

Southern Highlands GP After Hours Service

Internet and email policy

Current as of: 20/08/2025

Introduction

SHGPAHS 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. SHGPAHS supports the right of staff to have access to reasonable personal use of the internet and email communications in the workplace using the devices and networks provided by the practice.

Purpose and objectives

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

Scope

This internet and email policy applies to the practice team, contractors and other staff of SHGPAHS who access the internet and email on practice owned devices, including, but not limited to desk phones, smartphones, laptops, and all other 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 SHGPAHS. 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::

- 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.

Policy content

The practice team, contractors and other staff may use the internet and email access provided by SHGPAHS for:

- any work and work-related purposes
- limited personal use
- more extended personal use under specific circumstances (see below)

Limited personal use of email and internet

Limited personal use is permitted where it:

- infrequent and brief use
- does not interfere with the duties of the practice team, contractors and other staff
- does not interfere with the operation of SHGPAHS
- does not compromise the security of SHGPAHS
- does not impact on SHGPAHS's electronic storage capacity

- does not decrease SHGPAHS's network performance (eg large email attachments can decrease system performance and potentially cause system outages)
- does not incur any additional expense for SHGPAHS
- does not violate any legislation
- does not compromise any confidentiality requirements of SHGPAHS

What is considered to be reasonable personal use example:

- conducting a brief online bank transaction
- paying a bill
- sending a brief personal email, similar to making a brief personal phone call

Unacceptable internet and email use

The practice team, contractors and other staff may not use internet or email access provided by SHGPAHS to:

- creating or exchanging messages that are offensive, harassing, obscene or threatening
- visiting web sites containing objectionable (including pornographic) or criminal material
- exchanging any confidential or sensitive information held by SHGPAHS
- creating, storing or exchanging information in violation of copyright laws
- using internet-enabled activities such as gambling, gaming, conducting a business or conducting illegal activities
- creating or exchanging advertisements, solicitations, chain letters and other unsolicited or bulk email
- playing electronic or online games in work time.

Definitions

Policy review statement

This policy will be reviewed annually & when required to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of SHGPAHS and current legislation requirements.