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Policy***Telephone and electronic communications (C1.2 A)***Accreditation link: [C 1.2A](#)**Electronic and Telephone Communication with Patients****Policy Statement**

My GP Hub are committed to ensuring all patient communication—via telephone, SMS, email, or other electronic means—is carried out with the highest regard for privacy, confidentiality, and professional conduct.

Training and Responsibilities

- Privacy and confidentiality training is mandatory for all new practice team members during induction and is updated annually
- It is the responsibility of the Practice Manager to ensure training is completed, current, and securely stored in PracticeHub
- Training includes guidance on what staff can and cannot communicate to patients over the phone or electronically.

Telephone Communication Procedures**Reception Staff Responsibilities**

Reception staff at My GP Hub are trained to:

- Greet all callers professionally and identify the practice and themselves.
- Confirm the caller's identity using three approved identifiers: full name, date of birth, and either address, gender, or photo confirmation from the patient file.
- Obtain the caller's consent before placing them on hold and check if the matter is urgent.
- Triage calls using the Triage Support Guide – Patient Triage (GP 1.1B).

- Communicate the appropriate call response procedure, including:
 - Doctors do not take calls during consultations.
 - Patients can speak to the nurse if clinically appropriate.
 - Messages requiring follow-up are documented for the relevant clinician.
- Record all significant conversations in the patient's Best Practice file.

External Call Handling Script

"Good morning/afternoon, My GP Hub, this is [Your Name] speaking. May I confirm your full name and date of birth?"

- Confirm details, clarify the purpose of the call, and proceed with appropriate documentation or escalation.
- When placing a patient on hold, always ask:

"Would you mind holding? Is your call urgent?"

Internal Calls

"[Your Name] speaking."

Staff should maintain a clear, calm, and professional tone and vary vocal expression to convey attentiveness and warmth. Smiling while speaking helps create a reassuring tone.

Professional Conduct and Etiquette

- Be calm, courteous, and clear in all calls—especially when speaking with distressed or agitated callers.
- Avoid clinical advice or discussing results unless explicitly approved by the treating doctor.
- Only convey results if they are marked "No Action" and have been cleared for release by the doctor.
- If a result is marked "Urgent," the patient should be asked to make an appointment.

Aggressive or Abusive Calls

We operate under a Zero Tolerance Policy towards any form of:

- Abuse (verbal, physical, or emotional)
- Aggression or threats to staff or other patients
- Discrimination, harassment, or intimidation

This includes communication in person, by phone, email, or online.

Managing Calls on Hold

- Confirm urgency before placing any caller on hold.
- When resuming the call, always thank the patient for holding.
- Staff using headsets are encouraged to step away from the front desk when discussing confidential matters.

Call Documentation Protocol

All staff at My GP Hub are required to document:

- All contact attempts with patients
- All patient-initiated calls
- The purpose of the contact
- Any information exchanged

Process:

- Use a message pad or internal email system.
- Each message must include:
 - Recipient
 - Patient name and DOB
 - Message content and action required
 - Digital signature
- Staff must delete internal messages only after confirming they have been actioned.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Receptionists must not provide treatment advice or clinical interpretations.
- No results are to be given without clearance. Only those marked “No Action” may be communicated, using the doctor’s exact wording.
- Staff must not confirm or deny a patient’s attendance or disclose any detail without proper verification and consent.
- Transfer sensitive calls to a private space where they cannot be overheard.
- Do not release personal contact numbers of doctors unless specifically authorised.

Emergency Contact Reference

Emergency contact lists are displayed at each phone station.

Service	Phone Number
Ambulance	000 or 131 233
Police	000 or 6768 2999
Fire	000 or 6766 2319
Tamworth Base Hospital	6767 7700
Poisons Information	13 11 26
Translating & Interpreting Service	13 14 50
ACIR	1800 653 809
PIP/GPII	1800 222 032

SMS and Email Communication

Consent and Use

- Patients authorise SMS contact via their New Patient Registration Form (scanned into file).
- Mobile numbers are confirmed at each visit.
- SMS messages:
 - Do not contain sensitive health information
 - Are stored in the patient's electronic health record
 - Are auditable, with access to records and patient responses
 - Are used for appointment reminders and flagged recalls

Email Communication

• Using Email with Patients

- We only email patients if they've given written permission.
- Patients give consent by signing the New Patient Registration Form, which is saved in their file.
- We tell patients not to send personal or urgent health information by email.

What We Can Send by Email

- Appointment reminders (if authorised)
- Practice updates or newsletters
- General admin (e.g. forms or billing info)
- Simple health info (if approved)

We do NOT send:

- Test results
- Clinical advice or diagnoses
- Prescriptions or referrals (unless cleared by the doctor)

How We Send Emails

When sending an email to a patient:

1. Confirm the patient's full name and DOB.
2. Use only the email saved in the patient file.
3. Include a confidentiality disclaimer like this:

"This email is confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please delete it and let us know immediately."

4. Avoid medical details – say something like:

"Your results are back. Please book an appointment to discuss with your GP."

5. Save a copy of the email in the patient's file.

When We Get Emails from Patients

- We check emails regularly during business hours.
- If an email needs a doctor or nurse to follow up, we add it to the patient's record and pass it on.
- Admin staff do not act on clinical requests in emails unless approved by a GP.

Privacy and Safety

- Only trained staff check or send emails.
- We only use work email accounts.
- We do not open unknown or unsafe attachments.
- Email passwords are protected and changed often.