



Redborne Upper School

Menopause Policy

This policy will be evaluated and reviewed every three years by the Assistant Headteacher: Aspiration (Kirsty Wheeler)

This policy is available on request to parents and carers, the LA and Ofsted through the Headteacher.

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School acknowledgement

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.

Redborne 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. Redborne 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 all.

*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.

Menopause Policy

1. Aims of the policy

This policy aims to:

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 Minimise menopause-related stigma in our school by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer

1.4 Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them.

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

2. Definitions

2.1 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.

2.2 **Perimenopause** is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. **Post-menopause** is the time beyond menopause.

2.3 **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.

2.4 For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause shall include perimenopause and early menopause.

3. Symptoms

3.1 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.

3.2 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

3.3 For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature is too high, this may cause or exacerbate symptoms such as hot flushes, dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations.

3.4 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.

3.5 We acknowledge that 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. Legal obligations

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 [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

4.5 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

4.6 Ongoing symptoms linked to the menopause may meet the definition of a disability and where they do, employers will be required to consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required to alleviate any disadvantage.

4.7 Any such adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, staff affected by the menopause will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

5. Role of senior staff

5.1 Senior staff will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support staff experiencing the menopause.

5.1 They 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.
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge.
- 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 where necessary.
- Fitting blinds to windows where necessary.

5.2 A member of senior staff (Kirsty Wheeler) is available for staff affected by the menopause to speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager.

5.3 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.

6. Roles and responsibilities

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

6.2 All staff are responsible 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.

6.3 Line managers will listen and, wherever possible, respond sympathetically to any requests for adjustments at work.

6.4 All line managers are expected to familiarise themselves with this menopause policy.

6.5 Line managers are expected to:

- 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 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.
- 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 in order 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

6.6 Women who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work are encouraged to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager, or with the designated senior leader (Kirsty Wheeler).

- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff.
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services

6.7 All staff are expected to:

- Promote health and wellbeing for themselves and others at all times.
- 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.