



Billingham South

Perimenopause and Menopause at Work

Policy 2023

Policy statement

Billingham South Community Primary School are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive working environment for all staff. We recognise that many staff will experience perimenopause and menopause ('menopause') at some point in their time with the school, and that for a minority, it can be a difficult and stressful time and has the potential to have an adverse impact on their performance and/or attendance. The purpose of this policy is to raise awareness of menopause and the impact that it might have in the workplace, to encourage open discussion between line managers and affected staff and to detail the flexibilities and provisions that school will consider putting in place.

Perimenopause and menopause

Perimenopause and menopause are natural stages of life for women. Although unusual, menopause can also be experienced by trans-masculine and non-binary identified people who may not identify as female but whose female characteristics persist at this stage of their lives.

Perimenopause begins several years before the menopause. It is the life stage during which the ovaries begin to produce less oestrogen, usually starting between 40 and 50 years of age. Perimenopause lasts up until menopause, the point at which the ovaries stop releasing eggs and menstrual periods cease. In the last one or two years of perimenopause, the drop in oestrogen speeds up and many women have menopause symptoms.

Those experiencing perimenopause and menopause symptoms will usually do so between the ages of 45 and 55. Often symptoms last between four and eight years, but they can continue for as many as 12 years. Menopause induced by surgery (surgical menopause) can affect women at any age, as can early menopause.

Most staff will go through the menopause with little impact on their daily life. But others may experience physical and psychological symptoms that can have a negative



impact on their life and work. Symptoms of perimenopause and menopause can be similar and can include, but are not limited to, sleeplessness and night sweats resulting in tiredness and lack of energy, mood swings, loss of confidence, anxiety and depression, hot flushes, memory loss or poor concentration, irregular periods that are frequently heavier, headaches including migraines, muscle and joint pains and recurrent urinary tract infections. The degree and severity of symptoms will differ between staff members.

Principles

The following principles apply:

- Staff experiencing menopause are protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010 which protects workers against discrimination, including because of their sex, disability and their age.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to the workplace to accommodate staff negatively affected by the menopause to help them manage their symptoms and continue to perform well in their role.
- HT, DHT and Line managers will support their staff who are affected by the menopause in the workplace.

Procedures

Open conversations

ACAS advises that many women do not disclose their menopausal symptoms at work - either because it has no impact on their working lives or they do not wish to share this level of personal information. In addition, many who take time off work because of menopause symptoms do not tell their employer the real reasons for their absence.

Billingham South Community Primary School encourage open conversations about all matters but if a staff member finds it difficult to talk about the impact of the menopause on their work with the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, their line manager or the Menopause Lead, they must feel free to initially broach the matter with the HR Operations Manager. Conversations with the designated lead/ line manager are encouraged at the earliest opportunity.



Work place adjustments

Billingham South will ensure that staff menopause symptoms are not made worse by the workplace. A health and safety assessment will consider the specific requirements of the employee to manage their symptoms e.g.

- easy access to toilet facilities
- making sure the temperature is comfortable, providing a fan or access to fresh air
- providing somewhere to store extra clothes or change clothes during the day
- time off to attend medical appointments
- be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance; if a staff members performance suddenly dips, consideration could be given as to whether the menopause may be a contributory factor.

Managing absences from work

Managing all absences from work (including those that are menopause-related) is handled sympathetically. (Absences from work because of menopause symptoms will be recorded as such as there may be times when it would be inappropriate to measure menopause-related absences as part of an employee's overall attendance record.)

In managing absences from work, the HT will consider that menopause is a long-term and fluctuating health change.

Available Support

Colleagues are encouraged to inform HT, DHT, line manager or Menopause Lead that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an on-going health issue rather than individual instances of ill health.

Early notification will also help to determine the most appropriate course of action to support staff members individual needs. Staff who do not wish to discuss the issue with HT, DHT, line manager or Menopause Lead may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another line manager instead.



Staff will be encouraged to seek advice from medical practitioners regarding appropriate treatment and/ or to investigate suitable ways to manage/reduce symptoms.

A referral to Occupational Health could also be of assistance, to understand that adjustments can be made; so, colleagues are encouraged to give consent to be referred for advice.

Help and Support

[Help and support - - - Menopause - NHS](#)



NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk> › Health A to Z › Menopause

Find out about places to get support for the **menopause** and perimenopause, ... NHS or private **menopause** specialist on the British **Menopause Society website** ...

[Menopause Matters, menopausal symptoms, remedies, advice](#)



Menopause Matters

<https://www.menopausematters.co.uk>

Menopausematters.co.uk is an award winning, independent **website** providing up-to-date, accurate information about the **menopause**, **menopausal** symptoms and ...

[Menopause and Me|Official Website](#)



Menopause and Me

<https://www.menopauseandme.co.uk> › en-gb

The **site** offers tailored information about all stages of the **menopause**, understanding the changes to the body and treatment options

[balance - Homepage](#)



Balance Menopause

<https://www.balance-menopause.com>

The **balance website** and app are unrivalled platforms that educate and empower people across the globe. We are the world's biggest **menopause** library, ...



[The Menopause Charity - Menopause Facts, Advice and ...](#)



[The Menopause Charity](https://www.themenopausecharity.org)
<https://www.themenopausecharity.org>

At The **Menopause** Charity we educate, support and campaign, helping women take control of their hormones and HRT. Get **menopause** help today.

[Rock My Menopause - Menopause Information](#)



[Rock My Menopause](https://rockmymenopause.com)
<https://rockmymenopause.com>

Our **menopause** campaign will empower you with the information you need to become **menopause** aware to talk to your GP and loved ones with confidence.

Signed and dated:

Head Teacher

Chair of Governors