



Manchester
Communication
Primary
Academy

Manchester Communication Primary Academy

Menopause Policy

Approval History

This document has been prepared within	Manchester Communication Primary Academy (MCPA)
Date of last review	March 2024
Date of next review	March 2026
Date of Approval	18 th March 2024
Status	Approved
Person Responsible for Policy	Headteacher
Owner	MCPA
Signature of Approval	<i>Signed copy on file</i>

Revision History

Revision Date	Summary of changes	Owner/Editor

Draft: Menopause policy.

This policy is based on the NEU's model policy and has been developed through working with a group of volunteer colleagues.

1. Introduction

This policy is intended to raise awareness of the menopause and provide information and support for employees - both those who are directly affected and those indirectly affected, for example, partners, colleagues or line managers. The purpose of this policy and guidance is also to assist line managers in supporting women going through the menopause in the workplace.

This policy sets out procedures for members of staff and managers to follow in providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. If MCPA wishes to amend the Menopause Policy, consultation and negotiation on proposed changes will take place with staff via the recognised trade unions.

1. Menopause is a normal part of every woman's life. 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.
2. MCPA is committed to ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect in their working environment. It is also committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce.

Effects of Menopause:

Physical symptoms of the menopause can include:

- hot flushes
- insomnia
- fatigue
- poor concentration
- headaches
- skin irritation
- urinary problems

As a result of the above, or as an extension of the hormone imbalance, individuals going through menopause can also experience psychological difficulties, including:

- depression
- anxiety
- panic attacks
- mood swings
- irritability
- problems with memory
- loss of confidence

It's also commonly acknowledged that Hormone Replacement Therapy, medication which is often prescribed for menopause, can have side effects which can cause problems at work. These include nausea, headaches and leg cramps.

3. MCPA has a positive attitude towards the menopause and will treat all individuals with dignity and respect during this time. MCPA 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.

2. The Legislative Setting:

MCPA undertakes to comply with its legal obligations as set out below:

1. The **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)** requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to undertake general risk assessments which should include specific risks to menopausal women, see section 5.3.

2. The **Equality Act (2010)** prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of certain 'protected characteristics' including sex, age and disability. Conditions linked to the menopause may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the Equality Act and require reasonable adjustments.

3. Aims

1. To create an environment where women staff members feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for support and adjustments at work.

2. 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.

3. To reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace.

4. What steps will we take as an employer?

1. MCPA 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.

2. Where women members of staff feel uncomfortable going to their line manager, for any reason, we will ensure that an alternative contact is available. Confidentiality will always be respected.

3. The risk assessments which we undertake will consider the specific needs of menopausal women.

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

In the formulation of this policy, a volunteer group of staff worked to identify the challenges which women face in experiencing the menopause at work, and how best to overcome them. Leaders have taken this work and have formed from it, a commitment to provide the appropriate support:

Challenge	Agreed adjustment	Responsible
Not understanding what is going on and thinking that you are the problem and the only one going through it	Someone you can go and speak to who has gone through it. Counsellor access – via EAP	Menopause champions HR
Tiredness (difficulty sleeping)	A conversation about when PPA is preferred (am or pm)	Headteacher
Memory Focus/ concentration	Written follow-up after meetings and when key information is shared. Training slides shared afterwards. Staff to email after a conversation as a reminder Chunk information into smaller bits when delivering staff training In staff training sessions, the leader to stop the session if people staff having their own conversations as this is distracting. All staff to be reminded of expectations. A quiet space for PPA	Staff training leads SLT ensure upstairs staffroom is conducive. SLT offices can also be used.
Mood swings and the ability to cope	Ask for a change of face when you recognise you need support in a situation	Self
Low confidence levels	Positive reinforcement and encouragement Having an additional adult in important meetings for support in communicating and taking away the relevant details	Line managers Self
The need to go to the toilet more often placing pressure on staff in ratio	Access to staff toilets – ability to call for cover when needed due to ratio (most rooms already have 2 adults)	Line managers. Admin/safeguarding team to provide cover.
Feeling hot!!	Access to fans and ventilation.	Self – to request, from caretaker
Feeling cold	Heaters	

Headaches or migraines	<p>Access to medication in the staffroom, a quiet space, cups for drinking water, cold/warm compresses</p> <p>HR being made aware when increase in migraines due to menopause so that this does not reflect negatively on attendance leading to attendance monitoring meetings.</p>	<p>Headteacher</p> <p>Self & HR</p>
Dizziness	Time to have a break and sit down until it passes	Self
Lack of knowledge surrounding the menopause	Education/training for staff – what people experience in the menopause and how we can support	Headteacher & menopause champions
Irregular/ heavy periods	Always having a supply of sanitary towels available in school	Business manager

5. Roles and Responsibilities

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

5.1 All staff are responsible for:

- taking personal responsibility to look 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 and HR

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

5.1.1 All line managers and HR 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).
- encourage 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 (appendix 1);
- ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting;
- ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.
- 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.

Useful links:

British menopausal society fact sheets

– <https://thebms.org.uk/publications/factsheets/>

NHS choices – <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Symptoms.aspx>

Appendix 1: Menopause action plan:

Colleague name:		Plan formulated with:		Date:	
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Difficulty/challenge	Agreed support measure/adjustment	Responsible

Next review date:	
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Signed by colleague:	
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Signed by manager/HR:	
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