A no-show policy you can copy and paste

> *“Clients keep not showing up and I don't have a written policy, so I can't charge a fee or even point at a rule.”*

Category: scheduling **Setup Time:** ~20 minutes **Estimated Hours Saved:** 1 hrs/week **Direct Software Cost:** $0 / month

SOLUTION SUMMARY

A no-show policy only works if three things are true: it exists in writing, clients see it before they book, and there's a way to enforce it. The page below has a copy-paste template in three strengths, the exact places to publish it (booking page, confirmation message, intake form), and an honest look at which tools charge you for the enforcement part — automatic fees are usually the gated feature, not the free one.

REQUIRED TOOLS & DIRECT WHOLESALE UTILITIES

- **Calendly:** **(Free Tier / Wholesale)**
- **Square Appointments:** **(Free Tier / Wholesale)**
- **Google Business Profile:** **(Free Tier / Wholesale)**

STEP-BY-STEP APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Pick your window**
   24 hours is standard for appointment businesses; 48 for long or hard-to-fill slots. Shorter than 24 means you refill almost nothing; longer than 72 and clients stop planning around it.

2. **Pick your consequence**
   Flat fee, percentage of the service price, forfeited deposit, or card-required-after-repeat-offenses. One, in writing — not a sliding scale invented per incident.

3. **Copy the template from below**
   Three versions on this page: standard (most businesses), gentle (new books still building trust), strict (long appointments, waitlist-driven). Paste the one that matches and fill in your brackets.

4. **Publish it where clients actually see it**
   Booking page description, confirmation message, intake form if you have one, and your Google Business Profile description. A policy on a '/policies' page nobody visits doesn't count — disclosure at booking time is what makes it enforceable.

5. **Enforce it once, kindly**
   The standard play is a first-offense waiver: 'We'll waive it this once — it applies going forward.' Converts better than iron-fist enforcement, and most clients never test it twice.

5-POINT QUALITY VERIFICATION PROTOCOL

[ ] **Carrier & Webhook Test:** Confirm webhook listener receives test payload and returns HTTP 200 within 500ms.

[ ] **End-to-End Simulation:** Execute live test event from personal device and verify SMS/email delivery.

[ ] **Anti-Spam & Rate Limit Check:** Verify repeated submissions do not trigger duplicate messages to clients.

[ ] **Direct Ownership Audit:** Confirm all API keys, accounts, and credentials belong directly to your practice.

[ ] **Staff Notification Verification:** Verify practice manager/receptionist receives real-time push alert with dial link.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Can I actually charge a no-show fee?

A: Generally yes if the client saw the policy before booking and you hold a card on file — that's why Square's enforcement lives on the paid plan. Enforceability varies by jurisdiction and by how clearly they agreed, and a disputed fee is a conversation, not a line item. Not legal advice.

Q: Won't a policy scare clients off?

A: The opposite, mostly — a written policy reads as a professional business. What scares clients is a surprise charge they never agreed to, which is why disclosure at booking time is the whole game.

Q: What's a reasonable fee?

A: Common patterns are a flat $25–$50 or a quarter to half the service price. Whatever you pick, the number matters less than the client seeing it before they booked.