Menopause Policy

Introduction

Menopause is the time during an individual's life when menstruation periods permanently stop and an individual experiences hormonal changes. It is defined as occurring when the individual has experienced no periods for 12 consecutive months and no other biological or psychological cause can be identified. However, menopausal symptoms can begin months or years before periods stop and this stage is known as the perimenopause. According to the NHS website[1] symptoms last around four years after an individual's last period, although some can experience them for much longer.

The purpose of this policy is to provide details of how the nursery will support our staff who may be experiencing issues as a result of symptoms of the menopause. We aim to create a culture that encourages discussions to take place about any matters associated with the menopause and to create supportive working environment.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently approach the subject and are clear on our policy and practices
- Educate and inform staff about the potential symptoms of menopause and how they can support individuals experiencing these symptoms at work
- Ensure that those who are experiencing menopause symptoms feel confident to discuss them and ask for any support and reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms
- Assure individuals that as a responsible employer, we are committed to supporting their needs during menopause.

Employee responsibilities

All employees should contribute to a respectful working environment and be willing to support colleagues who may be experiencing the menopause. It is important that employees talk openly with their manager if they need support with menopausal symptoms. All employees are responsible for:

- Taking personal responsibility to look after their health
- Being open and honest in conversations with managers
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues
- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

[1] https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/

During any discussions, your manager will consider your individual situation and evaluate if any adjustments can be made. Your individual needs will be addressed sensitively and confidentiality will be maintained.

Employer responsibilities

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that no one experiences less favourable treatment as a result of the menopause
- Ensuring that any conversations are kept strictly confidential
- Putting in place any required support and/or adjustments where reasonably possible
- Recording any agreements made
- Holding regular reviews with employees regarding support required, including follow up meetings to review adjustments that have been made
- Seeking additional advice from occupational health where necessary
- Agreeing with the employee if other colleagues should be informed about any adjustments that have been agreed (even if the reason is not disclosed).

When responding to an employee experiencing difficulties caused by menopause, managers will maintain an open-door policy so that employees feel comfortable in approaching them. They will support staff to talk openly about their current situation and will not make presumptions about how it is affecting them.

We understand that employees may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with their manager. If this is the case, they are encouraged to discuss their situation with another senior member of staff.

Workplace adjustments

As with any longstanding health-related condition, sympathetic and appropriate support from the nursery is crucial to provide employees with the support that they need. Above all, it is important to listen to individuals and respond sympathetically to any requests for adjustments at work.

There are numerous symptoms of the menopause that can affect an individual both physically and mentally. The menopause affects individuals in different ways and symptoms can start during the perimenopause and last for many years.

Some of the more common symptoms include:

- Hot flushes
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Low mood or anxiety
- Problems with memory or concentration
- Anxiety
- Heavy and/or painful periods
- Panic attacks.

The following options are available to any employee who may be experiencing menopausal symptoms, depending on the needs of the individual and the business needs of the nursery.

Flexible working

We recognise that flexibility may be of significant benefit to someone who is experiencing menopausal symptoms. The Special considerations for employees policy describes ways in which the nursery may be willing to consider temporary changes to working arrangements, such as more frequent breaks or a change to start and finish times. If an employee does not wish to temporarily change their working arrangements, then this should be discussed with their line manager and any agreed changes will be regularly reviewed with the member of staff.

Temperature control

We strive to achieve a comfortable working temperature for employees. We will allow flexibility within the dress code where reasonable. We will also consider any other appropriate adjustments, for example changing an employee's work location including to nearer a window, providing blinds on windows, ensuring there is always the opportunity to access toilet facilities or providing cooling aids such as a desk fan.

Sickness absence

See the Absence management procedure.

If an employee is unwell due to menopausal symptoms, the nursery will provide them with all reasonable support during this period. It is important that employees feel that they are able to be open with their managers about the reasons for any absences and feel supported by them. We would also encourage employees to discuss any relevant concerns with their GP and confirm to the nursery any relevant advice that the GP has provided.

Available support

Employees are encouraged to inform their manager at an early stage if they are experiencing menopausal symptoms that could affect their work to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health.

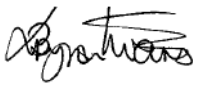
Early notification will also help managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs. Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead.

Employees and managers may find external sources of help and support useful including the following:

Information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options (https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/)

Support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency (https://www.daisynetwork.org/)

Information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause (https://www.menopausecafe.net/)

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
January 2026	 *Lucinda Byron Evans (Principal)*	*January 2027*