

OCEAN PHYSIOTHERAPY

Privacy and Health Information Policy

Effective: 21 October 2026 | Version 1.1

Purpose

Applies to Ocean Health Pty Ltd as trustee for the Fitzgerald Family Trust, trading as Ocean Physiotherapy (Ocean Physiotherapy, we, us or our). This policy explains how Ocean Physiotherapy collects, records, uses, stores, protects, shares and provides access to personal and health information. It is intended to operate alongside applicable Commonwealth and Victorian privacy, health-record and professional obligations.

1. Our commitment to privacy

Ocean Physiotherapy respects the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of people who use our services. We collect and handle information to provide safe, effective, coordinated and person-centred physiotherapy and related services, to administer those services, and to meet professional, funding and legal obligations.

We manage information in accordance with applicable law, including the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and Australian Privacy Principles, and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) and Health Privacy Principles. Registered health practitioners must also meet applicable professional standards for confidentiality and health records.

2. Information we may collect

Depending on the service and circumstances, we may collect:

- identity and contact details, date of birth and relevant demographic information;
- emergency contact, supporter, representative, carer or decision-maker details where relevant;
- Medicare, private health, NDIS, Support at Home, DVA, TAC, WorkSafe or other funding and payment information;
- referrals, reports and information from other health professionals or service providers;
- health history, diagnoses, medications, allergies, precautions, symptoms and relevant investigations;
- assessment findings, clinical observations and impressions, clinical reasoning, treatment offered or provided, client response and engagement, progress, outcomes, goals and recommendations;
- relevant functional, social, occupational, recreational, environmental and other contextual information;
- appointments, attendance, correspondence, communications, billing and payment-related records; and
- other information reasonably necessary for care, safety, service delivery, funding, administration or legal obligations.

3. Clinical records and contextual information

A clinical record is not limited to examination findings, diagnoses or treatment. Physiotherapy may require an understanding of the person, their function and the circumstances in which health, participation and rehabilitation occur.

Where reasonably relevant to assessment, treatment, safety, communication, rehabilitation, function or coordination of care, the clinical record may include information about home and living circumstances, work or study, family or support arrangements, physical activity, recreation, lifestyle, psychosocial factors, personal goals, preferences, concerns and other background information.

Ocean Physiotherapy aims to record only information that has a reasonable connection with care or another legitimate service purpose. Clinical impressions and professional opinions may be recorded where relevant and should be identified and documented appropriately rather than presented as established fact where uncertainty exists.

4. Sensitive information, requested confidentiality and separate episodes

Ocean Physiotherapy has professional obligations to maintain accurate and sufficiently complete clinical records. A client may ask that particular information be treated as especially confidential or not routinely disclosed to specified people or organisations. We will take reasonable steps to respect such requests where practicable and lawful.

A request for restricted disclosure does not necessarily mean clinically relevant information can be omitted from the record. Relevant assessment findings, treatment offered or provided, client response or engagement, risks, clinical reasoning, advice, progress and other information necessary for safe and appropriate care may still need to be recorded.

Where sensitive personal, psychosocial or contextual information is relevant to the individual generally but is not necessary for a particular external purpose, disclosure will ordinarily be limited to information reasonably relevant to that purpose.

A client may receive services for different conditions, purposes or funding arrangements. Where appropriate, private, funded and compensable episodes may be managed separately. Information from an unrelated episode will not ordinarily be disclosed to a funder or compensable body solely because that body funds another episode. However, information from another episode may need to be considered, recorded or disclosed where it is materially relevant to clinical safety, assessment, treatment, prognosis, function, care coordination, administration of the funded service, or another lawful requirement.

An internal label such as private, restricted or confidential does not prevent future access where the client later authorises disclosure or access, or where access is required by subpoena, court order, another lawful process, or otherwise authorised or required by law.

5. How we collect information

Where practicable, we collect information directly from the client. Information may also be obtained from an authorised representative or supporter, referring practitioner, general practitioner, specialist, hospital, allied health professional, aged-care or disability provider, funder, insurer or other person or organisation appropriately involved in care or service administration.

Information may be collected through consultations, home visits, assessments, telephone calls, email, SMS, forms, online bookings, reports, correspondence, secure messaging, clinical systems and other appropriate methods.

6. Why we use and disclose information

Information may be used or disclosed where reasonably necessary to:

- assess and provide physiotherapy, rehabilitation, exercise and related health services;
- develop, review and adjust management plans and monitor progress;
- communicate and coordinate with people appropriately involved in care;
- prepare reports, referrals, certificates and clinical correspondence;
- manage appointments, billing, claiming, funding and service administration;
- meet quality, clinical governance, incident, insurance, audit and professional requirements;
- comply with a current and sufficiently specific client authority or consent;
- comply with funding, statutory, regulatory, court or other legal requirements; or
- address another use or disclosure permitted or required by law.

Where a client has provided an ongoing authority, a new consent is not necessarily required for every communication that remains within the scope, purpose and duration of that authority. Consent or authority may be changed or withdrawn for future disclosures, subject to information already lawfully disclosed and any overriding legal requirement.

7. Supporters, representatives and decision-makers

A client may authorise a family member, friend, carer, trusted supporter, support worker, care manager, support coordinator or another person to be present, participate in discussions or receive specified information. Authority may be limited by purpose, type of information, duration or other conditions.

Permission to receive information or support the client does not necessarily provide authority to make decisions for the client. Where another person is to make decisions on the client's behalf, Ocean Physiotherapy may need to establish the nature and scope of that person's legal authority.

Verbal consent may be sufficient for another person to be present in a consultation or for defined communication, and may be documented in the clinical record. Broader, ongoing or particularly sensitive authorities may be documented using a separate written authority form.

8. Funded and third-party services

Where services are funded, arranged or administered through a third-party program, insurer, agency or service provider, Ocean Physiotherapy may need to use or disclose information reasonably necessary to provide, coordinate, review, substantiate, report or administer those services.

This may include NDIS, Support at Home, DVA, TAC, WorkSafe, Medicare, private insurers and other authorised arrangements. Participation in a funded program does not automatically give every person associated with that program unrestricted access to the complete clinical record.

For ordinary care coordination and reporting, we will have regard to the client's authority, the service arrangement, the purpose of the request and applicable program or legal requirements. Where reasonably possible, disclosure will be limited to information relevant to that purpose. Broader or complete-record requests will be considered separately.

9. Third-party systems, payment services and AI-assisted documentation

Ocean Physiotherapy may use reputable third-party systems for practice management, clinical records, bookings, electronic forms, secure messaging, email, data storage and backup, accounting, claiming, payment processing, direct debit, website hosting, analytics and other administrative functions.

Where a provider collects information directly from a client, such as payment or direct-debit details, that provider may also handle the information under its own privacy terms. Ocean Physiotherapy does not ordinarily need to retain complete card or bank credentials where those details are securely held by the relevant payment provider.

Ocean Physiotherapy may use approved electronic or AI-assisted clinical documentation tools to assist with note taking, transcription or preparation of clinical records. Where an audio recording or ambient transcription tool is used, the client will be informed before use. Standing written consent may be obtained as part of onboarding and refreshed where appropriate, and the treating clinician will briefly confirm ongoing consent when the tool is used. A client may decline or withdraw consent to AI-assisted recording or transcription without affecting access to treatment. Any resulting clinical note remains the responsibility of the treating clinician and will be reviewed for accuracy. Recording, transcript retention and deletion will be managed in accordance with the tool's configuration, Ocean Physiotherapy procedures and applicable privacy requirements.

10. Overseas disclosure and processing

Ocean Physiotherapy uses third-party technology, clinical, communication, payment and administrative service providers to support the delivery and management of our services. Some of these providers may store, process or provide access to personal information outside Australia.

Where overseas disclosure occurs, Ocean Physiotherapy takes reasonable steps when selecting and using service providers to ensure personal and health information is handled consistently with applicable privacy requirements.

Depending on the services used and their current processing arrangements, overseas recipients may be located in countries including Canada, India, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom, the United States and countries within the European Union. Further information about relevant overseas processing or service-provider arrangements is available on request.

11. Staff confidentiality and access

Practitioners, employees, contractors, students and other authorised personnel must respect client privacy and confidentiality. Access to personal and health information should be limited, as far as reasonably practicable, to people who need the information for their professional, clinical, administrative or legal functions.

Particularly sensitive information may be subject to additional internal access restrictions where this is supported by the clinical system and does not compromise safe care or continuity of treatment.

12. Electronic communication and secure release

We may communicate by telephone, SMS, email, secure messaging or other electronic methods where appropriate. Electronic communication carries inherent privacy and security risks.

For substantial, sensitive or complete clinical information, Ocean Physiotherapy may verify the recipient, authority and destination and may use secure clinical messaging, encryption, password protection, a secure portal or another appropriately protected method. We may decline to send particularly sensitive or extensive records by ordinary unencrypted email where a more secure and reasonably practicable option is available.

13. Accessing and correcting information

Clients generally have a right to request access to personal and health information held about them. Access may include inspection, electronic or printed copies, an appropriate summary, or transfer to another health service provider, depending on the circumstances and applicable law.

We may ask for sufficient information to identify the client and define the requested information. Formal photographic identification is not routinely required where identity is otherwise reasonably established. Where another person requests access on the client's behalf, their identity and authority may need to be verified.

Requests will be handled as promptly as reasonably practicable and within applicable legal timeframes. In limited circumstances, access may be refused or restricted where permitted or required by law, including where another person's privacy is affected, disclosure would be unlawful, or another statutory exception applies.

Clients may also request correction of information they believe is inaccurate, incomplete, misleading or out of date. A clinical record will not ordinarily be erased merely because there is disagreement with an entry. Where appropriate, a correction, clarification or client statement may instead be added.

14. Fees for access and transfer

Reasonable costs may apply to access, copying or transfer of records where permitted by law. Current charges and the client request process are set out separately in Ocean Physiotherapy's Client Records Access, Release Request, Process and Fees document. This allows operational charges to be updated without changing this policy. Ocean Physiotherapy will not use fees to discourage legitimate access requests and will advise clients of applicable charges before proceeding where required.

15. Service and administrative communications; marketing

Ocean Physiotherapy may send communications reasonably necessary to provide or administer services, including appointment information, changes to fees, opening hours, location, practitioner availability, service arrangements, policies or other matters affecting an existing service relationship. These communications are treated as service or administrative communications where their purpose is to manage the existing service relationship rather than promote goods or services.

Communications whose purpose is to promote new or additional services, programs or offers may constitute direct marketing. Health information will not be used for direct marketing unless the required consent or other lawful basis exists. Clients may opt out of marketing communications at any time.

16. Security, data incidents and retention

Ocean Physiotherapy takes reasonable administrative, physical and technical measures to protect information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Measures may include access controls, authentication, secure systems, physical security, staff procedures, secure transmission and appropriate disposal processes.

Suspected data breaches will be assessed and managed in accordance with applicable law, including notification requirements where relevant.

Health records are retained for applicable legal and professional periods. For Victorian private health service providers, records generally must not be destroyed until at least seven years after the person was last provided a health service, or, where the person was under 18 when last treated, until the person reaches 25 years of age. Records may be retained longer where another lawful, professional, insurance or clinical reason applies.

17. Website and analytics

When the website is used, limited technical information may be collected, including IP address, browser/device information, pages viewed, date/time, referring source and interactions with website functions. Cookies and analytics services may be used to maintain and improve website functionality and understand website use. Information submitted through linked booking or third-party services may also be handled by those providers.

18. Information about other people

Healthcare may sometimes require information about family members, carers, supporters or other individuals. Where such information is reasonably necessary for care or service delivery it may form part of the clinical record and will be handled with appropriate confidentiality. Another person's privacy may affect how some information can later be accessed or disclosed.

19. Complaints and contact

Questions, access or correction requests, or privacy concerns may be directed to:

Keegan FitzGerald Director / Privacy Officer, Ocean Physiotherapy
 Email: admin@oceanphysiotherapy.com.au | Phone: 03 5292 3645
 2/15 Hancock Street, Drysdale VIC 3222

Ocean Physiotherapy will acknowledge and consider privacy complaints reasonably promptly, investigate the circumstances as appropriate, communicate the outcome and any actions taken, and keep an appropriate record of the complaint and response. We may contact the person for further information where required.

If a privacy concern cannot be resolved directly, a person may have rights to complain to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) or the Health Complaints Commissioner Victoria, depending on the issue.

20. Changes to this policy

This policy may be updated from time to time to reflect changes to law, services, systems and privacy practices. The current version will be made available through Ocean Physiotherapy's website or on request.

Document control

Policy owner	Ocean Physiotherapy	Effective date	21 October 2026
Version	1.1	Next planned review	January 2027