

Menopause Policy 2022

Callington, Boyton and Lewannick Schools.

This policy was adopted on	February 2022
This policy is the be reviewed	February 2025
Category	Mental Health and Wellbeing
Applies to	Each School, TDAT

Party responsible: Justine Collins (Trustee, governor) with reference to Forbes Solicitors.

Linked policies: **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy 2022, Staff Wellbeing Policy 2022, Health and Safety Policy, Sickness Absence Policy, Performance Management Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Equality Policy 2021**

AIMS:

This policy aims to

- Make sure that our schools can support staff affected by the menopause and help the to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments.
- Set out how our schools will make reasonable adjustments to minimise the risk of the working environment making menopausal symptoms worse for those experiencing them
- Minimise menopause-related stigma in our school by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them.

DEFINITIONS USED:

The **menopause** is the stage of life when a woman stops having periods. It typically affects those aged somewhere between 45 and 55 when the female sex hormone levels begin to fall. In the UK the average age to reach the menopause is 51.

Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this when w woman may experience symptoms. **Post-menopause** is the time beyond menopause.

Early Menopause is when a woman's periods stop before the age of 45 which can happen naturally or as the result of some treatments or surgery.

For this document, the word **menopause** will include perimenopause and early menopause.

We acknowledge that, while the majority of people affected by the menopause will identify as women, those who are **trans or non-binary** may also experience the menopause or menopausal-type symptoms. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for ALL affected colleagues.

SYMPTOMS:

Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that causes changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact then at work. Menopause symptoms may include:

- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia, and fatigue
- Low mood, anxiety, and depression
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain
- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive
- Problems with memory, concentration, and confidence

For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature in a classroom is too hot, this may cause symptoms such as hot flushes, dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations.

Symptoms affecting sleep can make it difficult for staff experiencing them to concentrate and stay focused, while low self-confidence, low mood, and anxiety may impact on decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

We acknowledge that the menopause will **affect everyone differently**- some individuals may experience no symptoms at all, and some may experience a variety. We will adapt our response to staff affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE:

Under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of staff as far as is reasonably practicable. This is reflected in the school **Health and Safety Policy**.

The **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** require that employers make an **assessment of risks to the health and safety of their employees**. This requires undertaking general risk assessments, which should include specific risks to the health of staff affected by the menopause.

The **Equality Act 2010** prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics which include age, sex and disability. Employers are under a statutory duty to consider whether “**reasonable adjustments**” are required to alleviate any disadvantages staff encounter based on these characteristics.

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if

- They have a physical or mental impairment, **and**
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Relating to menopause symptoms therefore:

- Many of the symptoms of menopause would be likely to be classified as physical and/or mental impairment

- “Substantial” means more than minor or trivial
- “Long-term” means an impairment if it has lasted for at least 12 months, is likely to last for at least 12 months, or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.
- “Day-to-day activities” are those carried out by most people of a regular basis, and includes but is not limited to; walking, cycling, carrying or moving things, being able to concentrate, writing, reading, typing, speaking.

Ongoing symptoms linked to the menopause may meet the definition of disability and, where they do, employers will be required to alleviate any disadvantage. Any such adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis, and where appropriate, staff affected by the menopause will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

This policy complies with our Funding Agreement as a Trust.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Board of Trustees:

The Board of Trustees has **ultimate responsibility** for Health and Safety matters within each school, but has delegated responsibility to

Sally Cook, Headteacher at Lewannick CP School

Katherine Davies, Headteacher at Boyton CP School

Antony Fugill, Headteacher at Callington CP School

The Board of Trustees has a duty to take **reasonable steps to ensure staff are not exposed to risk to their Health and Safety** on school premises, and has a duty, as employer, to

- Assess the risk to staff and others affected by school activities **in order to identify and introduce the Health and Safety measures necessary** to manage those risks
- **Inform staff** about the risks and measures in place to manage them
- Make sure adequate Health and Safety training is provided

The role of senior leaders:

Senior leaders will make **reasonable adjustments** to the workplace to support staff experiencing the menopause and to make sure the workplace doesn't make their symptoms worse, by:

- Carrying out **individual Risk Assessments** to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause in line with the **Health and Safety Policy**.
- **Monitoring** the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- **Providing resources and training opportunities** to make sure all line managers and HR staff are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary
- **Promoting information about and access to external support services**
- **Ensuring good ventilation and air quality** throughout the school, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be opened safely

- **Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all staff**
- **Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the school** and collecting feedback from staff, as well as ensuring the temperature can be regulated by turning down radiators for example
- **Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff** and establish a system that allows for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching.
- **Providing emergency sanitary protection**
- **Providing small desk fans** to help staff cool down
- **Fitting blinds to windows**
- **Designating a member of staff as a wellbeing champion** that staff affected by the menopause can speak to about their symptoms in confidence if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager
- **Record menopause-related absences as an “ongoing health issue” instead of as a short-term absence** to avoid triggering sickness absence procedures- as reflected in the **Sickness Absence Policy**
- Be sensitive to health issues such as the menopause during Performance Management and in the Appraisal process, as reflected in the **Teacher Appraisal Policy**
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Senior leaders will work to create a culture where staff can talk openly about the menopause by

- **Providing information** on the menopause in the staff rooms of each school e. posters, leaflets
- **Creating a support group** across the three schools so that those who want to can seek support from each other
- **Providing training for staff and managers** to achieve consistent practice
- **Referring to the Menopause in the Staff Wellbeing Policy** for the Trust
- Consider the use of Occupational Health or Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Role of Line Managers:

Line managers who work with staff who may be affected by the menopause will

- Provide a **non-judgemental, empathetic, and confidential support system** to staff
- **Appreciate** the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them with **confidentiality and sensitivity**
- **Monitor** sickness absence and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge
- **Have regular informal conversations** with staff they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed
- **Consider flexible working requests** in order to accommodate acute symptoms and in accordance with the Trust **Flexible Working Policy**
- Allow staff affected by the menopause to take **regular breaks from their work** if necessary to help manage symptoms
- Give swift permission for absence to **attend medical appointments**
- Promote information about and access to **external support services**

- If necessary, seek advice from HR, or Occupational Health or discuss a referral with the staff member to Occupational Health for further support.

Role of members of staff affected by the menopause:

We encourage staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting on their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause
- Share their preferred coping strategies with their line manager or with the designated wellbeing champion for their school
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff such as the wellbeing champion, know if the menopause is having an impact on this
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services

Role of all staff:

Alongside the role of all staff set out in the **Staff Wellbeing Policy**, staff should especially ensure they

- **Promote health and wellbeing for themselves and other at all times**
- **Treat each other with empathy and respect**
- **Support other members of staff** such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- **Accept and support any adjustments that staff affected by the menopause may be receiving** as a result of their symptoms
- **Report honestly about their wellbeing** to their line manager or any other trusted member of staff such as their school's wellbeing champion.

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STAFF:

Below are some resources that can be shared with staff to help them **understand** the menopause and to provide **support** for staff affected by the menopause in our schools

Menopause (NHS) <https://www.nhs.uk>

Menopause Matters: <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk>

Menopause: diagnosis and management (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence): <https://www.nice.org.uk>

The Daisy Network (for those with Early Menopause or Premature Ovarian Insufficiency prior to the age of 40): <https://www.daisynetwork.org>

Menopause in the Workplace: <https://www.nhsemployers.org>

Managing the effects of the menopause-ACAS: <https://www.acas.or.uk>

ONLINE CPD TRAINING courses about menopause in the workplace:
<https://menopauseintheworkplace.co.uk>

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS POLICY:

This policy will be reviewed no later than February 2025. At every review it will be approved by the full Board of Trustees