



Policy and Guidelines for supporting staff who are breastfeeding

Introduction

Trinity College has a values based and strategic commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality. Under the terms of our Equality Policy, Trinity is also committed to the promotion of equality in all aspects of its activity, including in our capacity as an employer.

In this context, Trinity is supportive of efforts to ensure that women with family responsibilities participate fully in the workplace, and are not disadvantaged in progressing their careers.

On that basis, mindful of the provisions of the Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act 2004, and Trinity's Maternity Leave policy, this policy sets out arrangements for facilitating breastfeeding employees of Trinity College.

Background

2.1 Trinity College Dublin 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.

Ireland's National Breastfeeding Policy (Department of Health & Children 2004) recommends that breastfeeding policies should ensure that employees are supported to breastfeed for as long as they choose to do so and recommends that breastfeeding continue for two years or beyond. This recommendation is supported by evidence that demonstrates the important benefits of breastfeeding for the health and well-being of infants, mothers, and wider society.

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.

Employers also stand to benefit when mothers on their staff breastfeed. The benefits include:

- Reduced absenteeism and increased productivity as parents need to take less time off to care for sick children, as breastfed babies will be healthier throughout their childhood.
- Positive employer branding: staff have increased loyalty to organisations with a family-friendly approach.

Who is this policy for?

- 3.1 All female breastfeeding employees working in Trinity College Dublin
- 3.2 All managerial, supervisory & co-workers of the breastfeeding staff.

The Legal Context

- 4.1 Under 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 Manager and departmental service needs”.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 As Trinity 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.

Based on the contracted working hours applicable in Trinity, 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:

- 1 x 60 minute break,
- 2 x 30 minute breaks or,
- 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 an eight hour day.

Breastfeeding Breaks cannot be accumulated.

- 4.4 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 Trinity, and accordingly, having regard to the national policy (set out in section 1.1) under the provisions of this policy, the work place arrangements should apply for as long as the working mother chooses them to or for up until the child is two years old.

Responsibilities

Employee

- 5.1 An employee who wishes to exercise their rights to breastfeed in employment, must notify their line manager (in writing) of their intention to breastfeed at work. They must confirm this information at least 4 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.
- 5.2 The breastfeeding employee shall be responsible for the care and safe storage of their breast milk.
- 5.3 The breastfeeding employee shall be responsible for the equipment necessary for expressing their milk



Employer

- 5.4 It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure that the breastfeeding employee is supported and that all relevant staff are informed of the necessary breastfeeding break needs.
- 5.5 It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to comply with legislation, i.e. Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act 2004.4,6. This includes replying to the request for lactation breaks within two weeks of receiving it.
- 5.6 A breastfeeding employee returning to work within 26 weeks is supported through Health and Safety legislation. 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.

Procedures

- 6.1 Facilities are available at designated locations across College 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:

- 6.2 Make a formal written request to their line manager for the purpose of expressing breast milk using Appendix 1.
- 6.3 Agree with their line manager at local level the management of lactation breaks
- 6.4 Respect the privacy and security of the room and of those who use it.
- 6.5 Ensure the room is clean as they depart.
- 6.6 Take responsibility for the labelling and storage of their own breast milk.
- 6.7 Take responsibility for the care and maintenance of their own equipment (e.g. breast pump).



Human Resources are required to:

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

The Line Manager is required to:

- 6.9 Agree management of lactation breaks with the breastfeeding employee.
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Appendix 1 - Notification of intent to use the breastfeeding arrangements

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