



Menopause Policy

Date Adopted: 18th October 2023

Author/owner: Board of Trustees

Review: Triennial

NB. 'Trustees' means the Directors referred to in the Trust's Articles of Association

History of most recent policy changes

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, Change in legislation
V1.0	June 2023			New policy for the Trust in line with the TLP wellbeing strategy

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POLICY STATEMENT

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 there may need to be appropriate flexibility, support, and adjustments during the time of change before, during and after the menopause. The Tarka Learning Partnership (TLP) has a positive attitude towards the menopause and will treat all individuals with dignity and respect during this time, ensuring the workplace does not aggravate symptoms. The Trust is committed to ensuring that staff all feel confident in discussing menopausal symptoms openly, without embarrassment, and are able to request support and adjustments in order to continue to work safely.

1.0 PURPOSE

The Trust acknowledges that change before, during and after the menopause can be significant, challenging and can affect levels of confidence and self-esteem. Staff can feel too embarrassed to seek help and to share the difficulties they are experiencing. The Trust aims to reduce the stigma and embarrassment and through sharing concerns, joint solutions can be found.

The Trust is also aware that the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires that the TLP ensures the health, safety, and welfare of its staff. In addition, in line with the Equality Act 2010, the Trust has a duty not to discriminate and staff should be treated with respect in terms of their age and gender. Any detrimental treatment of staff related to the menopause could represent direct or indirect sex discrimination and conditions which are linked to the menopause require reasonable adjustments.

The aim of this policy is to encourage staff to talk more openly about the menopause, and to encourage managers and staff to work together to seek solutions to challenges and difficulties staff might experience or face. The Tarka Learning Partnership also aims to ensure that conditions in the workplace do not aggravate menopausal symptoms, and that appropriate adjustments and support are easily accessible. The Trust aims to achieve a fair and consistent approach, whilst also recognising that each individual experience of the menopause and perimenopause is unique to that individual. The Trust intends to reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff, assisting them to maintain good levels of health and wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Trustees** are responsible for ensuring the policy is appropriately and consistently communicated and applied throughout the organisation.

The **Head Teachers** and other senior leader are responsible for monitoring the application of this policy within their respective schools.

The **HR Leader** is responsible for overseeing the introduction, implementation, monitoring, and review of this policy and will report to the CEO and the Trustees as required. The HR Leader will also provide advice, guidance and support in the implementation of this policy, acting as a point of contact for staff, managers, Head Teachers and the CEO. The HR Leader will ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

Managers must ensure they respond sensitively, supportively and professionally to staff experiencing challenges relating to the menopause. Managers are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from the HR Leader as and when required, and to look to jointly solve problems, considering potential workplace adjustments as appropriate. Managers should listen and respond sympathetically. They should familiarise themselves with this policy, be aware of the potential impact the menopause can have, and provide a safe place for staff to speak openly and honestly.

Employees are responsible for looking after their health and being open and honest, contributing to a respectful and healthy working environment, and being willing to help and support colleagues. Staff with menopausal symptoms are encouraged to talk to others and seek support, which it is hoped will alleviate symptoms, anxiety and worry.

3.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Trust is committed to:

- Promoting equality and diversity in its policies, procedures and guidelines, adhering to the Equality Act 2010.
- Delivering high quality teaching and services that meet the diverse needs of its student population and its workforce, ensuring that no individual or group is disadvantaged.
- Conditions linked to the menopause may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the Equality Act and require reasonable adjustments.

This policy aims to ensure that staff experiencing the menopause are not disadvantaged at work, with supportive measures in place to effectively manage the risks and issues associated with the menopause.

4.0 STAGES AND SUPPORTIVE MEASURES

There are various stages to the menopause, as follows:

- Perimenopause (the period of hormonal change leading up to the menopause, which can last up to 5 years, and can include a variety of symptoms)
- Menopause (this usually occurs between the ages of 45-55, although around 1% do experience the menopause before the age of 40)
- Medical/surgical menopause. It is possible that ovaries can be damaged by treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery which can mean that the menopause can be experienced at any age, and for some the loss of fertility can be extremely hard to bear. In such circumstances, the Trust offers confidential counselling and emotional support via the Employee Assistance Programme, signposting to external services, and/or support via Occupational Health.
- Those undergoing treatment for conditions such as endometriosis and infertility may experience menopausal symptoms whilst receiving treatment

The menopause can result in temporary psychological issues, such as depression, anxiety, panic

attacks, mood swings, irritability, issues with their memory and loss of confidence. The Trust offers a range of resources that may be helpful, which can be accessed via the Head Teacher in a school or the Trust HR Leader. Those resources can be helpful for employees experiencing the menopause, and for colleagues and managers wishing to increase their knowledge and understanding to enable them to support colleagues more effectively.

The Trust will educate and inform managers and staff to be aware of the impact of the menopause, taking account of the particular circumstances in schools, and the potential symptoms of menopause, as well as the ways which can support those experiencing menopausal symptoms. Where employees feel uncomfortable talking about their menopausal symptoms with their line manager, they can contact the HR Leader, who will be happy to support them sensitively and confidentiality will always be respected.

When seeking solutions, risk assessments and wellbeing action plans can assist in enabling the individual's specific needs and issues to be fully considered and potential options explored. They may include issues such as temperature, ventilation, access to toilet facilities and cold water. Supportive measures may include leaving doors and windows open (where feasible and safe), provision of fans, fitting blinds to windows, cover arrangements to enable access to toilet facilities and cold water both during and outside break and lunch times, and the potential for flexible working arrangements. The Trust has a variety of roles and risk assessments will be individual and specific to the person and their circumstances.

Where actions and adjustments are agreed, managers should make a note of them (e.g. via a risk assessment) and the manager and employee should jointly monitor the achievement of actions and adjustments and their impact on the issues initially highlighted. Where adjustments do not have the desired impact, and symptoms remain the same or worsen over time, the line manager and employee may agree to an Occupational Health referral. Occupational Health can assess, provide advice and guidance, and signpost to other appropriate sources of help and advice.

Schools will ensure that a range of products are placed in staff toilets, to ensure employees are able to manage emergency situations discreetly.

It is recognised that some women going through the menopause may experience a dip in performance linked to menopausal symptoms. The Trust will manage anyone in this situation flexibly and supportively.

5.0 SUPPORTIVE ORGANISATIONS

There are a number of specialist organisations who can offer support to individuals before, during and after the menopause, including the following:

- The Trust's Employee Assistance Programme is able to provide specialist and confidential advice and counselling 24/7 and menopause resources can be accessed via their website (details available from the school or Trust HR Leader)
- NHS Guidance on Menopause provides comprehensive advice on symptoms and treatment options available: www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause
- Menopause Exchange Helpline can be contacted on 020 8420 7245 and their newsletters provide information and advice: www.menopause-exchange.co.uk

- British Menopause Society provides a wealth of information and guides on the menopause and all aspects of post reproductive health: www.thebms.org.uk This is primarily aimed at health care professionals and the Women's Health Concern is the patient arm of the British Menopause Society providing factsheets, articles, FAQs and further reading links: www.womens-health-concern.org
- Daisy Network is a charitable organisation providing support and guidance for all experiencing premature menopause: www.daisynetwork.org.uk
- Menopause Matters provides easily accessible information about the menopause, including treatments available and what steps to take: www.menopausematters.co.uk
- Simply Hormones provides blogs and articles about the menopause and the opportunity to sign up to receive a free menopause survival kit, newsletters and updates: www.simplyhormones.com
- Simply Hormones – Menopause: A Guide for Men provides information and helpful hints to help men understand more about the menopause:
www.simplyhormones.com/men-and-the-menopause
- www.theros.co.uk – this is the Royal Osteoporosis Society, with information including factsheets and information regarding bone health, fitness and activity.
- www.managemymenopause.co.uk – this provides expert advice on the menopause.
- www.thebms.org.uk – this is the British Menopause Society, and it has a range of information, including how to find a specialist.
- www.themenopauseschool.com – menstruation to menopause training.

Support and information can also be provided by the HR Leader, Health Assured and Occupational Health and Trade Unions.

6.0 MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICY

The HR Leader, Head Teachers and School Business Managers will monitor effectiveness and compliance of this policy and procedure.

Introduction

We aim to help staff to talk more openly about the menopause and to encourage managers and staff to work together to respond appropriately to concerns.

We encourage staff to:

- Talk more openly about the menopause
- Seek joint solutions to the challenges and difficulties
- Provide support for colleagues
- Refer colleagues to the appropriate help
- Raise concerns without feeling embarrassed

Recognise the symptoms

The menopause can cause a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms that can last for several years. Everyone is different and some of the most typical symptoms include:

- Hot flushes
- Sleep disturbance that can make people feel tired and irritable
- Night sweats
- Psychological issues such as mood disturbances, anxiety and/or depression
- Irregular periods
- Muscle and joint stiffness, aches, and pains
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Headaches
- Weight gain
- Palpitations
- Skin changes

Seek solutions

Supporting those experiencing the menopause is crucial and simple steps to jointly find solutions to concerns raised include:

- Providing sensitive and confidential support
- Ensuring conversations are friendly, honest and in private so they are as relaxed as they can be in the circumstances and will not be disturbed
- Approaching conversations with empathy, building trust with regular reviews and informal one-to-one meetings
- Reassuring the member of staff and working together to ensure their symptoms are not made worse by their job and making changes to help their symptoms at work to be effectively managed
- Carrying out a risk assessment and as part of this process it may be helpful to consider access to a rest area; easily available toilets and cold water; more frequent breaks to go to the toilet and take medication; cold drinking water easily available; adjustable temperature and good ventilation; adapting uniforms (where appropriate) to provide comfort and make it easy to request extra uniforms if needed
- Discussing reasonable supportive measures tailored to the individual's specific needs. Examples of

- reasonable measures include access to a private area to make a phone call to access professional support or availability of a private rest area if their symptoms suddenly become more significant at work
- Carrying out a wellbeing action plan to ensure all needs are explored and thought through.

Provide support

- Regularly check in with staff and encourage them to discuss concerns with you.
- Ask the individual about what support they need and regularly check in with that question, as the support they need may change over time
- Provide information regarding the Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health and signposting to other resources available
- Discuss whether it would be helpful to visit their GP, if they have not already accessed this support
- Identify a supportive colleague to talk to away from the work area, the HR Leader, or a trade union representative

Refer to the appropriate help

- Managers, colleagues, and HR should signpost employees to specialist help where needed, and this policy includes a list of support services we can signpost colleagues to.