

Baynards Primary School



Menopause Policy

Approved by:	Judith Dale	Date: 05.10.23
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1. Introduction

1.1 Menopause is a normal part of every woman's life. This policy recognises that the menopause is an equality and occupational health and safety issue and that women may need appropriate flexibility, support and adjustments during the time of change before, during and after the menopause.

1.2 Copford Primary School has a positive attitude towards the menopause and will treat all individuals with dignity and respect during this time and ensure that the workplace does not make symptoms worse. Copford Primary School is committed to ensuring that women feel confident in discussing menopausal symptoms openly, without embarrassment, and are able to ask for support and adjustments in order to continue to work safely in the organisation. For this reason, the menopause at work is an issue for men as well as women.

2. The legislative setting

Copford Primary School undertakes to comply with its legal obligations as set out below:

2.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to undertake general risk assessments which should include specific risks to menopausal women, see section 5.3.

2.2 The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of certain 'protected characteristics' including sex, age and disability. Conditions linked to the menopause may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the Equality Act and require reasonable adjustments. 3. Status 3.1. This policy sets out procedures for members of staff and managers to follow in providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. If Copford Primary School wishes to amend the menopause policy, consultation and negotiation on proposed changes will take place with staff via the recognised trade unions.

3. Aims

3.1 To create an environment where women staff members feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for support and adjustments at work.

3.2 To ensure that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that appropriate adjustments and support are put in place, recognising that the menopause and perimenopause is an individual experience and therefore there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

3.3 To reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace.

4. What steps will we take as an employer?

4.1 Copford Primary School will educate and inform managers and staff to be aware of how the menopause can affect working women, taking account of the particular circumstances in schools, and about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support women experiencing them.

4.2 Where women members of staff feel uncomfortable going to their line manager, because he is a man, or someone much younger, or both, we will ensure that an alternative contact is available. Confidentiality will always be respected.

4.3 The risk assessments which we undertake will consider the specific needs of menopausal women, and, in doing so, we will consult with union representatives and women staff members and share with all managers and new managers, requesting signatures to confirm that measures are understood and

will be acted upon. Risk assessments will include consideration of temperature and ventilation issues and will also address welfare issues, such as access to toilet facilities and cold water, during and outside break and lunch times.

4.4 Copford Primary School will make adjustments where necessary to support individuals experiencing the menopause, and to ensure the workplace does not make their symptoms worse. These could include simple measures such as:

- leaving doors open
- ensuring that windows can be safely opened
- ensuring that it is possible to regulate the temperature in a classroom or other room by turning down radiators (as long as the temperature does not drop below 18 degrees Celsius, this will be comfortable for all occupants)
- provision of fans
- fitting blinds to windows
- establishing a system that allows cover for women who need to access toilet/ washing facilities while they are teaching (to deal with heavy and recurring bleeding)
- swift permission for absence to attend menopause-related medical appointments
- adjusting workplace procedures and processes to support and avoid any detriment to menopausal women.
- recognising that menopause can lead to mood swings, anxiety and other mental health related conditions which may make dealing with children more challenging. In line with the school's behaviour policy recognising that staff might not be at their 'BEST' and should use the support of colleagues when managing challenging situations in the workplace.

This is not a definitive list of measures. Copford Primary School will actively listen to women staff and union reps and take on board other suggestions.

4.5 It is recognised that many of these practical and easy-to-institute changes to the workplace, which will make working life more bearable for menopausal women, will benefit all staff.

5. Roles and responsibilities

It is recognised that everyone who works at Copford Primary School has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff, including women experiencing the menopause.

5.1 All staff are responsible for:

- taking responsibility for looking after their health
- being open and honest in conversations with HR and occupational health
- contributing to a respectful and healthy working environment
- being willing to help and support their colleagues
- accepting and supporting any necessary adjustments their colleagues request or are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

5.2 Line managers

The most important and valuable thing a manager can do is listen and, wherever possible, respond sympathetically to any requests for adjustments at work.

5.2.1 All line managers will:

- familiarise themselves with this menopause policy
- be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance; if someone's performance suddenly dips, consideration will be given as to whether the menopause may be playing a part in this.
- provide a safe place to allow the member of staff to speak openly and honestly
- be ready and willing to listen and have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and confidentially and allowing adequate time for the discussion
- record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented, via an action plan
- ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting
- ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.

5.2.2 Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, the line manager may:

- discuss with the employee a referral to occupational health for further advice
- review occupational health advice, and implement any additional recommendations
- update the action plan and continue the review process.

5.3 Occupational health

The role of occupational health is to:

- carry out a holistic assessment of the employee to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be exacerbating menopause symptoms
- discuss with the employee what adjustments would help
- signpost to other appropriate sources of help and advice.

Additional help and support

Menopause matters www.menopausematters.co.uk

The British Menopause Society www.thebms.org.uk

NHS menopause pages www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms

APPENDIX

Definitions Perimenopause

The perimenopause is the period in a woman's life when she starts to experience hormonal fluctuations and changes to her periods. The average time for a woman to be perimenopausal is between four to five years. During this time, periods may become increasingly heavy and irregular, meaning it is vitally important for a woman experiencing symptoms to be close to toilets and shower facilities. For some women, the symptoms during this time can be worse than the actual menopause. Menopause A woman is described as being menopausal when they have gone 12 months without a period and when her ovaries are no longer responsive. The average age for a woman to reach the menopause in the UK is 51. American evidence suggests that this is different for Asian and black women. An Asian woman may start her menopause later and a black woman slightly earlier. To date, there is no UK evidence on this issue.

Post-menopausal

This is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for 12 consecutive months. The average time for women experiencing symptoms of the menopause is five years, but many women experience symptoms for up to ten years and 3% of women will experience symptoms for the rest of their lives.

Post-menopausal women have an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis and managers should be aware of this.

Symptoms of the menopause ~ Symptoms may include:

Vasomotor Symptoms

Hot flushes and Night Sweats

Psychological effects of hormone changes

Low mood/mood swings

Poor memory and concentration

Insomnia

Loss of libido

Anxiety/panic attacks

Physical Symptoms

Headaches

Fatigue

Joint aches and pains

Palpitations

Formication (creeping skin)

Insomnia

Sexual Symptoms

Reduced sex drive

Painful sex/vaginal dryness

Urinary tract infections

Vaginal irritation Consequences of oestrogen deficiency

Obesity, diabetes

Heart disease

Osteoporosis/chronic arthritis

Dementia and cognitive decline

Cancer N.B. This is not an exhaustive list.