

The Process for Dismissing a Patient

Documentation

Keep detailed records of all incidents, missed appointments, inappropriate behavior, or non-payment issues. This will support your decision.

Communicating with the Patient

Attempt to resolve the issues by discussing them with the patient. Clearly explain your concerns and give the patient a chance to address the problems. Always be polite and professional. Do not let emotions take control, even if the patient has an emotional response. Good communication skills are especially important.

Sending a Written Warning

If the issues persist, send a formal written warning outlining the problematic behaviors and the potential consequences if they continue.

Preparing a Dismissal Letter

If there is no improvement, draft the dismissal letter that should be professional and respectful stating the reasons for the dismissal and the date. Your letter should advise the patient to find a new dentist and that you will be available for emergency care only for the following 60 days. Also notify them of any outstanding treatment you have recommended and inform the patient of the consequences of not having the treatment completed in a timely manner

Finishing your Case

Any dental procedures started must be finished before dismissing the patient. This does not mean the entire treatment plan must be completed but, for example, a crown must be permanently cemented or a recently delivered denture adjusted. To dismiss a patient who requires immediate/emergency treatment risks injury to the patient and doing so may constitute professional misconduct.

Providing Recommendations

Offer patient recommendations for other dentists or clinics where they can continue their care. Ensure they have access to the necessary dental services.

Ensuring Continuity of Care

If the patient requires ongoing care or urgent care, make sure they receive the necessary treatment during the transition period.

Sending the Dismissal Letter

Send the dismissal letter by registered mail or another service that provides confirmation of delivery. This ensures the patient receives notice.

Documenting the Patient File

Make sure to write the reasons for dismissal and keep a copy of the letter that was sent out to the patient.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Daniel Violette', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Daniel Violette

NBDS Registrar