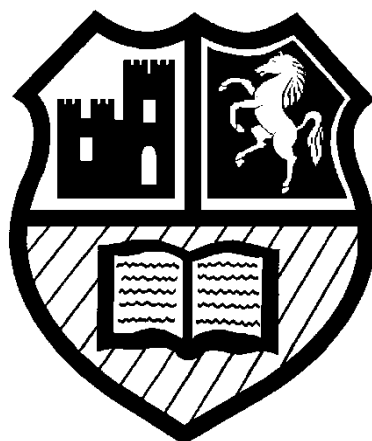


Otford Primary School



Menopause Policy

Date

March 2026

For review

March 2028

1. Introduction

1.1 There are currently more than 3.5 million female workers, that's 1 in 3 women over the age of 50 in the UK and this number is set to increase as the retirement age for women rises.

1.2 The menopause has often been regarded as a taboo subject in the workplace, yet it affects a large proportion of the workforce, with 8 out of 10 menopausal women in the workplace.

1.3 As a manager you have a duty of care towards all your Employees. It is important that you endeavour to support the health, wellbeing and attendance of your employees and provide an inclusive and supportive working environment for all.

1.4 The menopause is a natural part of every woman's life and for some, the transition and symptoms can be harder than for others.

1.5 The menopause can also affect transgender and non-binary people and managers need to understand how they can support this group of employees as well.

1.6 Everyone will encounter or experience the menopause. Men will have partners, family, friends, colleagues, and staff who are experiencing/will experience the menopause so need to be equipped with the tools to manage their experiences.

1.7 This guidance is written to help managers understand how to support women, transgender and non-binary groups, through what can be a tough and challenging time in their lives and how to support the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms.

1.8 Menopausal symptoms that have a severe adverse effect on an employee can amount to a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. Menopause can also be covered under the Equality Act 2010 for both sex and age discrimination.

1.9 This guidance does not form part of your contract of employment and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

2. Scope

2.1 This guidance applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices.

2.2 In this guidance, where we refer to the menopause we also mean the perimenopause (see below).

2.3 In this guidance when we refer to women this also includes transgender and non-binary people unless specifically stated otherwise.

3. Definitions

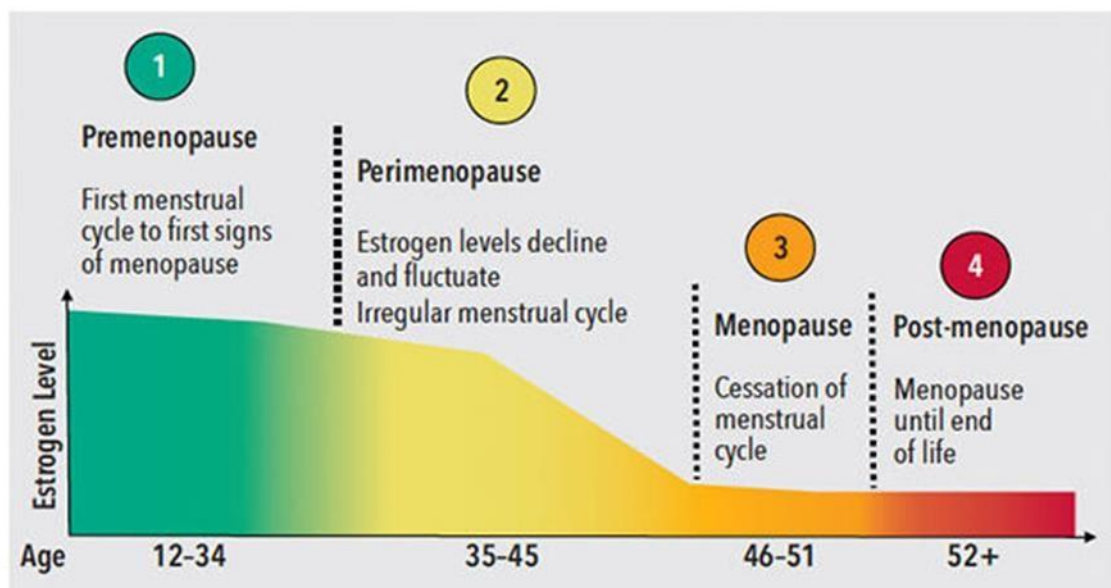
3.1 Premenopausal is the stage from a woman's first menstrual cycle to the first signs of the menopause. Age 12-34.

3.2 Perimenopause is the time leading up to the menopause when a woman, transgender and non-binary person may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause. Oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone levels decline and fluctuate age 35-45.

3.3 Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. Most women with symptoms have at least two or three years of 'hormonal chaos' as their hormone levels decline, although for some this can last considerably longer. The average age for a woman to reach the menopause is between 46-51.

3.4 Postmenopausal is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months. Age 52 plus.

3.5 Premature menopause can happen at any age and can be due to illness, genetics or medical procedures such as a hysterectomy.



4. Menopausal Symptoms

4.1 It is important to note that not every woman will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, 75% of women do experience some symptoms and 25% could be classed as severe. This is the same for transgender and non-binary groups although there is minimal statistics and data gathered or reported.

5. Self Help Measures for Employees

5.1 Employees have a responsibility to ensure they look after their own health and well-being and do not intentionally exasperate their symptoms.

5.2 There are a number of actions Employees can be encouraged to take:

- Find out about the menopause from available sources and seek advice from their GP on treatment options. There are a wide source of options available to women such as HRT, CBT, CBD oil, aromatherapy, yoga....
- Use technology where available and helpful, e.g: for reminders or note taking.
- To make their Headteacher/line manager aware of any health issues related to the menopause that may be impacting on their ability to maintain good attendance and performance.
- To attend meetings in connection with the management of menopausal issues (i.e: return to work meetings, adjustment review meetings, Occupational Health appointments).
- To work with their Headteacher/line manager to identify support and strategies for improving attendance or facilitating a better working environment to accommodate their specific needs whilst meeting the needs of the business.
- Avoid hot flush triggers (such as hot food and drinks) especially before presentations or meetings.
- Consider relaxation techniques such as mindfulness and other potentially helpful techniques such as cognitive behavioural therapy, as these can help reduce the impact of symptoms.
- Consider lifestyle changes such as weight reduction, smoking cessation and exercise. Also, caffeine and alcohol have been proven in some to exasperate symptoms especially anxiety and hot flushes.
- Tell people about it and the impact it has on you to help them understand what you are going through and how they can support you.
- Exercise regularly, it has been proven to help with low mood. Strength training and high impact exercise can help prevent osteoporosis by strengthening the muscles that help support and hold bones in place.

6. How Managers Can Support Employees

6.1 There are also several supportive measures managers may wish to consider:

- Be fully aware of this menopause guidance document and how they can help support colleagues at this time in their life.
- Be able to have open and honest conversations with employees about the menopause and advocate an open and supportive culture around this. Women often feel guilty, embarrassed, with 40% of women surveyed, felt that the menopause had had a negative effect on them at work but only a quarter of those women spoke to their line manager about the issues. For transgender and non-binary groups this is also a topic hard to discuss within the workplace.
- When considering requests for flexible working, employers should be aware that such requests may fall under the reasonable adjustments required to be made for disabled employees.
- Record any adjustments agreed and actions to be put in place to help support menopausal individuals and make sure these are adhered to.
- Ensure on-going dialogue and review dates where necessary are adhered to.
- Make guidance on the menopause freely available in the workplace so that fellow colleagues can help support and understand what people may be going through.
- Make sure there is an appropriate female member of staff that an employee can go to if they need to discuss any of their menopausal symptoms if they feel uncomfortable going to a male manager/head teacher.
- Where possible the working environment should support the needs of the employee such as ventilation, toilet facilities and access to cold water. These requirements would also be some of the specific requirements for a risk assessment for menopausal individuals.
- Provide training for employees and managers to raise awareness and convey that the menopause can present difficulties for some individuals whilst at work.
- Mental health first aiders or just well-being initiatives within school can be a great source of support.

- Signpost the Employee to appropriate external sources of support - The Education Support Partnership provide a free 24-hour helpline for all staff working in schools on 08000 562 561.

7. Referral to Occupational Health

7.1 Advice may be sought from an occupational health advisor, or personnel provider in the management of menopausal symptoms, that are proving particularly problematic for an employee and affecting their usual ability to carry out their job role or affecting their attendance.

7.2 The menopause, or at least some of its symptoms has now been recognised as a condition that may be covered under the Equality Act 2010. Some symptoms of the menopause can last for over a year and can have a considerable impact on the employee to be able to carry out their day-to-day role. Due to this an employee's absence due to menopausal symptoms may need to be recorded and treated as a disability rather than each period of absence being non-related. Always seek medical guidance from either OH or their GP.

7.3 Consider taking a holistic approach to the assessment of the individual to see if the menopause is a main contributing factor to the employee's well-being and health issues and if found that it is, then reasonable recommended actions and adjustments can be put in place where it is possible to do so.

7.4 If there are performance issues that are known to be caused by menopause related symptoms, the employer should consider adjustments to the role or working conditions that could help the employee. It may be appropriate to consult occupational health or obtain a medical report.

7.5 The advice of an Occupational Health Advisor may be sought to:

- identify how an Employee's menopausal symptoms may impact on their attendance or ability to undertake their job.
- provide guidance on what support or adjustments could be made to facilitate a return to work.
- provide guidance on any reasonable adjustments which may support them within their place of work.
- advise how an Employee may be able to improve their health and wellbeing in order to be more resilient to their current menopausal symptoms.

7.6 Any written report provided by an Occupational Health Advisor will be shared with the Employee. On receipt of the report from the Occupational Health Advisor a review meeting will usually be convened, and as a manager you can discuss with your employee any recommendations that you might be able to accommodate to support them in the workplace.

8. Further Information

Personnel Today

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/managing-the-menopause-in-the-workplace/>

British Occupational Health Research Foundation

http://www.bohrf.org.uk/downloads/Work_and_the_MenopauseA_Guide_for_Managers.pdf

Faculty of Occupational Medicine

<http://www.fom.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Guidance-on-menopause-and-the-workplace-v6.pdf>;

CIPD Managers Guide to Managing the Menopause

https://the-sps.co.uk/pdf_resources/menopause-people-managers-customisableguide_tcm18-55427.pdf