

Written January 2023



Breastfeeding in the workplace - Policy for Employees

Purpose

This policy has been developed in light of good practice guidelines and recognises the value of breastfeeding for mothers and babies.

Policy

Market Rasen Pre School provides the following policy to provide a workplace environment that supports breastfeeding employees in continuing to breastfeed their infants following their return to work. This policy will be communicated to all current employees. Market Rasen Pre School encourages employees and management to have a positive, accepting attitude toward working women who are breastfeeding and discrimination and harassment of breastfeeding mothers in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy is effective from January 2023.

Organisation's responsibilities

Market Rasen Pre School acknowledges that supporting breastfeeding has benefits to the organisation such as a reduction in absenteeism and staff turnover and important health benefits to mother and baby. Employees who wish to continue to breastfeed following return to work shall receive:

- **Breaks for breastfeeding or expressing milk:** Breastfeeding employees are allowed to breastfeed or express milk during work hours using their normal breaks and as part of additional lactation breaks (usually 20 minutes once or twice a day) as agreed with their line manager - up for discussion to adapt if required to less time. This lactation break will be unpaid.
- **A private place to express milk:** A private room shall be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk, in this time which is a staff toilet. The room will be private, lockable and clean, located near a sink with running water for washing hands and rinsing out breast pump parts. This is the only lockable private space available due to lack of space and rooms in the children's centre. If employees prefer, they may also breastfeed or express milk in their own private offices, or in other comfortable locations agreed upon in consultation with the employee's supervisor if appropriate. Expressed milk should be stored in a personal cool bag or if available the cool bag can be placed in a refrigerator, providing that it is washable plastic and not fabric - provided by employee.
- **Breastfeeding equipment:** Each breastfeeding employee is responsible for purchasing and maintaining all her own breast pump equipment. Storage of milk and cleaning of breast equipment should be undertaken as recommended in the Public Health Agency booklet Breastfeeding and returning to work.
- **Education:** management will signpost pregnant employees and returning employees to available information and support on breastfeeding and returning to work. Information is available at www.breastfedbabies.org and leaflets can be viewed at www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications - All work colleagues and line managers are expected to be supportive and sensitive to the needs of breastfeeding mothers returning to work.

- **Staff support:** Line managers are responsible for alerting pregnant and breastfeeding employees about the breastfeeding and working policy and for negotiating breaks and practices that will help facilitate each employee's infant feeding goals. It is expected that line managers and work colleagues will assist in providing a supportive and understanding approach to facilitating breastfeeding employees.

Employee's responsibilities

- **Communication with supervisors:** Employees who wish to breastfeed or express milk after their return to work shall keep supervisors informed of their needs so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the workplace.
- **Maintenance of milk expression equipment:** Employees are responsible for leaving the designated milk expression area clean. All breast pump equipment must be cleaned in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and as recommended in the Public Health Agency booklet Breastfeeding and Returning to Work.
- **Milk storage:** Employees should label all milk expressed with her name and the date collected so that it is not inadvertently confused with another employee's milk. Each employee is responsible for proper storage and transportation of her own milk, it is recommended that personal storage milk bottles/bags are placed into a plastic box that is washable, and kept clean in the refrigerator. If a refrigerator is not available breastmilk can be stored at room temperature or in a cool bag for 6 hours.
- **Use of break times to express milk:** If more than one breastfeeding employee needs to use the designated expressing room, employees can use a sign-in log provided in the room to negotiate milk expression times that are most convenient or best meet their needs. Lactation break times must be discussed with employer before returning back to work, and an agreement should be reached. The employee must then keep a record of lactation breaks, to be submitted with timesheets at the end of every month, so that a deduction of hours can be taken. If you find once you return, that your planned lactation break is not practical, you can discuss a change and negotiate this with your manager at any time.