

1. Policy Statement

Lam Dental Care is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional environment for our patients, staff, and visitors.

We operate a **zero-tolerance policy** towards any form of abuse, harassment, violence, intimidation, discrimination, or threatening behaviour directed at any member of our team by patients, relatives, carers, contractors, or any third party.

Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances and will result in immediate action being taken.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All patients of the practice
- Family members, carers, and visitors
- Contractors and third-party service providers
- Members of the public interacting with the practice (in person, by telephone, email, or online)

It covers behaviour occurring:

- On practice premises
- In the car park or surrounding areas
- Over the telephone
- Via email, social media, or written correspondence

3. Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour includes (but is not limited to):

3.1 Verbal Abuse

- Shouting, swearing, or offensive language
- Derogatory, racist, sexist, homophobic, or discriminatory remarks
- Threats of violence or intimidation

3.2 Physical Abuse or Threatening Behaviour

- Physical assault or attempted assault
- Aggressive gestures
- Damage to property
- Blocking access or refusing to leave premises

3.3 Harassment

- Persistent unwanted contact
- Inappropriate comments of a sexual nature

- Bullying or intimidation

3.4 Online or Written Abuse

- Abusive emails or messages
- Defamatory or threatening social media posts
- Harassing correspondence

4. Immediate Action Procedure (Step-by-Step)

If a member of staff experiences unacceptable behaviour, the following procedure will be followed:

Step 1: Immediate De-escalation

- The staff member will remain calm and professional.
- The individual will be clearly informed that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- A verbal warning will be issued, stating that continuation will result in termination of the interaction and further action.

Example wording:

"We will not tolerate abusive or threatening behaviour. If this continues, we will end this appointment and take further action."

Step 2: Termination of Interaction

If the behaviour continues:

- The appointment or telephone call will be terminated immediately.
- The individual will be asked to leave the premises.
- If they refuse to leave or escalate behaviour, senior management will intervene.

Step 3: Escalation to Practice Management

- The incident will be reported immediately to the Practice Manager or senior clinician.
- A written incident report will be completed on the same day.
- Witness statements will be collected if applicable.
- CCTV footage (if available) will be preserved.

Step 4: Formal Written Warning

Where appropriate:

- A formal warning letter will be issued to the individual outlining:
 - Details of the incident
 - Why the behaviour was unacceptable
 - The consequences of repeated behaviour
 - Any conditions placed on future attendance

Step 5: Removal from Practice List

In cases of serious misconduct or repeated incidents:

- The patient may be removed from the practice list.

- Written confirmation of removal will be provided.
- Emergency care arrangements (if applicable) will be explained.
- The individual will be advised to register with an alternative provider.

Step 6: Police Involvement

The police will be contacted immediately if:

- There is physical assault or threat of physical violence
- A staff member feels unsafe
- Criminal damage occurs
- There are credible threats made against staff

The practice will fully support any criminal investigation and prosecution.

5. Support for Staff

Lam Dental Care is committed to supporting any team member affected by abusive behaviour. Support may include:

- Immediate removal from the situation
- Managerial support and debrief
- Access to counselling if required
- Assistance with police reporting
- Adjustments to duties if necessary

No staff member is expected to tolerate abuse in order to provide care.

6. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All incidents will be:

- Documented accurately and securely
- Stored in accordance with GDPR requirements
- Reviewed by senior management to identify patterns or risks

7. Responsibilities

Practice Management

- Enforce this policy consistently
- Investigate incidents promptly
- Support affected staff

Staff Members

- Report all incidents immediately
- Complete incident documentation
- Follow de-escalation procedures

8. Communication of Policy

This policy will be:

- Displayed clearly in the practice reception area
- Published on the practice website
- Included within patient welcome documentation

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.

Approved By: Holly Lam, Jonathan Lam, Michael Lam
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