



# BREASTFEEDING POLICY

September 2011

## Document review and approval

### This document has been approved by

	Name	Minute No	Date approved
1	Director's Committee – DMC068-12		20 September, 2011

## Revision history

Version	Author	Date	Revision
1	Fair Workplace Co-ordinator	20 September, 2011	Original Version

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This policy contains 3 pages



## BREASTFEEDING POLICY

### Introduction

Sutherland Shire Council recognises the important role of women in all of its operations and the valuable contribution they make to the workplace. This policy has been created to support both the employee and their manager in facilitating a breastfeeding/expressing arrangement to encourage and assist women in caring for their baby when returning to work.

Amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) that took effect from 21 June 2011 establish breastfeeding as a separate ground of discrimination in certain areas of public life, including employment. As a result, it is unlawful to directly or indirectly discriminate against a woman who is breastfeeding, which includes expressing milk. The amendments ensure that appropriate measures are taken to accommodate the needs of breastfeeding women in the workplace and elsewhere in the general community.

### Planning and Preparation for Returning to Work after Parental Leave

Three possible scenarios that might occur in order to combine breastfeeding and work:

1. A carer may bring the infant to the workplace for the mother to breastfeed during the working day
2. The infant may be cared for in a nearby childcare centre and the mother may visit the centre to breastfeed during the working day
3. Most commonly, the mother may express breast milk during the working day.

An employee intending to continue breastfeeding when returning to work should discuss their needs with their immediate manager prior to returning to work to ensure that their needs can be accommodated. The discussion should focus on how best to balance work priorities with:

- The frequency and timing of lactation breaks
- Consideration of temporary flexible working arrangements – be flexible and creative
- Suitable space and other facilities required.

The practicalities of how this is to work are to be negotiated between each individual and their manager. The discussion should result in an agreed approach and assistance can be sought from Personnel or Fair Workplace at any time.

### Options for Flexible Arrangements

Breastfeeding an infant is not permanent and the arrangements agreed to should be recognised as short term and temporary. Review periods should be set and agreed upon, for example each 4-6 weeks.

Taking into account the needs of both the employee and the operational needs of the workplace, flexible arrangements may include:

- Graduated return to work
- Temporary lactation breaks
- Part-time hours provided for a period of time
- Varying hours of work
- Working from home / telecommuting
- Job-sharing for a period of time
- Re-organisation of lunch and tea breaks to accommodate breastfeeding needs.



## The manager is responsible for:

- Discussing and agreeing on flexible workplace arrangements that satisfy the needs of the parent and the organisation
- Seeking internal advice or support if required
- Advising Personnel of each individual arrangement made to allow reporting to occur annually.

In consultation with the employee, the manager should identify sensible, practical and reasonable ways to meet the employee's needs for access to:

- A suitable, hygienic room/space with comfortable seating (a toilet is not acceptable), and a power point if necessary
- Facilities for washing hands and equipment
- Adequate refrigerator space for storage of breast milk, if necessary
- Safe facilities for storage of breast pumps and related equipment, if necessary.

## The employee is responsible for:

- Discussing their intention to continue breastfeeding well in advance of their return to work
- Remaining flexible in order to satisfy their own needs whilst meeting the requirements of their position
- Seeking internal advice or support if required
- Where applicable, booking a suitable room for each occasion
- Providing their own expressing and sterilising equipment and storage containers
- Seeking appropriate information and advice
- Securely storing expressed milk in sealed and clearly labelled containers.

## External Breastfeeding Support

Some mothers may experience difficulties in the transition from home based breastfeeding to the workplace and may wish to seek external professional help.

Options include:

- Australian Breastfeeding Association [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)
- A Community Child Health Nurse
- A private Lactation Consultant

## Do you need further support?

- Read relevant information on Compass – Compass / My Employment
- Speak to your Manager or Supervisor
- Contact the Personnel Unit – 9710 0506
- Contact Fair Workplace – 9710 0679 [fairworkplace@ssc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:fairworkplace@ssc.nsw.gov.au)
- Council provides a free (up to 4 sessions per year) professional external confidential counselling service – 1800 818 728.

## Monitoring

- Managers must report each individual arrangement to Personnel
- Personnel reports annually on the number of individual arrangements within the workplace.

## Review Date

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required.