**Email Communications Policy**

Introduction

This email policy is to provide information on how we manage our privacy and security via email communications. This email policy is adapted from and in accordance with RACGP 5th Edition standards and AHPRA guidelines. General practices are increasingly receiving requests from patients, other clinicians and third parties for health information to be sent to them electronically because it is an easily accessible method of communicating. The Australian Privacy Principles published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner state that: “Health information is regarded as one of the most sensitive types of personal information.” For more information on Privacy Act ti988 (Privacy Act) and all amendments made to the Federal Legislation, please go to: https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2004A037ti2

Policy

Our practice considers our obligations and takes all reasonable steps to protect the information and privacy of our patients. Under the Privacy Act, our practice is obligated to ensure the privacy of all patient information, including all electronic correspondence concerning or regarding our patient’s personal and health information. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect this information may result in a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles. The extent of the reasonable steps taken depends largely on the nature of the information and the potential harm that could arise if unauthorised personnel gain access to it. All email communications to, from and between our practice, and/or to, from and between our practice and third-party companies/organisations regarding our patients, are treated as confidential and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the security and safety of this correspondence.

Email configuration

Our practice takes every effort to keep patient information safe, communication of patient information via email can potentially be compromised so this is done at the risk of the patient.

The types of information sent via email includes but limited to

* Ordering Supplies / Sample Medication
* Sending invoices for accounts
* Receiving requests for medical reports from Work Cover/Insurance Companies.
* Receiving updated health information
* Receiving Patient Complaints – to Practice Manager email
* Patients requesting referral letters, results or medical certificate to be emailed to them

Clinical information is only sent to patients after gaining verbal consent which is documented in the patient record. The process for sending information to patients is for the patient to send us a request for the information required, thereby giving us written consent and the information is then sent via return email back to the patient.

Protection against spam

Our practice uses anti-virus and anti-malware software to protect all aspects of our computer and server systems. This includes screening/blocking all emails for viruses and fraudulent emails. Our practice holds the right to screen all patient correspondence via email for the above security issues.

Email disclaimer

Email Disclaimer Notice: We are unable to answer any MEDICAL related queries made on this email. Please ring the surgery to make an appointment relating to these matters. The information contained in the Email is intended for the name's recipient only. It may contain privileged and confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient you must NOT print, forward or take any action in reliance of the Email or disclose to any person, firm or corporation. If you received this Email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email at knightsbridge.mc@gmail.com or by phone at 02 8850 7965

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Email correspondence

Email correspondences sent to our email address are retained as required by the Public Records Act 2002 and other relevant legislation. Email messages may also be monitored by our information technology staff for system trouble-shooting and maintenance purpose. Your email address details will not be added to a mailing list (unless you so request) or disclosed to a third party unless required by law.

Policy review statement

This privacy policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is in accordance with any changes that may occur.