

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT



Menopause in the Workplace Policy

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| LAST UPDATED AND REVIEWED | (by) School Business Manager | April 2024 |
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| POLICY TYPE | Non-Statutory |
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| REVIEW FREQUENCY | Every two years - April 2026 |
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| RESPONSIBLE | |
| Leadership Team | Headteacher School Business Manager |

Courage Commitment Compassion

Legal Framework

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

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

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, 'menopause' is defined as a biological state in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive cycle.

For the purpose of this policy 'perimenopause' is defined as the time leading up to the menopause where a woman 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 woman has not had a period for 12 consecutive months.

Statement of Intent

Newlands Girls' School is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here. We recognise that women experiencing the menopause, whether before, during or after this time of hormonal change and associated symptoms, may need additional consideration, support and adjustments.

Newlands Girls' School recognises that menopausal symptoms can also affect transgender people including nonbinary and gender fluid people and this policy applies to all who are affected by menopausal symptoms. Newlands Girls' School also appreciates that it may be more difficult for a person who does not identify as a woman to talk about menopausal symptoms.

We are committed to developing a workplace culture that supports you if you are experiencing the menopause (or perimenopause) symptoms in order for you to feel confident to raise issues about your symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments at work.

This policy is part of our commitment to equality and diversity. We are committed to creating a workplace that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity and combats prejudice, discrimination and harassment. This policy seeks to benefit your welfare; retain you as a valued employee; improve morale and performance and enhance the reputation of Newlands Girls' School as an employer of choice.

The aim of the policy is to:

- make leaders and managers aware of their responsibility to understand how the menopause symptoms can affect you, and how they can support you when experiencing the menopause symptoms at work
- foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations, or engage in discussions about the menopause in a respectful and supportive manner
- raise wider awareness and understanding among all employees about the menopause

- seek to enable you if you are experiencing menopause symptoms to continue to be effective in your job
- outline support and reasonable adjustments available
- To reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace.

1. Introduction

The menopause is generally experienced between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some people start experiencing symptoms much earlier or as a result of medical treatment. Often, symptoms last between four to eight years, but they can continue for longer. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. People may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause. This policy applies to all who are experiencing menopausal symptoms regardless of what stage they are at of the menopause journey.

Each person's experience will differ and symptoms can fluctuate. Symptoms commonly include, but are not limited to sleeplessness, hot flushes, memory loss, poor or reduced concentration, headaches, muscle and joint pains, depression, anxiety, night sweats, dizziness, fatigue, recurrent urinary tract infections, joint stiffness and heavy periods.

Each of these symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. We have a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

This policy recognises that the menopause is both an equality and a health issue.

We have a positive attitude towards the menopause and will treat all individuals with dignity and respect during this time and seek to ensure that the workplace does not make symptoms worse.

We are committed to ensuring that staff 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 all.

2. Status

This policy sets out procedures for you and your manager to follow in providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

This policy is not contractual and may be changed at any time.

3. What steps will we take as an employer?

Newlands Girls' School will educate and inform managers and staff to be aware of how the menopause can affect colleagues, taking account of the particular circumstances in schools, and about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support their colleagues experiencing them. To achieve this aim, all managers should read the guidance on the CIPD website and you can find it [here](#).

If you feel uncomfortable talking about menopause symptoms with your Line Manager for whatever reason, you can instead opt to communicate with a member of the school's Senior

Leadership Team. We appreciate that you may wish to keep your menopause symptoms confidential, but we will ask you to allow us to share this information with your Line Manager so that they are better able to support you.

Risk assessment will be undertaken on an individual basis, where appropriate, they will be gender sensitive and consider the specific needs of those experiencing the menopause. Risk assessments will include consideration of temperature and ventilation issues and will also address welfare issues, such as access to toilet facilities and cold water, during and outside break and lunch times.

We recognise that severe menopausal symptoms may constitute a disability under the Equality Act. We will make reasonable adjustments where necessary to support individuals experiencing menopausal symptoms, and to seek to ensure the workplace does not make their symptoms worse. These could include simple measures such as:

- leaving doors open
- ensuring that windows can be safely opened
- ensuring that it is possible to regulate the temperature in a classroom or other room by turning down radiators (as long as the temperature does not make other occupants uncomfortable)
- provision of fans
- fitting blinds to windows
- considering requests for changes to working arrangements, e.g. temporary part-time working or changes to hours of work where that would materially reduce commuting time (or overcrowding) or home working (were it appropriate to your role) during very heavy periods or episodes of fatigue
- permission for absence to attend menopause-related medical appointments in a timely manner
- adjusting workplace procedures and processes to support and avoid any detriment to menopausal people
- be flexible with breaks where the role permits
- access to cold drinking water
- provision of a rest area

This is not a definitive list of measures. We will actively listen to you and take on board other suggestions.

It is recognised that many of these practical and easy-to-institute changes to the workplace, which will make working life more bearable for menopausal people, will benefit all staff.

4. Roles and responsibilities

It is recognised that everyone who works at Newlands Girls' School has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff, including those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

We will take seriously and investigate any complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation, using the agreed procedures and respecting confidentiality.

You are responsible for:

- taking responsibility for looking after your 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 your colleagues
- accepting and supporting any necessary adjustments your colleagues request or are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms
- not expressing negative comments towards or harassing colleagues who talk about or require support in connection with menopausal symptoms

5. Line Managers

The most important and valuable thing a manager can do is listen and, wherever possible, respond sympathetically to any requests for reasonable adjustments at work. If Line Managers require further information or training after reading the CIPD's Guidance referred to above, we will arrange appropriate further information or training.

All Line Managers must:

- familiarise themselves with this Menopause Policy including reading the CIPD's policy <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/menopause/people-managerguidance>
- be aware of the potential impact of menopausal symptoms on performance or conduct; if your performance suddenly dips, consideration will be given as to whether the menopausal symptoms may be playing a part in this. Please therefore do not take offence if you are asked if you are suffering from menopausal symptoms as this is not intended as an invasion of your privacy but rather as a means of supporting you if your performance has been adversely affected by a health condition. In this case, your Line Manager will initially seek to support you sympathetically and establish if any of the above measures will assist you rather than move directly to capability or disciplinary procedures
- 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 as confidentially as is appropriate and allowing adequate time for the discussion
- record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented, via an action plan to be provided to you within five working days
- ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting
- ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary. As symptoms progress further or alternative adjustments may be required.

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, your Line Manager may refer you to the Head who may:

- discuss with you 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
- if you do not agree to a referral to occupational health, we are not likely to be able to implement any further adjustments

- if occupational health advice is that no further adjustments would assist you or we conclude that it is not reasonable to make any further adjustments we may discuss other options with you such as a period of unpaid leave. If that is not acceptable to you and there are no other reasonable adjustments which would assist you to maintain an adequate level of performance or conduct we may have to commence a capability or disciplinary process.

5. Occupational health

The role of occupational health is to:

- carry out a holistic assessment of you to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be exacerbating menopause symptoms
- discuss with you what adjustments would help
- signpost to other appropriate sources of help and advice.

As with all OH referrals, when you complete the consent form sent to you by the OH provider, you can request to receive the Occupational Health report prior to it being sent to school; at that point you may suggest amendments (but occupational health may decline to amend the report particularly in relation to any expressions of their professional opinion).

Sources of further support and information:

NHS information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause www.nhs.uk/conditions/early-menopause

NICE guidelines on 'Menopause: diagnosis and treatment':
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-this-information

Menopause Matters: www.menopausematters.co.uk

Women's Health Concern: www.womens-health-concern.org

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

The Menopause Exchange: www.menopause-exchange.co.uk