



WALTHAMSTOW HALL
SEVENOAKS

MENOPAUSE POLICY

The following policy draws upon latest guidance by a number of bodies including ISBA, HR Adviser and ACAS. The menopause is not specifically protected under the Equality Act 2010 therefore guidance is currently non-statutory.

Overview

With more women over the age of 50 in employment than ever before, a rising number are going through the menopause during their working life. Some will experience serious symptoms that affect their work, either during menopause itself or the period leading up to it (the perimenopause).

General Statement

As a School, we recognise that the impact of the menopause can be challenging and requires sensitivity and careful handling. Evidence suggests (ACAS Menopause at Work 2020) that many workers do not disclose their menopausal symptoms at work. In addition, many who take time off work because of the menopause do not tell their employer the real reasons for their absence.

Aims of this Policy

- To demonstrate that the School takes the well-being of staff seriously and that staff will be supported where necessary.
- To take measures to ensure that Senior and other Management are aware of the condition and symptoms.
- To support staff with sensitivity and to provide reassurance to them that their needs will be handled confidentially and fairly.
- To ensure that staff are treated with respect and dignity.

What is the menopause?

The menopause is a natural stage of life for women, usually in their late forties/early fifties. It can also happen earlier or later. For many women symptoms last about four years, but in some cases can last longer - up to 12 years. Part of the process includes what is termed the 'perimenopause' when a woman's body is starting to change in the build up to the menopause. The perimenopause usually starts in the mid-forties but can start earlier or later and last several years.

Symptoms of the Menopause

The specific symptoms can vary from very mild to severe, and from person to person. Some symptoms may include:

- Difficulty sleeping and night sweats.
- Feeling tired and lacking energy.
- Mood swings.
- Feeling anxious and panic attacks.
- Hot flushes.
- Struggling to remember things, concentrate and focus.
- Taking longer to recover from illness.
- Irregular periods which can become heavier.
- Aches and pains including muscle and joint stiffness.
- Urinary problems.
- Headaches including migraines.
- Putting on weight.
- Noticeable heartbeats.
- Skin irritation.
- Dry eyes.

NB, it is important to recognise that the number and severity of symptoms may differ from person to person and that it is likely that the effects of the menopause can, for example, lead to staff:

- Feeling ill.
- Losing confidence.
- Suffering from mental health conditions such as stress, anxiety and depression.

(Further information may be obtained from www.nhs.co.uk)

Supportive Measures

Where possible and realistic, we will make all reasonable and helpful adjustments to support staff in managing the symptoms and effects of the menopause. These may include:

- Access to ventilation including fans.
- Ensure that staff have access to a place to rest (for example, the Medical Centre).
- Ensure cold water is easily available.
- Contact “Talking Menopause” at www.talkingmenopause.co.uk or call 07866 479991 for further support.

As a School we will ensure that relevant members of staff will understand:

- How to offer support.
- Recognise how the condition can affect staff.
- Respect staff’s right to privacy.
- Ensure line managers record discussions of any effect from menopause during Appraisals or return to work interviews.

Menopause and the Law

As a School, we recognise that there are two main strands of law that may relate to the perimenopause and menopause:

- The Equality Act 2010 and The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

It is important that we manage and support staff who report that they are going through the menopause and find their ability to work is affected. The School has a legal duty to minimise or remove workplace health and safety risks for workers. This duty arguably extends to ensuring menopausal symptoms are not made worse by the workplace environment and practices and to making reasonable adjustments to help a worker manage their symptoms when working. The School could face a discrimination claim relating to gender or age depending on the severity of the menopausal symptoms. An employee suffering with severe symptoms either physical and/or mental could have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the employee’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities and could be deemed disabled for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010.

Walthamstow Hall policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.

Reviewed: June 2021
Next Review Date: June 2022

Signed:Date:

Mrs J Adams
Chairman of the Governing Body