



## NORTHSIDE CLINIC

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## Policy for co-parenting parents

At Northside Clinic we aim to support all types of families and acknowledge the specific challenges that come with co-parenting a child/ren.

We understand that separation can be a difficult time for all family members and wish to assist you in any way we can.

In order to work as a team with you in providing optimal care to your child/ren, we request that parents who co-parent a child/ren endeavour to;

- Keep animosity away from your child and their appointments.
- Put the child's needs first above your own.
- Resolve any disagreements about your child's assessments, medications, and payments of consult fees, outside of the clinic room setting, and not in front of your child.

### *Communication Policy*

- Our practice management software identifies a 'default' primary parent for each child, this is called 'Head of Family' within our software.
- Communication regarding that child, by default, is addressed to that parent.
- This identified 'default parent' applies to automatic communications such as reminder text messages (sent to the mobile phone number of the default primary parent).
- Sometimes this inadvertently leads to problem situations where information is sent to the wrong person. An example would be where a parent who is not the default primary parent on our information system makes an appointment, but the reminder information is sent to the default parent.
- In general, it is our expectation that separated or co-parenting parents work in a framework of joint parental responsibility. Legally, this means it is the responsibility of parents to work out how they exchange information.
- We do not have the capacity to make complex individualised arrangements, but we try our best to accommodate to individual circumstances for the benefit of the child where this is reasonable and achievable.
- In the absence of court orders, it is expected that co-parenting parents will communicate about their child's medical care and share relevant information.
- Our healthcare practitioners can only provide information during scheduled appointments.
- If the appointment is made by one parent, it is the responsibility of this parent to inform the other parent, invite them to attend, and provide feedback to them.
- The doctors do not have the capacity to provide separate feedback to each parent without separate appointment times being made to do this. They welcome both parents to attend appointments and will provide copies of correspondence to each parent, if specifically requested.

*It is your responsibility to ensure that.*

- Correct phones numbers are on file.
- Correct contact details are supplied for telehealth appointments.
- Correct head of the family is recorded for Medicare rebate purposes.

- If there are court orders in place, we need a copy of them.

#### *Your Rights as Parents*

- Both parents have the right to give consent for your child's medical care and request access to their medical information, unless a court order has revoked these rights or if the child is over 16 years of age and can make their own decisions.

#### *Treatment Consent*

- Practitioners are legally allowed to proceed with treatment based on one parent's consent, as long as there is no court order restricting that parent from providing consent.

#### *Making payment for appointments.*

- Payment is to be made on the day of the child's appointment. If there is legal agreement that requires the other parent to pay all or part of the treatment costs, it is the attending parent's responsibility to settle the account and collect reimbursement from the other parent.

#### *Resolving differences.*

- Parents are encouraged to resolve disagreements on treatment options independently.
- Where there is significant conflict, the doctor reserves the right to review the court orders, obtain signed consent from both parents, or limit their services until dispute has been resolved. If necessary, your doctor may discharge a family from their services if the conflict is disruptive to the clinic or impedes the care of the child. In cases where both parents are unable to be in the room together, we can offer one parent to link in with Telehealth (telephone/ Zoom videoconference) if this is appropriate.
- If separate appointments are needed, please inform the administration team. The usual time-based fees will apply and there is a fee for each appointment if separate appointments are required. It is a Medicare requirement that the child must be present during the consult for the parent to claim a Medicare rebate for their attendance.

#### *Children turning 16.*

Please see our policy for children turning 16 years old.