Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust

Menopause Policy

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Our Christian Ethos and Values

All policies within the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (hereafter referred to as "the Trust"), whether relating to an individual academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our Christian ethos and values.

We have high ambition for all, and we truly value the wider educational experience.

We walk and talk our Christian values. We put people at the centre of the organisation and want to see them flourish and grow. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those of all faiths and none.

Overall accountabilities and roles

The Trust has overall accountability for all its academies and staff. Through a Scheme of Delegation for each academy it sets out the responsibilities of the Trust, its Executive Officers, the Local Governing Body and the Principal / Head Teacher. The Principal / Head Teacher of each academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Trust.

All employees of the Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

Contents

1. Introduction....3
2. Scope and purpose....3
3. Definitions....4
4. Roles and responsibilities....4
Appendix 1 – Menopause Risk Assessment....7

1. Introduction

1.1 The Trust is committed to providing an inclusive working environment for all employees throughout all stages of their working lives. No assumptions should be made that those experiencing problematic periods or menopausal symptoms are only women, as people who identify as non-binary, transgender and intersex may also experience symptoms.

1.2 Menopause is a normal part of life. This policy recognises that the menopause is an equality and occupational health and safety issue and that employees may need appropriate flexibility, support and adjustments during the time of change before, during and after the menopause.

1.3 The Trust 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. The Trust is committed to ensuring that employees 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.

2. Scope and purpose

2.1 This policy applies to employees (referred to as “employee” or “you”). This policy sets out procedures for employees and line managers to follow in providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

2.2 The aim of this policy is to create an environment in which employees can openly and honestly initiate or engage in discussions about periods and the menopause and feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for support and adjustments at work.

2.3 To provide advice, information and further resources to employees, particularly line managers, about the support associated with periods and the menopause and minimise menopause-related stigma in our Trust by educating employees on what it is and the symptoms affected employees might suffer from.

2.3 To set out how the Trust will ensure that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that appropriate reasonable adjustments and support are put in place, recognising that the menopause and perimenopause is an individual experience and therefore people can be affected in different ways, to differing degrees and in turn, that different levels and types of support may be required.

2.4 To reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued employees in the workplace.

3. Definitions

3.1 The menopause is a stage of life when an affected individual 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.

3.2 Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when an individual may experience symptoms. Post-menopause is the time beyond menopause.

3.3 Early menopause is when periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen naturally, or as a side effect of some treatments.

3.4 Symptoms:

Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact them at work:

- Challenges with memory, confidence and concentration;
- Low mood, anxiety and depression;
- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations;
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia and fatigue;
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain;
- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections;
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive.

3.5 For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature is too high, this may cause symptoms such as hot flushes, dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations.

3.6 Symptoms affecting sleep can make it difficult for employees experiencing them to concentrate and stay focused, while low confidence, low mood and anxiety may impact on decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

3.7 We acknowledge that the menopause will affect everybody differently – some individuals may experience no symptoms at all, and some may experience a variety. We will adapt our response to employees affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 <u>Role of the Trust</u>

The Trust has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters but will delegate day-to-day operational responsibility to the Headteacher.

It is recognised that everyone who works at the Trust has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all employees, including individuals experiencing the menopause.

4.2 <u>Role of Academy Leaders and Central Services</u>

Working with support from human resources, Senior Leadership will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support employees experiencing the menopause, and to make sure the workplace doesn't make their symptoms worse, by:

- Carrying out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of employees affected by the menopause;
- Monitoring the wellbeing of employees through structured conversations;
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary;
- Promoting information about and access to external support services;
- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality in the workplace, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened;
- Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all employees;
- Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the workplace and ensuring the temperature can be regulated per room by turning down radiators for example;
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for employees;
- Providing small desk fans to help employees cool down, if requested;
- Fitting blinds to windows;
- Consider flexible working requests in order to accommodate acute symptoms;
- Designating an employee such as a wellbeing champion that employees affected by the menopause can speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager.

Leadership and HR will work to create a culture employees can talk openly about the menopause by:

- Providing information on the menopause around the office, e.g. posters and leaflets;
- Providing training for employees and line managers to achieve consistent practice;
- Referring to the menopause in the wellbeing policy;
- Promote utilising occupational health services and the employee assistance programme (EAP).

4.3 Role of Line Managers

- Provide a non-judgemental, empathetic and confidential support system to employees that they line manage;
- Appreciate the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them confidentially and sensitively;
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with employees if any patterns emerge;
- Have regular, informal conversations with employees that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed, with support from HR;
- Allow employees affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms;
- Give swift permission for absence where reasonable to attend medical appointments;
- Promote information about and access to external support services;
- Be sensitive to health issues such as the menopause during absence and performance management/appraisal process.

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

- If necessary, seek advice from HR or occupational health colleagues, or discuss a referral with the employee to occupational health for further support
- Review Occupational health advice, and implement any additional recommendations;
- Update the menopause risk assessment (Appendix 1) and review the risk assessment regularly through 1:1 meetings with the employee.

4.4 Role of 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.

4.5 Role of employees affected by the menopause

We encourage employees 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 designated wellbeing champions;
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted employee, such as a wellbeing champion, 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 assistance programme (EAP) for further support.

4.6 Role of all employees

All employees will be expected to:

- Work together to support those among them affected by the menopause;
- Take responsibility for their own health and well-being;
- Participate in and promote health and well-being programmes and initiatives;
- Treat each other with empathy and respect;
- Accept and support any adjustments that affected employees may be receiving.

Appendix 1 – Menopause Risk Assessment

Menopause Risk Assessment

This must be completed by an employee and an assessor, usually the line manager, and kept on the employee's file. This is a dynamic document that can be reviewed at the request of the employee or employer.

Not all of the risk assessment checklist will apply to every employee affected by the menopause, in every work setting, therefore there is space at the bottom to add additional hazards that may impact an employee.

EMPLOYEE DETAILS

Given Name/s:	
Family Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Job Title:	
Employment Location/ Academy Name:	
Email Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Address:	

ASSESSOR DETAILS

Full Name of Assessor:	
Email Address of Assessor:	
Contact Number of Assessor:	

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

What are the hazards?	Considerations	Who might be harmed and how	What is already being doing	What (if any) action is required	Action by whom	Action by when	Date achieved
Information on menopause	Does the employee have access to information on menopause, relevant policies on attendance management etc?						
Sickness Reporting	Is there the facility for those who are not able to attend work due to menopausal symptoms to report these to a female manager or other point of contact?						
Stress	Are there the appropriate mechanisms in place to deal with other related issues such as stress management? e.g. HSE Stress Management Standards						
Occupational Health Arrangements	Has the employee been made aware of what facilities are in place for OH referral and support to remain in the workplace – do they need a referral?						
Support groups	Has the employee been made aware of other support mechanisms in the workplace which may be able to help?						
Workstations	Are offices/classrooms/staff rooms easily accessible to sanitary and rest facilities?						

Facilities	Are there private washing and changing facilities available?						
	Is there access to sanitary products?						
	Do working patterns and timetables ensure that employees have easy access to sanitary and washing facilities?						
Temperature	Is the employee/employer aware of the workplace maximum and minimum temperature and is it implemented						
	Is ventilation available and is it regularly maintained?						
	Is additional ventilation provided if necessary? How is this implemented?						
Environment/duties	Have workstation risk assessments been reviewed to take menopause into account?						
	Are there opportunities to switch to lighter or different duties?						
	Do manual handling assessments take any issues around menopause into account?						
	Are there flexible arrangements in place in relation to breaks?						
	Can start and finish times be adjusted as part of a flexible working agreement?						

	Is there access to natural light?						
	Have work processes been assessed to see if any reasonable adjustments are needed?						
	Noise (too much)?						
	Fatigue, mental and physical? Fatigue from standing?						
	Sufficient workspace?						
	Movements and posture?						
	Remote working – is this part of the current role and what mechanisms are in place to manage this in terms of access to facilities?						
Working Conditions	Lone working						
	Working pattern						
	Overtime						
	Travelling						
Other Hazards							