



Example of a Breastfeeding Policy that meets BFW Best Practice

Your Workplace Pty Ltd Workplace Breastfeeding Policy

1. **Scope:**

This policy is applicable to all employees — whether full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary or casual, contractors, and volunteers of *Your Workplace Pty Ltd* who wish to combine breastfeeding and paid work. This might include: employees returning from maternity leave, new employees who may be breastfeeding, employees who may be relactating and pre-adoptive employees who may wish to establish a milk supply prior to their child's placement.

For the purpose of this policy, *breastfeeding* means breastfeeding an infant or expressing breastmilk.

2. **Purpose:**

Your Workplace Pty Ltd recognises a mother's need to ensure that work and breastfeeding can be combined comfortably and practically to promote ongoing benefits to the baby, mother and workplace. We strive to provide an environment which will assist employees to integrate work and life commitments.

Your Workplace Pty Ltd recognises that the needs of the breastfeeding employee are minimal and short-lived. We also recognise the importance of breastfeeding for both carers and baby and aim to provide a family-friendly workplace that enables employees to balance breastfeeding and their work responsibilities. *Your Workplace Pty Ltd* wishes to support women in their desire to maintain breastfeeding for as long as mother and baby desire.¹ As individual needs of the mother, carer and baby will vary, we are committed to offer flexible work arrangements that will meet the needs of the employee as well as operational requirements.

Support from colleagues is crucial to providing a supportive workplace environment for breastfeeding employees. All employees have a responsibility to treat colleagues who are breastfeeding with respect and dignity.

¹ The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for babies until the age of 6 months, and continued breastfeeding, with appropriate complementary foods, for children of up to 2 years of age or beyond (World Health Organization, 2001).

3. Objectives:

1. **Reduce absenteeism rates amongst new parents:** A study in the US reported that one-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of babies who are not breastfeed.²
2. **Improve recruitment and retention of staff following maternity leave:** Some research has found that women who are supported in breastfeeding their babies by their employers are more likely to return to work after maternity leave.³ Studies of several companies with breastfeeding programs in the US showed a retention rate of 94%.⁴
3. **Improve staff productivity and loyalty:** Companies who provide support for breastfeeding have consistently reported improved morale, better satisfaction and higher productivity.⁵
4. **Comply with relevant legislation.**
5. **Promote workplace diversity; health and wellbeing and social corporate responsibility.**
6. **Assist employees to integrate their work and family commitments.**

4. Roles & Responsibilities:

It is important that both employers and employees remain flexible, accommodating, and respectful of each other's needs.

Decisions made regarding requests for lactation breaks and flexible work options must be fair, transparent and capable of review. A written agreement between the employee and employer may be effective in this regard.

4.1 Employer Responsibility

All [Your Workplace Pty Ltd](#) employees have provisions protecting breastfeeding as outlined in this policy and Enterprise Agreement.

4.2 Human Resources

The Human Resources team is responsible for the implementation and ongoing facilitation of support for breastfeeding employees through the following channels:

- Ensure all managers are aware of this policy by scheduling it for annual distribution
- Provision of breastfeeding information when maternity leave is requested

4.3 Managerial Responsibility

Managers shall ensure that all staff are aware of, and comply with, the policy. This includes:

- Ensuring all staff understand their rights under this policy
- Ensuring that all staff understand their responsibility under this policy
- Ensuring pregnant staff are aware of their rights prior to taking maternity leave
- Supporting breastfeeding requests in line with operational requirements
- If, due to operational needs, there is a need to delay the taking of a lactation break, efforts should be made to ensure that the employee is able to take the break as soon as possible in order to minimise any risks to the employee's health or milk supply or the child's health.

² Cohen R, Mrtek MB, Mrtek R (1995) Comparison of Maternal Absenteeism and Infant Illness Rates Among Breast-feeding and Formula-feeding Women in Two Corporations *American Journal of Health Promotion* 10(2): 148–153

³ Payne, D., & James, L. (2008). Make or break Mothers' experiences of returning to paid employment and breastfeeding: a New Zealand study. *Breastfeeding Review*. 16 (2), 21: 2-27.

⁴ Ortiz J, McGilligan K, Kelly, P (2004) Duration of Breastmilk Expression Among Working Mothers Enrolled in an Employer-Sponsored Lactation Program. *Paediatric Nursing* 30(2): 111–119.

⁵ Galty, J. (1997). Lactation and the labor market: breastfeeding, labor market changes, and public policy in the United States. *Health Care Women Int.*, 18, 467-480.

4.4 Employee Responsibility

Employees wishing to combine work and breastfeeding shall negotiate their conditions as soon as practicable, with their manager. Employees shall:

- Negotiate the duration and timing of lactation breaks with their manager prior to the first break being taken. Ideally this should be done prior to returning to work to minimise the impact this may have on the workplace.
- Notify their manager when they depart and return to work, if an agreement to leave the workplace for lactation breaks has been arranged.
- Take both the organisational and personal needs into account, with a focus on minimising disruption in the workplace, when determining the timing of lactation breaks.
- Notify their manager if their breastfeeding needs change, or cease, so that any agreement can be amended as required.

Employees wishing to utilise breastfeeding facilities have the responsibility to:

- Supply their own expressing equipment and appropriate storage containers for expressed breastmilk.
- Clearly label these containers with their name and date before placing them in the designated refrigerator.
- If applicable, ensure that their child is delivered directly to the space designated for the purpose of lactation breaks and that the child leaves the workplace at the completion of each lactation break.
- Observe any other guidelines for the use of the designated room.

5. Support for Breastfeeding Employees

To enable employees to combine work and breastfeeding [Your Workplace Pty Ltd](#) has put in place the following:

5.1 Lactation Breaks

Lactation breaks are to be made available to employees to breastfeed (go to the baby or have the baby brought into the office) or express breastmilk during work hours.

The number of times women need to feed or express milk will be determined by the individual needs and age of the baby. The younger the baby, the more frequently a mother is likely to need to do so. An employee working a standard 8-hour shift is entitled to one or more daily breaks of up to one (1) hour per day or a reduction of hours of work counted as working time and remunerated accordingly. For employees requiring more than one (1) hour for combined lactation breaks during a standard working day, flexible work or leave arrangements may be implemented to cover the time in excess of that hour.

Part-time employees working 4 hours or less on any one day are entitled to one or more lactation breaks of up to 30 minutes or a reduction of hours of work, counted as working time and remunerated accordingly on any day worked.

The period of paid lactation breaks includes travelling time for employees who take lactation breaks off the work site. [Your Workplace Pty Ltd](#) offers the flexibility of adding these breaks to lunch break to allow the employee to travel to breastfeed her baby.

5.2 Facilities

Your Workplace Pty Ltd welcomes babies in the workplace. Employees who wish to care for their baby in the workspace should discuss their individual needs with their manager to reach an agreement that takes into consideration the operational needs of the organisation and the lactation needs of the employee. Some points for discussion include:

- Age of the baby and length of time that this agreement will apply for
- Where the baby will be located and any related WHS concerns
- Whether this agreement applies at all times or only during certain hours.

Employees are welcome to breastfeed their baby as and when needed in their work space. Such arrangements may be noted in the Lactation Break Agreement.

Your Workplace Pty Ltd has also provided suitable facilities in which women could express breastmilk or breastfeed their babies if the baby was brought to the workplace. A car parking space is available for carers bringing a baby to the workplace to breastfeed. Any visitors will need a parking pass issued.

Toilets, disabled toilets, cleaning rooms and shower recesses are not suitable areas for expressing breastmilk or breastfeeding.

Suitable facilities will include:

- A private, hygienic, clean, lockable space
- Power point
- Appropriate seating close to power point
- A table for breast pump equipment
- Hand washing facilities close by
- Hygienic facilities for washing breast pump equipment close by (not a toilet)
- Access to existing refrigerators for storing breastmilk
- Secure facilities for storage of breast pump and other equipment.

Further details on facility locations and access to these can be found in the Breastfeeding/Expressing Room Procedures document.

In the event that these rooms are not available there is a meeting room available on each floor, please check bookings before use. If this is occurring regularly please speak to [John Jones on ext. 488](#).

In the event that new premises are acquired, consideration will be given to the provision of facilities for breastfeeding employees as detailed in this policy.

5.3 Flexible Work Options

Breastfeeding employees returning to work can seek flexible work options as outlined in the Fair Work Act 2009.

This may include:

- Time off for an employee to express breast milk or to breastfeed her baby at family room or other child care facility
- Flexible start and finish times around core working hours
- Allowing lunch and other breaks to be taken to coincide with feeding times

- A short period of time off to return home or offsite
- Working from home
- Staggered return to work and/or gradual increase to full hours
- Job share
- Permanent part-time.

All flexible working arrangements are subject to operational requirements.

5.4 Other Support

Your Workplace Pty Ltd encourages its employees to make use of sources of support available to help with issues relating to return to work or managing issues relating to parenting and other life situations. These include, but are not limited to:

- Internal or external counselling services
- Intranet

Your Workplace Pty Ltd recognises that the individual needs of mother, carer and baby will vary, and is committed to provide work arrangements that will meet the needs of the employee as well as operational requirements. If after discussing your individual needs with your manager a workable solution cannot be found, please contact [John Jones on ext. 488](#) to assist with the facilitation of a suitable arrangement.

Your Workplace Pty Ltd employees are given priority placement when accessing childcare through the onsite centre. To register your interest in this support, please contact the childcare centre directly.

The Australian Breastfeeding Association has trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors available on the National Breastfeeding Helpline 24 hours per day for information and support on combining breastfeeding and paid work. Call 1800 mum 2 mum (1800 686 268) or visit: www.breastfeeding.asn.au for local group contact details in your area.

6 Related Procedures & Documents

The following procedures are in place to support the implementation of this policy. These include:

- Breastfeeding Communication Plan
- Supporting Breastfeeding Employees: Checklist for Managers
- Breastfeeding/Expressing Room Procedures
- Lactation Break Agreement

7 Relevant policies and legislation:

Under state legislation and the Sex Discrimination Act, 1984 (Commonwealth) it is against the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee who is breastfeeding. The definition of breastfeeding includes expressing milk. It is generally against the law to tell an employee not to breastfeed or express in the workplace. Failure to accommodate employees who are breastfeeding through flexible work arrangements or the provision of appropriate breastfeeding facilities at work may constitute a breach of state legislation and/or the Sex Discrimination Act, 1984 (Commonwealth) and may give rise to complaints to the relevant state body.

Workplace:

- *Maternity Pack*
- *WHS Policy*

State:

- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 (NSW)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)

Commonwealth:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
- NHMRC Australian Dietary Guidelines. Commonwealth of Australia 2013:87-96.

International:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW 1989
- ILO C156 Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981
- ILO C183 Maternity Protection Convention, 2000
- ILO R191 Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000
- World Health Assembly (Fifty Fourth) 2001, Infant and Young Child Nutrition: Resolution 54.2
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984.

Note: State and Commonwealth legislation prohibits direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of sex, breastfeeding status, pregnancy and carer's responsibility.