

Upton Snodsbury CofE First School



Menopause Policy

This policy was last reviewed: September 2023

Next Review Date: September 2025

Statement of intent

Upton Snodsbury CofE First School is committed to provide a supportive environment that makes 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 in line with our vision. This policy will 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. We will provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR teams, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them. We recognise the importance of being supportive and inclusive within the setting and the provision provided will ensure it supports our Christian values and our school vision of “Where a love of learning grows” .

'And above all these put-on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.'
- Colossians 3:14

Definitions

The **menopause** is a stage of life when a person stops having periods. It typically affects those 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.

Symptoms

Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact 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.

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Authority and Governors:

The LA has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but delegates responsibility for the strategic management of such matters to the school's governing board.

The governing board delegates operational matters and day-to-day tasks to the headteacher and staff members.

The Headteacher will:

- Carry out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Provide resources and training opportunities
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Ensure good ventilation and air quality throughout the school, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened
- Ensure regular access to cold drinking water for all staff
- Regulate and monitor the temperature of the school and collecting feedback from staff, as well as ensuring the temperature can be regulated per room by turning down radiators for example
- Ensure 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
- Fitting blinds to windows
- Designate a member of staff such as a MHWB 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/headteacher
- Provide information on the menopause if required
- Provide a non-judgmental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff
- Appreciate the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them confidentially and sensitively
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge
- Have regular, informal conversations with staff who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed
- Give swift permission for absence to attend medical appointments

- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Record menopause-related absences as an 'ongoing health issue' instead of as an individual short-term absence to avoid triggering sickness absence procedures
- 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

Staff experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager/MHWP champion/Headteacher
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager and or MHWP champion know if the menopause is having an impact on this
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services

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

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](#)

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed biennially unless there is a legal change that is required.