

School Breastfeeding Rationale

RATIONALE:

The School Breastfeeding Support Policy was developed to provide schools with recommendations and guidance on ways to support breastfeeding administrators, faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

Schools play a unique role in creating a breastfeeding-friendly environment as it includes support and accommodation for more than breastfeeding employees. Schools also have a responsibility to students and visitors. Teen mothers are less likely to breastfeed than any other population group in the United States. Continuity of care, schedule flexibility, and overall support by the school system are crucial components of teen breastfeeding success.

Breastfeeding-friendly environments must also extend beyond the school day. Support is necessary for visitors at all events and extra-curricular activities occurring on the school grounds.

Benefits

Supportive breastfeeding policies and practices in the school not only benefit mothers and babies. They also provide several benefits to the school as an employer and an educational system.

For All Mothers

- *Health* – Breastfeeding can lower rates of diabetes as well as breast, uterine, and ovarian cancer. Breastfeeding also lessens osteoporosis, benefits child spacing, promotes emotional health, and reduces the risk of postpartum depression in new mothers.

For Mothers in the Workplace

- *Productivity* – Lactation support programs in the workplace often demonstrate higher productivity. This increase in productivity is frequently attributed to a lessened emotional and psychological burden associated with being away from the baby, as well as higher energy and greater optimism.
- *Fewer Distractions* – Individuals who can express breast milk in the workplace are better able to concentrate during the workday. A breast infection and/or a drop in ability to produce milk can result if a mother is unable to express breast milk each time she feels the need to do so.
- *Absenteeism* – Individuals who use lactation support programs and facilities exhibit lower absenteeism.

For Babies

- *Immunity* – Breastfeeding passes on antibodies to babies, which help protect their immune systems from disease. Breastfed babies tend to have fewer and less severe instances of certain short-term illnesses, including bacterial

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meningitis, diarrhea, ear infections, respiratory infections, and urinary tract infections. Breastfeeding protects against future illness and disease.

- *Obesity – Babies who are breastfed have a reduced risk of both childhood and adult obesity.*
- *SIDS – Exclusive or partial breastfeeding is correlated with a decreased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).*

For Students

- *Academic Success - Confidence in breastfeeding and parenting may reflect positively in schoolwork.*
- *Absenteeism - Less unexcused absences and missed schoolwork due to infant's resistance to sickness.*

For Employers

- *Productivity – When employers provide breastfeeding support, breastfeeding employees tend to have fewer absences and tardiness because their infants are more resistant to sickness.*
- *Organizational Loyalty – Breastfeeding employees often feel increased loyalty to their employer because it demonstrates that their workplace supports the employee, their family, and their health.*
- *Recruitment and Retention – Employer support for breastfeeding serves as a recruitment tool. Employees that offer lactation support programs often have higher retention rates for female employees.*
- *Job satisfaction – Having effective lactation support programs demonstrates care for employees and their health. Businesses that display support for their employees facilitate greater workplace satisfaction.*

For School Systems

- *Health Education – Support for breastfeeding shows adolescent-aged students the benefits of breastfeeding, creates a cultural normalcy for breastfeeding, and promotes public health.*

School Breastfeeding Model Student Policy

Effective Date: _____ Review Date: _____

[SCHOOL NAME] is devoted to supporting breastfeeding employees at the school level.

[SCHOOL NAME] ensures the following policy and practices will be upheld to ensure a supportive breastfeeding environment that complies with state and federal laws, demonstrates a culture of breastfeeding support, and provides protection and accommodation to all breastfeeding mothers on school grounds including administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Breastfeeding Administrators, Faculty, and Staff (herein referred to as employees):

[SCHOOL NAME] will:

- Recognize the responsibility a mother has to both her job and her child when she returns to work, acknowledging there are many health benefits associated with breastfeeding and that mothers may miss less work caring for sick kids if they breastfeed.
- Support mothers who breastfeed at work and commit to helping employees continue breastfeeding when they return.
- Provide a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her child for 1 year after the child's birth each time an employee needs to express breast milk.
 - For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, employees can work with their administration to work an adjusted schedule or use leave.
 - Employers are not required to compensate for breaks taken to express breast milk. However, if an individual chooses to use an established compensated break time to express breast milk, they must be compensated as they normally would.
- Provide access to the school's Lactation Room located at [include description of where the room is located in the school]. A lactation room is a private space (NOT a bathroom) that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and students.
 - Each space will, at a minimum, have a lock or privacy curtain, access to electricity (outlets), a comfortable chair, sink and refrigerator for breast milk storage in the room or nearby (a community refrigerator will suffice for breast milk storage as breastmilk is not hazardous bodily fluid and it is not a contamination danger), reasonable method for scheduling use (i.e. paper sign-up sheet, dry-erase board, or an online calendar schedule as time allotted for scheduling is usually in 30 minute increments), and privacy signage.
 - If the employee prefers, they may express breast milk in their own private office or classroom.

Principal