Appointment Management and Cancellation Policy

It is the aim of this practice to provide quality dental care to our patients and to use clinical time effectively. To achieve this aim, we have an appointment management and cancellation policy.

Management of appointments
We invest in the latest technology to allow our patients to make or reschedule appointments easily. Our appointment system supports timely access to care and treatment, allows patients to access services at a time that suits them and minimises the length of time people have to wait. Appointments can be made or rescheduled by calling our dedicated appointments line on 01271 446699.

Reminders
E-mail and text reminders are sent to patients 2 days before any appointment and patients are requested to inform the practice of any changes to their contact details.

Cancellation or delay of an appointment by the practice
We will only cancel or delay a patient's appointment in unavoidable circumstances. In such cases, we will take the following steps:

- The patient will be contacted as soon as the practice is aware of the need to cancel or delay the appointment. We will explain the reason for the cancellation or delay
- At the time of contact, the patient will be offered a new appointment at the earliest time available
- If the patient is unable to commit to a new appointment during that contact, we will ask them to get in touch at a later time, when we will offer them a priority appointment

Cancellation of an appointment or missed appointment by a patient
We require **a minimum of 24 hours' notice, received during our normal practice opening hours**, to cancel or reschedule an appointment. Cancellations should be made by telephone on 01271 446699 or email at contact@devondentists.co.uk. Late cancellations and missed appointments may represent a cost to the practice, when other patients could have been seen in the time set aside for the patient.

Please be aware that:

- Cancellation requests must be received during our normal opening hours.
- Messages left outside our opening hours, including weekends, bank holidays and practice closures, will be treated as received when the practice next opens.
- The required notice period must allow at least 24 hours between our receipt of your cancellation and your scheduled appointment.

Example: If you have an appointment on Monday at 2:00pm, a cancellation message left on Sunday will not meet our notice requirements, as the practice is closed and the message cannot be processed until Monday morning.
We therefore encourage patients to contact us as early as possible if they anticipate being unable to attend.

There is a £50 fee for dental appointments lasting up to 45 minutes that are missed or cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice.

There is a £100 fee for dental appointments lasting longer than 45 minutes that are missed or cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice.

It is our aim to telephone or write to patients after a missed appointment to understand the reason for non-attendance and to inform them about any fee or decision. We understand that cancellations are sometimes unavoidable due to illness or emergencies and we will take account of all valid circumstances.

Appointment Deposits
To secure an appointment, we require a deposit at the time of booking.
Our standard deposit requirements are as follows:

- **Adult appointments lasting up to 45 minutes:** £50
- **Adult appointments lasting longer than 45 minutes:** £100
- **Children's examination appointments:** A deposit equivalent to the examination fee.
- **Children's treatment appointments:** A deposit of £50 or £100, depending on the duration of the appointment, in line with our adult appointment deposit requirements.

Deposits are credited towards the cost of treatment when the appointment is attended.
Where an appointment is cancelled or rescheduled with sufficient notice, the deposit may be transferred to a future appointment or refunded.

Late Cancellations and Missed Appointments
If an appointment is cancelled or rescheduled without the required notice, or a patient fails to attend without informing us, a cancellation charge may apply.
This charge reflects the reasonable financial loss incurred by the practice as a direct result of the unused appointment time, taking account of any costs saved or opportunity to offer the appointment to another patient.
Where applicable, the charge may be deducted from the deposit already paid, up to the amount of the practice's reasonable loss.
We will not charge patients twice for the same loss.
If we are able to fill the cancelled appointment, this will be taken into account when determining whether any cancellation charge remains appropriate.

Why Do We Have Cancellation Charges?
Unlike many services where a missed booking may affect only the individual customer, an unused dental appointment affects several people.

When you book an appointment with us, we reserve:

- Dedicated time with your dentist, hygienist or other clinical professional.
- Qualified nursing support where required.
- A fully equipped treatment room and clinical facilities.
- The necessary equipment, materials and resources.
- An appointment that could otherwise have been offered to another patient in need of dental care.

Our clinicians and team members are scheduled around these appointments and many of the associated costs continue even when an appointment is not attended.
An appointment is more than a time in our diary. It is a commitment of our team's time, skills and resources, reserved especially for you.
Our cancellation arrangements help us manage these resources responsibly and continue providing the high standard of care our patients deserve.

Illness and Unexpected Circumstances
We appreciate that illness, family emergencies and other unexpected situations can arise with little warning.
If you are unwell, particularly with symptoms of a contagious illness, please contact us rather than attending your appointment.

We ask that you inform us as soon as reasonably possible so that we have the best opportunity to offer your appointment to another patient.
We recognise that some circumstances are genuinely unavoidable. Any request for an exception will be considered individually, taking account of the circumstances, the notice reasonably possible and the financial loss incurred by the practice.
We aim to apply our policy consistently, fairly and compassionately.

Repeated Late Cancellations or Non-Attendance
Patients who repeatedly cancel at short notice or fail to attend appointments may be asked to discuss their future booking arrangements with our Practice Manager.
Where appropriate, we may require payment in advance, which will be subject to our usual cancellation terms, or make alternative booking arrangements.
Our aim is always to maintain a positive relationship with our patients while ensuring that appointment availability is managed fairly for everyone.

Any appeals about missed or cancelled appointment decisions by a patient should be made in writing to the Practice Manager, Bridget Kolonko.