Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing"

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Thatcham Park C.E. Primary & Nursery School,

Menopause Policy

Our Christian values underpin our ethos; every child is valued and encouraged to achieve their full potential. Every member of our school community is encouraged to respect and value each other. We want our children to learn to understand and respect our common humanity, diversity and differences so that they can go on to form the effective, fulfilling relationships that are an essential part of life and learning.

We are committed to supporting staff affected by the menopause. We recognise that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that, for some, the menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- raise awareness of the menopause and its impact in the workplace
- encourage open conversations between line managers and staff; and
- direct staff to relevant advice, support, and assistance.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

Any information you provide to us about your health will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. We recognise that this data is sensitive and will handle it in a confidential manner.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, Flexible Working Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Sickness Absence Policies and Data Protection Policy.

What is the menopause?

The menopause is a natural stage of life which marks the end of an individual's menstrual cycles due to hormonal changes. As menopausal symptoms are typically experienced for several years, it is best described as a 'transition' rather than a one-off event. All women will experience the menopause at some point during their life, but it can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female.

Menopause is preceded by the perimenopause, which is the phase leading up to the menopause, during which the body's hormone levels start to change in preparation for the menopause. Perimenopause can also last several years and can involve similar symptoms to menopause itself.

For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause includes the perimenopause.

Most of those who experience the menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some start experiencing symptoms much earlier and others later.

The menopause can cause a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms that can last for several years. Symptoms can include, but are not limited to, fatigue, sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, painful periods, irregular periods and/or periods can become light or heavy, weight gain, night sweats, depression and anxiety.

The majority of those going through the menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different, and symptoms can fluctuate and be felt to varying degrees. This Policy is not intended to create a 'one-size fits all' approach. It is focussed on highlighting all of the different ways that we can support our staff tailored to their individual circumstances.

Open and honest conversations

The menopause is often not spoken about as freely as some other physical illness or mental health conditions.

The menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of the menopause so that they can support those experiencing it or otherwise affected by it. Managers, in particular, have an important role to play in ensuring that anyone experiencing menopausal symptoms gets the same support and understanding as if they had any other health condition.

We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about the menopause. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by the menopause in the workplace.

If you are affected by the menopause, you should feel confident to talk to your line manager, a member of the governing board, or HR, about your symptoms and the support you may need to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause at work.

Line managers should be ready to have open conversations with staff about the menopause and what support is available. These conversations should be treated sensitively, and any information provided should be handled confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Staff Privacy Notice.

Risk assessments

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those experiencing the menopause.

Recruitment and selection

We will ensure that the recruitment process does not disadvantage menopausal applicants, and that those involved in making selection decisions do not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment or sex.

Promotion and training

We will ensure that appointments for promotion and training opportunities will not discriminate against those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Absence from work

Menopause-related time off will be managed and recorded in accordance with our sickness absence policies. This means that any absence associated with an employee's menopausal symptoms will be treated in the same way as other sickness absence, with the same sick pay and leave entitlements.

Support and adjustments

While many who experience the menopause are able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of the menopause symptoms on their work. These are likely to be temporary changes while staff go through the menopause transition.

If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to your line manager in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so, you should contact a member of the senior management team or a member of the governing board. They may then do a risk assessment to understand more about how your menopausal symptoms might affect you at work and the adjustments you may need. The reasonable adjustments we can make will depend on individual circumstances and the nature of your role.

Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provision of electric fans or access to rest facilities. Depending on individual and school needs, adjustments such as flexible working may be considered. We may also consider more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

External resources

There are charities and other support groups who offer information and support about the menopause, including the following:

- Menopause Matters – www.menopausematters.co.uk – independent website providing information about symptoms and treatment options.
- Women's Health Concern – www.womens-health-concern.org – the patient arm of the British Menopause Society; and
- The British Menopause Society – www.thebms.org.uk – a specialist authority for menopause and post reproductive health in the UK.

The NHS provides an overview of the menopause. You can read more at https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/