

Draft: Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding Policy

LONG TITLE	A Policy to Establish CUSA as a Breastfeeding friendly and Chestfeeding Friendly Organization.	DATE OF ENACTMENT	30 June 2025
		LAST AMENDED	30 June 2025
REFERENCE No.	E-XX, U-XX	NEXT REVIEW	30 June 2027
CATEGORY	Stances, Equity, and Advocacy		

PREAMBLE

CUSA affirms the right of all students and staff to breastfeed/chestfeed in areas where they are protected by the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code. Through our commitment to equity and accessibility, we welcome all nursing mothers, and parents of gender-diverse backgrounds into CUSA-operated spaces as being freely accessible and breastfeeding-friendly environments. CUSA recognizes and recommends several improvements to its own services, and that of Carleton University.

INTERPRETATION

Short Title

1 This Policy may be called the *Breastfeeding Policy*.

Definitions

2 In this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

“Breastfeeding”, also known as **“Nursing”**, is defined as an infant’s consumption of human milk by a baby by means of direct feeding from the breast or expressed milk.¹

“Infant Feeding Rights” are defined pursuant to the language contained within Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC)’s “Policy on preventing discrimination because of Pregnancy and breastfeeding”, including but not limited to the provisions outlined under 6. Duty to Accommodate and 2. Code protections for pregnancy and breastfeeding.²

¹ Hoban, Rebecca. “Human Milk and Breastfeeding”, Toronto Centre for Neonatal Health, 2005. <https://torontocentreforneonatalhealth.com/education-opportunities/elearning/human-milk-and-breastfeeding/>

² Ontario Human Rights Commission, Policy on preventing discrimination because of Pregnancy and breastfeeding, 1996.

“Breastfeeding friendly spaces” and **“Chestfeeding friendly spaces”** can be broadly defined as a clean, hygienic, private or semi-private area where a lactating individual feels comfortable expressing milk or direct-feeding a child.³

“Discrimination” in the context of this Policy refers to any action thereof to interfere, deny, obstruct, or intrude on the aforementioned Infant Feeding Rights of an individual.

PRINCIPLES

3 CUSA is committed to:

- a) Promoting vital and protected public health practices under the counsel of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), and the World Health Organization (WHO), among others.
- b) Reaffirming our commitment to promote equitable and accessible spaces for all students and staff, especially with regard to reproductive, and paternal rights.
- c) Providing optimal flexibility for breastfeeding/chestfeeding parents utilizing CUSA services.
- d) Revitalizing, improving, and promoting our spaces as breastfeeding and chestfeeding-friendly spaces.
- e) Ensuring our advocacy work is inclusive, and our recommendations to Carleton University, and/or external stakeholders are thoughtful of those students who breastfeed/chestfeed.

OVERALL POLICY

Context – breastfeeding on university campuses

4 CUSA acknowledges its adoption of a breastfeeding friendly/chestfeeding friendly policy in the context of a rising rate of labour force and academic participation among young women with children under the age of 6, particularly in a post-pandemic context.⁴

5 CUSA recognizes that breastfeeding/chestfeeding individuals may be unaware of their right to accommodation or their infant feeding rights protected by the *Code* and the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Policy%20on%20preventing%20discrimination%20because%20of%20pregnancy%20and%20breastfeeding_accessible_2014.pdf

³ Trent University and Peterborough County-City Health Unit, “Breastfeeding Friendly Campus Initiative (BCFI)”, 2024. <https://www.bfcampuses.ca/>

⁴ Beata Caranci and Francis Fong. *The Space Between Us: The Availability of Childcare will Define Canada's Workplace*, TD, 2023. <https://economics.td.com/ca-space-between-us>

6 CUSA further understands breastfeeding/chestfeeding individuals may constitute a marginalized group, and that certain schools/spaces may or may not have specific accommodation policies in-place.

Stance – CUSA as a breastfeeding/chestfeeding friendly space

7 CUSA shall formally declare all of its public spaces, including its front office at 401 Nideyinàn, all of its service centres, Ollie’s, Rooster’s and the Wing, as breastfeeding/chestfeeding friendly spaces, open to all, with particular focus and attention on undergraduate and graduate student-parents.

8 CUSA’s Women’s Centre shall be recognized as a designated semi-private breastfeeding/chestfeeding friendly space.

9 CUSA will promote these designations through its communication channels, including on its website (cusaonline.ca) and social media pages.

10 CUSA will give ample consideration to the needs of breastfeeding/chestfeeding parents and families in the design of any new spaces and programming, in an effort to create equitable and inclusive spaces for students, including the provision of:

- a) Wide and comfortable chairs
- b) Ample tables
- c) Electrical outlets
- d) Private curtained or closed off spaces with proper signage

RECOMMENDATIONS

11 CUSA shall adopt several immediate-to-long term recommendations concerning both its own services and those provided by Carleton University.

12 For CUSA spaces, offering:

- a) A stroller rental service at the Women’s Centre.
- b) A cool place of storage for breastmilk at the Women’s Centre.
- c) Dedicated breastfeeding/chestfeeding pillows at the Women’s Centre.
- d) Having diapers available free-of-charge at the Women’s Centre.

13 For Carleton University:

- a) Exploring the creation of dedicated nursing rooms on Carleton’s campus through the Dedicated Access Fund (DAF).⁵

⁵ Dominique Gené. “Exposed”: The undue challenges student mothers face on campus”, The Charlatan, 2022. <https://charlatan.ca/exposed-the-undue-challenges-student-mothers-face-on-campus/>

- b) Providing a publicly available list of all baby change stations on Carleton’s campus, and identifying gaps therein.⁶
- c) Providing a list of recommended private or semi-private spaces on campus from which parents can breastfeed/chestfeed.
- d) Incorporating explicit language and considerations for breastfeeding/chestfeeding, as well as the overall needs of student-parents, into its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan, and related asset renewal plans, ongoing capital projects, and infrastructure.⁷

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER POLICIES

14 This aligns with other CUSA & Campus policies, including Existing Policies under Reference Letter E (Stances, Equity, and Advocacy).

⁶ UBC Equity and Inclusion Office. “Okanagan Baby Friendly Initiative”, University of British Columbia. <https://equity.ok.ubc.ca/programs/okanagan-baby-friendly-initiative/>

⁷ Equity and Inclusive Communities. “Carleton University Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan”. Carleton University, 2021. <https://carleton.ca/edi-plan/wp-content/uploads/Carleton-University-EDI-Action-Plan-Full.pdf>