

JOHN TAYLOR MULTI ACADEMY TRUST



Menopause Policy

Policy owner:	Barbara Mahoney, JTMAT, COO
Implementation date:	November 2021
Review date:	July 2022

1. Overview

- 1.1 We are committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all our staff.
- 1.2 We 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.
- 1.3 We aim to create an environment in which all our employees feel informed about the menopause and are comfortable and confident talking about its impact. 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.
- 1.4 This policy should be read alongside our policies on Flexible Working, Equal Opportunities, Managing Attendance and Data Protection.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of your employment contract, and we may update it at any time.

2. What is the menopause?

- 2.1 The menopause is a biological process when a woman's periods stop that signals the end of a woman's ability to conceive a child. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55, but it can be earlier (sometimes much earlier) or later. Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. Postmenopause is the time beyond menopause
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Common symptoms 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
- 2.4 Menopause symptoms tend to last about four years, but can last longer.

3. Understanding the menopause

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 Through training and raising awareness of the symptoms and related issues, we promote an organisation-wide understanding of what the menopause means for those going through it. This is essential to building a culture of openness, trust, sensitivity and respect around what is for many women a challenging time in their lives.
- 3.3 We need you to be aware that the menopause may affect those you work with in the ways set out above. Sometimes you will need to make certain things easier for them. That might include simply accepting that some adjustments need to be made to a person's role, their working environment or their working day.

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 and respect their privacy.

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

- 3.4 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.

4. Helping you through the menopause

- 4.1 If you are going through the menopause and are finding things difficult at work, please don't suffer in silence.
- 4.2 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 might ask how you are, in general terms. You can then decide whether to talk to us about the menopause or not. We would encourage you to do so because we will want to support you.
- 4.3 We have a four-step procedure that applies to discussions around the menopause and the action we'll take:

Step 1

- 4.4 Speaking with your GP or medical specialist about your menopause-related concerns could be a good place for you to start.
- 4.5 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

- 4.6 Meet with your manager. You should expect to be able to have a private, friendly, honest and constructive conversation.
- 4.7 We will discuss with you ideas 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
- 4.8 Your conversation with your manager will be confidential. They will probably 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.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 We will not talk to your colleagues, other than those included in **4.8 above**, about the menopause-related difficulties you are having unless you ask us to.
- 4.11 We will keep notes of the things we discuss and will comply with our data protection responsibilities in respect of the information that passes between us. That's in line with our Data Protection Policy.
- 4.12 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

- 4.13 Taking account of any specialist advice, we will agree with you the adjustments that we will make.
- 4.14 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

- 4.15 We will meet with you on an ongoing basis to check that your symptoms are being managed effectively.
- 4.16 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.
- 4.17 We may need to consult with occupational health at various points to ensure everything is being done that should be done.

5. Some resources

- 5.1 The NHS website has some good, basic information about the menopause:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>
- 5.2 The British Menopause Society:
<https://thebms.org.uk>
- 5.3 Women's Health Concern:
<https://www.womens-health-concern.org>
- 5.4 Menopause Matters:
<https://www.menopausematters.co.uk>
- 5.5 The Daisy Network:
<https://www.daisynetwork.org/>

6. Data Protection

The organisation will comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018. 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. The organisation will ensure that personal information about an employee, including information in personnel files, is securely retained.