

Dalhousie University
Breastfeeding Guidelines

Preamble

Dalhousie University is committed to fostering an environment of teaching and learning excellence that is built on innovation, collaboration and respect. In building on the environment of collaboration and respect, it is recognized that it is a shared responsibility of both the student/employee and the university to collaborate with women, families and the community to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

These Guidelines have been developed to provide students, employees, and the University community as a whole, with information about breastfeeding-related supports and resources. It is hoped that they will help create a supportive physical and social environment that enables students and employees to make an informed decision about how they feed their child.

A. Guiding Principles

1. The University community is committed to supporting the rights of breastfeeding individuals.
2. Breastfeeding includes pumping or expressing milk, as well as breastfeeding directly.
3. The University will take reasonable measures to accommodate and support any student or employee who chooses to breastfeed or express breastmilk on campus.
4. The needs of breastfeeding individuals vary among each other and change over time. Therefore, creative approaches are employed to help students and employees meet those needs.
5. Students and employees must make requests for accommodations for breastfeeding in accordance with the *Student Accommodation Policy* and *Accommodation Policy for Employees*, respectively.

B. Education

1. The existence of these Guidelines as well as educational information regarding breastfeeding will be circulated and made available to students and employees by Human Rights and Equity Services.
2. Information as to how to support a colleague or student who is breastfeeding on campus will be made available to all students and employees by Human Rights and Equity Services.

C. Space and Equipment

1. Students and employees will be provided with access to a private (if desired by the breastfeeding student/employee), clean, comfortable and safe space on campus to accommodate breastfeeding or expressing breast milk.
2. Any space provided for the purpose of breastfeeding or expressing breast milk will include a chair, table or shelf, and electrical outlet. It may be an empty office, staff room, meeting room, or equipment room. A bathroom is not an acceptable space.

3. When using space provided for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk, the student or employee will post a sign on the door of the breastfeeding/pumping space that the space is in use and will leave the space clean and organized.
4. Students and employees will provide the personal equipment and supplies needed to express and store breast milk. Current literature shows that breast milk can be safely stored at room temperature for up to 8 hours or in a cooler for longer periods (Morbacher N & Stock J. (2002). La Leche League Answer Book: 188). An insulated bag or cooler with an ice pack is appropriate for storage.

D. Time

1. The number of times an individual needs to breastfeed or express milk as well as the amount of time required on each occasion to do so will be determined by the individual needs of the breast feeding individual and of the baby and may vary over time.
2. Employees will be provided with flexibility in their work schedule to enable them to breastfeed or express milk through the establishment of a mutually agreed upon schedule between the employee and Department Head. This may include altering the times of breaks and/or combining breaks.
3. Students should coordinate breastfeeding into their class schedule as appropriate. They may also choose to breastfeed in class so long as they leave class space if fellow students are disrupted by the child's behavior (the act of breastfeeding alone cannot be deemed disruptive) and so long as breastfeeding is not done during formal evaluation (such as tests or exams) or where doing so poses a health and safety risk to the child. If the duration or scheduling of an examination interferes with breastfeeding routine, students may request an accommodation.

E. Related Resources and Documents

1. University Policies

Student Accommodation Policy -

[https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/policy-repository/StudentAccomPolicy_Nov252014-V3\(2017Sept\).pdf](https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/policy-repository/StudentAccomPolicy_Nov252014-V3(2017Sept).pdf)

Accommodation Policy for Employees -

https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/policy-repository/AccomodationPolicy.pdf

Statement on Prohibited Discrimination -

http://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/university_secretariat/policy-repository/ProhibitedDiscriminationPolicy.pdf

2. University Resources

Human Rights and Equity Services –

<https://www.dal.ca/dept/hres.html>

Human Resources (for employee accommodation information) –
<https://www.dal.ca/dept/hr/contact-us.html>

Student Accessibility Centre (for student accommodation requests) -
https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility/requesting-accommodation.html

3. Legislation

Nova Scotia Human Rights Act -
<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/human%20rights.pdf>