

MARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Breastfeeding Policy

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1 Background Context

Marish Primary School, as a family friendly institution, at the heart of our community has developed this policy to support mothers in combining breastfeeding their baby and returning to work.

The rationale behind this policy is based on two key factors:

1. The World Health Organisation states that the maximum health benefits to both mother and baby will be incurred if exclusive breastfeeding takes place for 6 months and if breastfeeding continues into the baby's second year of life. Therefore current government policy and our own best practice requires, that we do everything we can to help new mothers continue to breastfeed their babies for as long as they wish.
2. In the current economic climate and changing educational context, many women find themselves having to shorten their maternity leaves for financial or professional reasons. We consider it unacceptable that in the 21st century women are forced to choose between breastfeeding their child and returning to work. This policy and the practice it outlines, are designed to enable new mothers to do both.

Further Reading:

New and Expectant Mothers at Work: A Guide for Employers HSE Books

www.hse.gov.uk

2 Our Practice

The school will endeavour to meet the individual needs of each woman using the policy. We will achieve this by providing:

- A warm, comfortable, private room with a clean fridge for storing breast milk. This can be used for pumping milk, or for feeding baby.
- Additional breaks which will allow a mother time to express breast milk (expressing milk can take between 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours).
- Additional breaks to allow the mother to breastfeed her baby. This could be when the baby is being cared for nearby, or if the baby is brought into the workplace. The number and length of such breaks will be negotiated with the headteacher or line manager with the dual aim of meeting the evolving needs of each new mother and baby and of the school. However guidelines from the World Health Organisation suggest between 2 and 6 breaks of up to 30 mins each during a working day for a new mother with a baby aged under six months.
- Flexibility of working hours, wherever possible, especially in the early weeks after maternity leave.

- Opportunities for a mother to have her baby in the workplace, if in unusual circumstances, the leadership of the school or a mother herself requests that she returns to work earlier than planned.
- If a request to return early is made by a mother, the school must accommodate her early return as long as she gives four weeks notice in writing, but may in practice accommodate a shorter lead in time, if possible to arrange.
- If the school leadership asks a mother to consider an earlier return to work, whether she does so or not is her decision entirely and her right to make this decision without pressure is protected by legislation, this policy and the school's best practice. Moreover, the school would only make such a request after careful consideration.
- If a mother does wish to return earlier than originally planned, she may list a variety of reasonable adjustments such as longer breaks and shorter working hours so she can spend time with her baby, whether or not she is breastfeeding and whether or not her request to return was instigated by her or the school.

3 Responsibilities of Line Managers

It is the responsibility of each line manager to ensure that all pregnant employees are made aware of this policy.

Prior to returning from maternity leave, all women wishing to combine breastfeeding with returning to work should inform the headteacher of this in writing and will be offered the opportunity to discuss their specific requirements relating to breastfeeding.

Even if you are continuing to breastfeed a baby older than six months and only at the beginning and end of the day, you are entitled to extra breaks to express milk and the school should carry out a risk assessment, to ensure that your own and your baby's health and well-being are being protected and that you are not, for example, being exposed to any harmful substances whilst at work.

Line managers will conduct an individual risk assessment for each breastfeeding employee.

Marish's Governing Body will be responsible for ensuring any changes in legislation are incorporated into the policy and will conduct a 2 yearly review to ensure that the uptake and use of the policy is satisfactory.

4 Benefits to the School

Supporting employees who want to combine work and breastfeeding makes good business sense.

- Lower absenteeism: babies who are breastfed are on average healthier and this can often mean employees having less time off work to care for a sick child.
- Higher rates of return from leave: if an employer offers a supportive, flexible environment, the mother may be more likely to return to work earlier. This retains valuable skills and avoids staff replacement costs.

- Equal Opportunities: support for breastfeeding is crucial to enable mothers to combine work and family and should be a key part of an equal opportunities strategy.
- Recruitment Incentive: organisation will be recognised as a family friendly employer, which is good for corporate and public relations, recruitment and retention of staff.

5 The Employer's Legal Obligations

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) outline the requirement to protect employees from hazards in the workplace. It is therefore the responsibility of the workplace to carry out a risk assessment of the mother's work situation before her return to work.

The Health and Safety Executive guide for employers on new and expectant mothers at work says, "Although there is no legal requirement to do so, you will want to consider providing a safe and healthy environment for workers who are breastfeeding to express and store milk, or breastfeed their babies."

6 Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	May 2012		

7 Approval History

Version	Approved	Comments
1.0	May 2012	