



## **Menopause Policy**

Name of School	Petersgate Infant School
Date of review	February 2025
Date of next review	February 2026
Reviewed by	Wendy Mitchell Headteacher

### **School Vision**

"for all children to grow into responsible, caring individuals who actively and positively contribute to the community."

At Petersgate Infant School, our vision outlined above is strengthened by our values of safety, caring, achievement, resilience and friendship. These values symbolise warmth, community and cohesion to ensure we are "working together to achieve our best".

As a school, we can apply these values through the following aims:

### **Aims**

- Ensuring everyone stays healthy and safe.
- Ensuring everyone feels valued and has a sense of belonging.
- Providing a high quality learning environment.
- Helping everyone enjoy learning and achieving their best.
- Nurturing and developing the whole child.
- Ensuring everyone makes a positive contribution to the school and wider community.

Safeguarding at Petersgate Infant School is carried out in line with the statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' published by the Department for Education

## 1. Introduction

The menopause is a natural and inevitable stage of life for the majority of women and some trans, gender fluid and non-binary individuals. For many, symptoms last about four years, but in some cases, they can last up to 12 years. 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.

With schools being a predominantly female workforce, there is a need to understand and provide support in the workplace whilst individuals go through the menopause.

The menopause can cause a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms and although the majority of individuals may experience some symptoms, everyone is different. Symptoms can fluctuate and be felt to varying degrees, with statistics showing that one in three will experience severe symptoms and for one in four, the symptoms will be mild. It is therefore important to recognise that there is no standard approach to take to support staff wellbeing and that each staff member will require different levels of support during the different stages of their menopause.

Petersgate Infant School 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. Petersgate Infant School 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 men as well as women.

*This policy is complemented by the Menopause 'How to Guide' (Hampshire Manual of Personnel Practice) which is available to staff if they will wish to see it.*

## 2. Definitions

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.

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

**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.

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

*\*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.*

## 3. The legislative setting

Petersgate Infant School undertakes to comply with its legal obligations as set out below:

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.

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.

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.

[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
- 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

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.

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.

#### **4. Status**

This policy sets out procedures for members of staff and managers to follow in providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

#### **5. Aims**

- 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
- 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
- Minimise menopause-related stigma in our school by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR teams, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them
- To ensure that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that appropriate adjustments and support are put in place, recognising that the menopause and perimenopause is an individual experience and therefore there is no 'one size fits all' solution.
- To reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace.

## **6. What steps will we take as an employer?**

Petersgate Infant School will educate and inform managers and staff to be aware of how the menopause can affect working women, taking account of the particular circumstances in schools, and about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support women experiencing them.

Where women members of staff feel uncomfortable going to their line manager, because he is a man, or someone much younger, or both, we will ensure that an alternative contact is available. Confidentiality will always be respected.

The risk assessments which we undertake, when appropriate, will consider the specific needs of menopausal women, and, in doing so, we will consult with union representatives and women staff members and share with all managers and new managers, requesting signatures to confirm that measures are understood and will be acted upon. Risk assessments will include consideration of temperature and ventilation issues and will also address welfare issues; such as access to toilet facilities and cold water, during and outside break and lunch times.

Petersgate Infant School will make adjustments where necessary to support individuals experiencing the menopause, and to ensure the workplace does not make their symptoms worse. These could include simple measures such as:

- leaving doors open
- ensuring that windows can be safely opened
- ensuring that it is possible to regulate the temperature in a classroom or other room by turning down radiators (as long as the temperature does not drop below 18 degrees Celsius, this will be comfortable for all occupants)
- provision of fans
- fitting blinds to windows
- establishing a system that allows cover for women who need to access toilet/washing facilities while they are teaching (to deal with heavy and recurring bleeding) considering requests for changes to working arrangements, eg temporary part-time working
- swift permission for absence to attend menopause-related medical appointments
- adjusting workplace procedures and processes to support and avoid any detriment to menopausal women
- Providing information and access to external support services

This is not a definitive list of measures. Petersgate Infant School will actively listen to women staff and union reps and take on board other suggestions.

It is recognised that many of these practical and easy-to-institute changes to the workplace, which will make working life more bearable for menopausal women, will benefit all staff.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

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

### **All staff are responsible for:**

- taking responsibility 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.

## **Line managers**

The most important and valuable thing a manager can do is listen and, wherever possible, respond sympathetically to any requests for adjustments at work.

### **All line managers will:**

- familiarise themselves with this menopause policy
- 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 where they have a safe place for the the member of staff to speak openly and honestly
- be ready and willing to listen and have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and confidentially and allowing adequate time for the discussion
- record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented, via an action plan
- ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting
- ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Be sensitive to health issues during the performance management process
- If necessary, seek advice from Education Personnel Services (EPS) or occupational health, or discuss a referral with the staff member for support support

### **Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, the line manager may:**

- discuss with the employee a referral to occupational health for further advice
- review occupational health advice, and implement any additional recommendations
- update the action plan and continue the review process.

## **Occupational health**

The role of occupational health is to:

- carry out a holistic assessment of the employee to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be exacerbating menopause symptoms
- discuss with the employee what adjustments would help
- signpost to other appropriate sources of help and advice.

## **8. Role of staff members affected by the menopause**

We encourage staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager, or with our senior mental health lead
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff, such as a member of the senior management team, know if the menopause is having an impact on this
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services
- Access our employee support line for further support

## **9. Role of all staff**

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

Report honestly about their wellbeing to their line manager or to another trusted member of staff, such as a member of the senior management team.

#### **10. External resources / websites**

- ACAS: <https://archive.acas.org.uk/menopause>
- Faculty of Occupational Medicine: <http://www.fom.ac.uk/health-at-work-2/information-for-employers/%20dealing-with-health-problems-in-the-workplace/advice-on-the-menopause>
- NHS: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
- NHS ('male menopause'): <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/male-menopause/>
- NICE: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/Menopause>
- Most of the professional associations provide additional guidance and advice on the menopause:
- ASCL: <https://www.ascl.org.uk/Help-and-Advice/Leadership-and-governance/Health,-safety-and-safeguarding/Guidance-for-employers-on-supporting-staff-with-me>
- NAHT: <https://www.naht.org.uk/advice-and-support/management/the-menopause/>
- NASUWT: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/advice/equalities/under-represented-groups/women/managing-the-menopause-in-the-workplace.html>
- NEU: <https://neu.org.uk/menopause>

#### **11. Links to other policies**

- Mental Health and Well-being policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Staff Sickness Absence policy
- Performance Management policy
- Flexible Working policy
- Schools Equality policy
- Dignity at Work policy

**Policy review date: January 2026**