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## **Menopause Policy**

**Revised and applicable from 26th February 2024**

**Signed:**

**Chair of Governors**

## **1. Policy Statement**

The purpose of this policy is to support staff affected by menopause, help them before, during and after the menopause. It is to allow for additional consideration when staff are experiencing symptoms and seeking appropriate adjustments.

Schools are committed to ensuring all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity in respect in their working environment. The policy is designed for schools to work proactively with all staff experiencing menopause, including ensuring the workplace does not worsen symptoms for those experiencing them.

The policy sets out to reduce menopause-related stigma in schools as well as educating staff in fostering an inclusive environment and to advise line managers in supporting these individuals.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all staff in schools experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Menopause is a natural stage of life which affects most women and other people who have a menstrual cycle. This can include:

- trans people – 'trans' is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth
- people with 'variations of sex development' (VSD) – some people might prefer to identify as intersex or use the term 'differences in sex development' (DSD)

It's important for schools to be aware of all of the people who might go through the menopause and menopause symptoms and to support them all equally.

## **3. Definitions**

The menopause usually happens between 45 and 55 years of age but it can also happen earlier or later in someone's life. For many people symptoms last about 4 years, but in some cases, symptoms can last a lot longer.

There are 3 different stages to the menopause:

- perimenopause
- menopause
- post- menopause

Some people might also experience early menopause or go through medical menopause earlier in their lives. These types of menopause can be medically complicated, so employers should consider this when supporting their staff.

All stages and types of the menopause are different and symptoms can vary from person to person, and range from very mild to severe. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to menopause shall include perimenopause and post menopause.

#### **4. Principles**

Menopause is a health and wellbeing concern for staff and needs to be handled sensitively.

It's important for schools to be aware that the menopause and its symptoms can affect staff at any time. Being aware of this can help staff continue to do their job confidently and effectively.

The menopause can also have an impact on those supporting someone going through the menopause, for example a relative, partner, colleague or carer.

Although the menopause will only be experienced by women and other people who have a menstrual cycle, men should also be included in conversations and training. This is because they might be supporting others going through it.

#### **5. Symptoms**

Menopausal symptoms include but are not limited to the following:

- Psychological issues such as mood disturbances, anxiety and / or depression, memory loss, panic attacks, loss of confidence and reduced concentration
- Hot flushes
- Sleep disturbances that can make people feel tired or irritable
- Night sweats
- Irregular periods / and or periods that become light or heavy
- Muscle and joint stiffness, aches and pains
- Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTI's) including cystitis
- Headaches
- Weight gain
- Palpitations
- Skin changes
- Eye irritation (dry eyes)

It is important to note that menopause will affect everybody differently, where some individuals may not experience any symptoms at all. There are other people who experience a variety of symptoms, therefore any staff affected by menopause should be treated on a case by case basis.

#### **6. Responsibility**

It is the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure all staff are not exposed to any risks to their health and safety on the premises. Therefore, the head teacher and the

appropriate line manager should where possible put the following adjustments in place.

- Monitor well-being of staff through regular surveys as well as informal day to day conversations.
- Provide resources and training opportunities for all line managers and school staff on menopause, the impact and how it should be dealt with effectively.
- Ensure staff have access to confidential counselling services and Employee Assistance programmes.
- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality throughout the school.
- Ensuring restroom, toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for all staff with the ability and arrangement to allow staff to go to the toilet as required.
- Providing staff with equipment to mitigate any symptoms they may be experiencing such as small desk fans.

It is the line manager's responsibility to support staff affected by menopause, some of support mechanisms managers can put in place are listed below:

- Carry out individual Risk Assessments: These should look at temperature and ventilation, the materials used in any uniform or clothing as well access to toilet facilities and access to cold water.
- Discuss appropriate adjustments: Certain aspects of a person's job can represent a barrier for someone experiencing menopausal symptoms. Line managers should where possible alleviate or remove these barriers by putting suitable adjustments in place.
- Start open and transparent conversations with employees, treating all conversations confidentially and sensitively.
- It may be necessary for line managers to consider providing suitable adjustments with flexibility to accommodate particular menopausal symptoms that could potentially impact an employee's ability to perform.
- Have regular informal well being meetings with staff that are affected by menopause to discuss and review support going forward.
- While dealing with sickness absence triggers, it is important for line managers to keep in mind that menopausal symptoms could potentially impact them negatively. Hence, they should make a concerted effort to be flexible in such cases.
- Allow staff affected by menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms.
- Allow periods of absence to attend medical appointments.

## **7. Help and Support**

Additional resources which may be helpful for employees affected by menopause:

[NHS guidance on menopause](#)

[British Menopause Society](#)

[Menopause Matters](#)

[Menopause support](#)

[Bupa Women's Health Hub: Menopause Support](#)

[Department of Work and Pensions](#)