



Version: 2024.08

Management of Personal Information Policy

This document describes the privacy policy at Ardent Psychologists Ringwood for the management of clients' personal information. The health service provided is bound by the legal requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

About Ardent Psychologists Ringwood

Ardent Psychologists Ringwood is the name given to the psychology consulting suites at East Ringwood Clinic. In-person and telehealth psychology services are available.

The psychologists working at our consulting rooms are independent practitioners. They determine how, where and when they deliver Health Services, and are responsible for patient outcomes and resolving disputes.

Some psychologists simply rent rooms and attend to their own administrative services and billing. If this applies to your psychologist, they will manage your client file and can provide you with their own Personal Information Policy.

The following information applies to psychologists who contract East Ringwood Clinic to provide administrative services, billing, and use of consulting rooms.

Psychologists who contract East Ringwood Clinic to provide administrative services.

Client information

Client files are held in a secure booking / electronic medical records system which is only accessible to East Ringwood Clinic, its agents, and health practitioners working with East Ringwood Clinic. The information on each file includes personal information such as name, address, contact phone numbers, medical history, and other personal information collected as part of providing the psychological service. East Ringwood Clinic uses integrated medical records: All health practitioners access the same client file. This allows for better integration and continuity of care when clients see more than one health practitioner at the clinic.

How clients' personal information is collected.

A client's personal information is collected in a number of ways during the booking and consulting process including:

- hardcopy, softcopy, and electronic forms,
- correspondence via email,
- interactions with staff of East Ringwood Clinic
- interactions with health practitioners
- referrals, correspondence, and medical reports.

Consequence of not providing personal information

If a client does not wish for their personal information to be collected in a way anticipated by this Privacy Policy, health practitioners may not be in a position to provide the health service to the client.

Purpose of holding personal information

A client's personal information is gathered and used for the purpose of providing health services, which includes assessing, diagnosing, and treating a client's presenting issue. The personal information is retained in order to document what happens during sessions and enables the clinician to provide a relevant and informed health service.

Disclosure of personal information

All personal information gathered during the provision of services will remain confidential except when:

1. it is subpoenaed by a court, or disclosure is required or authorised by law; or
2. failure to disclose the information would place you or another person at risk of harm; or
3. given your prior approval, or consent of a guardian who is legally authorised to act on your behalf in order to provide a written report to another professional or agency, or discuss information with another person e.g., employer; or
4. one would reasonably expect your personal information to be disclosed to another professional or agency, and disclosure is directly related to the primary purpose for which it was collected such as to inform your GP of treatment and progress; or
5. clinical consultation with another professional is required to provide better clinical services.

If during the course of your work with your clinician, they become aware of risk to someone's life, health, or wellbeing, they are required by policy of the state and federal governments to report the matter to the appropriate agencies.

Clients' personal information will not be used, sold, rented, or disclosed for any other purpose.

In the event that unauthorised access, disclosure, or loss of a client's personal information occurs, East Ringwood Clinic will activate a data breach plan and use all reasonable endeavours to minimise any risk of consequential serious harm.

Requests for access and correction to client information

At any stage, a client may request to see and correct the personal information about them kept on file. The health practitioner may discuss the contents with them and/or give them a copy, subject to the exceptions in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). If satisfied that personal information is inaccurate, out of date or incomplete, reasonable steps will be taken in the circumstances to ensure that this information is corrected. All requests by clients for access to or correction of personal information held about them should be lodged with East Ringwood Clinic. These requests will be responded to in writing within 21 days, and an appointment will be made if necessary for clarification purposes.

East Ringwood Clinic may transfer Patient medical records to a third party nominated by the Patient, upon the East Ringwood Clinic receiving written authority from the client to transfer such medical records.

Concerns

If clients have a concern about the management of their personal information, they may inform East Ringwood Clinic. Upon request they can obtain a copy of the Australian Privacy Principles, which describe their rights and how their personal information should be handled. Ultimately, if clients wish to lodge a formal complaint about the use of, disclosure of, or access to, their personal information, they may do so with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner by phone on 1300 363 992, online at <http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/making-a-privacy-complaint> or by post to: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, GPO Box 5218, Sydney, NSW 2001.