



HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

MENOPAUSE POLICY

Aspiration – Respect – Excellence

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

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Introduction and purpose

Anyone can be affected by hormonal changes during their lives for a number of reasons, including pregnancy, fertility treatment, gender transitioning, conditions needing hormone treatment, and the menopause. These can bring about symptoms which could affect a colleague at work.

Menopause is a transition of life, and it is not something which is 'taboo' or off limits as a topic of conversation. We want all our colleagues to feel comfortable and supported at work. Menopause and perimenopause are very personal experiences and will differ from individual to individual. Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status. It is important to recognise that for many reasons, people's individual experiences of the menopause may differ greatly. As such, each case will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Symptoms will fluctuate during the menopause. Different levels of adjustments and support may be required at different times based on individual needs.

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of the menopause, and how they can support colleagues experiencing menopause symptoms at work
- to raise an awareness and understanding of menopause amongst all colleagues
- to outline the support and reasonable adjustments that are available
- to create an environment where colleagues feel confident enough to raise issues about their menopause symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments and additional support at work

Our School is mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and acknowledges its obligation to consider reasonable adjustments for employees. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken to ensure that no groups or individuals with protected characteristics are unintentionally disadvantaged by the policy or practice.

Our School recognises that managing menopause at work can be a sensitive matter and always aims to give due consideration to the welfare of staff, the needs of the school and the impact any absence may have on the effective education of students.

Our School is committed to:

- Educating all colleagues about the potential symptoms of the menopause
- Providing management guidance on supporting colleagues experiencing menopause symptoms at work highlighting the support and reasonable adjustments that are available
- Creating an environment where colleagues feel confident enough to raise issues about their menopause symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments and additional support at work.

It may be appropriate for colleagues to be supported using Our Schools Flexible Working or Attendance Management policies available in the Staff Handbook, but as support needs will vary according to

individual circumstances, line managers should liaise with the School Business Manager to ensure fairness and consistency.

Definitions

Menopause

The menopause is when a colleague stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally. Periods usually start to become less frequent over a few months or years before they stop altogether. Sometimes they stop suddenly. The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a colleague's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age to reach menopause is 51. But around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before the age of 40. This is known as premature menopause.

Perimenopause

The perimenopause is used to describe the years building up to the menopause. It is where the ovaries gradually begin to make less oestrogen and therefore some individuals may start to experience menopausal symptoms. It usually starts in a person's 40s but can start in their 30s or even earlier as a result of medical induced menopause such as cancer treatment or hysterectomy surgery.

Post-menopausal

Post menopause is the time after the menopause has occurred, starting when an individual has not had a period for 12 consecutive months. The average time for experiencing symptoms of the menopause is five years, but many experience symptoms for up to ten years and 3% will experience symptoms for the rest of their lives. Post-menopausal colleagues have an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis.

Symptoms

Menopause symptoms can have a significant impact on daily life. Common symptoms include:

- hot flushes
- night sweats
- difficulty sleeping
- a reduced sex drive
- problems with memory and concentration
- vaginal dryness
- headaches
- mood changes, such as low mood or anxiety
- palpitations
- joint stiffness, aches and pains

- reduced muscle mass
- recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- dry eyes
- panic attacks
- weight gain
- fatigue

Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

Sources of support

Menopause - NHS provides details of symptoms, treatment, help and support.

Menopause Matters is an independent website providing up-to-date information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options. Here you will find information on what happens leading up to, during and after the menopause, what you can do to help and what treatments are available

The Daisy Network provides a support network and information to those diagnosed with premature menopause.

The Menopause Cafe provides an opportunity to gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.

British Menopause Society educates, informs and guides on the menopause.

The Menopause Support Network Facebook Group is a private community group run by the team at Menopause Support.

Balance Menopause provides information based on the latest evidence available.

Roles and responsibilities

- The Trust Board is responsible for the overall monitoring of the effectiveness of this procedure.
- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that those with line management responsibilities are suitably skilled to manage wellbeing conversations. The Headteacher will also fulfil the responsibilities of the line manager in respect of certain individuals.
- All line managers (including the Headteacher) are responsible for ensuring that members of staff are familiar with the expectations placed upon them in relation to this policy.

All colleagues are responsible for:

- Their own wellbeing and to do their best to take all reasonable steps to look after both their physical and mental health including seeking medical advice and treatment as required.
- Where appropriate, taking responsibility for sharing any menopause information with their line manager in the first instance or if a colleague feels uncomfortable to do this, they may contact the School Business Manager directly, so that employees and managers can collaboratively establish appropriate ways of supporting and managing this, such as agreeing reasonable adjustments.

- Actively participate in discussions about their wellbeing at work and any menopausal symptoms or issues that may be affecting this.
- Seek advice from their line manager or the School Business Manager should they need additional information about this Policy.

Line managers are responsible for:

- Encouraging and supporting colleagues to look after their health and wellbeing.
- Being aware of relevant policies and procedures.
- To be open and willing to have wellbeing discussions with colleagues about the menopause, treating the discussion sensitively and professionally. Line Manager Guidance can be sought from the School Business Manager.
- Where relevant, to seek expert advice from their School Business Manager and Occupational Health to assist with the management of an individual's menopause symptoms in the workplace.
- Undertake any risk assessments as required in collaboration with the colleague and the School Business Manager
- Implement all adjustments agreed and regularly review these in conjunction with the individual employee.
- Ensure all colleagues are aware of the range of support services available, how to access these and to support them in doing so as and when appropriate.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Providing managers with advice in the management of menopause affecting employees in the workplace and promoting positive health and wellbeing.
- Providing advice on other School policies and procedures which might be utilised.
- Providing advice to managers when making a referral to Occupational Health or obtaining other relevant medical information and how best to use this.

Informal wellbeing meetings

All line managers have a responsibility, with appropriate training, to conduct wellbeing discussions to ensure colleague wellbeing and support.

This wellbeing meeting is informal and an opportunity for colleagues, line managers and where appropriate School Business Manager to sensitively discuss colleagues' symptoms and any impacts these are having at work. Whilst this is an informal meeting colleagues can request to be accompanied by a work colleague or a union representative to support them. The wellbeing meeting, where appropriate may include a wellbeing risk assessment to assist with the identification of any potential reasonable adjustments, these may include the temperature and ventilation, including fans, access to toilet facilities and cold water, identifying adjustments to the role or working environment. Adjustments should be tailored to colleagues, specific needs and the consideration of a referral to occupational health referral where appropriate.

Occupational Health referrals

Referrals to OH will be made at the line manager's discretion with support and advice of the School Business Manager, involving the individual and informed by the following criteria:

- Where discussions with the employee indicate that the colleague's health may be having an impact on his/her ability to carry out the job.
- Where there are concerns about the wellbeing and health of a colleague.

Employee consent must be obtained before making a referral to OH.

The contents of the referral form and the subsequent report must be shared with the colleague, preferably face-to-face where circumstances permit. In considering the referral, OH may wish to obtain a report from the colleagues own doctor(s) but will obtain the employee's written consent before doing so.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if there is a specific legislative requirement. The purpose of this monitoring and review is to identify where reasonable adjustments can be made to working conditions, practices and policies in order to make this policy effective.