

Breastfeeding Friendly Policy



'Breastfeeding is an integral part of the reproductive process, the natural and ideal way of feeding the infant and a unique biological and emotional basis for child development.'

Statement: Joint WHO/ UNICEF Meeting on Infant & Young Child Feeding, Geneva, October, 1979

RATIONALE

Farmhouse Montessori School recognises breastfeeding as the optimum means of infant feeding. Farmhouse Montessori School has a duty and responsibility to demonstrate active support, through its policies and staff training practices as well as informing mothers who wish to breastfeed of their support.

PURPOSE

Farmhouse Montessori School acknowledges and supports the rights of women to breastfeed their children in all public areas of their premises. If the mother is happy to feed her baby in a public area, then she should be made to feel comfortable to continue. A chair can be offered for her comfort and convenience.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has stated that, while no complaint has been formally pursued, preventing a woman from breastfeeding could constitute discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

If a mother wishes to feed her baby in private, our staff should advise her of the facilities available (staff room or office) these are available at both school campuses. If a mother chooses not to avail herself of the facilities which have been offered to her, her right to do so must be respected.

Ladies toilets are not acceptable as a private space to breastfeed and should not be offered as they do not offer a hygienic environment.

HANDLING OBJECTIONS/COMPLAINTS FROM OTHER CUSTOMERS/USERS

If a member of the public, objects to a mother breastfeeding, then it is the School policy to move the complainant rather than the mother herself, to an area where they will no longer be able to 'view' the mother.

The complainant should also be informed that this is part of the school breastfeeding policy however; the school may also like to re-iterate that it is their policy to meet the needs of all their customers/users and make their visit as pleasant as possible.

The sensitivity of personal opinions of staff must be acknowledged but should not be allowed to deter women from breastfeeding. Staff will be made aware of the policy and have it explained to them before it is widely publicised to service users.

SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Farmhouse Montessori School has tight safeguarding procedures to protect pupils within its care. It is due to the safeguarding issues that we will operate the breastfeeding friendly policy for parents/adults related to the school community. This will not extend to ladies who do not have connections with the school, but are members of the general public.

Breastfeeding your baby is a normal and natural thing to do. Babies have a right to be breastfed and mothers have the right to breastfeed. Most mothers can work out where and how to comfortably feed their babies when they are out. Although our society acknowledges that breastfeeding is important for mothers and babies, some people make critical remarks or confront mothers with unnecessary and illegal 'rules'.

Many mothers find any type of confrontation in relation to breastfeeding difficult to deal with and feel that it is a personal attack on them. This is a normal response and one that is very valid. It comes with a range of unsettling feelings that can be a roadblock to breastfeeding in public.

Controversy over breastfeeding in some public places may imply that breastfeeding is unnatural, undesirable or even illegal. Nothing could be further from the truth. Don't forget that conflict and bad news are more likely to

make the newspapers, radio and television. Conflict is the essence of news reporting. The fact that things are going along smoothly is simply not news. That's why you don't hear much about the many mothers who happily breastfeed at work, in shopping centres, in parks, in restaurants, in trains or just about anywhere, every day of the week without raising an eyebrow, let alone uproar.

What can a mother do if she is verbally abused for breastfeeding her baby?

Thankfully this type of incident is uncommon. However, if it does happen, it can really rock a mother's confidence. It may be essential to normalise breastfeeding again after the incident. A mother may like to consider:

- finding emotional support through family and friends, her GP and/or counselling
- calling the [Breastfeeding Helpline](#) 1800 686 268
- attending her [local ABA group](#) meeting.

If a mother is ever in a situation where she is verbally or physically abused, then this constitutes an assault and is classed as a criminal act. In this situation she should consider, in addition to the above:

- not responding to aggressive behaviour to avoid an escalation of the situation
- contacting the police when possible and reporting the incident.

Many mothers find that as they become more confident with breastfeeding, they can provide a comeback comment if confronted by a negative remark. This may include a breastfeeding fact or to state their legal right.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

In Australian Federal Law breastfeeding is a right, not a privilege.

Under the federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984, it is illegal in Australia to discriminate against a person either directly or indirectly on the grounds of breastfeeding. Direct discrimination happens when a person treats someone less favourably than another person. For example, it is discriminatory for a waiter to decline to serve a patron who is breastfeeding. Indirect discrimination happens when an apparently neutral condition has the effect of disadvantaging a particular group, in this case women who are breastfeeding. For example, an employer may impose a requirement on all employees that they must not make any breaks for set periods during the day under any circumstances. Such a condition would particularly disadvantage women who need to express milk.

SOURCE

- The Australian Breastfeeding Association
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Policy Date	Modification	Review
May 2017		May 2019
May 2018	New School logo added and reformatted	May 2020
27 July 2020	Safeguarding issues and What is the Law section added Reformatted Sources updated	July 2022