Policy Title	Patient Rights and Responsibilities Policy
Policy Category	Patient Care
Manual Reference	Section 2
Applies To	All patients, carers, visitors, staff, independent contractor General Practitioners, allied health providers and workplace participants across all practice locations
Related Standards	RACGP Standards for General Practices (6th Edition) – Person-Centred Care, Patient Rights, Safety & Quality
Document Owner	Practice Manager
Approved By	Practice Manager / Principal GP
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1. Purpose

1.1 Village Medical Centre is committed to providing safe, respectful, high-quality and person-centred healthcare.

1.2 This policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of patients and the practice to support positive healthcare experiences, mutual respect and effective partnerships in care.

1.3 The practice recognises that respectful relationships between patients and healthcare providers contribute to improved health outcomes, patient safety and quality care.

1.4 This policy supports the practice's commitment to providing healthcare that is equitable, culturally safe, free from discrimination and responsive to individual patient needs.

2. Commencement of Policy

2.1 This Policy will commence from 1 August 2026.

2.2 It replaces any previous Patient Rights and Responsibilities Policies (whether written or unwritten).

3. Application of Policy

3.1 This Policy applies to all patients, carers, visitors and workplace participants across all Village Medical Centre locations.

3.2 This Policy applies to all interactions with the practice including:

- Face-to-face consultations
- Telephone consultations
- Telehealth consultations
- Reception interactions
- Electronic communications
- Home visits (where applicable)
- Community activities undertaken by the practice

4. Patient Rights

Patients have the right to:

4.1 Respect

(a) be treated with courtesy, dignity and compassion;

(b) receive care that is respectful of their culture, beliefs, identity and personal circumstances;

(c) receive healthcare that is free from discrimination, harassment or abuse.

4.2 Safe and High-Quality Care

Patients have the right to:

(a) receive safe, evidence-based healthcare;

(b) receive care from appropriately qualified healthcare professionals;

(c) have care coordinated where appropriate;

(d) receive treatment in a safe clinical environment.

4.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

Patients have the right to:

(a) have their personal and health information kept confidential in accordance with privacy legislation;

(b) know how their information is collected, used and disclosed;

(c) request access to their health records in accordance with applicable legislation.

4.4 Informed Decision Making

Patients have the right to:

(a) receive information in a manner they can understand;

(b) ask questions about their healthcare;

(c) participate in decisions regarding their treatment;

(d) provide or withhold consent;

(e) seek a second opinion.

4.5 Communication

Patients have the right to:

(a) effective communication;

(b) request an interpreter where appropriate;

(c) receive explanations regarding fees and billing arrangements;

(d) receive information regarding waiting times and appointment availability where possible.

4.6 Cultural Safety

Patients have the right to:

(a) receive culturally safe healthcare;

(b) have cultural, spiritual or religious beliefs respected wherever clinically appropriate;

(c) receive healthcare that is responsive to their individual needs.

4.7 Feedback and Complaints

Patients have the right to:

(a) provide compliments, suggestions and complaints;

(b) have complaints managed respectfully, fairly and confidentially;

(c) receive information regarding external complaint agencies if required.

5. Patient Responsibilities

Patients share responsibility for supporting safe and effective healthcare.

Patients are expected to:

5.1 Respect Others

(a) treat staff, clinicians and other patients respectfully;

(b) refrain from abusive, threatening, discriminatory or aggressive behaviour;

(c) respect the privacy of other patients.

5.2 Provide Accurate Information

Patients should:

(a) provide accurate personal and medical information;

(b) advise the practice of changes to their contact details;

(c) inform clinicians of medications, allergies and relevant health history.

5.3 Participate in Their Healthcare

Patients are encouraged to:

(a) ask questions if they do not understand information;

(b) participate in agreed treatment plans;

(c) inform clinicians if they choose not to follow recommended treatment.

5.4 Appointments

Patients are expected to:

(a) arrive on time where possible;

(b) advise the practice if they are unable to attend;

(c) understand that cancellation and non-attendance policies may apply.

5.5 Financial Responsibilities

Patients are responsible for:

(a) understanding the practice's billing arrangements;

(b) paying fees at the time of consultation unless alternative arrangements have been made.

6. Practice Responsibilities

Village Medical Centre will:

6.1 Provide respectful, safe and person-centred healthcare.

6.2 Maintain patient privacy and confidentiality.

6.3 Employ appropriately qualified healthcare professionals.

6.4 Promote culturally safe healthcare.

6.5 Maintain a safe environment for patients, visitors and staff.

6.6 Encourage patient participation in healthcare decisions.

6.7 Respond appropriately to feedback and complaints.

6.8 Maintain appropriate clinical governance and quality improvement activities.

7. Zero Tolerance of Violence and Abuse

7.1 Village Medical Centre is committed to maintaining a safe workplace.

7.2 Violence, intimidation, harassment, threatening behaviour, discrimination or abuse towards staff, contractors or other patients will not be tolerated.

7.3 Patients engaging in unacceptable behaviour may be asked to leave the premises and, where appropriate, may be removed from the practice in accordance with the practice's Zero Tolerance Policy and RACGP guidance.

8. Feedback and Complaints

8.1 Patients are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the services provided by Village Medical Centre.

8.2 Feedback may be provided verbally, in writing, via email or through patient surveys.

8.3 Complaints will be managed in accordance with the Village Medical Centre Complaints Policy.

8.4 Where appropriate, patients will be informed of external complaint agencies including the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner.

9. Accessibility and Equity

9.1 Village Medical Centre aims to provide equitable access to healthcare for all patients.

9.2 The practice will make reasonable efforts to reduce barriers to healthcare through:

(a) culturally safe care;

(b) interpreter services where appropriate;

(c) accessible facilities;

(d) person-centred communication;

(e) reasonable adjustments for patients living with disability where practicable.

10. Continuous Improvement

10.1 Village Medical Centre regularly reviews:

- patient feedback;
- complaints;
- patient satisfaction surveys;
- quality improvement activities;
- accreditation requirements.

10.2 Feedback is used to continually improve patient experiences and healthcare services.

11. Breach of this Policy

11.1 Workplace participants are expected to uphold this policy at all times.

11.2 Where a workplace participant fails to meet the requirements of this policy, appropriate performance management or disciplinary action may be taken.

11.3 Patients who engage in behaviour that places staff, contractors or other patients at risk may have their care managed in accordance with the practice's Zero Tolerance and Safety policies.

12. Associated Documents

- Cultural Safety Policy
- Anti-Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints Policy (Staff and Patient)
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Informed Consent Policy
- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Interpreter Services Procedure
- Feedback and Complaints Procedure
- Workplace Violence and Aggression Policy