

Emerson Park Academy



MENOPAUSE GUIDANCE

Reviewed: September 2024

Next review: September 2025

HES HR Model Menopause Guidance

1.0 Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The School is committed to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all its employees thus creating a work environment which is supportive of all employees, including those who are going through the menopause.
- 1.2 The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that affected employees are treated with dignity and respect during the menopause which, for many can be positively managed through lifestyle adjustments. However, the School does recognise that for some women the menopause is not always an easy transition and therefore additional considerations can be put in place to help support them within the work environment.
- 1.3 School based employees tend to be predominately female and many will be working through the natural age of the menopause and beyond. Therefore there is a need for clear guidance in this area.
- 1.4 This guidance is also to support and inform Headteachers and line managers so that employees reporting issues are treated fairly and given appropriate support.
- 1.5 This policy applies to all employees employed by the School. It does not apply to agency staff, consultants, casual workers and external secondees working for the School.

2.0 Aims of this guidance

- 2.1 To support employees going through the menopause to remain at work.
- 2.2 To raise awareness of menopause, the related issues and how it can affect employees.
- 2.3 To break the stigma and taboo surrounding the menopause at work and to promote an environment in which employees feel confident in discussing menopausal issues and ask for support and adjustments, if required.
- 2.4 To provide direction on how to support employees who raise menopausal issues and also those who may be affected indirectly, which may include managers and work colleagues.
- 2.5 To inform Headteachers and line managers of the potential symptoms of the menopause, how this can affect employees and what can be done to support individuals including reasonable adjustments.

3.0 Definitions of terms

3.1 Menopause

The menopause is a natural part of ageing and refers to the time in life when periods stop and the natural reproductive cycle ends. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 with the average age being 51.

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3.2 **Premature ovarian insufficiency (premature menopause)**
Approximately 1 in 100 affected women will experience menopause before 40 years of age (naturally or as an effect of a medical condition or treatment). For example, undergoing a hysterectomy can trigger the menopause immediately, regardless of age (known as a surgical menopause).

3.3 **Peri-menopause**
The time leading up to menopause when menopausal symptoms can be experienced. Symptoms can start a few months or even years before periods stop.

3.4 **Post-menopause**
The time after the last period.

4.0 **Symptoms of Menopause**

4.1 Symptoms of menopause are associated to a decrease in the body's production of the hormone oestrogen, although other factors such as diet, exercise and medication can also influence the symptoms.

4.2 Whilst not all women will notice symptoms or need support in the workplace, it is important to note that the most common symptoms, that may lead to affecting performance at work, include:

- Hot flushes
- Sleep disruption
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory problems
- Loss of confidence
- Mood disturbances including anxiety & depression
- Irregular periods/heavy bleeding

(this is not an exhaustive list)

4.3 Symptoms on average continue for 2-4 years however some women will experience symptoms for longer. The nature of symptoms will vary from mild to severe. These symptoms can have a significant adverse impact on the quality of both personal and working life.

4.4 Where possible Headteachers/line managers should be mindful of those employees who will go through a surgical menopause, and may suffer with a sudden onslaught of symptoms, which could be difficult for the employee to manage/come to terms with.

4.5 It is also important to note that the onset of menopause symptoms can also coincide with other health issues as well as potential caring responsibilities.

5.0 **Roles and responsibilities**

5.1 Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable responsibility and care for their own health and well-being.

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- 5.2
- Being open to having conversations with the most appropriate person, if they feel they need support and/or adjustments.
- 5.3
- Upholding a positive working environment by treating others with dignity and respect.
- 5.4
- Headteachers/Line managers are responsible for:
- Familiarising themselves with this guidance
 - Be willing to have open discussions with employees about changes in the employee's health, including issues relating to the menopause, recognising that each individual employee's experience may differ.
 - Using appendix one of this guidance to record outcomes of any discussions/agreed reasonable adjustments/other action points.
 - Ensure on-going communication with employee's and plan for a review as required.
 - Implement any agreed reasonable adjustments.
 - Referring to occupational health as and when appropriate.
 - Upholding a positive working environment by treating others with dignity and respect.

6. Discussion guidance

- 6.1
- It is important to note that employees experiencing menopausal issues (directly or indirectly) may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed in raising any problems they may be having. One of the most valuable things an employer can do is listen and respond sympathetically if issues relating to the menopause are reported to them.
- 6.2
- Discussions that take place can assist to identify support at work which can make a real difference with how employees cope with menopause. This may enable them to continue working well, productively and to remain at work.
- 6.3
- if a Headteacher/line manager is aware of the symptoms associated with the menopause and how this can affect a person, this can greatly assist in promoting an environment where employees feel more confident to approach them and seek support, if required.
- 6.4
- If an employee wishes to talk about changes in health including symptoms of menopause it is important to:
- Encourage the employee to discuss any relevant health concerns with their GP.
 - To hold any meetings in a suitable space, allowing confidentiality to be maintained
 - Allow for sufficient time to have the conversation and encourage the employee to be open and honest when discussing any difficulties, they may be experiencing.
 - Explore with the employee ways in which they can be supported, if required.
 - Agree an action plan, record the outcome of the discussion and agree a review timeframe (please see Appendix 1 for a Discussion template).
 - Provide details of support and external services available (appendix 2)

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7.0 Symptoms and Suggested Adjustments to Consider

7.1 Hot Flashes

Can result in employees feeling uncomfortable and less tolerant of workplace temperatures.

- Review control of workplace temperature and ventilation – consider desktop fans in classrooms/offices or locate desks closer to an opening window or away from a heat source.
- Access to drinking water e.g. water bottles in class
- Ensure easy access to suitable toilet facilities
- Reasonable adjustments to the dress code

7.2 Sleep disruption/night sweats

Can result in tiredness and fatigue

- Consider flexible working requests in line with the flexible working policy or a temporary change in hours to accommodate difficulties.

7.3 Difficulty concentrating/Memory problems

Performance may be affected

- Regular supervision/review with manager for additional support, if required
- Review task allocation and workload

7.4 Low mood/Depression/anxiety/panic attacks/loss of confidence

Can make work tasks more difficult to carry out and performance may be affected.

- Provide opportunity to openly discuss any concerns/difficulties
- Encourage that they discuss symptoms with their GP practice
- Signpost to sources of support including the employee assistance programme
- Consider referral to Occupational Health

8.0 Legal framework

8.1 This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

8.2 This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following school policies and procedures:

- Staff Attendance Management Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

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Appendix 1 – Confidential discussion template

Name		Job Title	
Managers Name		Date of Discussion	

Summary of Discussion:

Agreed Actions/Adjustments

Date of next review meeting

Signed (employee)

Signed (Manager)

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Appendix 2. - Sources of information/support

If employees have troublesome menopausal symptoms it is recommended they see their GP in the first instance, who will be able to discuss management/treatment options available.

In addition to this employees can also:

- Meet with their Headteacher/line manager
- Contact the schools employee assistance programme
- Be referred to occupational health

External links

Menopause Matters

<https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

NHS Choices

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

The Daisy Network (support for early menopause/premature ovarian insufficiency)

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

The Menopause Exchange

<https://menopause-exchange.co.uk/>

Women's Health concern

<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

Remploy (mental health support service)

<https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplacemental-health-support-service-employers>

Henpicked (community site for women over 40)

<https://henpicked.net/>

Menopause Café (gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss menopause)

<https://www.menopausecafe.net/>

British Menopause Society

<https://thebms.org.uk/>

CIPD Menopause at Work A Practical Guide for Managers

https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/menopause-guide_tcm18-55426.pdf