St Michael's C of E Schools' federation

Menopause Policy



Creation date – September 2026	Review date – September 2027

1. Introduction

1.1 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.

1.2 St Michael's Church of England Schools' Federation 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.
St Michael's Church of England Schools' Federation 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.

2. The legislative setting

St Michael's Church of England Schools' Federation undertakes to comply with its legal obligations as set out below:

2.1 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.

2.2 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

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

3.2 To endeavour 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 are individual experience and therefore there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

3.3 To reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace. Schools need to retain their experienced and valuable staff during this time of change.

3.4 To educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause and how they can support women at work. Survey findings from the education sector have shown that a quarter of women going through the menopause have considered leaving their jobs (need a ref to the research here). Schools cannot afford to lose this experienced, highly skilled and capable group of educators

4. Definitions

4.1 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. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for women reaching menopause naturally). The average age for a woman to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons.

4.2 Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when a woman may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.
4.3 Postmenopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

5 Symptoms of Menopause

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 in 25% of women, these symptoms will have a severe effect on the person's life.

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety and loss of confidence. Some women also experience difficulty sleeping.

For more information regarding symptoms see
https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/iizekema/20-menopause-in-the-workplacehttps://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/iizekema/20-menopause-in-the-workplace-v2.pdfv2.pdf

6 Roles and Responsibilities

It is recognised that everyone who works at St Michael's Church of England Schools' Federation has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff, including women experiencing the menopause.

6.1 All staff are responsible for:

- taking responsibility for looking after their health and making appointments to see health professionals if needed
- being open and honest in conversations with senior leaders 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

6.2 Senior Leaders

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

6.2.1 All Senior Leaders will:

- familiarise themselves with this menopause policy
- be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance and wellbeing; if someone's performance or wellbeing suddenly dips, consideration will be given as to whether the menopause may be playing a part in this.
- provide a safe place to allow 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.

Senior Leaders have also felt that ambassador training is useful and the schools wellbeing champions have completed training to be 'Menopause ambassadors'.

6.2.2 Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, the senior leader 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 Colleagues

Supporting women through the menopause will increase collegiate bonds, and promote a happier, healthier workplace culture for all. Some colleagues may wish to volunteer to be trained as Menopause Ambassadors or just be a buddy for a colleague who would benefit from support.

7 Support

Here are some of the ways in which we can support colleagues or make minor adjustments to their working environment

- We have a wellbeing display with information/websites and leaflets on different mental health issues in the staff room
- We have trained menopause ambassadors (BR/BC)
- We offer access to free counselling for members covered by our staff absence insurance
- We have an open-door policy to senior leaders who facilitate safe and supportive conversations which remain confidential.
- We have an individualised approach to staff support
- We have free tea, coffee and water
- Fans can be supplied for work in different areas of the school and doors windows opened if needed
- Each working area has blinds to help reduce temperatures inside work areas
- Referrals can be made to occupational health and action plans drawn up to support individual needs
- Easy access to drinking water
- Access to toilet facilities outside of break times if needed and a member of staff can cover the class
- Access to the staffroom outside of break times if needed to take medication and a member of staff to cover the class

8 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by members of staff before being ratified by the Full Governing Body every 2 years.

9 Useful references/Weblinks

Guide to the menopause
https://www.forthwithlife.co.uk/blog/guide-to-the-menopause/
Menopause Goddess

https://www.menopausegoddessblog.com/
MiddlesexMD
https://middlesexmd.com/
Doctor Anna Cabeca
https://drannacabeca.com/pages/blog
Red Hot Mamas
https://redhotmamas.org/
Menopausal Mother
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQYgCxu988s
Ellen Dolgen
https://ellendolgen.com/

10 Apps

Health and her menopause app
https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/health-her-menopause-app/id1519199698
Balance App
https://www.balance-menopause.com/balance-app/
MenoLife: Menopause, Perimenopause and Midlife Health Tracker App for Women
https://menolabs.com/pages/our-app
Headspace App: Meditation and Sleep Made Simple
https://www.headspace.com/
Calm App: Meditation and Sleep
https://www.calm.com/

11 Books

- The Menopause Manifesto – Dr Jen Gunter
- Slip Sliding Away: Turning back the clock on your vagina – By Lauren Streicher, MD
- Hot Flash Hell – By Lauren Streicher, MD
- Cracking the Menopause: While Keeping Yourself Together – Mariella Frostrup and Alice Smellie
- Everything You Need to Know About the Menopause (but were too afraid to ask) – Kate Muir
- The Perimenopause Solution: Take Control of your hormones before they take control of you – Anya Green
- It's Not You, It's Your Hormones: The essential guide for women over 40 to fight fat, fatigue and hormone havoc – Nicki Williams
- Preparing for the Perimenopause and Menopause – Dr Louise Newson

12 Videos and Clips

TED Talk: How menopause affects the brain – Lisa Mosconi
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJZ8z_nTCZQ
TED Talk: The Link Between Menopause and Gender Inequity at Work – Andrea Berchowitz
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4h2zgJhC7E
TED Talk: What Really Happens to Your Body During Menopause – Dr Jen Gunter
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chegkrcHkrI
TED Talk: What Women in Menopause Learned about Exercise May Be A Lie – Debra Atkinson
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5IzLZ1mP94

Why you should get excited about your menopause – Catherine O'Keeffe
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4oKAZMTo7s

Menopause explained – a British Menopause Society Video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddzdgEUOGIk Menopause, HRT and me!! – Davina McCall
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQNJRJQ-wdY

13 Social Media

Patrick Ottley-O'Connor @ottleyoconnor #HeforShe **https://twitter.com/ottleyoconnor**
Sally Bolton @sb_wellbeing **https://twitter.com/sb_wellbeing**
Davina McCall @ThisisDavina
https://twitter.com/ThisisDavina
Dr Louise Newson @drlouisenewson **https://twitter.com/drlouisenewson**
Newson Health Menopause Society @NHMenoSociety **https://twitter.com/NHMenoSociety**
The Menopause Charity @TheMenoCharity
https://twitter.com/TheMenoCharity
Dr Nighat Arif @DrNighatArif
https://twitter.com/DrNighatArif
Black Women in Menopause @BLKMenopause
https://twitter.com/BLKMenopause
Menopause Café @Menopause_Cafe
https://twitter.com/Menopause_Cafe
Let's talk menopause & perimenopause
https://www.facebook.com/groups/389966982595733
Menopause Matters
https://www.facebook.com/groups/425415375251256
Perimenopause Hub
https://www.facebook.com/groups/perimenohub
Postcards from Midlife
https://www.facebook.com/groups/681448662400206

14 Useful Links

EMAS Menopause Essentials
https://emas-online.org/emas-menopause-essentials/
Women's Health in Education Work
https://womened.org/campaigns-resources/Womens-Health-in-Education-Work
Menopause Matters
https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/
Carol Vorderman supports the Menopause Workplace Pledge
https://www.wellbeingofwomen.org.uk/news/carol-vorderman-discusses-menopausehttps://www.wellbeingofwomen.org.uk/news/carol-vorderman-discusses-menopause-experience-in-support-of-menopause-workplace-pledge-campaign**experience-in-support-of-menopause-workplace-pledge-campaign**
British Menopause Society **https://thebms.org.uk/**
Mail Online
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-10726573/DR-LOUANN-BRIZENDINEhttps://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-10726573/DR-LOUANN-BRIZENDINE-explains-female-brain-works.html**explains-female-brain-works.html**
Menopause Support
https://www.menopausesupport.co.uk
Menopause Cafe
https://www.menopausecafe.net/