

# Breastfeeding Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate Melbourne Polytechnic's commitment to supporting staff and students who are breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk, and to create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that enables individuals to balance work, study and family responsibilities.

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to:

- a. All Melbourne Polytechnic staff, including permanent, fixed-term, casual and sessional employees.
- b. All students enrolled at Melbourne Polytechnic.
- c. Volunteers and contractors while on Melbourne Polytechnic campuses.

## Section 3 - Policy

### Policy Statement

(3) Melbourne Polytechnic is committed to supporting staff and students who wish to breastfeed or express breastmilk while at work or during study. We recognise breastfeeding as a protected attribute under Victorian and Commonwealth law and are committed to ensuring that no individual is disadvantaged because of their breastfeeding needs.

(4) Melbourne Polytechnic will:

- a. Provide safe, private, and hygienic spaces for breastfeeding and expressing breastmilk.
- b. Support reasonable breaks and flexible arrangements where required.
- c. Foster a respectful, inclusive and supportive culture for breastfeeding across all campuses.

(5) This commitment reflects our obligation under the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#) to prevent discrimination on the basis of breastfeeding.

### Policy Principles

(6) This Policy is guided by the following principles:

- a. Equity and inclusion – breastfeeding is a normal and protected activity.
- b. Health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students and infants.
- c. Respect and dignity for individual needs and privacy.
- d. Compliance with relevant legislation and [Australian Breastfeeding Association guidelines](#).
- e. Practical support, including access to appropriate facilities, time and information.

## Policy Topics

### Supporting Staff Flexible Arrangements

(7) Melbourne Polytechnic recognises that breastfeeding and expressing breastmilk needs may vary between individuals and over time. Where reasonably practicable, staff who are breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk may access flexible work arrangements in accordance with the [Flexible and Hybrid Work Policy](#) and under the provisions of their relevant enterprise agreement. These arrangements may include flexibility in work location, work scheduling, lactation breaks, or other agreed adjustments to support breastfeeding needs while maintaining operational requirements.

### Student Support and Study Arrangements

(8) Students may request reasonable adjustments to support their breastfeeding needs, taking into account the requirements of their course, placement, assessment or learning activities.

(9) Where reasonably practicable, adjustments may include flexibility in class attendance, access to breaks during classes or assessments, access to breastfeeding or expressing facilities, temporary access to alternative learning arrangements, or other appropriate accommodations based on individual circumstances.

(10) Students seeking support should discuss their requirements with their teacher or Student Services to enable appropriate arrangements to be considered and implemented.

(11) Melbourne Polytechnic will seek to balance the individual needs of the student with academic, regulatory and safety requirements while promoting equitable access to education and a supportive learning environment.

### Access to Breastfeeding and Expressing Facilities

(12) Melbourne Polytechnic provides a number of [dedicated breastfeeding facilities](#) at selected campuses, and will also provide access to a private room, or a suitable private space where a dedicated room is not available, for employees and students who are breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk. Facilities will, where reasonably practicable, include:

- a. access to a private room with a lockable door and access to power points for the use of equipment such as electric breast pumps;
- b. a comfortable breastfeeding chair with footrest;
- c. refrigeration for the safe storage of expressed breast milk;
- d. secure storage for personal equipment and supplies required for breastfeeding or expressing milk;
- e. waste disposal facilities;
- f. a table or suitable work surface; and
- g. access to handwashing and cleaning facilities located in or near the room or private space.

(13) Where provided, breastfeeding facilities may be shared by multiple users and will be maintained in a clean, safe and hygienic condition.

### Use of Breastfeeding and Expressing Facilities

(14) Employees and students wishing to combine work/study and breastfeeding shall negotiate their conditions as soon as feasible, with their manager or teacher by:

- a. Negotiating the duration and timing of lactation breaks prior to the first break being taken, ideally prior to returning to work or class to minimise any impact to the workplace or classroom;
- b. Taking both the organisational and personal needs into account, with a focus on minimising disruption in the

workplace or classroom when determining the timing of lactation breaks.

(15) For employees:

- a. Notifying their manager when they depart and return to work, if an agreement to leave the workplace for lactation breaks has been arranged.
- b. Notifying their manager if their breastfeeding needs change, or cease, so that any agreement can be amended as required.

(16) In using breastfeeding and expressing facilities, employees and students have the responsibility to:

- a. Supply their own expressing equipment and appropriate storage containers for expressed breastmilk.
- b. Clearly label these containers with their name and date before placing them in the designated refrigerator.
- c. Clean personal equipment after use
- d. If applicable, ensure that their child is delivered directly to the space designated for the purpose of lactation breaks and that the child leaves the workplace at the completion of each lactation break.
- e. Observe any other guidelines for the use of the designated facility.

(17) Refrigerators provided for breastmilk storage are for this purpose only.

### **Respectful Environment**

(18) All staff and students are expected to support a respectful and inclusive environment. Discrimination, harassment, or negative treatment related to breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk will not be tolerated and may be addressed under relevant Melbourne Polytechnic policies.

## **Section 4 - Responsibility and Accountability**

(19) The Executive Director People and Student Success is responsible for providing strategic leadership and oversight to ensure Melbourne Polytechnic maintains a supportive and inclusive environment for staff and students who are breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk so that Melbourne Polytechnic meets its legislative and workplace obligations.

(20) The Director People and Culture is responsible for providing advice and support to managers and employees regarding workplace arrangements, lactation breaks, reasonable adjustments and related employment matters.

(21) The Manager Student Services is responsible for providing information, guidance and support to students seeking breastfeeding or expressing facilities and reasonable study-related accommodations, assisting in coordinating support arrangements and referrals where required to enable a students continued participation in learning activities.

(22) The Manager Integrated Services is responsible for maintaining breastfeeding facilities and ensure they remain safe, private, accessible and hygienic, coordinating access to suitable spaces on campuses where dedicated facilities are not available.

(23) All Managers are responsible for supporting employees who are breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk by considering reasonable requests for lactation breaks, workplace flexibility and access to appropriate facilities.

(24) Educators are responsible for supporting students who are breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk through reasonable accommodations, where practicable, to enable participation in classes, assessments and other learning activities.

(25) All staff and students are responsible for using breastfeeding facilities respectfully and in accordance with health,

safety and hygiene requirements, taking responsibility for the safe storage and labelling of breastmilk, the cleaning of personal equipment and respectful shared use of facilities.

## Section 5 - Procedure(s) or Overarching Policy

(26) Related Melbourne Polytechnic policies and procedures

- a. [Child Wellbeing and Safety Policy](#)
- b. [Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- c. [Flexible and Hybrid Work Policy](#)
- d. [Student Support Policy](#)

(27) For all related Melbourne Polytechnic policies, procedures, legislation, regulation and supporting documents and templates, refer to the Associated Information tab of this Policy.

## Section 6 - Definitions

(28) For the purpose of this Policy the following definitions apply:

- a. Breastfeeding: Includes breastfeeding an infant and expressing breastmilk, as defined under the [Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#).
- b. Expressing: means the act of removing breastmilk from the breast manually or using a pump for later feeding.
- c. Reasonable adjustment: means a modification or arrangement made to accommodate breastfeeding needs, unless it would cause unjustifiable hardship.

## Status and Details

|                                      |                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| <b>Policy Owner</b>                  | Cathy Frazer<br>Executive Director People and Student Success            |
| <b>Policy Implementation Officer</b> | David Thorsen<br>Director People and Culture                             |
| <b>Author</b>                        | David Thorsen<br>Director People and Culture                             |
| <b>Enquiries Contact</b>             | David Thorsen<br>Director People and Culture<br><hr/> People and Culture |