

# **Workplace breastfeeding guideline for:**

## **The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University**

### **Background**

The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) of Stellenbosch University recognises that many women return to work while they are breastfeeding.

The FMHS establishes these guidelines in order to support breastfeeding and the expression of breastmilk by female employees who are breastfeeding their babies while back at work.

### **Purpose**

To provide a guideline to supervisors and managers with regard to female employees who choose to breastfeed their babies or express breastmilk for their babies.

### **Scope**

These guidelines are applicable to employees who return from maternity leave as well as new appointees who are breastfeeding at the time of appointment. These guidelines are not applicable to casual employees, including sessional employees, appointed to work for less than 24 hours per month.

### **Legislative framework**

- ❖ Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No 108 of 1996
- ❖ Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995 as amended
- ❖ Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No 75 of 1997
- ❖ Employee Equity Act, No 55 of 1998
- ❖ Code of Good Practice on the Protection of Employees during pregnancy and after the birth of a child as per the regulation Gazette No 6342 of 1998, issued in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997

### **Arrangements**

1. On return from maternity leave, the employee will inform her direct supervisor that she is breastfeeding or needs to express milk. Any new appointee should inform her direct supervisor on commencement of work.
2. The employee can request reasonable time off to breastfeed or for expressing breastmilk.
3. The employee and her direct supervisor should discuss a suitable arrangement that may include an arrangement for the employee to have breaks of up to a maximum of 30 minutes, over and above normal breaks, twice per day in an 8-hour period for breastfeeding or expressing.
4. Operational requirements must be considered at all times as discussed by the employee and her direct supervisor.
5. It may be that an employee needs more time per break or more than two breaks for breastfeeding or expressing. The direct supervisor can agree to extend the breaks on condition that, if operational requirements necessitate it, the employee can be required to make up the lost time or alter her working hours.
6. The direct supervisor must ensure that a record is kept of the employee's arrangement for breastfeeding or expressing.

7. In cases where abuse of time is suspected, the arrangement can be stopped or an appropriate monitoring mechanism can be implemented.
8. Any arrangements for breastfeeding or expressing are applicable for a period of six months after the birth of the employee's child. This can be extended by the direct supervisor, subject to operational requirements.

### **Space and facilities**

It is recognised that general bathroom facilities are not appropriate for women to breastfeed or express their breastmilk.

The FMHS will endeavour to provide at least one facility for breastfeeding and/or expressing of breastmilk that has:

- ❖ A clean, comfortable and private space within the workplace
- ❖ Appropriate signage (i.e.: ROOM IN USE) to enhance privacy
- ❖ A comfortable chair, with supportive armrests, for breastfeeding
- ❖ A small table and chair for expressing breast milk
- ❖ Accessible electrical outlets for electric breast pump use
- ❖ A baby changing station or table with a means to hygienically clean area
- ❖ Proximity to washing facilities with a clean, safe water source for hand washing and rinsing out breast pump equipment
- ❖ A small refrigerator or space in a refrigerator for safe storage of breastmilk.

Breastfeeding women will provide their own containers for the storage of breastmilk and milk stored in the refrigerator that will be clearly labelled with a name and date.

### **Promotion and communication of guideline**

This guideline will be communicated to all staff employed at the FMHS.

### **Further information**

For further information or assistance in relation to this guideline, please contact:

Prof Lisanne Du Plessis at [lmdup@sun.ac.za](mailto:lmdup@sun.ac.za).

### **Authority**

Approved by: The Management of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences  
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