Applecroft School



Menopause Policy

Person Responsible:	**Headteacher**
Review Cycle:	**Annual**
Date of Issue:	**October 2026**
Review Date:	**October 2027**

This policy is based on 'The Key's' Model policy of the same name that the Professional Associations/Trade Unions have been consulted on and approved by solicitors.

Menopause Policy

1) Introduction:

School Vision:

'To be a positive and inspiring community that nurtures each individual and empowers leaders for life'.

School Mission Statement:

'Nurturing Potential, Inspiring Minds, Changing Lives'.

School Values:

- Ambition and Leadership
- Kindness and Supportiveness
- Respect and Honesty
- Determination and Resilience.

2) Aims:

This policy aims to:

- Make 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
- 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
- Minimise menopause-related stigma in our school by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR teams, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them.

3) Definitions:

The **menopause** is a stage of life when a woman* stops having periods. It typically affects those aged between 45 and 55, when oestrogen (female sex hormones) 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.

*We acknowledge that while the majority of people affected by the menopause will be women, those who are trans or non-binary may also experience the menopause or

menopause-type symptoms. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

3.1 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.

4) Legislation and Guidance:

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require that employers make an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees. This requires undertaking general risk assessments, which should include specific risks to the health of staff affected by the menopause.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include age, sex and disability. Employers are under a statutory duty to consider whether any 'reasonable adjustments' are required to alleviate any disadvantages staff encounter based on these characteristics.

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment, **and**
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Relating specifically to menopause symptoms:

- Many of the aforementioned symptoms would be likely to be classified as a physical and/or mental impairment
- 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'Long-term' means an impairment if it has lasted for at least 12 months, is likely to last for at least 12 months, or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected
- 'Day to day activities' are those carried out by most people on a regular basis, and includes but is not limited to walking, driving, carrying or moving things, being able to concentrate, writing, reading, typing, speaking.

The school recognises that menopause symptoms can, in some circumstances, amount to a disability under the Equality Act 2010. The school will ensure that no employee is treated less favourably because of menopause-related symptoms and will consider all requests for reasonable adjustments sensitively and on an individual basis.

Where symptoms are significantly affecting attendance, performance or wellbeing, staff may be referred to Occupational Health, with their agreement, to identify appropriate support and workplace adjustments.

5) Roles and Responsibilities:

5.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to the Headteacher.

The Board has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff are not exposed to risks to their health and safety on the school premises.

The Board of Trustees, as the employer, also has a duty to:

- Assess the risks to staff and others affected by school activities to identify and introduce the health and safety measures necessary to manage those risks
- Inform employees about risks and the measures in place to manage them
- Make sure that adequate health and safety training is provided.

5.2 Role of senior staff

Senior staff will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support staff experiencing the menopause examples of adjustments include:

- Later start times following sleep disturbance where possible,
- Temporary reduction in duties,
- Home working for non-contact tasks where appropriate,
- Additional preparation and administration time,
- Adjustments to meeting schedules,
- Flexibility regarding uniform requirements where applicable.

Senior staff will make sure the workplace doesn't make their symptoms worse by:

- Carrying out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers and HR staff are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary
- Promoting information about and access to external support services
- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality throughout the school, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened
- Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all staff
- Regulating and monitoring 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
- Ensuring 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
- Providing small desk fans to help staff cool down
- Fitting blinds to windows
- Designating a member of staff such as a wellbeing 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.

Senior staff will work to create a culture in the school where staff can talk openly about the menopause by:

- Providing information on the menopause in the staff room, e.g. posters and leaflets
- Creating a support group so that those who want to can seek support from each other
- Providing training for staff and managers to achieve consistent practice
- Accessing support and guidance through our staff wellbeing package.

5.3 Role of Line Managers

Line managers who work with staff who may be affected by the menopause will:

- Provide a non-judgemental, 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 that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed
- Consider flexible working requests to accommodate acute symptoms
- Allow staff affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms

- 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.

5.4 Role of Staff Members Affected by the Menopause

We encourage staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager or member of SLT
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff know if the menopause is having an impact on this
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services
- Access our employee assistance programme (EAP) for further support.

5.5 Role of All Staff

All staff are expected to:

- Always promote health and wellbeing for themselves and others
- 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
- Report honestly about their wellbeing to their line manager or to another trusted member of staff.

6) Menopause Support Plan:

The school may develop an individual support plan with affected employees. This may include:

- Agreed workplace adjustments,
- Temporary changes to duties,
- Flexible working arrangements,
- Agreed review dates,
- Occupational Health recommendations,
- Emergency cover arrangements where symptoms become severe.

7) Confidentiality:

Information disclosed by an employee regarding menopause symptoms will be treated as confidential and handled in accordance with UK GDPR and the school's Data Protection Policy. Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to provide appropriate support.

8) 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.

9) Monitoring Arrangements:

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Analysis of staff wellbeing survey outcomes,
- Monitoring menopause-related support requests,
- Review of sickness absence trends,
- Feedback from affected employees.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Policy Review Committee annually.

10) Related Policies:

- Equality Information Objectives Policy,
- Flexible Working Policy,
- Health and Safety Policy,
- Data Protection Policy,
- Staff Health & Attendance Policy,
- Staff Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy,
- Staff Sickness Absence Policy.