

## Client Information Management

Last updated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clearly state the protocol for handling personal information, including health information.

### Policy

AVA Orthopaedics employees have a responsibility to maintain the privacy of personal health information and related financial information. The privacy of this information is every client's right.

This policy outlines how the practice handles personal information collected (including health information) and how the security of this information is protected. A privacy statement is made available to clients and anyone who requests it.

There are no degrees of privacy. All client information, including the information of employees who may be clients, must be considered private and confidential, even that which is seen or heard. Therefore, such information is not to be disclosed to family, friends, employees or others without the client's approval. Sometimes details about a client's medical history or other contextual information, such as details of an appointment, can identify them - even if no name is attached to that information. This is still considered health information, and it must be protected. Client information may not be disclosed either verbally, in writing, in electronic form, or by copying either at the practice or outside it, during or outside work hours, except for strictly approved use within the client care context, or as legally directed.

### Privacy Statement

This statement informs clients how their health information will be used. This includes the sharing of information to other organisations to which the practice usually discloses client health information, and any law that requires the particular information to be collected. Client consent to the handling and sharing of health information should be provided at an early stage in the process of client care. Clients should be made aware of the collection statement when giving consent to share health information.

In general, quality improvement or audit activities for the purpose of seeking to improve the delivery of a particular treatment or service is considered a directly related secondary purpose for information use or disclosure. Specific consent for this use of client health information is not required.

## Procedure

### Informed Consent

Clients are informed of practice policies regarding the collection and management of their personal health information via:

- New client forms
- Verbally, if appropriate
- Practice website

Prior to a client signing consent to the release of health information, clients are made aware that they can request a full copy of the privacy policy and collection statement.

### Telehealth Consults

It is the practitioner / health care professional's responsibility to ensure that records and related client information are kept secure at all times, including whenever they are not in attendance of their computer.

Client privacy and security of information is enhanced during consultations by ensuring a telehealth consultations are undertaken in a private room, and headphones are used when there is a risk of other people hearing the consultation. At all times screens must be set up so there is no risk another person can see information on the screen.

If privacy cannot be maintained during a telehealth call the call must be ceased immediately.

### Staff Access to Client Information

AVA Orthopaedics client health records can be accessed by an appropriate team member when required. All client health records are electronic and accessible through AVA Orthopaedics clinical software by appropriate employees.

AVA Orthopaedics employees have different levels of digital access to client health information. To protect the security of health information, employees do not give their computer / software passwords to others in the team.

Personal health information should be kept out of public view and access.

### Computer Security

Active and inactive client health records are kept and stored securely within AVA Orthopaedics software.

This practice is considered paperless and has systems in place to protect the privacy, security, quality and integrity of the personal health information held electronically. Appropriate employees are trained in computer security policies and procedures.

AVA Orthopaedics computers and servers comply with computer security standards.

Care should be taken that the public, not linked to AVA Orthopaedics, cannot see or access computer screens that display information about other individuals. To reduce this risk, automated screen savers should be engaged.

## **Administration Security**

Administration and other practice employees should be aware that conversations may be overheard if they are in a public setting. As such, employees should avoid discussing confidential and sensitive client information when they cannot ensure privacy.

Whenever sensitive documentation is discarded, all employees of the practice use an appropriate method of destruction. Documents are placed in a confidential waste bin, and confidential waste is disposed of securely. All computers, memory sticks or CDs are disposed of properly by a designated employee.

AVA Orthopaedics employees ensure that all forms of client information are not visible to the public.

## **Correspondence**

Electronic information is transmitted over the public network in an encrypted format using secure messaging software. Where client information is sent by mail, the use of secure postage or a courier service is used - determined on a case by case basis. Return address states the physical or post office address, but the practice name is not identified on the envelope.

Incoming client correspondence and diagnostic results are opened by a designated employee.

Items for collection or postage are left in a secure area out of public view.

Facsimile, printers and other electronic communication devices used by practice staff are located in areas that are only accessible to practitioners and other approved staff. Faxing is point to point and will therefore usually only be transmitted to one location.

All faxes containing confidential information are sent to fax numbers after ensuring the recipient is the designated receiver. Each fax is accompanied by a cover sheet, the cover sheet includes the words "confidential" and a fax disclaimer notice that affiliates with AVA Orthopaedics.

Emails are sent via various modes and are at risk of being intercepted. Client information may only be sent via email if it is securely encrypted according to industry and best practice standards. In most situations personal information is saved as a PDF and sent with a password protect on it.