

Menopause Policy

Greenside School



Greenside School
Learning Achieving Together

Approved by: Resources Committee

Date: April 2025

Last reviewed on: N/A

Next review due by: April 2028

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of the menopause and that for some the menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives

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.

Greenside school 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. Greenside 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.

The Legislative Setting:

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

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.

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.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

Status

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 Greenside wishes to amend the Menopause Policy, consultation and negotiation on proposed changes will take place with staff.

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.

What is the menopause

All women will experience the menopause at some point during their life. The menopause can also impact trans and non-binary people who may not identify as female. Women can also may be put in a medically induced menopause as part of treatments for conditions such as endometriosis and adenomyosis.

Most of those who experience the menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some start experiencing symptoms much earlier. Often, symptoms last between four to eight years, but they can continue for longer.

Symptoms can include, but not limited to, sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pain, depression and anxiety. The majority of those going through the menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different, and symptoms can fluctuate.

The menopause is preceded by the perimenopause, during which the body prepares itself for menopause. The perimenopause can last several years and can involve similar symptoms to the menopause itself. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause includes the perimenopause.

Open conversations

Menopause is not just an issue for older women. All staff should be aware of the menopause so that they can support those going through it otherwise affected by it.

We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about the menopause. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by the menopause in the workplace. Anyone affected by the menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause them at work.

Line managers should be ready to have open conversations with staff about the menopause and what support is available. Such conversations should be handled confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Risk assessments

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those going through the menopause.

Support and adjustments

While many who go through the menopause will be able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognize that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on their work.

If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to your line manager in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so you should contact a member of SLT.

Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provisions of electric fans or access to rest facilities. Other measures could include:

- Leaving doors open;
- Ensuring that windows can be safely opened;
- Ensuring that where possible you can regulate the temperature in a classroom or other room by turning down radiators (as long as the temperature does not drop below 18 degrees Celsius, this will be comfortable for all occupants);
- Permission for staff to use handheld, individual neck fans or use of cooling sprays in class
- Access to cool drinking water
- A reasonable provision of fans across school
- Fitting blinds to windows;
- Establishing a system which allows cover for women who need to access toilet/washing facilities while they are teaching (to deal with heavy and recurring bleeding), this can include going home if necessary to access personal care and clean clothes.
- Considering requests for changes to working arrangements, eg temporary part-time working;
- To support symptoms relating to mental health and well-being (e.e. anxiety and panic attack):
 - Access to mental health support and counselling services – through our employee support plan
 - Access to menopause champions/well being team
 - A quiet place that staff can use if they are struggling with anxiety or having a panic attack. This space could include some strategies for dealing with a panic attack.

- To support symptom of headaches:
 - Ensure lighting of rooms are considered and staff have appropriate space they can go if suffering (darkened room)
 - Access to sunglasses/blue light filtering glasses if struggling with light sensitivity
- To support symptoms concentrating (e.g. brain fog):
 - To encourage staff to use their work calendar to set digital reminders,
 - Easy access to equipment (either digital/paper) to write lists/aid memory
 - Planning aids/structured procedures/schedule-including dates for completing tasks.
 - To ensure important emails have information in the title) so staff struggling with brain fog can use the search facility to find information.
 - Discuss if there are any times of the day where concentration is better and ensure PPA is allocated during this time.
- Swift permission for absence to attend menopause-related medical appointments; and
- Adjusting workplace procedures and processes to support and avoid any detriment to menopausal women.

This is not a definitive list of measures. Greenside will actively listen to women staff and union reps and take on board other suggestions

We may refer you to our OH service and encourage seeking medical advice from your GP. Any request for a medical report or examination will be dealt with as set out in our Leave of Absence policy (found on our website).

Roles and Responsibilities

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

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

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

All line managers 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;
- ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting;
- ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, the line manager 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.

Menopause Champions

Nominated persons to be available for staff to speak to about menopause. These persons will attend training and have access to support and guidance

There names to displayed in staff room with information about menopause support.

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.

Additional support

If you need additional support, you have access to our confidential employee supporting helpline – please see posters around the school or details in the school office.