

Port Sorell Medical Centre Internet and Email Policy

Current as of: 1st August 2025

Port Sorell Medical Centre's internet and email policy provides guidance to our practice team on what they can do and cannot do when using the internet and email from devices provided by the practice for business purposes.

Port Sorell Medical Centre 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.

Purpose and objectives

This policy sets out guidelines for acceptable use of internet and email by the practice team, contractors, and other staff of Port Sorell Medical Centre. Internet and email are provided primarily to assist the team carry out their duties of employment.

All staff within the practice are to assist in mitigating security risks. This includes being aware of the risks associated with email and internet usage.

All staff are to use the internet, email and secure messaging in a manner which meet our privacy obligations and are to use such resources in a respectful and professional manner.

All staff have individual work email addresses.

Scope

This internet and email policy applies to the practice team, contractors and other staff of Port Sorell Medical Centre who access the internet and email on practice owned devices, including, but not limited to desktop computers, laptops, iPad, and telephone devices 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 Port Sorell Medical Centre. 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 any or all the below.

- disciplinary and/or legal action
- termination of employment
- the practice team, contractors and other staff being held personally liable for damages caused by any violations of this policy]

All employees are required to confirm they have understood and agree to abide by this email and internet policy. All practice staff, medical practitioners and allied health professionals working within the practice and using the practice's technology resources are required to sign an Internet and Email Usage Policy as part of their Contract of Employment.

Policy content

To avoid unnecessary risk to information systems, the following applies:

Internet usage

Acceptable Uses:

- internet use is for business, clinical and research purposes only
- all downloads accessed from the internet must be scanned for viruses
- all sites accessed must comply with legal and ethical standards
- web browser security settings are not to be changed without authorisation

This practice uses antivirus, anti-malware and anti-spyware which are centrally installed and managed and locally deployed.

Unacceptable Uses:

- forwarding chain emails and viruses
- transmitting copyrighted materials without permission
- visiting websites with obscene or objectionable content
- transmitting any offensive, harassing or fraudulent messages or conducting personal business.

This practice uses antivirus, anti-malware and anti-spyware which are centrally installed and managed and locally deployed.

Any executable files downloaded from the internet or by email (e.g. software patches or any files with an .exe, .bat or .com extension) are scanned for viruses following download.

As information from the internet can be outdated, incorrect or misleading, any information obtained from the internet is verified for accuracy with other information sources before being used.

Confidential information is not sent over the internet unless encrypted.

Email usage

Communication with patients via electronic means (e.g. email) is conducted with appropriate regard to the privacy and confidentiality of the patient's health information.

Our practice uses the following confidentiality and privilege notice on outgoing emails that are affiliated with the practice:

"Please consider the environment before printing this email."

The content & attachments of this message are confidential. If you have received it by mistake, please inform us by an email reply and then delete the message. It is unlawful to copy, forward or in any way reveal the contents of this message to anyone. The integrity and security of this email cannot be guaranteed over the internet. Encrypted messaging systems are preferred for confidential communications. Please be aware that our e-mail communications are not encrypted, it is the policy of Port Sorell Medical Centre not to use email for sharing confidential information. Therefore, the sender will not be held liable for any damage caused by the message. The contents of this email are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily represent views of the Port Sorell Medical Centre."

As website inquiries are received by the reception email, the following autoreply is sent.

"This email address is not regularly monitored and is not our preferred means of communication. There is a risk that important clinical information sent to this address may be missed or not picked up, particularly time critical information. In addition we urge all persons to carefully consider the issue of security before sending medical information via email which is not encrypted. The alternative methods for communicating clinical information are below in the contact details, although please do not use normal post for forwarding time critical information. We encourage patients to phone the practice or make an appointment to discuss clinical issues."

Best practice when using email:

- Do not open unexpected email even from people known to you as this might have been spread by a virus.
- Use an antivirus mail filter to screen email before downloading.
- Do not use the 'preview pane' in your email program as this automatically opens your email when you click on the header.
- Save attachments and check for viruses before opening or executing them (note this does not relate to the clinical secure messaging but to attachments received through email and websites).
- Do not run programs directly from websites. If files are downloaded, check for viruses first.

- Email use that breaches ethical behaviours and/or violates copyright is prohibited.
- Do not send or forward unsolicited email messages, including the sending of 'junk mail' or other advertising material (email spam).
- Do not use email for broadcast messages on personal, political, or non-business matters.
- Practice staff are never to send emails that might be construed as offensive or constitute as any form of harassment.

Emails and internet usage is currently monitored by the Practice Manager including discretion to blacklist certain sites such as personal email or social media sites.

All staff have access to the practice email reception@psmed.com.au

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of Port Sorell Medical Centre and current legislation requirements.

Disclaimer

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