



CULTURAL SAFETY POLICY

Purpose

GreenHills Health Hub is committed to providing healthcare that is culturally safe, respectful, inclusive and responsive to the individual needs of our patients.

The practice recognises that culture can influence a person's values, beliefs, behaviours, understanding of health and illness, communication and interaction with healthcare services.

This policy establishes the expectations of the practice team regarding culturally safe care and ensures that patients are treated with dignity, respect and without discrimination.

All members of the practice team are required to provide care that is respectful of a person's culture and beliefs and free from discrimination.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All patients and their families, carers and support persons.
- 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.

Cultural Safety

Cultural safety involves providing an environment in which patients feel respected and safe to express their cultural identity, beliefs and healthcare preferences.

Culturally safe care requires practice team members to:

- Respect each person's culture, beliefs, identity and individual circumstances.
- Ask rather than assume about a person's cultural background or needs.
- Recognise that people from the same cultural background may have different beliefs, practices and preferences.
- Avoid imposing personal cultural beliefs, values or assumptions on patients.
- Listen to patients and respect their expressed cultural needs and preferences.
- Support patients to participate in decisions about their healthcare.
- Adapt communication and care where reasonably practicable.

- Provide care free from racism, discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping.

The practice recognises that **the patient is best placed to determine whether they wish to identify their cultural background and what information they are comfortable sharing.**

Cultural Self-Identification

Patients will be given the opportunity to identify their cultural background where they wish to do so.

The practice recognises that:

- A patient may not wish to identify their cultural background.
- A patient may be comfortable discussing their cultural background with some members of the practice team but not others.
- Patients have the right to decide what cultural information they wish to disclose.
- A patient must not be pressured to disclose cultural information.
- Staff should not make assumptions about a patient's cultural background based on their appearance, name, language, country of birth or other characteristics.
- A patient's decision not to disclose cultural information must be respected.

Where a patient chooses to provide cultural information that is relevant to their healthcare, this information should be appropriately recorded in the patient's health record.

Cultural information should only be accessed and used where relevant to providing appropriate healthcare and should be managed in accordance with the practice's privacy and confidentiality requirements.

Patients may request that cultural information is updated or corrected where appropriate.

Respect for Patient Identity, Culture and Beliefs

The practice will make reasonable efforts to:

- Record and use the patient's preferred name and pronouns.
- Respect cultural, religious and spiritual beliefs and practices.
- Accommodate a request for a practitioner of a particular gender where reasonably practicable.
- Consider cultural preferences relating to examinations, communication and involvement of family or carers.
- Respect the patient's choice about who is involved in their healthcare, subject to consent, privacy and clinical considerations.
- Maintain privacy and dignity during consultations and examinations.
- Avoid assumptions based on a patient's appearance, background, language, culture, religion or beliefs.

Where a cultural or religious preference cannot reasonably be accommodated, staff should communicate respectfully with the patient and, where appropriate, discuss available alternatives.

Communication and Health Literacy

The practice recognises that language, communication difficulties and health literacy can affect a patient's ability to access, understand and participate in their healthcare.

The practice will make reasonable efforts to provide:

- Professional interpreter services where required.
- Culturally and health-literacy appropriate health information and resources where available.
- Additional explanation where health literacy may be a barrier to understanding.
- Appropriate communication support for patients with disability or other communication needs.

A professional interpreter should be used where necessary to ensure safe, accurate and confidential communication, particularly where clinical, consent or sensitive information is being discussed.

Family members or carers may be involved in communication where appropriate and with the patient's consent.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

GreenHills Health Hub recognises the importance of culturally safe healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The practice will:

- Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, culture, beliefs, connection to Country, family and community.
- Provide care free from racism, discrimination and stereotyping.
- Support patients to identify cultural, communication or other healthcare needs if they wish to do so.
- Respect the role of family, community and support persons where requested by the patient and consistent with consent and privacy requirements.
- Provide culturally appropriate health information and resources where available.
- Maintain appropriate acknowledgement and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the practice environment.
- Support employees to undertake relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness and cultural safety education.
- Identify opportunities to improve access to and engagement with healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.
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The practice acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the practice operates and pays respect to Elders past and present.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Patients

GreenHills Health Hub recognises that patients come from a wide range of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds.

The practice team will:

- Treat each patient as an individual.
- Avoid assumptions based on cultural, ethnic, linguistic or religious background.
- Ask patients about their preferences where these may affect their healthcare.
- Provide appropriate communication support where required.
- Consider cultural factors when planning and delivering care where clinically appropriate.
- Respect the patient's right to accept or decline healthcare after receiving appropriate information.

Family, Carers and Support Persons

The practice recognises that family members, carers, community members or other support persons may have an important role in a patient's healthcare.

With the patient's consent, and where appropriate, these people may be involved in consultations or healthcare discussions.

The patient's privacy, autonomy and right to make their own healthcare decisions will be respected.

Practice Environment and Resources

GreenHills Health Hub will seek to maintain an environment that is welcoming, inclusive and respectful of Australia's cultural diversity.

Where appropriate and practicable, the practice will provide or display:

- An acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians of the land.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork, flags or other appropriate resources.
- Culturally appropriate health information.
- Health information appropriate to varying levels of health literacy.
- Resources supporting patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Information about interpreter services and other relevant support services.

Practice resources and displays will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain appropriate, respectful and relevant.

Cultural Awareness and Training

The practice will provide opportunities for employees and other members of the practice team to develop and maintain cultural awareness and cultural safety knowledge.

Training may include:

- Cultural awareness and cultural safety.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety.
- Communication and use of interpreter services.
- Understanding health inequalities and barriers to healthcare.
- Inclusive and non-discriminatory healthcare.
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Relevant training will be recorded in the practice training register.

Cultural safety may also be discussed through staff meetings, education sessions, case discussions and quality improvement activities.

Monitoring Cultural Safety

The practice will monitor cultural safety and identify opportunities for improvement through:

- Patient feedback and complaints.
- Staff feedback.
- Review of cultural awareness training.
- Review of practice resources and environment.
- Quality improvement activities.
- Clinical audits, where appropriate, to identify cultural groups within the practice population and assist the practice to understand and respond to the needs of its patient population.
- Identification of barriers to equitable access to healthcare.

Clinical audits and use of cultural information will be undertaken in accordance with privacy and confidentiality requirements.

Discrimination and Racism

Discrimination, racism, harassment or disrespectful behaviour is not acceptable at GreenHills Health Hub.

Patients and members of the practice team are entitled to an environment free from discrimination based on culture, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, age or other personal characteristics.

Concerns regarding discrimination, racism or culturally unsafe behaviour will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with the practice's:

- Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy.
- Anti-discrimination Policy - Patients
- Zero Tolerance Policy.
- Complaints and Feedback Policy.
- Code of Conduct.
- Other relevant practice policies and procedures.

Patient Feedback and Complaints

Patients are encouraged to provide feedback about their experience of care, including whether they felt respected and culturally safe.

Feedback and complaints relating to cultural safety will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with the practice's Complaints and Feedback Policy.

Where appropriate, feedback will be used to:

- Identify barriers to culturally safe care.
- Improve practice processes.
- Identify education and training needs.
- Inform quality improvement activities.

Patients will not be disadvantaged or discriminated against because they provide feedback or make a complaint.

Responsibilities

Practice Management

Practice Management is responsible for:

- Maintaining and reviewing this policy.
- Supporting cultural awareness and cultural safety training.
- Ensuring appropriate resources are available.
- Responding to relevant concerns and complaints.
- Monitoring opportunities for improvement.
- Promoting a respectful and inclusive practice environment.

Clinical Team

Clinical team members are responsible for:

- Providing culturally safe and respectful care.
- Respecting patient culture, beliefs, identity and preferences.
- Asking rather than making assumptions about cultural needs.
- Identifying and responding to cultural or communication needs.
- Using interpreter services where required.
- Appropriately documenting relevant cultural considerations where clinically appropriate.
- Participating in relevant education and training.

Reception and Administration Team

Reception and administration staff are responsible for:

- Treating patients respectfully and without discrimination.
- Respecting a patient's decision about whether to disclose cultural information.
- Being alert to communication, accessibility and cultural needs.
- Respecting patient privacy and cultural preferences.

- Seeking assistance when unsure how to appropriately respond to a patient's needs.

All Practice Team Members

Every member of the practice team is responsible for contributing to an environment where patients, colleagues and visitors are treated with dignity, respect and without discrimination.

All members of the practice team are required to provide care that is respectful of a person's culture and beliefs and free from discrimination.

Review

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

Feedback, audit findings, complaints, training outcomes and quality improvement activities may be considered as part of the review process.

Related Documents

- Patient Rights and Responsibilities Policy
- Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Staff Training Register

Current as of:	28/08/2026	Version:	1.0
Amendments			
Date of amendment:	Version:	Details of amendment:	
28/08/2026	1.0	Original policy	