maintain patient privacy and confidentiality.
- Communicate clearly, respectfully and in a manner the patient can understand.
- Support patients to participate in decisions about their healthcare.
- Ask questions and seek clarification rather than make assumptions about individual needs.
- Provide reasonable adjustments and appropriate communication assistance where required.
- Allow additional time or provide additional support where reasonably practicable in difficult or distressing circumstances.
- Maintain accurate and current health records.
- Respond appropriately to concerns, complaints and incidents.
- Provide appropriate assistance to patients who are distressed.
- Maintain a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff.
- Respect a patient's decision to refuse treatment or seek another clinical opinion, subject to applicable legal and clinical requirements.

Staff Induction, Education and Training

Patient rights and responsibilities, respectful communication, cultural safety, discrimination, privacy, complaints management and the practice's Zero Tolerance Policy will be included in staff induction and relevant ongoing education.

All members of the practice team are expected to understand and comply with the policies and procedures relevant to their role.

Ongoing training needs may be identified through:

- Staff performance reviews.
- Patient feedback and complaints.
- Incidents and near misses.
- Quality improvement activities.
- Changes to legislation, standards or practice requirements.
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Relevant training will be recorded in the practice training register.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or earlier where there are significant changes to legislation, accreditation standards, practice requirements or identified risks.

Patient feedback, complaints, incidents, staff feedback and quality improvement activities may be considered as part of the review process.

Related Documents

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- Anti-discrimination Policy - Patients
- Cultural Safety Policy

- Ceasing Patient Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Staff Training Log
- Incident, Near Miss, Adverse Outcome Reporting Policy

Current as of:	29/08/2026	Version:	1.1
Amendments			
Date of amendment:	Version:	Details of amendment:	
29/08/2026	1.1	Addition of chaperone and third party present in consultations. Addition of PTS.	
28/08/2026	1.0	Original policy	