

Ridges Family Medical Practice

Email Communication Policy

RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th Edition)

Practice Name:	Ridges Family Medical Practice
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1. Purpose

This policy outlines how email communication is used at Ridges Family Medical Practice while maintaining patient privacy, confidentiality and information security in accordance with RACGP Standards and the Privacy Act 1988.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff including general practitioners, nurses, reception staff, administrative staff, the practice manager and contractors who access practice email systems.

3. Appropriate Use of Email

Email may be used for administrative communication, appointment enquiries, referral letters, communication with hospitals, specialists, pathology providers and internal staff communication.

4. Patient Email Communication

Patients may contact the practice via email for non-urgent administrative matters. Email should not be used for urgent medical concerns. Patients requiring medical advice should contact the practice by phone or book an appointment.

5. Clinical Advice via Email

Doctors do not provide diagnosis or urgent medical management via email. Clinical concerns should be addressed through appropriate consultations.

6. Privacy and Confidentiality

Staff must ensure emails containing patient information are sent to the correct recipient and only necessary information is shared. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

7. Email Security

Email accounts are protected by passwords, secure network systems, antivirus protection and restricted staff access to protect patient information.

8. Documentation

Any clinically relevant information received or sent via email must be documented in the patient's medical record to ensure continuity of care.

9. Response Time

Emails are monitored during business hours only. Patients should allow 1–2 business days for a response. Email should not be used for emergencies.

10. Staff Responsibilities

The Practice Manager oversees implementation of this policy. Reception staff monitor administrative inboxes and clinical staff ensure documentation of relevant communications.

11. Inappropriate Use

Staff must not send confidential patient information to unauthorised recipients, use personal email accounts for clinical communication or provide medical advice outside appropriate clinical processes.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when RACGP standards or legislation changes.

Document Control	
Approved By	Dr Chamila Kulasekara – Principal GP
Policy Owner	Siriporn Deamer – Practice Manager
Clinical Lead	Laura Hunt – Registered Nurse
Review Period	2 Years
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