



Tudhoe Learning Trust

Menopause

Policy and Procedure

Approved by: Trust Chief Executive Officer **Date:** December 2022

Last reviewed on: November 2022

Next review due by: November 2025

Contents

Introduction.....	2
What is menopause.....	3
Awareness and open conversations.....	3
Support and adjustments.....	4
Sickness Absence.....	5
Health and Safety Risk Assessments.....	5
Training.....	5
Discrimination and harassment.....	5
Confidentiality, data protection and record keeping.....	5
Additional information and support.....	6

Introduction

We recognise that the menopause will have an adverse impact on the working life of many members of staff and we are committed to supporting staff affected by the menopause.

This policy's objectives are to:

- support staff experiencing the menopause to remain at work;
- raise awareness of the menopause and its impact in the workplace;
- encourage open conversations about the menopause between colleagues, including line managers; and
- ensure staff know where they can access relevant advice and assistance.

This policy does not give contractual rights to any individual and we reserve the right to amend it at any time, although we will notify you in writing of any changes.

This policy applies to anyone involved in the school e.g. employees, volunteers, governors, Directors, and also applies to agency workers, contractors and suppliers.

In applying this policy, the Trust will not unlawfully discriminate in respect of any of the protected characteristics as defined under the Equality Act and specified below:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership

The operation of this Policy will be kept under review and changes will be made as deemed appropriate.

What is menopause?

Menopause is a natural event during which a person stops having periods and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. Trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female may also go through the menopause.

The majority of people who experience menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some people may start to experience symptoms of menopause at a younger age. Symptoms typically last between four and eight years, although they continue for longer for some people.

Some of the most common symptoms of menopause include:

- disturbed sleep
- hot flushes and night sweats
- heavy bleeding and period pains
- headaches
- fatigue
- muscle and joint pains
- heart palpitations
- recurrent urinary tract infections
- thinning hair and brittle nails
- weight gain
- depression and anxiety
- tearfulness
- short temper
- memory loss
- poor concentration
- cloudy thinking (sometimes referred to as “brain fog”)

Menopause symptoms may also exacerbate existing impairments and ongoing medical conditions that those affected may already be struggling to cope with.

Most people who go through the menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different and symptoms can fluctuate.

The period before menopause is known as peri-menopause. During this time, the body is preparing itself for menopause. Peri-menopause can also last several years and can involve similar symptoms to menopause itself.

The period after menopause is known as post-menopause. During post-menopause, some people may continue to experience symptoms similar to menopause itself. There can also be an increased risk of some health conditions post-menopause, such as cardiovascular (heart) disease, osteoporosis (weak bones) and urinary tract infections.

Any reference to menopause in this policy includes peri-menopause and post-menopause.

Some people seek medical advice and treatment for the symptoms of menopause. A common form of treatment is known as hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Many people find this treatment helpful for alleviating symptoms, but HRT is not appropriate for everyone. Some people using HRT may experience side effects which may also require support in the workplace.

Awareness and open conversations

Menopause is not just an issue for those with symptoms. It is important that all staff have an

awareness of menopause, so that they can support colleagues who are going through it or who are otherwise affected by it. For example, the menopause may have an impact on those supporting someone else going through the menopause, for example a relative, partner, colleague or carer.

We are committed to creating an open and supportive culture and ensuring everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We aim to facilitate an understanding work environment in which staff can have open conversations with their colleagues and managers about menopause and how it may be affecting them at work.

We encourage anyone affected by menopause at work to talk to their line manager and/or HR at an early stage about their own symptoms, or how menopause is otherwise affecting them at work. Telling us about any issues you may be experiencing will enable us to offer support as appropriate.

Line managers / HR will be open to such conversations and will be able to provide information about what support is available.

Support and adjustments

Many people are able to carry on their working lives as normal during menopause. However, we recognise that some people may be more severely impacted by menopause symptoms and we may therefore, in appropriate cases, consider adjustments to working conditions to mitigate the impact of those symptoms on their work.

If you wish to ask for support or for any adjustments to your working conditions, please speak to your line manager in the first instance. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to your line manager, you can speak to the Trust HR Manager as an alternative. However, your line manager will still need to be involved in agreeing any adjustments, even if you initially discuss these with the Trust HR Manager.

Depending on individual needs and business requirements and resources, the sorts of adjustments that may be provided could include:

- Temperature control (such as the provision of fans or positioning a workstation closer to a window or other ventilation)
- more frequent breaks from the workstation
- changes to work allocation
- adjusted start and finish times

The above are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

In order to better understand your symptoms and any adjustments or other support we can provide to help alleviate their effect on you at work, we may refer you to Occupational Health and/or seek medical advice from your doctor(s). Any request for a medical report or examination will be dealt with as set out in our Attendance Management Policy.

Symptoms of the menopause can fluctuate over time and your needs may change as a result. We will therefore follow up with you [on a regular basis] to check that any agreed adjustments are working effectively, whether they are still required and/or whether any further changes should be considered.

If you need additional support with your menopause symptoms, including if they are affecting your mental health, you can also contact our confidential employee assistance programme helpline: 0800 028 0199.

Sickness absence

In the same way as for other conditions, you are not expected to work on any day on which you are too unwell for work with menopause symptoms. This includes the sudden onset of symptoms during the working day. If you are unwell and unable to work, you should follow the procedure set out in our Trust Sickness Absence Policy.

You do not have to disclose that your absence is related to menopause. However, we would encourage you to be open about the reason for your leave if possible, as this will better enable us to provide appropriate support.

Health and safety risk assessments

We recognise our duty to ensure the health and safety of all staff and our health and safety risk assessments will include consideration of any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopause symptoms. This may include identifying specific risks to the health and wellbeing of those experiencing menopause and taking appropriate steps to address them.

Training

We are committed to ensuring that all line managers are provided with training so that they are able to support individuals experiencing menopause symptoms or otherwise affected by the menopause at work.

Discrimination and harassment

This policy is part of our commitment to equality and diversity. We are committed to eliminating discrimination amongst our workforce. Our objective is to create a working environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. See also our Equality Policy and Diversity and our Trust Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Staff should report any instances of harassment, discrimination or victimisation experienced because of issues related to the menopause to their line manager / HR.

If an employee is found to have harassed, discriminated against or victimised a colleague in relation to the menopause, this will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary policy.

Confidentiality, data protection and record keeping

We aim to deal with matters connected to menopause sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of the individuals involved.

Providing support for staff under this policy involves us processing relevant personal data of the individuals concerned. We use this personal data in order to ensure that staff who are experiencing menopause symptoms can access appropriate support, to consider adjustments and to comply with health and safety requirements.

Our legal grounds for processing your personal data in these ways are that it is necessary:

- to comply with our legal obligations (e.g. to ensure a safe working environment, to make reasonable adjustments, etc.); and/or
- in our legitimate interest to deal effectively with issues that may arise where symptoms of menopause are affecting you at work.

Information relating to your health is special category data, and we need an additional legal ground

for using such data about you. The additional grounds that we may rely on are that this is necessary: to exercise legal rights/comply with legal obligations in relation to employment; and/or to establish, exercise or defend legal claims.

Additional information and support

The following organisations can provide additional information about the menopause and support for people experiencing menopause symptoms:

NHS information pages

www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx

British Menopause Society

www.thebms.org.uk/

Menopause Matters

www.menopausematters.co.uk

The Menopause Charity

<https://www.themenopausecharity.org/>

The Daisy Network

www.daisynetwork.org.uk