

Warragul Family Medicine Internet and Email Policy

Introduction

Warragul Family Medicine recognises the practice team requires access to email and the internet to assist in the efficient and safe delivery of healthcare services to our patients.

Warragul Family Medicine supports the right of staff to have access to reasonable personal use of the internet and email communications in the workplace using the devices and networks provided by the practice.

Purpose and objectives

This policy sets out guidelines for acceptable use of internet and email by the practice team, contractors and other staff of Warragul Family Medicine. Internet and email is provided primarily to assist the team carry out their duties of employment.

Scope

This internet and email policy applies to the practice team, contractors and other staff of Warragul Family Medicine who access the internet and email on practice owned devices, including, but not limited to laptops and desktop computers to perform their work.

Use of the internet by the practice team, contractors and other staff is permitted and encouraged where this supports the goals and objectives of Warragul Family Medicine. Access to the internet is a privilege and the practice team, contractors and other staff must adhere to this policy.

Violation of these policies could result in:

- Disciplinary and/or legal action
- The practice team, contractors and other staff being held personally liable for damages caused by any violations of this policy
- Removal of system access
- Notification to regulatory authorities (where required)
- Data breaches will be managed in accordance with the practice Data Breach Response Plan

All employees are required to confirm they have understood and agree to abide by this email and internet policy.

Policy content

The practice team, contractors and other staff may use the internet and email access provided by Warragul Family Medicine for:

- Any work and work-related purposes
- Clinical information and research
- Medicare, My Health Record, PRODA, and other government portals
- CPD and professional education
- Practice business activities
- Personal use under specific circumstances (see below)

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Limited personal use of email and internet

Limited personal use is permitted where it:

- Infrequent and brief
- Does not interfere with the duties of the practice team, contractors and other staff
- Does not interfere with the operation of our general practice
- Does not compromise the security of our general practice
- Does not impact our general practice electronic storage capacity
- Does not decrease our general practice network performance (eg large email attachments can decrease system performance and potentially cause system outages)
- Does not incur any additional expense for our general practice
- Does not violate any legislation
- Does not compromise any confidentiality requirements of our general practice

Examples of what could be considered reasonable personal use could include:

- Conducting a brief online bank transaction
- Paying a bill
- Sending a brief personal email, like making a brief personal phone call

Unacceptable internet and email use

The practice team, contractors and other staff may not use internet or email access provided by Warragul Family Medicine to:

- Create or exchange messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening
- Visiting web sites containing objectionable (including pornographic) or criminal material
- Exchanging any confidential or sensitive information held by our general practice
- Creating, storing or exchanging information in violation of copyright laws
- Downloading unauthorised software
- Using internet-enabled activities such as gambling, gaming, conducting a business or conducting illegal activities
- Creating or exchanging advertisements, solicitations, chain letters and other unsolicited or bulk email
- Playing electronic or online games in work time or streaming large downloads that affect network performance
- Using practice email for personal business or external employment
- Sharing passwords or accounts

Patient Privacy & Confidentiality

Staff must never send patient information via email unless:

- It is clinically necessary AND
- The patient has given informed consent AND
- The correct recipient and address has been verified

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Where possible:

- Use secure messaging instead of email
- De-identify information if full details are not required
- The correct recipient and address have been verified
- **Personal email accounts must NEVER be used for patient information**

Security Requirements

All users must:

- Use strong passwords and keep them confidential
- Lock computers when unattended
- Log out at the end of each session
- Report suspicious emails (phishing) immediately
- Not open unknown attachments or links
- The correct recipient and address have been verified

Statement

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of Warragul Family Medicine and current legislation requirements.