

Policy Title:	Menopause Policy
Version:	1.1
Member of Staff Responsible:	Chief Finance & Operating Officer
Date adopted by Trust Board:	8 th December 2025
Date for review:	October 2027
Date Reviewed:	16 th October 2023
Reviewed:	Bi-annually

Change Record		
Version	Date	Description
1.1	08/12/2025	Addition of Surgical menopause, definitions, distinction from natural menopause, typical symptoms
1.2		
1.3		
1.4		

Primitas Learning Partnership promotes the safeguarding and welfare of all children in its care; all policies are developed and formulated with this in mind

Menopause Policy

1. Introduction

Menopause can happen naturally, or for reasons such as surgery, cancer treatments or a genetic reason. Sometimes the reason for menopause is unknown. 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 before, during and after the menopause.

Primitas Learning Partnership (PLP) 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.

PLP 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.

PLP recognise that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that for some the menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives.

PLP aim to create an environment in which all our employees feel informed about the menopause and are comfortable and confident to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for support and adjustments to be made at work. If you are going through the menopause, you'll have help in coping with its effects so that you can continue to do your job successfully.

This policy sets out procedures for members of staff and managers to follow in providing the right support and adjustments to manage menopausal symptoms at work. The policy acknowledges that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to the menopause and so it is intended as a support guide for all staff.

It should be noted that people from the non-binary, transgender and intersex communities may also experience menopausal symptoms. Due to a variety of factors, the experience of the menopause may be different for those among these communities. Although the policy refers to women, please consider that 'people who menstruate' also require consideration.

Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status. It is important to recognise that for many reasons, people's individual experiences of the menopause may differ greatly.

The menopause can also affect partners and families too.

This policy does not form part of your employment contract, and we may update it at any time.

2. Legislative Compliance

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

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff.

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.

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.

3. What is the menopause?

The NHS in their guide to Menopause states menopause is when periods stop due to lower hormone levels and it affects anyone who has periods. 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.

There are stages in the natural menopause which occur gradually over several years and these can be defined as:

Perimenopause – the time in a women's life when she starts to experience hormonal fluctuations and changes to her periods.

Menopause – this is the time when a woman has not had a period for at least a year. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55, but it can be earlier or later.

Post-Menopause – this is the time after the menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for 12 consecutive months. A woman's symptoms may still be experienced.

Surgical menopause is distinct from natural menopause. There is an abrupt and total loss of hormones overnight, symptoms tend to be more severe and sudden, and there is no adjustment period. Women experience the most intense stage of menopause all at once which is physically and emotionally harder to deal with.

The menopause produces a range of physical and psychological symptoms that can affect many aspects of life. Every woman is different and not all will be affected in the same way or to the same extent. However, the symptoms can often have a very negative effect on a woman, her partner and family, as well as having a potential impact on work performance, concentration and self confidence.

Common symptoms may include:

- Hot flushes
- Headaches
- Poor concentration
- Dry eyes
- Anxiety
- Low mood
- Lack of confidence
- Panic attacks
- Poor sleep
- Weight gain
- Fatigue
- Poor memory
- Joint and muscle pain

Surgical menopause symptoms may be similar to natural menopause but they tend to be more severe or sudden. These commonly include:

- Intense hot flushes and night sweats
- Severe mood swings, anxiety or depression
- Memory or concentration problems

- Profound fatigue
- Joint and muscle pain

Menopause symptoms tend to last for about four years, but can last longer.

4. **Understanding the Menopause**

Despite its potentially serious impact on a woman's everyday life, the menopause is still not spoken about as freely as some other physical or mental health issues. We aim to do things differently so that the menopause becomes a normal part of the health and wellbeing conversation, without embarrassment or stigma.

We may not be able to tell you about any menopause-related issues that a particular colleague is experiencing. We need you to accept that the menopause may affect those you work with in the ways set out previously. It may be necessary to make some adjustments to a person's role, their working environment or their working day.

If you treat a colleague badly (including making unwanted comments or jokes) because of her menopause symptoms, you could be disciplined.

For managers, recognising the symptoms of the menopause is vital to treating an affected employee fairly. It can explain certain behaviours that you might otherwise put down to a bad attitude or poor performance.

If you think that someone who reports to you may be going through the menopause and it is affecting their performance, and you're not sure what to do, please contact HR. Women who don't get the right support can lose confidence in their ability to do their job (some even decide to leave) and may find that their mental health suffers.

Support for women going through the menopause

If you are going through the menopause and are finding things difficult at work, please don't suffer in silence.

We know that the menopause is a very personal matter, so we will not raise it with you even if we think you are displaying symptoms. We would encourage you to talk to your Line Manager about the menopause as we will want to support you.

We have a four-step procedure that applies to discussions around the menopause and the action we will take:

Step 1

Speaking to your GP or medical specialist about your menopause-related concerns could be a good place for you to start. There are a range of treatments available and women should seek advice from their GP or medical specialist about the most suitable course of action for them.

You could also talk to a colleague or HR for support, or you could go straight to your Manager instead if you would feel comfortable doing that.

Step 2

Meet with your manager. If you feel uncomfortable going to your Line Manager, because he is a man, or someone much younger, or both, we will ensure that an alternative contact is available. Confidentiality will always be respected. You should expect to be able to have a private, friendly, honest and constructive conversation.

We will discuss with you adjustments that could make things easier for you. Adjustments will depend on different factors, including the budget we have available and your particular role, but things you could ask us to consider could include:

- Giving you a desk fan
- Making a room available for rest
- Allowing you more frequent breaks
- Making a quiet working space
- Extending deadlines
- Agreeing a flexible working arrangement
- Altering some aspects of your duties
- Mindfulness training or counselling for anxiety
- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality throughout the school, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff, and establishing a system that allows for cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching

This is not a definitive list of measures and your school will actively listen to women staff and take on board suggestions.

Your conversation with your Manager will be confidential. They may need to discuss issues and possible solutions with others including HR, other Managers if appropriate, your GP and occupational health. Those people will be subject to duties of confidentiality.

We will work hard to balance your needs with those of your colleagues, however on occasions we may not be able to find a solution that works for everyone.

We will not talk to your colleagues, other than those included above, about the menopause-related difficulties you are having unless you ask us to.

We will keep notes on discussions and will comply with our data protection responsibilities in respect of the information that passes between us. This is in line with our Data Protection Policy.

After your initial meeting with your manager, and periodically after that, we may carry out health and safety risk assessments and/or seek advice from occupational health.

Step 3

Taking account of any specialist advice, we will agree with you the adjustments that we will make.

We will meet with you to make sure that the adjustments are working for you and for us. If any modifications are needed, or if anything new needs to be put in place, we will discuss that with you.

Step 4

We will meet with you on an ongoing basis to check that your symptoms are being managed effectively.

You may find that your symptoms change over time. You should tell us if that happens so that we can look at making further or alternative adjustments. Once your symptoms pass we would expect you to tell us, and we may discuss with you removing the adjustments that had been put in place.

We may need to consult with occupational health at various points to ensure adjustments that have been put in place are appropriate.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

It is recognised that everyone who works at PLP 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 responsibility for looking 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 menopause 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 the 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;
- 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 the 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.
- engage with training and awareness sessions on issues relating to the menopause including health and safety issues
- refer to HR when managing sickness absence and the absence is related to menopause symptoms
- refer to HR where performance issues are related to menopause symptoms to explore all potential adjustments

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.

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 menopausal symptoms;
- discuss with the employee what adjustments would help;
- signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice.

6. Workplace Support

This policy recognises that there are many workplace factors which can make working life more difficult for women experiencing the menopause and which may make symptoms worse. Line Managers should take into account the management guidance for information discussion in Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 will help with the planning of specific adjustments during the meeting. The adjustments should be shared with the employee before the meeting.

7. Useful Resources

The NHS website has some good, basic information about the menopause:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

The British Menopause Society: <https://thebms.org.uk>

Women's Health Concern: <https://www.womens-health-concern.org>

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

The Daisy Network: 6. <https://www.daisynetwork.org/>

Menopause and Me: www.menopauseandme.co.uk

Menopause cafe: <https://www.menopausecafe.net/>

8. Data Protection

PLP will comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Employee data will be processed by the organisation in accordance with the principles of that legislation, as necessary for the performance of the employee's contract of employment and/or the conduct of the organisation's business. PLP will ensure that personal information about an employee, including information in personnel files, is securely retained.

Management Guidance for Informal Discussions

Managers should familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy before conducting a meeting with a member of staff to discuss their situation.

Should an employee request a meeting to discuss concerns of the menopause, it is recommended that Line Managers:

- arrange a meeting at a convenient time for both parties;
- allow the employee to be accompanied if they want to be. This can be a trade union representative or a colleague;
- choose a venue that provides privacy and is unlikely to be disturbed;
- allow adequate time to talk;
- encourage the employee to be open and honest. It is difficult to help when you haven't got the full picture;
- if the employee wishes to speak to another Manager, this should be allowed;
- If the employee wants information about their menopause symptoms to be shared, the employee will confirm what they want and do not want their colleagues to know and who will be told and who will tell them;
- Keep a note of all discussions and agree outcomes and next steps (the '*Confidential Discussion Record – Menopause*' should be used to facilitate this);
- agree a follow-up meeting to review the situation.

Confidential Discussion Record – Menopause

Date:

Present:

Staff Name:

Staff Job Title:

Summary of discussions:

Agreed action points/reasonable adjustments:

Agreed date of review meeting:

Signed (staff).....

Signed (manager).....

Workplace Issues/Suggested Adjustments

This is not an exhaustive list. Adjustments will depend on different factors. There may be occasions where we are unable to find a solution that works for everyone.

Symptom	Examples of workplace factors which could worsen or interact with symptoms	Suggested adjustments
Daytime sweats, hot flushes, palpitations	Lack of access to rest breaks or suitable break areas. Hot flushes and facial redness may cause women to feel self-conscious, or the sensation may affect concentration or train of thought.	Be flexible about additional breaks. Allow time out and access to fresh air. Ensure a quiet area/room is available. Ensure cover is available so staff can leave their posts if needed where possible. Under localised dress codes ensure that women are able to choose to wear cool comfortable clothing
Night time sweats and hot flushes. Insomnia or sleep disturbance	Rigid start/finish times and lack of flexible working options may increase fatigue at work due to lack of sleep.	Consider temporary adjustment of hours to accommodate any difficulties. Allow flexible working. Provide the option of alternative tasks/duties. Make allowance for potential additional need for sickness absence. Reassure staff that they will not be penalised or suffer detriment if they require adjustments to workload or performance management targets.
Urinary problems; eg increased frequency, urgency, and increased risk of urinary infections	Lack of access to adequate toilet facilities may increase the risk of infection and cause distress, embarrassment and an increase in stress levels. Staff member may need to access toilet facilities more frequently, may need to drink more fluids and may feel unwell.	Ensure easy access to toilet and washing facilities. Allow for more frequent breaks during work to go to the toilet. Ensure easy access to supply of cold drinking water. Make allowances for potential additional need for sickness absence.
Irregular and/or heavy periods	Lack of access to adequate toilet facilities may increase the risk of infection and cause distress, embarrassment and an increase in stress levels. Staff member may need to access toilet and washing facilities more frequently.	Ensure easy access to well maintained toilet and washroom or shower facilities. Allow for more frequent breaks in work to go to the toilet/washroom. Ensure sanitary products readily available. Ensure cover is available so staff can leave their classroom or office if needed.

Symptom	Examples of workplace factors which could worsen or interact with symptoms	Suggested adjustments
Skin irritation, dryness or itching	Unsuitable workplace temperatures and humidity may increase skin irritation, dryness and itching. There may be discomfort, an increased risk of infection and a reduction in the barrier function of skin.	Ensure comfortable working temperatures and humidity. Ensure easy access to well maintained toilet and washing or shower facilities.
Muscular aches and bone and joint pains	Lifting and moving, as well as work involving repetitive movements or adopting static postures, may be more uncomfortable and there may be an increased risk of injury.	Make any necessary adjustments through review of risk assessments and work schedules/tasks and keep under review. Consider providing alternative lower-risk tasks. Follow Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and advice on manual handling and preventing MSDs (musculoskeletal disorders).
Headaches	Headaches may be triggered or worsened by many workplace factors such as artificial lighting, poor air quality, exposure to chemicals, screen work, workplace stress, poor posture/unsuitable workstations, unsuitable uniforms or workplace temperatures.	Ensure comfortable working temperatures, humidity and good air quality. Ensure access to natural light and ability to adjust artificial light. Allow additional rest breaks. Ensure a quiet area/room is available. Carry out Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and stress risk assessments.
Dry eyes	Unsuitable workplace temperatures/humidity, poor air quality and excessive screen work may increase dryness in the eyes, discomfort, eye strain and increase the risk of infection.	Ensure comfortable working temperatures, humidity and good air quality. Allow additional breaks from screen based work. Carry out DSE risk assessments
Psychological symptoms, eg depression, anxiety panic attacks, mood changes, loss of confidence	Excessive workloads, unsupportive management and colleagues, perceived stigma around the menopause, bullying and harassment and any form of work-related stress may exacerbate symptoms. Stress can have wide-ranging negative effects on mental and physical health and wellbeing. Performance and workplace relationships may be affected.	Carry out a stress risk assessment and address work-related stress. Ensure that staff will not be penalised or suffer detriment if they require adjustments to workload, tasks or performance management targets. Ensure that managers understand the menopause and are prepared to discuss any concerns that staff may have in a supportive manner. Ensure Managers have a positive attitude and understand that they should offer adjustments to workload and tasks if needed. Allow flexible/home working. Make allowance for potential additional need for sickness absence.

		Ensure that staff are trained in mental health awareness. Raise general awareness of issues around the menopause so colleagues are more likely to be supportive. Ensure a quiet area/room is available. Provide access to counselling services
Psychological symptoms: Memory problems, difficulty concentrating	Certain tasks may become more difficult to carry out temporarily; for example, learning new skills (may be compounded by lack of sleep and fatigue), performance may be affected and work-related stress may exacerbate these symptoms. Loss of confidence may result.	Carry out a stress risk assessment and address work-related stress. Reassure staff that they will not be penalised or suffer detriment if they require adjustments to workload or performance management targets. Ensure that managers understand the menopause and are prepared to discuss any concerns that staff may have in a supportive manner. Ensure managers have a positive attitude and understand that they should offer adjustments to workload and tasks if needed. Reduce demands if workload identified as an issue. Provide additional time to complete tasks if needed, or consider substituting with alternative tasks. Allow flexible/home working. Offer and facilitate alternative methods of communicating tasks and planning of work to assist memory. Ensure a quiet area/room is available. Provide access to counselling services.