



## Menopause Policy and Guidance - Schools

### 1. Introduction

Menopause is a normal part of every woman's life. We want everyone to understand what menopause is and to be able to talk about it openly without embarrassment.

This policy recognises that menopause affects individuals in different ways and that women may need appropriate flexibility, support and adjustments during the time of change before, during and after the menopause.

This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. It may also be useful for employees who have family members who are going through the menopause, as this may also impact on employees.

### 2. Scope of Policy and Guidance

This policy applies to all staff and managers.

### 3. Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- help create an environment where women feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for adjustments at work. The school will treat all individuals with dignity and respect during this time and to ensure that the workplace provides support that may be needed.
- Educate and inform employees and managers about the potential symptoms of menopause and how they can be supported at work.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.

### 4. Definitions

**Perimenopause** - this is the time leading up to menopause when a woman may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

**Menopause** occurs when a woman stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. This usually occurs when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for women reaching menopause naturally). The average age for a woman to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons. Menopause is caused by a change in the balance of the body's hormones, such as the body stops producing as much oestrogen.

**Post menopause** is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

### 5. Menopause Symptoms

Most women will experience some menopausal symptoms. Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flashes, sleep disturbance, low mood, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, depression, anxiety, and loss of confidence.

## 6. Managing Menopause Symptoms and Support

Employees who feel they may be experiencing menopause symptoms, should in the first instance consult with their GP. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) website, [Nice.org.uk guidance](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance) provide a helpful guide for women on managing menopause and seeking advice and support from a medical professional.

Employees are encouraged to speak to their manager to discuss their symptoms, any issues or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic).

The manager will allow adequate time to have a confidential conversation with the employee, suggest ways in which they can be supported and agree actions, and how to implement. They will also agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom so that the employee has the support they require.

## 7. Workplace Adjustments

Your Headteacher / Line manager will consider appropriate work place adjustments, These temporary adjustments will hopefully be beneficial. Working in a school setting may present challenges in adapting working practice, however a manager may consider the following adjustments, but not exclusive:

- temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk or moving near a window, or away from a heat source;
- Easy access to drinking water;
- Be allowed to adapt prescribed uniform/dress code;
- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse, and adjust practice accordingly, where feasible;
- Promote counselling and employee support services offered via AbleFutures, Mindmatters and Blackburn Health Services

Where adjustments are unsuccessful or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the manager may refer the employee to Occupational Health with the assistance and guidance from HR and implement any recommendations, where reasonably practical.

## 8. Managing an Employee's Absence

Menopause may cause an employee to have an increase in absences from work. It is important to refer to the improving attendance policy when managing absences, including giving consideration to the Equality Act 2010.

## 9. Additional Support and Guidance

There are a number of sources of information available for both employees and managers through the following websites:

[NHS website - menopause guidance](#)

[Nice.org.uk guidance](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance)

[Menopause matters website](#)

[Simply hormones website](#)

## 9 Monitoring

Headteachers will be responsible for monitoring the policy in their own schools in order to measure its effectiveness and to identify any improvements that can be made.

Approving body and date:  
LJNCC: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021