

Breast and Bottle Feeding and Expressing on Campus Policy

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- a. Staff and students are assisted and supported, wherever possible, to successfully combine their family, work and study responsibilities in ways which are proactive, contribute to the staff development, career or educational progression of staff and students and support the University's operational requirements;
- b. The University is compliant with relevant anti-discrimination legislation and University policy by adopting a proactive approach to ensure that discrimination on the basis of sex, breastfeeding, marital status, parental or carer status does not occur;
- c. A healthy, safe and secure environment is maintained for staff/students who are breast or bottle feeding or expressing, for their children and for those who may come into contact with them; and
- d. Staff and students are aware of their rights, responsibilities and obligations in regard to breast or bottle feeding and expressing on any University campus or other associated site.

(2) This policy should be read in conjunction the [Children on Campus Policy](#) and [Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#).

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(3) This policy is important to:

- a. Staff;
- b. Applicants (potential staff);
- c. Managers/Supervisors;
- d. Selection Panels;
- e. Students;
- f. Teaching Staff; and
- g. Human Resources/Student Engagement.

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) Breastfeeding - the feeding of a child/infant directly from the mother's breast.

(5) Bottle feeding - the feeding of a child/infant from a bottle with expressed breastmilk or a substitute milk product.

(6) Campus or associated site - any University campus, workplace and site used for work or study purposes. It includes field and research stations, buildings, grounds, vehicles, farms and commercial operations.

(7) Carer - a person who has responsibility for the care of a child(ren) at the time relevant to the application of the

policy.

(8) Expressing - the expression of breastmilk for the purposes of bottle-feeding at a later time or to maintain milk flow.

(9) Staff - all persons employed by Victoria University.

(10) Student - A person who is enrolled in any VU program. This includes students on leave of absence from their studies; research students awaiting thesis examination results; and persons enrolled or registered in non-award programs.

(11) Supervisor/Manager - all University staff members with a responsibility for the management or supervision of staff.

(12) Teaching staff - University staff with responsibility for the supervision of students.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(13) The intent of anti-discrimination legislation is to ameliorate the often competing demands of various roles such as parent, carer, student and worker, in ways which can maximise balance and provide all employees and students with the opportunity to exercise and fulfill their potential. The University recognises that the need may arise for staff and students to bring their child onto campus for breastfeeding purposes. The University has determined that where possible, potential discrimination, health and safety matters in the workplace or classroom should be balanced against helping to meet the needs of staff and students who are parents or carers. The University will, wherever possible and practicable, provide reasonable accommodation and/or adjustment (for example flexible work options) to allow staff and students to combine breast or bottle feeding and work or study. This may include expressing, breast or bottle feeding a child or children on a University campus or associated location (including a University children's centre), or attending another location for the purposes of expressing, breast or bottle feeding.

Flexible Work Options (Staff)

(14) On return from parental leave, a parent/carer may seek changes to their work arrangements for the purposes of breast or bottle feeding or expressing. Options may include, but are not limited to:

- a. change in working hours (e.g. a move from full-time to part-time hours);
- b. change in start or finishing time (e.g. beginning earlier and ending later); and
- c. change in break times or duration (e.g. more frequent and/or longer breaks).

(15) Requests should be made to the direct line supervisor/manager and no reasonable request shall be refused.

Study Arrangements (Students)

(16) A student may seek changes to their study arrangements for the purposes of breast or bottle feeding or expressing. Options may include, but are not limited to:

- a. changes to their enrolment (e.g. a move from full-time to part-time enrolment); and
- b. change in break times (e.g. more frequent and/or longer breaks during class time).

(17) Requests should be made to the relevant teaching staff or the College General Office and no reasonable request shall be refused.

Facilities (Staff and Students)

(18) The University currently provides a Parents Room on the Footscray Park campus (Building E, Room E123a WSMplannet) which is a designated space for breast and bottle feeding and expressing and is available for both staff and students.

(19) Baby change facilities are also located on St Albans Campus, Building 4, Ground Level.

(20) Where a facility does not exist or is not appropriate in the circumstances, supervisors/managers/teaching staff will identify appropriate spaces and facilities in the local workplace or study environment for staff and students who wish to breast or bottle feed and/or express and store breast milk.

(21) It is recommended that identified spaces include as many of the following as possible:

- a. A convenient, quiet and private (secure/lockable) space to feed or express milk;
- b. Comfortable seating (e.g. armchair);
- c. A clean and safe environment for changing nappies;
- d. Hot and cold running water and hand drying facilities;
- e. Waste disposal; and
- f. Appropriate signage.

(22) The identification and designation of space for the purposes of breast/bottle feeding or expressing must have full consideration of occupational health and safety policy and legislation in relation to the parent/carer, child(ren) and other students and staff.

Associated Costs

(23) Any costs associated with providing temporary work/study arrangements or facilities for individual staff or students will be covered by the organisational area budget.

Requests

Making a request

(24) Staff and students wishing to breast/bottle feed or express on a University campus and requiring temporary arrangements to allow them to do so should make a request to their supervisor/manager or the relevant teaching staff member. Requests should be reasonable in the circumstances and give due consideration to the University's operational requirements and to occupational health and safety. Requests should be made as soon as possible to allow due consideration and time for any changes to be implemented.

(25) A staff request may be made using the Flexible Work Arrangements Policy (policy currently being developed) forms and agreement.

Considering a request

(26) Where a request for work/study adjustments or facilities for the purposes of breastfeeding or expressing, is received from a staff member or student the supervisor/manager/teacher will consider it on its merits and not unreasonably refuse. Consideration should be given to the University's other relevant policies and its obligations under anti-discrimination and Fair Work legislation. Where appropriate, advice should be sought from People and Culture or Student Equity and Disability Programs, Student Wellbeing Department.

(27) Considerations will include:

- a. the nature of the request, including the nature of the workplace or the study forum attended by the parent/carer;
- b. the specific needs of the child and carer, the duration and frequency;
- c. whether the presence of the child on campus will present any health or safety risk to the child or any other person;

Refusing a Request

(28) A request to breast/bottle feed or express on campus, or for work/study arrangements to allow a staff member/student to do so, may be refused if it imposes an unreasonable hardship on the University or an unreasonable health and safety risk to staff, students or visitors. Where a request is refused the staff member/student must be provided with a response in writing within 21 days of receipt of the request outlining in detail the reasons for the refusal and any suggested alternatives. The response must be signed and dated by the supervisor/manager/teaching staff member.

Appeals

(29) Where a staff member or student feels that a request has been unreasonably refused they may proceed in accordance with the:

- a. Staff Issue and Complaint Resolution Policy; or
- b. Student Complaints Resolution Policy.

(30) Staff and students retain the right to use alternative and/or external avenues of appeal or complaint.

Section 5 - Procedures

Staff/Students

Supervision of children

(31) Children brought onto a University campus or associated site for the purpose of breast or bottle feeding must be under the constant supervision of the parent/carer in alignment with the Children on Campus policy.

Occupational Health and Safety

(32) Parents and carers who wish to breast/bottle feed or express while working or studying must give due consideration to occupational health and safety in relation to themselves, their child(ren) and other University staff and students and visitors. Staff and students should be aware that, where a University staff member considers that there is an occupational health and safety risk or unreasonable disruption to others they are required to take appropriate action which may include requesting the removal of the child(ren) from the area of risk.

Supervisors/Managers/Teaching Staff

Creating a Breastfeeding-friendly Work and Study Environment

(33) Supervisors, Managers and Teaching staff should be aware of and familiar with this policy and take all reasonable steps to ensure that they, and staff and students under their supervision, comply by:

- a. Communicating the policy to staff and students and ensuring awareness of rights and responsibilities in relation to breast/bottle feeding and expressing and work/study;
- b. Encouraging, supporting and facilitating understanding and implementation of this policy;

- c. Ensuring that any request or appeal is dealt with promptly and professionally;
- d. Proactively identifying and addressing potential issues that conflict with this policy and its intent;
- e. Proactively discussing this policy and associated issues with staff and students who are pregnant or who are returning to work/study; and
- f. Seeking advice and information from Staff Equity and Diversity, Human Resources or Student Equity as appropriate.

Health and Safety

(34) A staff member who identifies an occupational health and safety risk associated with a staff member or student who is combining breast/bottle feeding or expressing and work or study should seek advice from their supervisor/manager and People and Culture.

Section 6 - Guidelines

(35) Nil

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	2nd September 2014
Review Date	2nd May 2017
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	2nd September 2014
Expiry Date	15th February 2016
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