



Communication Policy

Current as of: July 2026

Purpose

This policy outlines how Kirrawee Doctors communicates with patients, carers, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to ensure safe, timely, confidential, and effective communication in accordance with [RACGP Standards for General Practices \(5th Edition\)](#) and applicable NSW and Commonwealth legislation.

This policy supports RACGP Criterion C1.1 by informing patients about how the practice receives and responds to telephone calls and electronic communications.

Policy Statement

Kirrawee Doctors is committed to:

- Providing patients with clear and accessible information about the practice
- Managing communications in a timely, respectful, and confidential manner
- Protecting patient privacy and health information
- Ensuring communication methods are clinically appropriate and safe
- Maintaining professional boundaries in electronic communication
- Complying with:
 - RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th Edition)

Scope

This policy applies to:

- General practitioners
- Nurses
- Allied health practitioners
- Reception and administration staff
- Contractors and temporary staff

It applies to all communication methods including:

- Telephone
- Email
- SMS/text messaging
- Website enquiries
- Telehealth platforms
- Written correspondence
- Social media messaging (if applicable)



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Practice Communication Principles

The practice will:

- Treat patients courteously and respectfully
- Respond to communications within reasonable timeframes
- Ensure urgent clinical matters are escalated promptly
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy
- Document clinically relevant communications in the patient health record
- Use secure communication methods wherever possible

Telephone Communications

Incoming Calls

Reception staff will answer calls professionally and identify the practice by name.

Staff will:

- Confirm patient identity using 3 identifiers before discussing personal information
- Determine whether the matter is administrative or clinical
- Escalate urgent clinical concerns immediately to a nurse or doctor

Returning Calls

- Routine calls are generally returned within the same business day where possible
- Non-urgent clinical calls may be returned within 1–2 business days
- Results will not be provided by reception staff, however they will assist you in making an appointment with your preferred provider

Emergencies

Patients experiencing chest pain, breathing difficulty, severe bleeding, collapse, or other emergencies will be instructed to call Triple Zero (000) immediately.



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Electronic Communications

Email

The practice email account is monitored during business hours only.

Patients are advised:

- Email is not suitable for urgent medical matters
- Email is for administrative purposes only
- Clinical advice will not be provided by email
- An appointment with a doctor is required for any clinical enquiries, prescriptions, referrals or other clinical requests.
- Emails are not monitored for bookings

Where clinically appropriate:

- Significant clinical communications will be recorded in the patient record

SMS/Text Messaging

SMS may be used for:

- Appointment reminders
- Recall and reminder notices
- Practice announcements
- Limited administrative communication

Reply SMS is NOT available.

Patients may opt out of SMS reminders and communication

Website and Online Enquiries

Online enquiries are monitored during business hours.

The practice website will include:

- Practice contact details



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- Opening hours
- Billing and Fee list information
- Services provided
- Booking Links for our team
- Privacy information
- After Hours Options
- Mobility Access
- Automatic Door Notice and warning
- Feedback and complaints process

Telehealth Communications

The practice offers telehealth consultations where clinically appropriate and in accordance with current Medicare requirements.

Information for patients:

- Telehealth Appointments are an approximate time. The GP will call you as close to the appointment time as possible
- Associated fees are on our website under the Patient > Fee tab.
- The GP will confirm patient identity using 3 identifiers before discussing personal information

Telehealth consultations are documented in the patient record in the same manner as face-to-face consultations.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

The practice may use approved artificial intelligence (AI) assisted technologies to support administrative and clinical workflow processes, including document handling, correspondence allocation, transcription, and communication management.

AI tools are used only as support systems and do not replace clinical judgement or staff oversight. All clinically relevant information is reviewed by appropriately qualified practice staff before action is taken.

The practice takes reasonable steps to ensure:

- Patient privacy and confidentiality are maintained
- AI tools comply with applicable privacy and security requirements



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- Information is handled in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)
- Clinical GPs are trained in the safe and appropriate use of AI-assisted systems

For further AI use information, patients may like to read our Privacy Policy.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All staff must maintain patient confidentiality.

Patient information:

- Will only be disclosed with consent and once the patient has been correctly identified or where authorised by law
- Will be communicated securely where possible
- Discussion will be limited in public areas and only where there is appropriate measures in place to prevent conversations being overheard.

Electronic communications carry some privacy risks. Patients using email or SMS acknowledge these risks.

The practice privacy policy is available at reception and on the practice website.

The practice undertakes reasonable steps to ensure third-party software providers, including AI-enabled systems, meet appropriate privacy and security standards.

Social Media

- Social media is not used for clinical advice
- Patient confidentiality must never be breached
- Inappropriate or offensive content may be removed
- Patients are encouraged to contact the practice directly regarding health matters

Interpreter and Accessibility Services



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The practice will make reasonable efforts to support patients with communication needs, including:

- Interpreter services (TIS)
- National Relay Service
- Assistance for patients with low literacy or disability

Staff Training

All staff receive training on:

- Privacy and confidentiality
- Telephone etiquette and appropriate triage of calls
- Managing difficult conversations
- Electronic communication protocols
- Recognising urgent clinical matters
- Safe and appropriate use of AI-assisted administrative systems

Complaints and Feedback

Patients may provide feedback:

- In person
- By telephone
- By email
- Via the practice website
- In writing

Complaints are managed confidentially and respectfully.

Patients may also contact:

- Health Care Complaints Commission
- [HCCC NSW](#)

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually, or
- Earlier if legislation, RACGP standards, or practice procedures change