



**Bengeworth**  
Multi Academy Trust

*Brilliant People • Better Schools • Bright Futures*



# MENOPAUSE SUPPORT POLICY 2024-25



## **Statement of intent**

Member schools of Bengeworth Trust are committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all staff.

We are aware that the menopause is a natural process of every female's life, and the school is in an important position to provide the right support to staff members experiencing the menopause.

This policy is part of the school's overall commitment to safety, wellbeing and duty of care to its employees. This school is committed to being inclusive and supportive of all its staff. This policy applies to all employees who are experiencing menopausal symptoms. It also provides a framework for managers to support employees throughout their menopause to enable them to improve their experience at work, ultimately helping them to remain at work.

The aims of this policy are to:

- To offer help and support to any employee who is experiencing symptoms caused by the menopause, which is affecting their work
- To maintain a safe, healthy and productive workplace
- Encourage an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing the effects of the menopause
- To educate all employees on what the menopause is and how it can affect women
- To provide Headteachers and staff with advice on how to help and support employees experiencing the menopause
- To provide support to ensure the employee remains at work and absence is kept to a minimum because the correct support is provided

## **Contents:**

- 1. Legal framework**
- 2. Definitions**
- 3. Signs and symptoms**
- 4. Responsibilities**
- 5. Notification**
- 6. Risk assessments**
- 7. Reasonable adjustments**
- 8. Staff training**
- 9. Attendance procedures**
- 10. Monitoring and review**

# 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following school policies and procedures:

- Staff Attendance Management Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

# 2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, “**menopause**” is defined as a biological state in a female’s life that occurs when she has not had a menstrual bleed for a period of 12 months and reaches the end of her natural reproductive cycle. The average age that a female reaches menopause is 51; however, it can be earlier or later than this due to a number of reasons.

For the purpose of this policy “**perimenopause**” is defined as the time leading up to the menopause where a female begins to experience the signs and symptoms of menopause. This can be several years before the menopause actually occurs.

For the purpose of this policy “**post menopause**” is the time after which the menopause has occurred, starting from the time when a female has not had a period for 12 consecutive months.

# 3. Signs and symptoms

Common symptoms of the menopause include, but are not limited to, the following:

## Physical:

- Hot flushes – causing the face, neck and chest to turn red and sweaty. Some women will experience being drenched with sweat, which soaks through the clothing. Hot flushes can also cause dizziness, light-headedness and even heart
- palpitations
- Night sweats
- Sleep disruption – as a result of other symptoms
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Joint pain
- Heavy periods
- Vaginal dryness
- Urinary symptoms

### **Mental/psychological symptoms:**

- Difficulty concentrating
- Mood changes
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Poor memory
- Reduced confidence
- Panic attacks
- Irritability
- Reduced ability to multi-task

Menopausal symptoms can occur months or even years before a female's periods stop and can last for up to 15 years after they have stopped.

The menopause can have a significant impact on females at work and their relationships with colleagues, e.g., if they are experiencing severe anxiety, this may have negative side effects on their happiness at work.

Not every female will experience the signs and symptoms of the menopause; however, the list provided above is common for most females.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **Employees undergoing the menopause**

It is expected that employees will:

- Familiarising themselves with the procedures in this policy
- Being aware of the common signs and symptoms of the menopause to help with their diagnosis or to support others experiencing the menopause
- Seek medical advice from their GP where necessary
- Be honest in conversations with Headteachers/managers/occupational health and HR, especially where an employee feels that their symptoms are affecting their performance and/or attendance.
- Be willing to discuss and/or implement practical needs to improve their experience at work. See section x for suggested support.
- Look after their own health e.g., getting enough rest, eating well and regular exercise.
- Adopting any reasonable adjustments that the school implements to support them
- Creating an action plan in conjunction with their line managers
- Engaging in training to ensure they are able to support others

### **Work colleagues**

It is expected that employees will:

- Creating a respectful and productive working environment
- Ensuring that unlawful conduct towards staff members experiencing menopause is avoided and reported to the Executive Headteacher/Head teacher where incidents occur. The following are examples of unlawful conduct:
  - Discrimination of any kind, whether it be indirect, discreet, or direct
  - Harassment
  - Victimisation
  - Failure to make reasonable adjustments

- Look out for the health and wellbeing of colleagues, be sensitive in any approaches made to enquire about issues or raise issues sensitively with the Headteacher/management.
- Respect adjustments put in place for others.
- Be considerate, understanding and respectful

### **Headteacher responsibilities**

It is expected that Headteachers will:

- Encourage an approachable, supportive environment, which encourages employees to be confident about raising any issues they may be experiencing.
- Manage all disclosures with professionalism, sensitivity and confidentiality – the employee will need to agree to other colleagues being made aware.
- Decide on and implement reasonable adjustments to support the employee.
- Be mindful that all employees and their experiences are different, so a one size fits all approach is unlikely to be successful.
- Be mindful that not all employees will want to discuss their menopause symptoms or even be open about going through the menopause. In these cases, the school will respect that decision and consider what support could be offered generally
- Monitor employee absence in line with the school's absence management policy and procedure. Employees experiencing menopausal (including perimenopausal) symptoms will be considered as if the symptoms were related to a disability, for absence procedure purposes. Menopause related absence will be recorded separately, where it is known to be menopause related.
- Ensure that performance and capability procedures do not discriminate against female staff members experiencing the menopause
- Alongside the Inclusion Lead, attend training sessions and developing briefing sessions for staff
- Maintaining effective communication with line managers and staff experiencing the menopause

### **The Academy Business Manager is responsible for:**

- Monitoring staff absence in line with the school's Staff Attendance Management Policy

### **Occupational Health is responsible for:**

- Carrying out holistic assessments of individuals who believe they are experiencing the menopause
- Providing advice to staff members experiencing the menopause
- Providing information as to where staff members can seek further advice
- Making recommendations to Senior Leaders in relation to reasonable adjustments
- Monitoring all referrals made as a result of the menopause

## 5. Notification

Where an employee has approached the Headteacher (or Senior Leader) to discuss the impact their menopausal symptoms are having, or a situation has arisen where it is clear a conversation is required with an employee the Headteacher (or Senior Leader) should:

- Read this policy in preparation
- Arrange an informal meeting to discuss the employee's situation and decide what action can be taken, taking into account section 8 and any suggestions from the employee. The meeting should be held in an appropriate location to maintain confidentiality. At the meeting the employee and headteacher (or Line Manager) should:

- Agree together what action can be taken and how the employee can be best supported. This is most easily recorded by using an action plan template
- Record any adjustments and actions on the action plan. Ensure completion or review dates are assigned to any actions. Subsequently, where completion or review dates cannot be met ensure the employee is informed of this and kept up to date on progress.
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify risks and implement appropriate control measures. The risk assessment will need to consider the specific needs of the individual in question and include (but not limited to) assessing;
  - Existing symptoms
  - Temperature and ventilation
  - Access to a quiet space
  - Access to toilet facilities
  - Access to drinking water
  - Level of workplace stress
  - Review of workload and work activity
  - Consideration of flexible working adjustments
- Record and implement any reasonable adjustments identified on the risk assessment. These can be recorded on the action plan so that the actions are all in one place.
- Ensure the action plan and risk assessment are reviewed every term or more frequently where required (e.g., if new symptoms arise). Schedule a follow up meeting one month after the initial meeting takes place to ensure the employee is being supported successfully.
- Schedule future meetings to ensure agreed reviews take place.
- Where adjustments are not successful or if symptoms develop/change and require other adjustments the Headteacher (or Senior Leader) can:
  - Make a referral to occupational health, having already discussed this with the employee and implement any recommendations where reasonably practicable.
  - Keep the action plan up to date and under review.

## 6. Risk assessments

Menopausal females are identified as workers who may be particularly at risk and, therefore, the school has a duty to make suitable and sufficient risk assessments for such employees.

Where an employee has voiced concerns about their symptoms of the menopause, the Senior Line Manager will conduct a risk assessment of their work practice to identify risks and implement appropriate control measures.

A separate risk assessment will be conducted for each member of staff experiencing the menopause.

The risk assessment will consider the specific needs of staff members experiencing the menopause. Specific information that will be considered includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Temperature and ventilation
- Current symptoms
- Access to toilet facilities
- Access to fresh drinking water
- Workplace stress

Appropriate reasonable adjustments will be implemented in light of the risk assessment.

The risk assessment will be reviewed and updated by the Headteacher in collaboration with the Inclusion Lead when any circumstances change, e.g., symptoms.

## 7. Reasonable adjustments

In order to support staff members' symptoms of the menopause, the school will implement a variety of reasonable adjustments, suitable to staff members' individual needs. While menopause is not classed as a disability, certain symptoms may class as a disability themselves, and therefore the school has a duty to ensure reasonable adjustments are made where necessary.

Each case will be treated individually, and the below adjustments are not exhaustive.

**Hot flushes** – the school will:

- Adjust the temperature control of the work area, such as putting a fan on their desk or moving their desk close to a window
- Ensure there is easy access to drinking water
- Make adaptations to dress code, where appropriate, providing that this is in accordance with the school's Staff Code of Conduct
- Ensure there is adequate access to toilets
- Provide a quiet area for the staff member if they experience a severe hot flush
- For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has access to an additional member of staff if required at short notice who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break

**Heavy and light periods** – the school will:

- Ensure there is adequate access to toilets
- Ensure that sanitary products are readily available
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing, should the staff member require it

- Allow the staff member to bring extra clothing with them, providing it is in accordance with the school's Staff Code of Conduct

**Headaches and lack of sleep** – the school will:

- Ensure there is access to fresh drinking water at all times
- Offer a quiet space to work, if necessary
- Ensure there is adequate supply of headache medication, e.g., ibuprofen, in the school
- Discuss the effects of a healthy balanced diet on improving symptoms
- Allow staff members time to take a break if they experience a headache
- For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has access to an additional member of staff if required at short notice who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break
- Allow staff members to be considered for flexible working, in line with the Flexible Working Policy

**Low mood and loss of confidence** – the school will:

- Allow staff members time to take a break whenever required, without needing to ask for permission
- Identify a 'time out space' where the staff member may go if they need to take a break, e.g., the staff room
- For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has access to an additional member of staff if required at short notice who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break
- Ensure the staff member has a sufficient support mechanism in place should they require it
- Ensure there are termly personal development discussions in place with the staff member's Senior Line Manager
- Establish, with the staff member's Senior Line Manager, an agreed time for the staff member to catch up on any missed work as a result of absence

**Poor concentration** – the school will:

- Discuss with the staff member if there are times of the day where concentration is better or worse, and review how working can be managed around this
- Review the staff member's task allocation and workload, distributing tasks to others where possible
- Provide materials to assist with concentration and memory, such as action boards
- Offer quiet spaces to work wherever possible
- Establish, with the staff member's Senior Line Manager, an agreed time for the staff member to catch up on any missed work as a result of absence

**Anxiety and panic attacks** – the school will:

- Provide the staff member with contacts for external support and counselling and discuss referral to Occupational Health
- Ensure the staff member has a sufficient support mechanism in place from their Senior Line Manager or member of the Senior Leadership Team, should they require it
- Encourage the staff member to seek help from their GP
- Identify a time out space where the staff member may go if they need to take a break
- For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has access to an additional member of staff if required at short notice who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break
- Discuss relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises, and encourage the staff member to practice these when taking a break

External sources of help and support for employees and managers, is available:

- Menopause matters, which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options. <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>
- The Daisy Network charity, which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency. <https://www.daisynetwork.org/>
- The National Health Service provides an overview of menopause. <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.
- The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists offer further information in a dedicated area of their website at: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>.
- The Balance App: <https://www.balance-menopause.com/balance-app/>

## 8. Staff training

The Academy Director for Inclusion and Provision, is responsible for organising training for staff members.

The school will ensure that all Senior Leads have been trained to be aware of the signs and symptoms of the menopause, how it can affect work, and what adjustments should be made to support staff.

The school will ensure that, as part of a wider Occupational Health awareness campaign, issues of the menopause are highlighted so all staff members understand how it affects staff, and to create a positive attitude towards managing the menopause whilst being employed at the school.

The school will ensure all female staff members are provided with sufficient information as to where they can access support for any issues that arise as a result of the menopause through the creation of a Menopause Champion within each setting.

## 9. Attendance procedures

Attendance of staff members experiencing the menopause will be managed in line with the Staff Attendance Management Policy.

Menopause-related sickness absences recorded as ongoing issues, rather than individual absences.

The school will ensure staff members experiencing the menopause are able to request flexible working, in line with the Flexible Working Policy.

Any requests for breaks or flexible working will be outlined in the employee's action plan.

The school will ensure that any appraisal, capability, and performance procedures are not applied in a way as to discriminate unlawfully against female staff members experiencing the menopause.

## 10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Director of Inclusion and Provision, or another senior leader with delegated authority, on an annual cycle unless circumstances require earlier review.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff members.

# APPENDIX 1

## Risk Assessment – Menopause Support Policy

Please retain a copy of your assessment and ensure that the actions are completed. A copy will also be placed in your personnel file. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

<b>Employee Name</b>		<b>Position</b>	
<b>School</b>			
<b>Assessment undertaken by</b>		<b>Position</b>	
<b>Date of Assessment</b>		<b>Review Date</b>	

<b>Section 2: Your Health</b>			
Please tick the box which best describes your current medical position/stage of menopause			
No symptoms (at present)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perimenopause	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minor to moderate symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Significant symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please detail the symptoms you are experienced including details regarding the severity, frequency and impact on you (whilst at work)</b>			
<b>Please give an indication of the medical intervention you have received to- date</b>			
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	GP diagnosis, no treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnosis, treatment plan in place	Insert details of treatment plan		
No formal diagnosis; alternative/personal treatment	Insert details		

<b>Section 3: Job and Workstation</b>		
Do you have easy access to drinking water, rest facilities and toilets?	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>
Insert details:	<b>e</b>	<b>o</b>
	<b>s</b>	

Is the environment in which you work comfortable?	Y e s	N o
Insert details:		
Is the job self-paced and are you able to avoid long periods of standing/ sitting/ driving or fatigue?	Y e s	N o
Insert details:		
Are you concerned about your levels of concentration/ stress/ anxiety? (Complete a stress risk assessment)	Y e s	N o
<b>Insert details:</b>		

<b>Section 4: Discussion Points/ Actions Agreed</b>	
Having completed your assessment (Section 2/3), list the points for discussion with a member of the Senior Leadership Team.	
Discussion Points <i>e.g. medical intervention</i>	Actions Agreed <i>Referral to OH, visit GP by (date)</i>
Employee Signature	Manager Signature

<b>Assessment Review</b>	
This assessment should be repeated in 3 months' time; the agreed date or immediately, with your line manager, if required.	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Next Review date:</b>

## APPENDIX 2

### EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT

If an employee wishes to speak about their symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic), or if a male employee wishes to speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- Allow adequate time to have the conversation;
- Find an appropriate room to preserve confidentiality;
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly;
- Suggest ways in which they can be supported (see symptoms below)
- Agree actions, and how to implement them (you should use the risk assessment template (See Appendix 1) to record the meeting, so that all parties agree what has been discussed, and the next steps, before the meeting ends).
- Ensure that this record is treated as confidential, and is stored securely.
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom;
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for a follow up meeting.
- Do not rely on quick queries during chance encounters in the corridor or break room.

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including, but not exhaustively or exclusively; support for women should be considered as detailed below:

#### Hot Flushes:

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk (where possible a USB connected desk fan to ensure environmentally friendly) or moving near a window, or away from a heat source;
- Easy access to drinking water;
- Be allowed to adapt prescribed uniform, such as by removing a jacket;
- Have access to a rest room for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush.

#### Heavy/light Periods:

- Have permanent access to toilet and wash facilities;
- Ensure sanitary disposable products are available in toilet facilities.
- Provide storage space for a change of clothing if required.

#### Headaches:

- Have ease of access to fresh drinking water;
- Offer a quiet space to work;
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices;
- Have time out to take medication if needed.

### Difficulty Sleeping:

- Ask to be considered for flexible working, particularly suffering from a lack of sleep.
- Consider homeworking if appropriate to the employees' role, if fatigued to reduce travelling etc.
- Agree time out from others, when required.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of the work area;
- Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head';

### Loss of Confidence:

- Ensure there are regular Personal Development Discussions;
- Have regular protected time with their manager to discuss any issues;
- Offer coaching to the individual which might help with confidence;
- Offer reassurance about a person's value and worth in the organisation
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

### Poor Concentration:

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse, and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly;
  - Review task allocation and workload;
  - Provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment;
  - Offer quiet space to work;
  - Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices;
  - Reduce interruptions;
- Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed;
  - Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

### Anxiety:

- Promote counselling services.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of work their area;
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques;
- Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

### Medical Advice and Impact of Work upon

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited their GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety.

If they have visited their GP, and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to make an Occupational Health referral to give specific advice regarding the workplace. Occupational Health can carry out a holistic assessment of the employee to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be contributing to or exacerbating menopause symptoms.

# Bengeworth

## Multi Academy Trust

*Brilliant People • Better Schools • Bright Futures*

**Bengeworth Multi Academy Trust**  
King's Road, Evesham, WR11 3EU

[www.bengeworthtrust.co.uk](http://www.bengeworthtrust.co.uk)

Company Registration Number: 08943457  
UID: 16942  
UKPRN: 10060770



*Brilliant People • Better Schools • Bright Futures*