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Privacy Policy

Updated: 01/10/2026 | **Supersedes:** Privacy Policy dated 22/09/2026 and Cairns Orthodontics Privacy Policy (undated) | **Next review:** 01/10/2027

1. Who we are and about this policy

NQ Ortho ("we", "us", "our") is the trading name of Cairns Orthodontic Specialists Pty Ltd (ABN 72 010 567 316), providing orthodontic care from our Cairns and Atherton locations. To provide safe, high-quality care, we need to collect and hold personal and health information about our patients. This policy explains what we collect, why, how we protect it, and your rights in relation to it. It covers both our clinical care and your use of our website, www.nqortho.com.au.

As a health service provider, NQ Ortho is bound by the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) in full, regardless of the practice's size or turnover — the small business exemption available to some other businesses does not apply to us.

2. The information we collect

- Identity and contact details — name, date of birth, address, phone and email.
- Health information — medical, dental and surgical history, clinical notes and treatment plans.
- Images, scans and recordings — clinical photographs, x-rays, intraoral scans, and images or video from remote monitoring apps.
- Billing, Medicare and health fund details, where relevant to your care.
- For patients under 18, the contact details and consent of a parent or guardian.
- Information you give us through our website, online booking forms, our Quick Check virtual consultation, email, SMS or social media.
- Website usage information collected by cookies and similar tools (see section 8).

3. How we collect it

We collect information directly from you (or your parent/guardian) through consultation, new patient forms, our website and online booking systems, and through clinical imaging and scanning equipment used in your care. We may also receive information from a referring dentist, GP or specialist, or through a monitoring app you install as part of your treatment.

During consultations, your clinical notes may be drafted in real time with the assistance of an AI transcription tool (currently Heidi). Any tool we use for this must generate text as the conversation happens without creating or retaining an audio recording, and must be hosted in Australia — that doesn't change even if we move to a different tool in future. Your treating clinician reviews and corrects the resulting notes. Consent to this is included in our new patient intake form, which is reviewed and reconfirmed annually. If you do not consent, please let us know so we can discuss an alternative way to document your consultation.

You can make a general enquiry without identifying yourself, or using a pseudonym. We do need to identify you to book appointments or provide treatment.

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4. Why we collect, hold, use and disclose your information

- To assess, plan, deliver and review your orthodontic treatment.
- To coordinate your care with other practitioners involved in your treatment.
- For billing, Medicare and health fund claims.
- For practice administration, accreditation and quality improvement.
- To respond to enquiries and bookings made through our website.
- With your separate, specific consent — for marketing messages, education or marketing purposes (see sections 9 and 14).

5. Who we may disclose your information to

Who	Why
Referring and treating practitioners	Referring dentists, GPs, specialists and allied health providers involved in your care
Dental laboratories and appliance manufacturers	To design and manufacture custom orthodontic appliances (aligners, retainers, expanders)
Clinical software and monitoring platforms	Practice management, treatment planning, imaging and remote monitoring tools used in your care
Health funds and Medicare	To process claims and rebates on your behalf, where relevant
Our administrative support team	To manage appointments, records and correspondence
IT, cloud, website and booking providers	Hosting, maintaining, backing up and supporting our systems, website and online booking
Analytics and advertising providers	Website usage information only, as described in section 8
Regulators, insurers and legal advisers	Where required or authorised by law, or to manage a complaint or claim

We do not sell, rent or trade your personal information.

6. Overseas disclosure

Some of the platforms and services we use to design and manufacture appliances, monitor treatment, support our systems, and support the practice administratively are based, or process information, overseas. The table below sets out the categories of overseas recipients and the countries involved, as required by the Australian Privacy Principles.

Category of recipient	Country/countries
Custom appliance design and manufacturing	USA, China, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, Costa Rica, UK
Remote clinical monitoring platform	France
Online virtual consultation platform	France

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Category of recipient	Country/countries
Practice management, treatment planning and imaging software — data held on our own local server, with remote technical support	USA
Outsourced administrative support	Philippines
Website analytics and advertising providers	USA and other countries where those providers operate

Where we disclose personal information to an overseas recipient, we take reasonable steps as required by Australian privacy law to ensure the recipient handles it appropriately, and we disclose only information reasonably necessary for the relevant service. Removing your name from a record sent to one of these platforms does not, on its own, make that record de-identified — where other details (such as your date of birth, sex, or clinical images) could still identify you, it remains personal information and is handled with the same protections as if your name were included. By receiving care from NQ Ortho, you consent to this overseas disclosure where it is necessary to deliver your treatment.

7. How we store and protect your information

- Your records are held in our secure, access-controlled practice management system, on our own local server.
- Where practical, our systems display only your first name — not your surname — on screens visible to other patients or visitors, such as the appointment book and waiting room.
- Staff and contractors — including our overseas administrative support — are bound by confidentiality and data-handling obligations, and access is limited to what each role requires.
- Any use of AI tools in your care is governed by our separate Generative AI Usage Policy, which sets out the safeguards that apply.
- Where practical, we use de-identified or coded information rather than your full name and details, including when working with external systems or platforms — though removing your name alone doesn't always make information de-identified where other details could still identify you (see section 6).

8. Our website, cookies and online advertising

Our website uses cookies and similar tools to make the site work, understand how it is used, and advertise our services. Tools that aren't essential to run the site only run if you accept them in our cookie banner, and you can change your choice at any time. Full details are in our Cookies Policy at www.nqortho.com.au/cookies-policy.

These tools may collect information such as your IP address, device and browser type, the pages you visit, and whether you arrived from one of our ads. Some providers (such as Meta, Google, TikTok and Snap) may link this to an account you hold with them, under their own privacy policies.

We do not intend to send health information to advertising or analytics providers. Form fields are masked in our session-recording tool.

Our website links to other sites, including our online booking and virtual consultation providers and our social media pages. We aren't responsible for the privacy practices of sites we don't control.

9. Marketing and communications

We send appointment reminders and treatment-related messages by SMS and email as part of your care. We only send marketing messages (such as newsletters or offers) by email or SMS if you have agreed to receive them. Every marketing message includes a way to unsubscribe, or you can contact us at any time. Unsubscribing from marketing doesn't stop messages about your care.

10. If there is a data breach

If we become aware of a data breach involving your personal information that is likely to result in serious harm, we will assess it, take steps to contain it, and notify the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) and affected patients where required under the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme.

11. AI use and automated decisions

We use AI tools in aspects of your care, always with a human making the final call:

- AI-assisted transcription (see section 3) helps draft your consultation notes in real time. It does not make any decision about your care — your clinician reviews and corrects every note.
- Our remote monitoring platform uses an algorithm to review the images or scans you submit and flag items for your treating clinician's attention. The algorithm does not decide on your treatment — your clinician reviews every flag and makes the decision about any change to your care.

NQ Ortho does not use a computer program to make, on its own, a decision about a patient that could significantly affect their rights or interests — the tools above assist your clinician, who makes all decisions about your treatment. If this changes, we will update this policy to explain what personal information is used and how, consistent with our obligations from 10/12/2026.

12. Access and correction

You may ask to access or correct the information we hold about you by contacting our Privacy Officer (see section 18). We will respond without undue delay. Access may be by inspection of your record at an appointment, or by copy — there is no charge for the request itself, though a fee may apply to cover the reasonable cost of copying or processing.

13. How long we keep your information

As a general professional standard, we retain adult patient records for at least 7 years from your last consultation, and records for patients who were minors until they turn 25 (or 7 years from the last consultation, whichever is later). This reflects common professional and indemnity-insurer practice rather than a fixed Queensland statutory minimum for private practices — we periodically confirm this against our insurer's requirements.

14. Clinical photography and use of images

Clinical photographs and scans are taken as part of your treatment and form part of your health record. Separate, specific consent is sought before any image, video or testimonial is used for education or marketing purposes (including on our website and social media), and you may withdraw that consent for future use at any time.

15. Children and young people

Where a patient is under 18, we generally collect information from and communicate with a parent or guardian, who exercises the patient's access and consent rights on their behalf. A young person who has sufficient understanding and maturity may make their own healthcare and privacy decisions before turning 18 — we assess this on a case-by-case basis. Any rights not already being exercised by the young person transfer to them once they turn 18.

Where a patient's parents or guardians live separately, we use our Parental Responsibility & Contact Form to record who holds parental responsibility and how we communicate with your family — ask our team for a copy.

16. Complaints

If you have a concern about how we've handled your personal information, please contact our Privacy Officer (see section 18). We will investigate and respond promptly. If you're not satisfied with our response, you can lodge a complaint with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner at www.oaic.gov.au.

17. Your healthcare rights

As a patient of NQ Ortho, you have the right to be treated with respect and dignity, to be informed about your care, to be involved in decisions about your treatment, and to provide feedback or make a complaint. For more information, see the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights (Second Edition) at www.safetyandquality.gov.au/Australian-Charter-Healthcare-Rights.

18. Contact us

If you have a question or concern about your privacy, please contact:

Dr Rhonda Coyne, Principal and Privacy Officer — NQ Ortho
443–445 Draper St, Cairns QLD 4870
Postal address for privacy matters: PO Box 8087, Cairns QLD 4870
Email: info@nqortho.com.au | Phone: (07) 4051 2333

19. Changes to this policy

We review this policy at least annually, and whenever there is a material change in privacy law or the way we handle personal information. Next scheduled review: 01/10/2027.