

Women in Education



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Guidelines for breastfeeding workers

If a teacher chooses to breastfeed or express milk in the workplace on return from maternity leave, Departmental guidelines exist to support their wish.

To maintain adequate breast milk a mother needs to lactate (breastfeed or express milk) on a regular basis. Determination 3 of 2011 under the Teaching Services Act prescribes the provision of lactation breaks for teachers in schools, recognising "the teacher's needs in relation to the timing of the breaks".

Breastfeeding and Lactation Breaks in Schools: Guidelines for Principals and School Staff states: "Lactating teachers are entitled to two 30-minute paid lactation breaks per working day. Teachers who work for less than four hours per day shall be entitled to one paid 30-minute lactation break per day."



Any teacher wishing to access lactation breaks needs to discuss specific needs with their principal well before their intended return to work. A Federation Representative or Women's Contact can act as a support person in meetings to negotiate the practical implementation of lactation breaks in the teacher's school. Federation's Professional Support section can also assist.

The departmental guidelines state: "Every effort should be made to provide employees with access to suitable facilities to support breastfeeding.

"In consultation with the employee, the manager should identify sensible, practical and reasonable ways to meet the employee's need for access to:

- a private, lockable, hygienic room/ space with a powerpoint and comfortable seating
- facilities for washing hands and equipment
- refrigeration for storage of breast milk
- facilities for convenient storage of breast pumps and related equipment."

Study examining experiences of breastfeeding workers

Federation is providing assistance to a Western Sydney University study examining organisational support for and experiences of women who return to work and continue breastfeeding.

Phase one of the study has focused on women in female-dominated professions such as teaching and

nursing/midwifery. The second phase of the study will include women from other workplaces and professions.

Researchers are seeking to identify enablers and barriers for women who wish to return to work and the study aims to develop strategies to make workplaces enabling environments for breastfeeding women. The research may assist Federation in the long term to ensure the Department of Education maintains its commitment to supporting women who return to work and continue breastfeeding.