

Appointment Booking & Attendance Policy

Purpose

To ensure appointments are booked accurately and that clinical time is used appropriately, with clear expectations for both staff and patients.

Appointments represent reserved clinical time. When unattended or cancelled late, this impacts access to care for other patients and the financial sustainability of the practice.

Section A: Staff Responsibilities

All staff booking appointments must:

1. Confirm Patient Identity

Before finalising any booking, staff must confirm:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Current address
- Current phone number
- Email address

Outdated information must be updated immediately.

2. Allocate Appropriate Appointment Length

Staff must:

- Ask patients to clarify the reason for their appointment, while respecting their privacy. Some appointments may involve sensitive health matters, so use discretion and avoid probing unnecessarily.
- Determine the appropriate appointment type and duration
- Escalate to a nurse or GP if uncertain

Multiple concerns, care plans, procedures, mental health consultations and complex reviews require longer appointments.

If a patient declines a longer appointment despite advice, this must be documented.

3. Communicate Fees at Time of Booking

Staff must:

- Inform patients of applicable out-of-pocket fees
- Confirm billing type
- Advise of late cancellation and non-attendance fees

4. Confirm Appointment Details

Before concluding the booking:

- Confirm doctor
- Confirm date and time
- Confirm appointment type
- Remind the patient of their responsibility to notify the clinic if unable to attend

Section B: Patient Responsibilities

By booking an appointment, patients agree to the following:

1. Accurate Information

Patients are responsible for ensuring:

- Contact details are current
- Medicare and concession details are valid

Failure to provide accurate information may delay processing of rebates.

2. Attendance and Confirmation

Patients are responsible for:

- Attending appointments on time
- Confirming appointments when prompted
- Notifying the clinic as soon as possible if unable to attend

3. Cancellation Timeframes

The practice requires:

- A minimum of 24 hours' notice for standard and long GP appointments
- A minimum of 12 hours' notice for short appointments

Cancellations outside these timeframes may incur a fee.

4. Non-Attendance and Late Cancellation Fees

If a patient:

- Cancels within the above notice period, or
- Does not attend their appointment

A fee will apply.

The fee is generally equivalent to the out-of-pocket amount that would have been payable for that consultation.

5. Extenuating Circumstances

The practice recognises that unforeseen events can occur.

Requests for consideration due to extenuating circumstances will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and must be communicated respectfully.

Fee waivers are at the discretion of practice management.

6. Outstanding Fees

Unpaid non-attendance or late cancellation fees will result in:

- Inability to book further appointments
- Possible requirement for pre-payment of future appointments

Appointments will not be confirmed until outstanding fees are settled.