



Menopause Policy

Approved by:	Paula Tucker	Date: 1/9/26
Review by:	15/9/27	

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1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Make sure that our school can support staff affected by the menopause and help them to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments
- Set out how our school 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 experience
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR teams, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them

2. Definitions

The menopause is a stage of life when periods stop. It typically affects people aged between 45 and 55, when oestrogen 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 a 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. It can happen naturally, or as a side effect of some treatments.

For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause shall include perimenopause and early menopause.

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

2.1 Symptoms

Individuals experiencing the menopause may have symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may affect them at work.

Menopausal symptoms might include:

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

- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive

For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature is too high, 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 confidence, low mood and anxiety may impact on decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

We acknowledge that the menopause will affect everybody 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.

3. 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 all staff, so far as is reasonably practicable.

[Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks to employees' health and safety. General and, where appropriate, individual risk assessments will consider how working conditions may affect menopausal symptoms, including temperature, ventilation, hydration, access to toilets and rest facilities, workload, working patterns and the physical or emotional demands of working with pupils.

[Equality Act 2010](#) The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination and harassment related to protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. Menopause is not a separate protected characteristic, but unfavourable treatment connected with menopausal symptoms may amount to discrimination or harassment related to one or more of 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 specifically to menopause symptoms:

- Many of the aforementioned symptoms would be likely to be classified as a 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 on a regular basis, and includes but is not limited to: walking, driving, carrying or moving things, being able to concentrate, writing, reading, typing, speaking

Ongoing menopause symptoms may meet the definition of disability. Where they do, ReFocus has a statutory duty to consider and make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce substantial disadvantage.

ReFocus may also agree supportive workplace adjustments whether or not the Equality Act definition of disability is met. Support will be considered promptly, on a case-by-case basis, and will not depend on a formal medical diagnosis. ReFocus has fewer than 250 employees, so the statutory equality action-

plan provisions for large employers do not apply; relevant good-practice guidance will nevertheless be considered.

From 30 October 2026, ReFocus will take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and will not permit harassment of staff by third parties. This includes proportionate preventative action in relation to colleagues, pupils, parents/carers, visitors, contractors and representatives of commissioning organisations.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The proprietor/owners, Headteacher and governing board

The proprietor/owners retain legal accountability as the employing body for health, safety and employment matters. The Headteacher manages the implementation of this policy and will keep the governing board informed.

The governing board, including the Safeguarding Governor, provides support and oversight and takes reasonable steps to assure itself that appropriate arrangements are in place.

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that ReFocus:

- Assess the risks 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 employees about risks and the measures in place to manage them
- Make sure that adequate health and safety training is provided

4.2 Role of senior staff

Paula Tucker – Head Teacher is the wellbeing champion.

Senior staff will consider proportionate workplace adjustments to support staff experiencing the menopause and help prevent the workplace from making symptoms worse. Adjustments will be agreed with the staff member, recorded where appropriate and reviewed as needs change. These may include:

- Carrying out an individual risk assessment where appropriate, taking account of the member of staff's role, working conditions and specific needs
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that 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
- Considering ventilation and air quality while maintaining safeguarding, fire-safety, site-security and pupil-safety requirements
- Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all staff
- Monitoring workplace temperature and considering reasonable means of local temperature control where practicable
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff, and establishing a system that allows for cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching
- Providing a desk fan or other appropriate cooling measures where safe and practicable
- Fitting blinds to windows

- Designating a member of staff such 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

Senior staff will work to create a culture in the school where staff can talk openly about the menopause by:

- Providing information on the menopause in the staff room, e.g. posters and leaflets
- Creating a support group 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 school's staff wellbeing policy
- Considering the use of an occupational health service or employee assistance programme (EAP)

4.3 Role of line managers

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

- Provide non-judgemental, empathetic and confidential support. Information about a person's health is special-category personal data under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and will be stored securely and retained in line with the school's Records Retention Schedule
- Share information only where necessary, on a need-to-know basis, and normally with the staff member's knowledge, unless disclosure is required by law
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge
- Have regular, informal conversations with staff that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed
- Consider temporary changes and flexible working requests to accommodate acute symptoms. Staff may make a statutory flexible working request from the first day of employment, which will be considered in line with legislation and the school's Flexible Working Policy
- Allow staff affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms
- Consider requests for time away from work to attend menopause-related medical appointments in accordance with the school's leave and absence procedures
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Record menopause-related absence sensitively and consider it separately from other sickness absence where appropriate, so that staff are not unfairly disadvantaged or subjected to inappropriate absence triggers
- Be sensitive to health issues such as the menopause during the performance
- management/appraisal process
- If necessary, seek advice from HR or occupational health colleagues, or discuss a referral with the staff member to occupational health for further support

4.4 Role of staff members affected by the menopause

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

- Share their practical needs, preferred coping strategies and any workplace difficulties with their line manager or with Paula Tucker, the designated member of the senior leadership team responsible for wellbeing

- Keep their line manager or another trusted member of staff informed if menopausal symptoms are affecting their health, wellbeing or work
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services

4.5 Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Promote health and wellbeing for themselves and others 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
- Raise wellbeing concerns with their line manager or another trusted member of staff, such as Paula Tucker, where they feel able to do so

5 Further resources

- [Menopause](#) (NHS)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [Menopause: diagnosis and management](#) (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)
- The [Daisy Network](#) charity
- [Menopause in the Workplace](#)
- [Menopause resources](#) from the CIPD, particularly for:
 - [Line managers](#)
 - [HR staff](#)

6 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leadership team. The proprietor/owners retain legal accountability, the Headteacher manages implementation, and the governing board provides support and oversight.

7 Links to other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Staff wellbeing policy
- Health and safety policy
- Sickness absence policy
- Performance management procedure