



# **Engage MAT**

## **New and Expectant Mothers Policy**

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## **New and Expectant Mothers Policy**

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### Contents

1. Introduction – Equal Opportunities and Scope .....	3
2. Definitions related to this policy and supporting guidance .....	3
3. Headteachers/Managers Responsibilities .....	3
4. Staff Responsibilities .....	4
5. Risk Assessment and Reviews .....	4
6. Breastfeeding .....	5
7. Night work .....	5
8. Other Considerations .....	6
9. Rest Facilities .....	6

## New and Expectant Mothers Policy

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### 1. Introduction – Equal Opportunities and Scope

While employers are required to assess risks to all staff, they have a specific requirement to take into account risks to new and expectant mothers. Although many staff may be able to carry out their normal duties when they are pregnant, have given birth in the previous six months or are breastfeeding, some special arrangements may have to be made for these staff to ensure that they or their child are not exposed to any significant risk. This policy also includes and applies to volunteers, agency or relief workers working on behalf of the organisation.

Pregnancy should not be regarded as ill health. It is part of everyday life and safety implications at work can be addressed by the safety management system and procedures. *Guidance on Addressing Risks for New and Expectant Mothers G640* can be found on HR InfoSpace. However, with the diversity of work carried out, it is important to look at all work activities as not all areas of work may be mentioned specifically in the guidance, and each pregnancy can impact on a women's health and capabilities differently

Staff are expected to adhere to this policy in line with its obligations under equality legislation. Headteachers must ensure that all reasonable adjustments or supportive measures are considered to allow equality of access and opportunity regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, faith or religion, gender identity, pregnancy or marital status.

### 2. Definitions related to this policy and supporting guidance

Staff	This includes those directly employed by the organisation and also includes volunteers, agency and relief staff working on behalf of the organisation
New and expectant mother	A staff member who has notified their manager that they are pregnant, have given birth within the previous six months or who is breastfeeding
Given birth	This is defined as having delivered a living child, or, after 24 weeks of pregnancy, a stillborn child
Maternity	For the purpose of this policy and guidance, maternity means the pregnancy, the six months after giving birth and the breastfeeding period

### 3. Headteachers/Managers Responsibilities

When a staff member notifies their headteacher/manager that she is pregnant, has given birth in the last six months, or is breastfeeding, headteachers/managers are responsible for:

- Carrying out a specific risk assessment as soon as possible, using the *Risk assessment (template) F625a* available on HR InfoSpace, to ensure the safety of mother and child. It is good practice to carry out this assessment as soon as a staff

## **New and Expectant Mothers Policy**

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member makes it known they are pregnant, have given birth recently or are breastfeeding even if it is too early for confirmation in writing.

- Ensuring any necessary control measures or actions are implemented
- Keeping the assessment and the control measures under regular review. The review intervals may need to become more frequent as the pregnancy progresses to take into account any changing needs of the staff member.
- Ensuring there are suitable facilities available for workers who are pregnant or breastfeeding to rest (this may be in a first aid room, or a comfortable chair in a quiet place for example)

### **4. Staff Responsibilities**

It is advisable for staff to notify their headteacher/manager when they are pregnant or breastfeeding in order for any necessary measures to be put in place for the protection of both themselves and their child. Staff are responsible for:-

- Raising concerns they may have about their work or the arrangements with their headteacher/manager.
- Seeking medical advice on particular queries about their own health with their GP/midwife/appropriate specialist. While the *Guidance on Assessing Risks for New and Expectant Mothers G640* supporting this document gives general advice for work related health, it cannot give detailed medical information about particular situations and conditions.

### **5. Risk Assessment and Reviews**

Headteachers/managers are responsible for ensuring that an individual risk assessment is carried out for their staff member as soon as possible after being informed of the pregnancy. As with other risk assessments, the headteacher/manager can either carry out the assessment themselves or can delegate to another appropriate member of staff to undertake this task. The staff member that the assessment is for should be involved in the risk assessment process. Headteachers/managers should ensure they take advice provided by the staff member's health professional into account. The headteacher, manager or assessor must ensure that their staff member's pregnancy is not made known to others without consent.

The *Risk assessment (template) F625a* available on HR InfoSpace is to be used to record the assessment findings. The *Risk Assessment Guidance (Schools) P625* has guidance in calculating risk from the findings.

*Guidance on Assessing Risks for New and Expectant Mothers G640* sets out some of the known work related risks and gives suggested control measures to lower or remove those risks. It is important to look at all the staff members work activities as not all areas of work may be mentioned specifically in the guidance.

Any identified control measures must be put in place without delay. Where actions do not sufficiently remove or reduce risks to an acceptable level, headteachers/managers may need to:

- Consider adjustments to the individuals working conditions and/or hours of work.
- Offer suitable alternative work if available

## **New and Expectant Mothers Policy**

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- Where neither of the above are feasible, it may be necessary to suspend the staff member from work on paid leave for as long as necessary to protect their health and safety and that of their child.

Headteachers/managers will need to contact their HR provider to establish the required arrangements for these actions.

The Risk Assessment must be reviewed regularly. Frequencies will depend on the type of work, its location and on the individual. The reviewing intervals may need to become more frequent as the pregnancy progresses to take into account any changing needs of the staff member. For example, dexterity, agility, co-ordination, speed of movement and reach may be impaired because of increasing size.

Some staff may choose to work late into their pregnancy. Where the worker intends to continue working close to the date of confinement, more frequent review of the risk assessment will be essential. Importance should be given to reviewing and revising if necessary the staff members access to communication with others and the levels of supervision. This will be particularly relevant where lone working is involved.

Risk assessment must be repeated on the staff members return to work, to take account of any risks for the new mother and child especially if breastfeeding.

### **6. Breastfeeding**

It is up to the mother to decide how long she wishes to breastfeed, and it is recognised some choose to continue this into the child's second year or beyond. Where staff continue to breastfeed for many months, headteachers/managers will need to review risks regularly using the risk assessment template as above. The main concerns will be to prevent contaminants from entering the breast milk. Where risks are identified headteachers/managers will need to continue to prevent exposure to the risk.

It is good practice to provide a healthy and safe environment for nursing mothers to express or store milk. This could be included in the suitable resting facilities you must provide for new and expectant mothers.

### **7. Night work**

You may need to give special consideration to new and expectant mothers who work at night. Management of health and safety should reduce most of the known risks. However, where a staff member has a medical certificate stating that night work could affect their health and safety, you must either:

- Offer her suitable alternative daytime work if any is available, or if that is not reasonable
- Suspend her from work, on paid leave, for as long as is necessary to protect her health and safety and that of her child

### **8. Other Considerations**

In addition to any risks presented by the work activity itself, there are aspects of pregnancy that may impact on the way an individual is able to work. These aspects include morning sickness, backache, increasing size, frequent visits to the toilet, tiredness, and any changes in relation to dexterity, agility, balance and comfort. Some of these are mentioned in the guidance provided to help with the risk assessment process. However, it is important for headteachers/managers to give consideration to all such aspects as circumstances dictate.

### **9. Rest Facilities**

Pregnant workers may, at times, suffer from fatigue and other effects, especially during the latter months of the pregnancy. If an expectant mother is in need of rest during their working hours, she should be allowed to sit in a suitable and quiet area of the premises. This could be a vacant or quiet area of an office, a vacant meeting room, first aid room, or a comfortable chair in a quiet place, etc.