

**Policy Name:** Policy on Supporting Breastfeeding at MIE

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Policy on Supporting Breastfeeding at MIE
<b>Description:</b>	Policy to set out clearly the process and supports available to mothers who wish to breastfeed their child while working at MIE.
<b>Author (Position):</b>	Human Resources
<b>Version:</b>	1
<b>Approved By:</b>	MIE Governing Body
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## **Policy on Supporting Breastfeeding at MIE**

### **1. Context**

The Marino Institute of Education (MIE) has a values-based and strategic commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality. Under the terms of our [Staff Equality Policy](#), MIE is also committed to the promotion of equality in all aspects of its activity, including in our capacity as an employer.

### **2. Purpose**

To set out clearly the process and supports available to mothers who wish to breastfeed their child while working at MIE.

### **3. Benefits**

Mindful of the provisions of the [Maternity Protection \(Amendment\) Act 2004](#), and MIE's [Maternity Leave Policy](#), this policy sets out arrangements for facilitating breastfeeding employees of MIE.

### **4. Principles**

MIE will be supportive of efforts to ensure that women with family responsibilities participate fully in the workplace and are not disadvantaged in progressing their careers.

- 4.1. MIE is committed to supporting staff and establishing policies to assist them to combine work and breastfeeding. We are also committed to ensuring that employees who want to continue breastfeeding on returning to work are provided with appropriate arrangements and facilities to combine work and breastfeeding.
- 4.2. To sustain breastfeeding it is vital that mothers either breastfeed their babies or express breast milk at regular intervals every day. If they are not able to do this their milk supply will be adversely affected. This does not apply to non-breastfeeding mothers.

### **5. Definitions**

- 5.1. This policy applies to all female breastfeeding employees working in MIE and all managerial, supervisory & co-workers of the breastfeeding staff.

- 5.2. [Section 9](#) of the Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act 2004 provides that “women in employment who are breastfeeding are entitled to take time off work each day in order to breastfeed.” The provision applies to all women in employment who have given birth within the previous 26 weeks. Employees returning after this time may only be provided with lactation breaks subject to discussion with their Head of Department.
- 5.3. The Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act 2004 provides an entitlement to paid breastfeeding/lactation breaks where the employer provides facilities or a reduction of working hours without a loss of pay for breastfeeding where no facilities are provided.
- 5.4. As MIE provides facilities for employees to express breast milk, the employee is entitled under [Section 9](#) of the 2004 Act to a breastfeeding/lactation break of one hour per normal eight hour working day.

## **6. Policy**

Facilities are available at designated locations in MIE which affords privacy to the breastfeeding employee to express their milk. The following is the procedure for the use of these facilities.

The breastfeeding employee is required to:

- 6.1. Make a formal written request to their Head of Department for the purpose of expressing breast milk using [Appendix 1](#).
- 6.2. Agree with their Head of Department at local level the management of lactation breaks:
  - i. Respect the privacy and security of the room and of those who use it.
  - ii. Ensure the room is clean as they depart.
  - iii. Take responsibility for the labelling and storage of their own breast milk.
  - iv. Take responsibility for the care and maintenance of their own equipment (e.g. breast pump).
- 6.3. Human Resources are required to:

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Inform all relevant staff of the availability of agreed lactation breaks for the breastfeeding employee and MIE's support of same.

6.4. The Head of Department is required to:

Agree management of lactation breaks with the breastfeeding employee.

6.5. Based on the contracted working hours applicable in MIE, the entitlement will be one hour per working day for all eligible full time employees.

The regulations state that this paid break can be broken into:

- i. 1 x 60 minute break,
- ii. 2 x 30 minute breaks or,
- iii. 3 x 20 minute breaks.

This paid break is in addition to meal breaks.

The Regulations provide for a pro-rata entitlement for part-time employees or employees who do not work a full day. Breastfeeding breaks cannot be accumulated.

6.6. While the minimum entitlement under the law is for up until the child is six months old, this limit is insufficient to support mothers in their return to work in MIE, and accordingly, having regard to the national policy, the workplace arrangements should apply for as long as the working mother chooses, or until the child is two years old.

6.7. An employee who wishes to exercise their rights to breastfeed in employment, must notify their Head of Department (in writing) of their intention to breastfeed at work. They must confirm this information at least four weeks before the date they intend to return to employment from maternity leave. If an employee does not provide proper notice of their return to work, this could affect their rights as contained in the Act.

6.8. A breastfeeding employee returning to work within 26 weeks is supported through Health and Safety legislation ([Section 18](#) of the Act). Regulations require that an employer must assess the workplace for risks to pregnant workers, and those who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding. If a risk is established, the

employer must put in place measures to remove the risk. If it is not possible for the employer to do this, the employee must be granted suitable alternative work. If the employee cannot be granted suitable alternative work, then they must be granted Health & Safety Leave.

## **7. Responsibility**

- 7.1. The breastfeeding employee shall be responsible for the care and safe storage of their breast milk.
- 7.2. The breastfeeding employee shall be responsible for the equipment necessary for expressing their milk.
- 7.3. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that the breastfeeding employee is supported and that all relevant staff are informed of the necessary breastfeeding break needs.
- 7.4. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to comply with legislation, i.e. [Maternity Protection \(Amendment\) Act 2004](#). This includes replying to the request for lactation breaks within two weeks of receiving it.
- 7.5. The responsibility for maintenance of this policy rests with Human Resources.

## **8. Related Documents**

- 8.1. [Maternity Leave Policy](#)
- 8.2. [Staff Equality Policy](#)
- 8.3. [Maternity Protection \(Amendment\) Act 2004](#)

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**Appendix 1 - Notification of Intent to Use the Breastfeeding Arrangements**

Employee's name: Staff Number:	
Infant's date of birth:	
I confirm that I will be/am breastfeeding my infant and I intend of availing of the breast feeding facilities and/or break arrangements from:	Date:
The arrangements I require are:	I am planning to express breast milk and require facilities <input type="checkbox"/>  I plan to take lactation breaks <input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide any further relevant details on the arrangements you request here including the lactation breaks:	
<p><b>Declaration</b></p> <p>I declare that the information given above is true and complete. I confirm that when I cease to require these arrangements I will notify my Head of Department accordingly.</p> <p>Signature of Employee</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Date:</p>	