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| Scope: All Staff | Effective Date: 1 February 2023 | Responsible Dept: Human Resources | Equality Impact Assessment: November 2022 |
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Breastfeeding Policy

Policy Statement

- 1.1 York St John University acknowledges the importance of breastfeeding in the first two years of an infant’s life. The World Health Organisation recommends that infants are exclusively breastfed for the first six months. They state that breastfeeding continues to benefit infants in their first two years of life, alongside complementary foods. Breastfeeding is a choice and should parents working at the University want to breastfeed their infant upon return to work, for an indefinite period of time, we will provide support as detailed in this policy.
- 1.2 The University expects managers and colleagues to be encouraging and positive towards employees who are breastfeeding. Discrimination and/or harassment of breastfeeding employees is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- 1.3 Apart from the benefits of breastfeeding for parent and infant, supporting breastfeeding benefits the organisation through reduction in absenteeism, retention of staff, attraction of new talent and higher productivity.

2. Aim and Scope

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to provide support to employees who wish to continue breastfeeding/chest feeding on return to work. It provides a framework of support for managers and employees in ensuring that employees returning to the workplace are able to continue to breastfeed, should they choose to do so. Breastfeeding usually involves expressing milk and safe storage of milk. Breastfeeding in this policy covers both breastfeeding/[chest feeding](#) and milk expressing.

3. Breastfeeding Support and Manager Responsibilities:

- 3.1.1 Line managers are responsible for communicating and promoting this policy and to decide on breaks and practices that will support the employee’s infant feeding goals. Where possible this will be arranged flexibly. They will also take this into consideration when planning team meetings and commitments. Managers should also be aware of the impact breastfeeding can have on a parent who is likely to be tired, hungry and thirsty.

3.1.2 A risk assessment should be undertaken by the line manager and the breastfeeding employee. This will help to consider aspects such as around safe working environments or working away e.g. conferences or travel abroad. A template is provided [New and Expectant Mother Risk Assessment](#). The manager may first receive a request to breastfeed at work as part of the normal KIT (keeping in touch) meetings held with an employee whilst they are on maternity leave. This will give the manager an opportunity to discuss how to best manage this issue to enable the employee to return to work more easily and more effectively. The manager should request a written notification of their intention to breastfeed whilst at work and this should then be used to trigger a discussion and the completion of the risk assessment. Whilst the policy asks for the individual to provide written notice of their intention to breastfeed, managers should also recognise that plans can change at short notice and managers should be flexible when asked to allow employees to breastfeed at short notice.

Staff can arrange to bring their child onto Campus for breastfeeding during breaks, this needs to be agreed with the Head of Department, as outlined in the Children on Campus Policy.

3.1.3 Adjustments to consider could include the following:

- **Breaks to breastfeed/chestfeed the infant or to express milk**

Employees can breastfeed/chestfeed or express milk during their normal breaks but will also be allowed to have 2 to 3 additional breaks. These are paid breaks. The duration and timing of the additional breaks is to be discussed and agreed with the line manager. The line manager may need to consult the timetable office to ensure breaks are scheduled. If parents can arrange childcare close to work, then the childminder may be able to bring the baby on campus for breastfeeding (or bottle feeding for the other parent).

When expressing milk it is essential to a parent's health to have breaks. It is not possible to skip breaks even when busy as this could impact on the parent's health and risk for example mastitis

- **A private place to express milk**

A private room will be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk. This will be private, lockable and clean, located near a sink with running water and have an electrical outlet. The rooms will be easily accessible and ideally be dedicated solely for the purpose of breastfeeding/expressing. The rooms will contain a microwave or steriliser equipment that can be sterilised in between expressing sessions.

The breastfeeding rooms on campus are:

- Holgate – HG037 – An access fob is available from the Student Advice desk, or the manager can contact Estates via estates.admin@yorks.ac.uk to arrange a long-term loan.
- Haxby Road site: a private space will be made available on request via the line manager

- London campus: a private space will be made available on request via the line manager.

If employees with private offices wish to express milk in their offices, they are welcome to do so. Additionally, colleagues may make arrangements with their manager to use other private offices that could be made available.

If the dedicated breastfeeding room is not viable for the employee, for example due to distance from their desk, or for reasons of accessibility other alternatives such as private rooms will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. In every case, a suitable alternative location will be found.

- **Storage space**

Small portable refrigerators are available to borrow via Estates. The manager should contact Estates via estates.admin@yorksj.ac.uk to request a long-term loan. These are available across all University sites for employees to store expressed milk in. All bottles/packets must be labelled; however, the refrigerator can be kept for personal use. There is also a fridge available in the breastfeeding room in Holgate.

3.1.3 The employee's responsibilities are as follows:

- **Regular communication**

Prior to your return to work, please provide written notification to your line manager to inform them of your intention to breastfeed on your return. This will enable you to update your individual risk assessment and to discuss breastfeeding/expressing breaks. If you wish to, you could arrange a trial run before returning to work, and then this can be discussed with your manager. This would be a paid hour or could be incorporated as part of a Keep in Touch Day. As the infant grows, communicate regularly with your line manager about changing needs for breaks.

3.1.3.1.1 Where an employee starts at YSJ and is breastfeeding, they will give the manager notification of their intention to breastfeed as soon as practical after they have accepted a job offer.

- **Hygiene**

Employees are responsible for leaving the breastfeeding/expressing room clean and tidy after use for the next user.

- **Storage**

All milk stored in the fridge must be labelled with the employee's name and date. Employees are responsible for storage and transportation of the expressed milk.

If further support and advice is required then please contact the Human Resources and Organisational Development team at HROD@yorksj.ac.uk for further discussion. Employees

are also able to [raise concerns](#) if they feel that their needs are not being met, or they are being discriminated against.

Other useful links:

1. Shared Parental Leave Policy: [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#)
2. Maternity Leave Policy: [Maternity Policy](#)
3. Maternity and Breastfeeding Parents Risk Assessment: [Maternity & Breastfeeding Parents Risk Assessment](#)
4. Flexible Working Policy: [Flexible Working Policy](#)
5. [Safeguarding Policy](#)
6. [Children on Campus Policy](#)
7. [New and Expectant Mother Risk Assessment Feb 2023](#)
8. Employee Assistance Programme: [Employee Assistance Programme \(staffroom.yorks.ac.uk\)](#)
9. NHS UK Breastfeeding: [Breastfeeding | Feeding Your Baby | Start for Life \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
10. National breastfeeding helpline: 0300 1000 212The Breastfeeding Network: <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk>
11. Breastfeeding and work: <https://www.nhs.uk/Planners/breastfeeding/Documents/breastfeedingandwork%5B1%5D.pdf>
12. Breastfeeding and going back to work: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/breastfeeding-and-bottle-feeding/breastfeeding-and-lifestyle/back-to-work/>