**Guide to support individuals through the menopause**

This guide is intended to inform managers and employees about the menopause and associated support on offer for those experiencing menopausal symptoms. Depending on the personal circumstances, other School policies and procedures may also apply when reading this guidance document, such as the flexible working guide. Relevant legislation applying to this policy includes the Equality Act 2010 and the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

# What is the menopause?

The menopause is a natural event in most women's lives during which they stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. There are three different stages to the menopause – perimenopause, menopause and post menopause. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. For some it will be medically induced. Each experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. Women may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

While symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

* hot flushes;
* night sweats;
* anxiety;
* dizziness;
* fatigue;
* memory loss;
* depression;
* headaches;
* recurrent urinary tract infections;
* joint stiffness, aches and pains;
* reduced concentration; and
* heavy periods.

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. XXX School has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

XXX School also recognises that the menopausal symptoms can also affect transgender people and non-binary people. Any conversations will be kept confidential and there will no discrimination against employees due to their gender identity / gender reassignment.

# Available Support

XXX School recognises that the menopause is a very personal experience and therefore different levels and types of support and adjustments may be needed

Employees are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health. Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs. Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead.

***(Include details of EAP if offered by the school)***

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Our EAP service offers employees access to a wide range of support documents and confidential support to help cope with a range of wellbeing issues, including the menopause. For further information, please refer to XXXXXXX.

[Menopause Matters](https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/)

Provides up to date, accurate information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options.

[The Daisy Network Charity](https://www.daisynetwork.org/)

Provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency

[Menopause Café](https://www.menopausecafe.net/)

Provides information about events for individuals to gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.

# Reasonable Adjustments

XXX School recognises that the menopause is a very personal experience and can affect women in different ways. With this in mind, adjustments will vary from person to person; some women may not require any. Outlined below are some possible adjustments if required. In some circumstances a manager and employee may feel it beneficial to carry out a [**risk assessment**](https://wokingham.sharepoint.com/Services/Pages/Work-related-stress-.aspx) and or [**stress risk assessment**](https://wokingham.sharepoint.com/Services/Pages/Work-related-stress-.aspx) .

**Temperature control**

XXX School strives to achieve a comfortable working temperature for employees. XXX School’s dress code, as outlined within the conduct policy ***(delete if not applicable),*** outlines that employees are expected to dress appropriately for the role they are undertaking, taking due regard of the impact their appearance will have on the client/customer relationship and being mindful of any health & safety risks that may be involved. XXX School will allow some flexibility within its dress code, where reasonable. Some rooms / offices are equipped with air conditioning systems or assisted cooling systems in the building, ***(delete if not applicable),*** but desk fans will be provided upon request. Chilled water is also provided or a fridge is available in which to place bottles of water. ***(delete if not applicable),***

**Home-working (Smart Working)**

Employees may be able to request to work partly from home to help manage menopausal symptoms. ***(delete if not applicable),***

**Flexible working**

The organisation recognises that difficulty sleeping is a common symptom of the menopause. To reflect this, as well as the impact of other common symptoms, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working could include for example asking for:

* a change to the pattern of hours worked;
* permission to perform work from home;
* a reduction in working hours; or
* more frequent breaks.

You can request this at any time informally. However, all employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the legal right to request flexible working, although most requests are concluded informally. For further information, please refer to our Family Care Policy.

Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis and you will not be penalised or suffer detriment because you have requested and/or been granted workplace adjustments or flexible working to manage symptoms in the employment environment.

**Access to Toilet Facilities**

The school recognises that women may need more frequent access to toilet facilities that are easily accessible and also easy access to sanitary products. The school will provide secure storage in a private area where supplies can be accessed. .***(delete if not applicable).***

A quiet room for an employee to rest/manage their symptoms, if necessary, is also available. ***(delete if not applicable).***

# Impact on Absence and Performance

Managers should be aware that there may be a need for sickness absence by employees experiencing the menopause in order to manage their menopausal symptoms.

Absence will be recorded as related to menopausal symptoms and managers will consider any periods of absence as an ongoing condition requiring the consideration of reasonable adjustments, rather than as separate instances of sickness.

XXX School recognises the potential impact of menopausal symptoms on performance by employees experiencing the menopause and managers should acknowledge this and support staff sympathetically.

# Data Protection

XXX School will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which XXX School becomes aware that an employee is undergoing menopause is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.