Policy for Non-Attendance

Definitions

Failure to attend (FTA): Patients who have missed, or have not cancelled/rescheduled at least 24 hours in advance of, their pre-booked appointment (exceptional circumstances are at the discretion of the practice).

Was not brought (WNB): Used for children (patients under 16) who miss an appointment. A child relies on a parent, carer or guardian to bring them, so a missed appointment is recorded as "was not brought" rather than "failure to attend". See the section on children below.

General

Under the National Health (Dental Charges) Regulations 2005 (Section 3) the practice will not be able to charge patients for failing to attend appointments.

All failures to attend (FTA) and was not brought (WNB) appointments will be documented in the patient file/record.

How missed appointments are counted

Only missed appointments within the last 2 years, counting back from today's date, are taken into account when applying this policy. Missed appointments older than 2 years are not counted towards the steps below, although they remain on the patient's record.

Adult patients

A 1st failure to attend will result in a written or verbal communication being given. The patient will be given the opportunity to rebook the appointment. They will also be advised by reception staff that, in accordance with the General Dental Services Regulations 2005, Schedule 3 Part 1 (5), if they miss a second appointment within 2 years, the practice will no longer be able to see them for NHS treatment.

A 2nd failure to attend: If a patient misses 2 appointments within 2 years without giving at least 24 hours' notice, the practice will consider that this constitutes an irrevocable breakdown in relations. Under the NHS (General Dental Services) Regulations 2005, Schedule 3 Part 1 (5), the patient will no longer be seen for NHS treatment at the practice.

If a new patient fails to attend their 1st appointment we reserve the right to refuse further appointments on the NHS at our practice.

Private appointments are managed under a separate private practice policy.

Children (was not brought)

When a child misses an appointment, this is recorded as "was not brought" (WNB). Because a child cannot get to the practice on their own, a missed appointment can be a sign that they are not getting the care they need, so we will:

- Contact the parent, carer or guardian to find out why the appointment was missed and to rebook it.
- Record each WNB in the child's dental record, together with any contact made.
- Review the child's record with the dentist if they are not brought to 2 appointments within 2 years, or sooner if they have ongoing treatment, pain or significant dental need.
- Follow the practice safeguarding policy where there is a concern. This may include contacting the child's GP, health visitor or school nurse, or children's social care.

If a child is not brought to 3 appointments within 2 years, the practice may no longer be able to see them for NHS treatment.

Double booking

The practice reserves the right to double book persistent FTA patients. If the practice intends to double book the patient, the patient must be advised of this at the time of booking and told that they will have to wait until the dentist is in a position to see them, as the double booking would be done on the assumption that the patient may miss the appointment.

Appointment reminders

Please note that, although we normally send email and/or text message reminders prior to appointments, the successful delivery of these relies on our text provider, your mobile network provider and your phone and cannot therefore be guaranteed. Therefore, you should not rely on our emails or text messages as the sole reminder of your appointment. We will not be responsible for any appointments missed as a result of non-delivery of these reminders, regardless of the reasons for its failure.