

Staff Treatment Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines our company's commitment to ensuring that all staff members are treated fairly and with respect by all external stakeholders, including patients. It establishes guidelines for handling incidents of harassment, swearing, or aggression by patients towards staff, ensuring a safe and supportive work environment. This policy is used to preserve the physical, emotional and psychological health of staff at My Hills Dentist.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all patients, suppliers and their representatives, laboratories and their representatives, and all other stakeholders across all departments and locations associated with My Hills Dentist. It also covers interactions with staff in person, over the phone, or through any other communication channels.

3. Fair Treatment of Staff

Respect and Dignity: All staff members are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity at all times. Patients are expected to engage with staff in a polite and professional manner.

Equality: Every staff member has the right to fair treatment regardless of their role, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic.

Zero Tolerance: My Hills Dentist has a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment by patients. Any such behaviour will be addressed promptly and may result in consequences for the patient, including termination of services.

4. Harassment

Harassment includes any unwanted behaviour that is intimidating, humiliating, or offensive. This may include verbal abuse, inappropriate comments, or actions that create a hostile environment.

5. Swearing and Inappropriate Language

Prohibited Conduct: The use of swearing, abusive language, or derogatory remarks towards staff members is strictly prohibited. Patients are expected to communicate in a respectful manner at all times.

Response to Incidents: Staff members are encouraged to address any inappropriate language calmly and professionally, asking the patient to refrain from such behaviour. If the behaviour persists, staff should follow the procedures outlined in this document.

6. Handling Aggression and Rudeness

De-escalation: If a patient becomes aggressive or rude, staff should remain calm and attempt to de-escalate the situation by using appropriate communication techniques.

Request for Assistance: In cases where a patient's behaviour cannot be de-escalated, staff should seek assistance from a supervisor or another staff member immediately.

Documentation: All incidents of aggression or rudeness should be documented in the general incident register, including details of the date of incident, patient's behaviour, the staff member's response, and any actions taken by management.

Procedure for Addressing Patient Misconduct

Remain calm: If a patient has become verbally aggressive or abusive toward you, arguing will only cause the situation to escalate further. Remain calm, take a deep breath, place the person on hold or leave the room if necessary.

Attempt to deescalate the situation: In a calm and even tone, ask the patient to calm down and assure them that you are here to assist them. If a patient is physically threatening, staff should remove themselves from the situation if it is safe to do so and seek immediate assistance.

If the patient continues to display unacceptable behaviour and you cannot leave the room, use the Instant message feature in EXACT to request help from other staff members. You can select the PANIC button on the bottom left of the instant message window, which will send a large red message to all computers requesting HELP. The patient won't be able to see what you are doing. The patient should then be escorted out of the building if this is the case.

Listen and empathise: If you are able to encourage the patient to calm down, invite them to explain their point of view. Listen to their point of view and offer any reasonable solutions. If a solution can not be reached, let the patient know that we can work on this with a manager or provider, and get back to them at a later date.

Reporting: Staff members must report any incidents of patient misconduct to their supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor will then initiate an investigation into the incident.

Investigation: The incident will be reviewed by management, and the patient may be interviewed as part of the investigation. The outcome of the investigation will determine the appropriate action, which may include issuing a warning to the patient or terminating the patient's relationship with the office.

Support for Staff: My Hills Dentist will provide support to staff members involved in any incidents of patient misconduct, including access to counselling services if necessary.

8. Consequences for Patients

Warnings: Patients who engage in inappropriate behaviour will be issued a warning outlining the unacceptable conduct and our expectations moving forward.

Termination of Services: In severe cases or repeated incidents, My Hills Dentist reserves the right to terminate services with the patient, following a review of the situation.

9. Staff Training

Awareness: All staff members will receive training on handling difficult patient interactions, including de-escalation techniques and the procedures outlined in this policy.

Ongoing Support: My Hills Dentist is committed to providing ongoing support and resources to staff to ensure their safety and well-being.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure its effectiveness and to make any necessary updates in response to new developments or changes in the workplace environment.

Glossary of terms

Consequences

The possible outcomes for patients who engage in inappropriate behaviour, which can include receiving a warning or having their services terminated by My Hills Dentist after a review of the situation.

Equality

The right of every staff member to receive fair treatment without bias or discrimination, regardless of their role or personal characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

Harassment

Unwanted behaviour from patients or other stakeholders that is intimidating, humiliating, or offensive, including verbal abuse, inappropriate comments, or actions that create a hostile work environment.

Psychological health

The state of a person's mental and emotional well-being, including how they think, feel, and cope with stress or challenges.

Termination of services

The process of ending the professional relationship between a patient and the company, resulting in the patient no longer receiving care or services from My Hills Dentist.

Zero Tolerance

A strict policy stance adopted by My Hills Dentist, meaning no harassment by patients is tolerated, and any such behaviour will be promptly addressed, potentially leading to termination of services.