



Infant Feeding Policy

Safe feeding environments for babies

St Paul's United Reformed Church Southern Synod

St Paul's United Reformed Church ('the church') wants this to be a safe place for infants to be fed by their parents / carers . We will give all parents and carers active and practical support for their needs in feeding their infant here whether by breast or bottle.

Guidelines

1. The Equality Act 2010 says that it is discrimination to treat a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. It applies to anyone providing services, benefits, facilities and premises to the public, public bodies, further and higher education bodies and associations.
2. We will acknowledge and support the rights of women to breastfeed their children in all public areas of these premises. If a mother is happy to feed in a public area, then she should be made to feel comfortable to continue. An appropriately placed chair can be offered for her comfort and convenience.
3. If a mother wishes to feed her baby in private, we will advise her of the facilities available [youth room, vestry, church office]. If a mother chooses not to use the private facilities offered to her, her right to do so must be respected.
4. Toilets are not acceptable as a private space to breastfeed and should not be offered as they do not offer a hygienic environment.
5. If a mother wishes to express milk to feed her baby, we will advise her of the facilities available [youth room, vestry, church office]. If a mother chooses not to use the private facilities offered to her, her right to do so must be respected. Toilets are not acceptable as a private space to express and should not be offered as they do not offer a hygienic environment.

6. If there are older siblings with the parent or carer, and there is no crèche provision, then we will try to provide an appropriate space alongside the feeding parent/ carer with age appropriate materials for those children to play with safely.
7. We will provide information about the options for feeding infants, giving support to those who cannot breastfeed their own children and are grieving about this.
8. We will signal our support for breastfeeding with appropriate public signs
9. We will support local, national and international campaigns that promote safe feeding environments for infant and breastfeeding.
10. We will support International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) campaigns. Whilst acknowledging that not every mother can breastfeed, the targeting of the world's poorest nations by large multinational companies is not acceptable.

Handling objections

1. It is the policy of this church to try and meet the needs of all its members and visitors and make their attendance as positive and safe as possible.
2. If a visitor or member of the church objects to a mother breastfeeding, then a conversation about the church's policy will be held and an alternative place for the person with objections to sit will be offered

Handling objections

The policy was discussed by elders and church members prior to its adoption and will be reviewed every 3 years. Anyone wishing to comment on this policy should contact the Church Secretary.

Equipment which may be helpful:

- A comfortable chair without arms which is suitable to use for feeding a child (nursing type chair);
- A quiet space using a small play tent, a wigwam or a simple rug for older siblings, with a box of books, and some age appropriate quiet toys;
- Facility to warm a bottle;
- Facility to keep milk cold.

This policy was adopted at the St Paul's URC Church Meeting held on 20 March 2022 – next review March 2025 or earlier