THE DOCTORS.
HOPE ISLAND

CLINIC **EMAIL POLICY**

The DOCTORS Hope Island | GP Medical Centre

Effective Date: 1st July 2025
Review Date: 1st December 2025

1. Purpose

This policy outlines appropriate use of email communication at **The DOCTORS Hope Island** to ensure patient privacy, clinical accuracy, legal compliance, and efficient operations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, locums, students, and others handling clinic emails or patient communication.

3. Legal & Regulatory Compliance

All email communication must comply with:

- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009 (QLD)*
- *My Health Records Act 2012*
- *Health Records and Information Privacy Act (where applicable)*
- *RACGP Standards for General Practices (5th edition)*

4. Use of Email in Clinical Practice

- Emails are used for administrative communication, such as appointment reminders, invoices, and general clinic information.
- Clinical advice or results may be emailed only with explicit patient consent, documented in the patient's medical record.
- Sensitive information must only be transmitted via secure methods, preferably using encrypted email platforms.

5. Consent Requirements

- Written or verbal patient consent must be obtained before emailing any personal health information.
- Consent must include an acknowledgment of risks associated with unencrypted email.
- Consent should be reviewed periodically and documented in the patient's file.

6. Acceptable Use

Staff may only use email systems for clinic-related business. Prohibited uses include:

- Personal or non-work-related messages
- Sending confidential information without security measures
- Disclosing passwords or patient information

7. Email Format & Content

- Emails must be professional, concise, and written in plain language.

- Include the clinic's disclaimer and confidentiality notice in every outgoing email.

- Staff should double-check recipient email addresses and attachments before sending.

8. Security Measures

- Use secure email platforms where possible (e.g., Argus, HealthLink, encrypted Outlook).
- Access to email accounts must be password protected with multi-factor authentication (MFA).
- Staff must log out of shared computers when not in use.
- No sensitive information should be stored in personal email accounts.

9. Email Monitoring & Retention

- Email correspondence may be monitored or audited by the practice manager for compliance.
- Clinically relevant emails must be uploaded into the patient record in the clinical software.
- Emails should be retained according to the Health Records Act retention period (minimum 7 years after last patient contact or until age 25 for minors).

10. Breaches & Incidents

- Any suspected data breach, misdirected email, or phishing attempt must be reported immediately to the practice manager.
- The clinic will follow the OAIC Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) Scheme where applicable.

11. Staff Training

- All staff must undergo email communication and privacy training at induction and on a yearly basis.
- Training must include cybersecurity awareness, especially related to phishing, ransomware, and spoofing.

12. Review & Updates

- This policy is reviewed annually or after any legislative changes or accreditation updates.
- Updates will be communicated to all staff and recorded in the staff meeting minutes.

13. Email Disclaimer Template

If you receive this email by mistake, please notify **EMBRACE MEDICAL GROUP PTY LTD**, and do not make any use of the email. We do not waive privilege, confidentiality or copyright associated with it. This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the individual named. If you are not the named addressee you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail. E-mail transmission cannot be guaranteed to be secure or error-free as information could be intercepted, corrupted, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses. The sender therefore does not accept liability for any errors or omissions in the contents of this message, which arise as a result of e-mail transmission. If verification is required please request a hard-copy version.