

## **Windmill Practice Privacy Policy**

### **Policy**

Australian Privacy Principle 1 requires our practice to have a document that clearly sets out its policies on handling personal information, including health information.

This document, commonly called a privacy policy, outlines how we handle personal information collected (including health information) and how we protect the security of this information. It must be made available to anyone who asks for it and patients are made aware of this.

The collection statement informs patients about how their health information will be used including other organisations to which the practice usually discloses patient health information and any law that requires the particular information to be collected. Patient consent to the handling and sharing of patient health information should be provided at an early stage in the process of clinical care and patients should be made aware of the collection statement when giving consent to share health information.

In general, quality improvement or clinical audit activities for the purpose of seeking to improve the delivery of a particular treatment or service would be considered a directly related secondary purpose for information use or disclosure so we do not need to seek specific consent for this use of patients' health information, however we include information about quality improvement activities and clinical audits in the practice policy on managing health information. (Refer Section 8 Accreditation and Continuous Improvement)

### **Procedure**

We inform our patients about our practice's policies regarding the collection and management of their personal health information via:

- patient information notice in the waiting area.
- our patient information sheet.
- new patient forms – 'Consent to share information'.
- verbally if appropriate.
- the practice website.

## **Windmill Practice Privacy Policy**

At Windmill Practice we recognise the importance of privacy protection and have developed our Privacy Policy incorporating the Australian Privacy Principles 2014 and the NSW Health Privacy Principles 2002. Confidentiality and privacy are considered fundamental to our practice and deviation from our policy is not acceptable. All staff and contractors are bound by a confidentiality agreement and must operate within the privacy policy. The Directors of Windmill Practice believe that patients are entitled to feel confident that their health information is treated with respect and care and that stringent security measures are in place to protect their privacy. Upmost care is taken to ensure that all Commonwealth and State regulations and principles are adhered to. Personal information is collected to enable Windmill Practice to provide high quality medical care to patients. Demographic information is collected to enable accurate identification and contactability of patients. Past and present health information is collected to enable comprehensive assessment of health care needs to enable high quality care to be planned, implemented and evaluation. Patient choice is fundamental to the process of health care delivery and as such, the patient is considered a key member of the "health care team". Accurate up to date information is particularly vital to facilitate

high quality preventative health care interventional, monitoring and screening measures to optimise health and well-being.

It is sometimes in the patient's best interests that personal information is shared, eg, via referral to specialists or allied health care providers. Consent is obtained for sharing of information and patients are offered a copy of the information shared, such as the referral letter, team care arrangement etc.

### **The circumstances under which we disclose information**

It is Windmill Practice policy not to pass on any personal information we hold about patients unless we have their express consent to do so. An exception to this is where Windmill Practice may be required by law to disclose certain information.

### **How we handle emails:**

Communication with clinicians via email is discouraged due to variability of security of email systems. Appointments cannot be made via email. Emails sent to or from Windmill Practice are routinely monitored for quality control, systems administration and legal compliance purposes. Medical records and/or advice are not sent by email.

In some instances when a patient specifically requests that results be sent to them via email, this has become more prevalent with the introduction of telephone consultations. Covid results and medical certificates can be sent via return email if the patient emails their request to [info@windmillpractice.com.au](mailto:info@windmillpractice.com.au). All other requests for information to be sent via email are passed on to the Practice Manager/Manager (Anne) who speaks with the patient to explain the risk of unencrypted medical information being sent via email. If the patient chooses to accept that risk and Anne considers the request to be safe and reasonable, the patient must confirm their request by email to Anne or Fiona who will reply to their email, including the requested results.

### **Website Visitors:**

We do not collect or use any personal information on visitors to our website, through the use of "cookies" or other software or hardware techniques.

### **Accuracy and currency of information**

If patients believe that any information that we hold about them is inaccurate or out of date, they are asked to contact us and we will review the relevant information.

### **How to contact us if you wish to discuss this policy**

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this policy please contact us:

Windmill Practice, 34 Verdelho Drive, Tamworth, NSW, 2340.

Telephone: 02 67618300, Facsimile: 02 67618333.

Website: [www.windmillpractice.com.au](http://www.windmillpractice.com.au) Email: [info@windmillpractice.com.au](mailto:info@windmillpractice.com.au)

Queries and requests are preferred in writing or by telephone and should be addressed to the Practice Manager. Queries or suggestions of a general nature can be submitted via the practice suggestion box.