



Threemilestone School

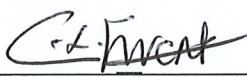
TMS Menopause Policy

Ratified: 16th May 2023

Next Review Date: May 2024

Safeguarding

Threemilestone School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We expect all our team members to share this commitment.



Author

Dated 17/05/23



Headteacher

Dated 17/5/23.



Chairperson of Governing Body

Dated 17/5/23.

Menopause Policy

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1. Policy Statement

Threemilestone School is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for all its workers and recognises that women may need additional consideration, support and adjustments before (perimenopause), during and after the menopause.

This policy sets out the guidelines for employees on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms in the workplace.

It is estimated that between 75% and 80% of menopausal women are in work in the UK. It is therefore imperative that workplaces have a workable, informative and robust policy in place that is fully consistent with UK legislation.

Menopause is a natural part of every woman's life, and marks the end of her reproductive cycle. For many reasons, it may not be an easy time in a woman's life and so it is imperative that workers who require additional support during this time are treated with understanding, dignity and respect.

This policy acknowledges that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the menopause and so it is intended as a support guide for all workers. All stakeholders agree to work proactively to make adjustments where necessary to support women experiencing the menopause and to ensure the workplace does not make their symptoms worse.

Exclusionary or discriminatory practices will not be tolerated.

2. Legislative compliance

This policy is fully compliant with the following legislation:

The Health and Safety at work Act 1974 - this act requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers.

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

The Equality Act 2010 - This act 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 'impairment' under the Equality Act and require reasonable adjustments.

3. Policy Aims

- to educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of the menopause, and how they can support women at work
- to understand the menopause and related issues, and how they can affect staff
- to raise a wider awareness and understanding among the workforce
- to outline support and reasonable adjustments that are available and to ensure that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse
- to recognise that the menopause and perimenopause is an individual experience and that therefore there is no 'one size fits all' solution
- to create an environment where women feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments and additional support at work
- To reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace

4. 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 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.

5. 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.

6. What steps will we take as an employer?

Threemilestone 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.

Where women members of staff feel uncomfortable going to their line manager, we will ensure that an alternative contact is available. Confidentiality will always be respected.

The risk assessments which we will undertake will consider the specific needs of menopausal women. Risk assessments will include consideration of temperature and ventilation issues will also address welfare issues; such as access to toilet facilities and cold water during any outside break and lunchtimes.

This policy recognises that there are many workplace factors which can make working life more difficult for women experiencing the menopause and which may make symptoms worse. School and college leaders should take into consideration the concerns listed in Appendix 1.

[Appendix 3](#) will help with the planning of specific adjustments that may be required

7. Roles and responsibilities

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

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 menopausal symptoms

Senior Leaders

All Senior leaders will:

- familiarise themselves with this 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 confidentiality and allowing adequate time for the discussion
- record adjustments agreed and actions to be implemented in 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

See [appendix 1](#) for more information

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

It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience and different adjustments and levels of support may be needed for different individuals. Line managers should seek to provide appropriate support and adjustments when needed to help women deal with issues arising from the menopause. 'Management advice' is provided as an [Appendix 1](#) to this policy.

8. 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

9. [Links to other policies](#)

- [TMS Code of Conduct](#)
- [TPAT Grievance Policy](#)
- [TPAT Professional Growth Policy](#)

10. Additional help and support

NASUWT www.nasuwt.org.uk

TUC www.tuc.org.uk

Menopause matters www.menopausematters.co.uk

The British Menopause Society www.thebms.org.uk

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

Appendix 1

Management guidance for informal discussions

Managers should familiarise themselves with the menopause before conducting a meeting with a member of staff to discuss their situation.

Menopause is a natural part of ageing which usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age. It occurs as a direct result of a woman's oestrogen levels declining. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach menopause is 51. A woman is officially described as post-menopausal when her ovaries are no longer working and when she has not had a period for 12 months.

The perimenopause is the period of hormonal change leading up to the menopause. This is the time when many women start to experience symptoms. The perimenopause can often last for four to five years, although for some women it may continue for many more years, or for others last just a few months. In general, periods usually start to become less frequent over this time. Sometimes menstrual cycles become shorter, periods may become heavier or lighter, or women may notice that the odd period is missed until eventually they stop altogether. Some women report that during the perimenopause, they experience worse symptoms than the menopause.

Some women experience sudden menopause after surgery, chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

It is estimated that around one in every 100 women will experience a premature menopause (before the age of 40).

Menopause affects every woman differently and so there is no 'one-size fits-all' solution to it.

Some women experience few symptoms while others experience such severe symptoms that it impacts negatively on both their home and working lives.

Signs and symptoms of the menopause

The following is merely a guide to some of the signs and symptoms women may experience as part of the menopause. Some women may suffer with conditions that are exacerbated by the menopause, such as osteoarthritis and migraine.

Signs and 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
- 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.

Many women may also find that their symptoms are connected. For example, sleep disturbance, which is really common during the menopause, may lead to a whole plethora of other serious conditions.

The length of time that women experience symptoms of the menopause can vary between women. Again, there is no one answer for all. Symptoms can begin months or years before a woman's periods stop.

The perimenopause is usually expected to last around four or five years, but it can be much shorter or longer. During this time, many women begin to experience painful, intermittent and heavy periods. As a teacher, it is therefore important to raise this issue with management if adjustments need to be put in place, such as having access to a toilet and shower facilities.

According to the NHS, on average, a woman continues to experience symptoms for around four years after their last period, but around 10% of women continue to experience symptoms for up to 12 years after their last period and 3% will suffer for the rest of their lives.

With teachers remaining in the classroom well into their sixties, it is imperative that caseworkers are aware of this and are not afraid to raise it as an issue with women members seeking help and support for other, seemingly unrelated, concerns.

It is also important to recognise that beyond the menopause, postmenopausal women can be at increased risk of certain conditions due to a decrease in hormones. These include osteoporosis and heart disease.

The British Menopause Society (2016) estimated that 50% of women aged between 45-65 who had experienced the menopause in the previous ten years had NOT consulted a healthcare professional about their menopausal symptoms.

This was despite:

- 42% of women feeling that their symptoms were worse or much worse than they expected
- 50% of women believed the menopause had impacted on their home life
- More than a third believed the menopause had impacted on their work life.

Many workplace factors can make working life more difficult for women experiencing the menopause, which may make symptoms worse.

School and college leaders should take into consideration the concerns listed below. These can include:

- lack of suitable gender sensitive risk assessments
- lack of awareness of the menopause
- lack of management training on women's health issues
- poor ventilation and air quality
- inadequate access to drinking water
- Inadequate toilet/washing facilities
- lack of control of temperature/ light
- inflexible working time rules/break times
- inflexible policies which penalise women because of their symptoms
- negative attitudes
- excessive workloads
- workplace stress
- unsympathetic line management/colleagues

- bullying and harassment

Senior Leaders

It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience and different adjustments and levels of support may be needed for different individuals. Senior Leaders should seek to provide appropriate support and adjustments when needed to help women deal with issues arising from the menopause.

Should an employee request a meeting to discuss concerns of the menopause, it is recommended that Senior Leaders adhere to the following:

- Arrange a meeting at a convenient time for both parties
- Allow the employee to be accompanied if they want it. This can be a trade union representative or a colleague
- Choose a venue that provides privacy and is unlikely to be disturbed
- Allow adequate time to talk
- Encourage the employee to be open and honest. It is difficult to help when you haven't got the full picture
- If the employee wishes to speak to another manager, this should be allowed
- Keep a note of all discussions and agree outcomes and next steps (the ['Appendix 2 Confidential Discussion Record – Menopause'](#) should be used to facilitate this)
- Agree a follow-up meeting to review the situation

Appendix 2 - Confidential Discussion Record – Menopause

Date:	Present:
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Staff details	
Name	
Job title	

Summary of discussions:

Agreed actions points/adjustments:

Agreed date of review:

Signature (staff) _____

Signature (manager) _____

Appendix 3 – Workplace issues/suggested adjustments

Symptom	Examples of workplace factors which would worsen or interact with the symptom	Suggested adjustments
Daytime sweats, hot flushes, palpitations	Lack of access to rest breaks or suitable break areas. Hot flushes and facial redness may cause women to feel self-conscious, or the sensation may affect concentration or train of thought.	Be flexible about additional breaks. Allow time out and access to fresh air. Ensure a quiet area/room is available. Ensure cover is available so workers can leave their posts if needed.
Night time sweats and hot flushes. Insomnia or sleep disturbance	Rigid start/finish times and lack of flexible working options may increase fatigue at work due to lack of sleep.	Consider temporary adjustment of hours to accommodate any difficulties. Where possible allow flexible working. Provide the option of alternative tasks/duties. Make allowance for potential additional need for sickness absence. Reassure workers that they will not be penalised or suffer detriment if they require adjustments to workload or Professional Development Targets.
Urinary problems; for example, increased frequency, urgency, and increased risk of urinary infections	Lack of access to adequate toilet facilities may increase the risk of infection and cause distress, embarrassment and an increase in stress levels. Staff member may need to access toilet facilities more frequently, may need to drink more fluids and may feel unwell	Ensure easy access to toilet and washroom facilities. Allow for more frequent breaks during work to go to the toilet. Ensure easy access to supply of cold drinking water. Make allowances for potential additional need for sickness absence.
Irregular and/or heavy periods	Lack of access to adequate toilet facilities may increase the risk of	Ensure easy access to well maintained toilet and

	infection and cause distress, embarrassment and an increase in stress levels. Staff member may need to access toilet and washroom facilities more frequently.	washroom or shower facilities. Allow for more frequent breaks in work to go to the toilet/ washroom. Ensure sanitary products are readily available. Ensure cover is available so staff can leave their posts if needed.
Skin irritation, dryness or itching	Unsuitable workplace temperatures and humidity may increase skin irritation, dryness and itching. There may be discomfort, an increased risk of infection and a reduction in the barrier function of skin.	Ensure comfortable working temperatures and humidity. Ensure easy access to well maintained toilet and washroom or shower facilities.
Muscular aches and bone and joint pain	Lifting and moving, as well as work involving repetitive movements, or adopting static postures, may be more uncomfortable and there may be an increased risk of injury.	Make any necessary adjustments through review of risk assessments and work schedules/tasks and keep under review. Consider providing alternative lower-risk tasks. Follow Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and advice on manual handling and preventing MSDs (musculoskeletal disorders).
Psychological symptoms, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • Anxiety • Panic Attacks • Mood changes • Loss of confidence 	Excessive workloads, unsupportive management and colleagues, perceived stigma around the menopause, bullying and harassment and any form of work-related stress may exacerbate symptoms. Stress can have wide ranging negative effects on mental and physical health and wellbeing. Performance and workplace relationships may be affected.	Ensure that workers will not be penalised or suffer detriment if they require adjustments to workload, tasks or professional development targets. Ensure that senior leaders understand the menopause and are prepared to discuss any concerns that staff may have in a supportive manner. Ensure senior leaders have a positive attitude and understand that they should offer adjustments to workload and tasks if needed. Where possible allow flexible/home working.

		<p>Make allowance for potential additional need for sickness absence.</p> <p>Ensure that staff are trained in mental health awareness. Raise general awareness of issues around the menopause so colleagues are more likely to be supportive.</p> <p>Provide information about how counselling may be accessed.</p>
<p>Psychological symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memory problems • Difficulty concentrating 	<p>Certain tasks may become more difficult to carry out temporarily; for example, learning new skills (may be compounded by lack of sleep and fatigue), performance may be affected and work related stress may exacerbate these symptoms. Loss of confidence may result.</p>	<p>Carry out a stress risk assessment and address work-related stress through implementation of the HSE's management standards. Reassure workers that they will not be penalised or suffer detriment if they require adjustments to workload or professional development targets. Ensure that Senior leaders understand the menopause and are prepared to discuss any concerns that staff may have in a supportive manner.</p> <p>Ensure Senior leaders have a positive attitude and understand that they should offer adjustments to workload and tasks if needed.</p> <p>Reduce demands if workload is identified as an issue.</p> <p>Provide additional time to complete tasks if needed, or consider substituting with alternative tasks.</p> <p>Allow flexible/home working if appropriate. Offer and facilitate alternative methods of communicating tasks and planning of work to assist memory.</p>

		Ensure a quiet area/room is available. Provide information about how counselling services may be accessed.
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