



**Ivington C of E
Primary and
Pre-school**

*Reaching together with the Fruit of
the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)*

Menopause Policy

Approval of the Governing Body

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for:

Menopause Policy

at

Ivington CE (VA) Primary and Pre-school

It was revised during the:

Spring 2024

It has been agreed and is supported by the teaching staff and the governing body.

We aim to review this policy during the:

Spring 2026

Or sooner if necessary



Linking with our Vision – Reaching together with Love, Joy and Peace (Galatians 5:22-23)

To provide a caring, Christian ethos for the school, which inspires and excites a shared enthusiasm for life and learning.

At Ivington CE Primary and Pre-school, through our strong Christian ethos and focus on nine important Christian values, we are committed to providing a deeply nourishing, spiritual, ambitious, and broad curriculum.

Our motto, 'Reaching together' underpins our belief in equality of opportunity for all, where we actively endeavour to promote understanding and appreciation of our diverse society and give each child a special place in the world where they feel valued, essential to our community and equipped with the necessary skills to make a positive contribution.

We perceive our role to be opening a 'Window on the World', through which our pupils are actively encouraged to develop respect for the beliefs and cultures which enrich their everyday lives and encourage others to do likewise.

We strive to eliminate inequality through our deep Christian ethos of respect and understanding of all groups in society, which ensures that everyone at Ivington will be treated fairly despite his or her creed, colour, disability, or gender.

More details are available in our Inclusion, Racial Equality and Equal Opportunities policies.

The health, safety, and welfare of all the people who work or learn at our school are therefore of fundamental importance. We aim to provide a safe, secure, and pleasant working environment for everyone. The governing body, along with the LA, takes responsibility for protecting the health, safety and welfare of all children and members of staff.

INTRODUCTION

A significant proportion of a school's workforce will be impacted by the menopause and its symptoms, either individually, working with colleagues or through managing others.

This guidance document applies to all employees who work in a maintained school, but can be applied to Voluntary Aided, Trust Schools and Academy Schools.

These guidelines have been produced to provide Schools and Governing Bodies with the information to support them in providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for employees experiencing the menopause.

The purpose of this guidance is to raise awareness and understanding of the menopause to support school leaders to have informed and secure conversations in the workplace therefore, enabling any employee to understand the support available to them.

The school should signpost all staff to this document, and ensure it is easily accessible. This guidance is inclusive of all gender identities, including transgender and non-binary employees and acknowledges that menopause can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female. School leaders should recognise that individuals may be concerned about their gender identity being revealed as a result of seeking support for menopausal symptoms.

Menopause may be classed as a disability under the Equality Act, depending on the nature and severity of the symptoms. Individuals going through the menopause may be protected under the Equality Act if they are treated less favourably as a consequence of their sex, age or gender reassignment.

Discrimination or bullying/harassment in relation to the menopause will be treated seriously in accordance with the existing policies, available from the Head teacher. Should you require further advice on the contents of this guidance, please contact HR Services.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE MENOPAUSE

Put simply, menopause refers to the time when an individual stops menstruating and can no longer get pregnant naturally. This occurs because the ovaries stop producing eggs and, as a result, levels of the hormones being produced (oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone) fall.

Most use the word 'menopause' to describe the period of time when these hormonal changes occur, and typical symptoms are exhibited but it actually refers to a single day: when an individual hasn't had a period for 12 months in a row.

The average age of menopause for women in the UK is 51, but there is significant variation with most typically occurring between age 45 and 55. Transgender, non-binary, and intersex people may also experience menopausal symptoms.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to the menopause when many experience symptoms, such as irregular periods and other menopausal symptoms. Typically begins at around age 45.

Menopause refers to the point in time when an individual stops having periods for 12 months, and can no longer get pregnant naturally.

Postmenopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

Premature or early menopause is where perimenopause symptoms occur before the age of 40 or periods stop before the age of 45. This can happen naturally, as an effect of a medical condition or following treatment such as hormone replacement therapy during transition.

Medical treatments and procedures e.g. a hysterectomy can also cause an induced menopause. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), a treatment for menopausal symptoms may also produce adverse side effects.

It is important that school leaders improve understanding and promote discussion around the menopause and recognise the symptoms, to support colleagues during this phase of their life, undertaking relevant training where necessary.

3. SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

It is important to recognise that menopause is a very individual experience and that people can be affected in different ways and to different degrees. Not all will have menopausal symptoms and others will be severely affected by them. Symptoms will vary in type, amount and severity, therefore different and varying levels of support and adjustments may be needed. It is important not to compare one individual's experience with that of another. Menopause related symptoms may also exacerbate pre-existing medical conditions or impairments.

The symptoms of menopause are caused by the changing hormone levels in the body and brain. Symptoms may start a few months or years before the individual's periods stop (known as the perimenopause), and on average, last around four to eight years from the last period, and for some individuals these symptoms can continue for longer.

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically and may have a significant impact on daily life for some individuals. In severe cases, the symptoms may have such an adverse impact that they may meet the legal definition of a disability under the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on an individual's ability to do normal daily activities.

Symptoms may include:

Physical - Tiredness, sleep deprivation, depression, muscle or joint pains, needing to use the toilet more often, thinning hair, cystitis, itchy skin, dizziness, heavy periods

(which can cause anaemia, fainting etc.), tinnitus, heart palpitations, hot flushes and office temperature sensitivity

Psychological - Poor concentration, stress and anxiety, irritability, forgetfulness, low mood, word recollection difficulties, brain fog.

It is important for school leaders to be aware of the range of symptoms that could be linked to menopause, so that appropriate support can be provided.

A GP is usually able to confirm whether a woman is menopausal based on her symptoms. To ensure that an employee gets the most out of their GP appointment, they may want to consider:

- Asking which GP at their surgery is the best to talk to about the menopause;
- Asking for a longer appointment to allow them time to discuss the issue;
- Making themselves aware of the [NICE guidelines](#);
- Taking along a record of their symptoms including changes to and frequency of their menstrual cycle;
- Asking for a second opinion if they're not happy with the support provided by their GP.

It is reported that a third of women wait at least three years for their symptoms to be correctly diagnosed as menopause related. Common misdiagnosis include depression or low mood, chronic fatigue syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, cognitive dysfunction, fibromyalgia and cystitis.

4. SUPPORTING MENOPAUSE AT WORK

Severe menopausal symptoms may combine to have a substantial adverse effect on normal day to day activities and as such potentially meets the legal definition of a disability under the Equality Act requiring reasonable adjustments. It is important to note that the menopause is not automatically classed as a disability; it depends on how it affects the individual at that stage in their life.

Supporting and creating a positive and open environment between an employer and someone affected by the menopause, enables them to be successful at work and can help prevent the person from:

- losing confidence in their skills and abilities
- feeling like they need to take time off work and hide the reasons for it
- having increased mental health conditions such as stress, anxiety and depression
- leaving their job

Any absence relating to menopausal symptoms should be managed sensitively in accordance with the sickness absence policy, available for the Head teacher, including

the use of reasonable adjustments where applicable, referring to occupational health if required.

When approaching attendance, performance and conduct, consider if menopause could be a contributing factor. Assumptions should not be made - the lead should be taken from the employee. Where necessary, occupational health should provide advice and support on any adjustments required.

Employees should be encouraged to discuss their menopausal symptoms with their line manager in the first instance as they are best placed to provide support, review risk assessments and consider any adjustments required. However, where an employee feels uncomfortable to have this conversation with their line manager, an alternative contact will be agreed with the Head teacher. Employees should keep their nominated contact informed of any changing symptoms or concerns so that appropriate support can be put in place. Individuals are also encouraged to liaise with their trade union representative for support.

5. ACTIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

- ☐ Create an open culture where menopause is not taboo, leaders are aware and issues can be raised and supported.
- ☐ Have a “Menopause Champion” (Mrs Smith) as a contact individuals can go to for support at work, and who can also provide input and feedback to ensure that menopause is considered when adopting new policies or ways of working shows the school is taking a proactive approach to supporting staff going through the menopause.
- ☐ 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 – this should be available to all employees. Review the school general risk assessment and ensure that menopause is considered within it, (including consideration of temperature, ventilation, toilet facilities and cold water, during and outside break and lunch times) along with new and expectant mothers and women of child bearing age, and that measures or adjustments effectively remove or control risks.
- ☐ To support individuals with menstruation and while they go through the menopause, allow individuals to store sanitary products in the toilet facilities and/or provide sanitary products for staff.
- ☐ Be aware of the impact of menopause in the workplace and improve menopause awareness within the leadership team – consider attending [Hoople LMS. Schools Specific - Menopause **Hot Topic**](https://www.hooplelearning.co.uk/schools-specific-menopause-hot-topic) ([hooplelearning.co.uk](https://www.hooplelearning.co.uk))

- Consider gender representation for disciplinary hearings or appeal panels, where menopause is identified as a potential factor.

6. ADDITIONAL USEFUL INFORMATION

[About this information | Information for the public | Menopause: diagnosis and management | Guidance | NICE](#)

[Managing the menopause at school \(educationsupport.org.uk\)](https://www.educationsupport.org.uk)

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/davina-mccall-sex-myths-and-the-menopause>

<https://www.themenopausecharity.org/>

[Menopause - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[World Menopause Day - BMS World Menopause Day \(worldmenopauseday-thebms.org.uk\)](https://worldmenopauseday-thebms.org.uk)

<https://www.acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work>

<https://www.daisynetwork.org/>

7. VERSION LOG

Version	Status	Date	Description of change
1.0	Final	January 2023	New document

<i>Date sent for consultation</i>	<i>Consultees</i>
January 2023	<p><u>Herefordshire Council</u></p> <p>Liz Farr - Service Director, Education, Skills and Learning, Children and Young People– Herefordshire Council Kaz Szostak – Health & Safety Advisor</p> <p><u>Schools/Academies</u> Julie Rees – Head teacher – Ledbury Primary School Sue Gaston - Head teacher – Fairfield High School Tracey Kneale – CEO – Marlbrook Primary School, St Martins Primary School, Little Dewchurch Primary School Kristian Phillips – Assistant Head teacher – John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form College</p>

	<p>Martin Henton – Head teacher – The Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School Steve Kendrick – Head teacher – Ashfield Park Primary School</p>
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Hoople Ltd (HR Services)

Julie Davies - HR Services Manager

Julie Bridgewater- HR Manager – Schools

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Trade Unions

Chris Lewandowski (NASUWT)

Paul Deneen (NEU)

Noel Glover (NAHT)

Carol Rushton (ASCL)

Lisa Pearce (Community TU)

Kim Wright (GMB)

Helen Astley (Unison)

APPENDIX 1 – POTENTIAL ADJUSTMENTS TO CONSIDER

This is not a definitive list of adjustments. The individual and occupational health (where relevant) should be consulted to identify potential adjustments to support that individual. It is then for the school to determine whether a suggested adjustment is reasonable and can be accommodated, taking into account the operational requirements of the school.

Symptoms	Adjustments
Hot flushes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temperature control for their work area i.e. USB connected desk fan, moving closer to an open window• Easy access to fresh drinking water and fresh air outside• Access to a quiet room for breaks if work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush• Opportunity to move away from/remove a heat source• Adapt uniforms to improve comfort (if relevant)
Heavy / light periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to washroom facilities• Allow for more frequent breaks to go to the toilet• Make it easy to request extra uniforms (if relevant)• Consider if home working would make this more comfortable, where possible• Ensure sanitary products can be stored and/or are provided in toilet facilities• Provide storage for a change of clothing if required• Ensure staff that require it have someone to contact to provide cover should they need to urgently leave the classroom.
Headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of access to fresh drinking water• Consider if there's a quieter place to work• Allow someone to move around / or stay mobile – if these help
Heart palpitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signpost them to their GP• A few lifestyle changes such as reducing caffeine intake or other stimulants such as cigarettes and alcohol• Reduce work related stress
Difficulty sleeping and fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider our flexible working policy to make a request to adjust start and finish times or to have additional break times
Loss of confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold supportive regular one-to-one meetings, if this would benefit the employee• Consider whether additional or refresher training would help• Assign a mentor for coaching sessions• Signpost to Employee Assistance Programme, if available• Offer counselling
Poor concentration and forgetfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider adjusting working hours to fit times of the day when concentration is better, where possible

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide list books, note board or other memory-assisting equipment • Offer quieter space to work, where possible • Reduce interruptions if possible • Signpost to the Employee Assistance Programme
Low mood, anxiety, depression and panic attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost to Employee Assistance Programme • Offer counselling • Signpost them to their GP • Consider Occupational Health