HAYNES LOWER SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Menopause Policy

Date of formal review: September 2025

Persons responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy:

Signed: Head Teacher

Signed: Chair of Governors

Review date: September 2027

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definitions
3. Signs and symptoms
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Informing the school
6. Risk assessments
7. Reasonable adjustments
8. Staff training
9. Attendance procedures
10. Monitoring and review

Statement of intent

Haynes Lower School is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all staff members.

The school recognises that the menopause is a natural stage of life which affects most women and other people who have a menstrual cycle. This can include trans people and people with 'variations of sex development' (VSD) – some people might prefer to identify as intersex or use the term 'differences in sex development' (DSD). Experiences of the menopause can be many and varied – the school recognises its important position as an employer in ensuring adequate support is provided to staff members.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Create an environment in which staff members can openly and comfortably discuss the menopause.
- Ensure every staff member understands what the menopause is and the common signs and symptoms.
- Ensure line managers are aware of the reasonable adjustments that should be put in place to support staff members.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Increase access to flexible working systems for staff members experiencing the menopause.

1. Legal framework

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

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

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following school policies and procedures:

- Staff Attendance and Absence Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

2. 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. The average age that a woman reaches menopause is 51; however, it can be earlier or later than this due to a number of reasons.

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 **“postmenopause”** 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.

3. Signs and symptoms

Common symptoms of the menopause include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hot flushes, i.e. sudden feelings of hot or cold in your face, neck and chest which can cause dizziness
- Palpitations
- Headaches and migraines
- Night sweats
- Difficulty sleeping
- Changed body shape and weight gain
- Skin changes, e.g. dry and itchy skin
- Vaginal dryness and pain
- Low mood or anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Loss of concentration
- Depression
- Reduced sex drive
- Problems with memory and concentration

Menopausal symptoms can occur months or even years before a woman's periods stop and can last for several years after they have stopped. Not every woman will experience the signs and symptoms of the menopause; however, the list provided above is common for most women.
The school will encourage all members of staff who are, or who suspect they may be, experiencing the menopause to arrange a meeting with their GP or nurse.

The menopause can have a significant impact on women at work and their relationships with colleagues, e.g. if they are experiencing severe anxiety, this may have negative side effects on their happiness at work.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Staff members experiencing menopause are responsible for:

- Being aware of the common signs and symptoms of the menopause to help with their diagnosis or to support others experiencing the menopause.
- Engaging in open and honest conversations with relevant individuals, e.g. line managers, and the HR lead – Lucy Chapman/Vicki Page.
- Seeking help where necessary from relevant professionals, e.g. GPs.
- Creating a risk assessment/action plan in conjunction with their line managers.

All members of staff are responsible for:

- Creating a respectful and productive working environment.
- Ensuring that unlawful conduct towards staff members experiencing menopause is avoided, and reported to the headteacher where incidents occur. The following are examples of unlawful conduct:
  - Discrimination of any kind, whether it be indirect, discreet, or direct
    - Harassment
    - Victimisation
    - Failure to make reasonable adjustments
- Ensuring they have a good understanding of the menopause and how this can affect the workplace.

Line managers are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the procedures in this policy.

- Organising discussions with staff members experiencing the menopause.
- Acting sensitively and emphatically towards staff experiencing the menopause.
- Deciding on which reasonable adjustments need to be made to support staff members experiencing the menopause, and ensuring they are implemented.
- Implementing a risk assessment/action plan in conjunction with staff members experiencing the menopause.
- Recording all reasonable adjustments and reviewing them as necessary.
- Making changes to risk assessment/action plans and reasonable adjustments, as necessary.
- Monitoring staff absence in line with the school's Staff Attendance and Absence Policy.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Offering guidance to line managers to enable them to effectively support staff experiencing the menopause.
- Identifying issues with staff absence and responding in line with the school's Staff Attendance and Absence Policy.
- Attending training sessions and developing briefing sessions for staff.
- Maintaining effective communication with line managers and staff experiencing the menopause.

5. Informing the school

Where any staff member believes they are experiencing symptoms of menopause which may affect their work, or where they will require reasonable adjustments, they will notify their line manager.

The line manager will hold a one-to-one discussion with the employee to discuss the symptoms and which reasonable adjustments are required.

The one-to-one discussion will be held in an appropriate location on-site to maintain confidentiality, e.g. an office.

The line manager will conduct a risk assessment for any staff member experiencing the menopause, and will review working conditions.

The line manager and employee will devise a written risk assessment/action plan which details the following:

- Their signs and symptoms
- The perceived or actual effects on their work
- Necessary reasonable adjustments
- Time frames for reasonable adjustments to be in place
- Next steps
- Review date

The line manager will ensure any recommendations for reasonable adjustments from the individual's GP or nurse, or other relevant agency, are included in the risk assessment/action plan.

The line manager and employee will discuss whether any other staff members should be notified – if so, who and how the employee would like them to be notified.

The line manager will notify the Head Teacher of the risk assessment/action plan.

The line manager will schedule a follow-up meeting one month after the initial discussion to review progress so far. Any changes will be made as necessary.

The line manager will schedule review meetings to review the risk assessment/action plan and make any changes as necessary.

6. Risk assessments

Women experiencing the menopause are identified as workers who may be particularly at risk and, therefore, the school has a duty to make suitable and sufficient risk assessments for such employees.

Where an employee has voiced concerns about their symptoms of the menopause, the line manager will conduct a risk assessment of their work practice to identify risks and implement appropriate control measures.

A separate risk assessment will be conducted for each member of staff experiencing the menopause.

The risk assessment will consider the specific needs of staff members experiencing the menopause. Specific information that will be considered includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Temperature and ventilation
- Current symptoms
- Access to toilet facilities
- Access to fresh drinking water
- Workplace stress

Appropriate reasonable adjustments will be implemented in light of the risk assessment.
The risk assessment will be reviewed and updated by the line manager when any circumstances change, e.g. symptoms.

7. Reasonable adjustments

In order to support staff members' symptoms of the menopause, the school will implement a variety of reasonable adjustments, suitable to staff members' individual needs. While menopause is not classed as a disability, certain symptoms may class as a disability themselves, and therefore the school has a duty to ensure reasonable adjustments are made where necessary.

Each case will be treated individually, and the below adjustments are not exhaustive.

Hot flushes – the school will:

- Adjust the temperature control of the work area, such as putting a fan on their desk or moving their desk close to a window.
- Ensure there is easy access to drinking water.
- Make adaptations to dress code, where appropriate, providing that this in accordance with the school's Staff Code of Conduct.
- Ensure there is adequate access to toilets.
- Provide a quiet area for the staff member if they experience a severe hot flush.
- For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has support from a higher-level teaching assistant (Level 3 TA) who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break.

Heavy and light periods – the school will:

- Ensure there is adequate access to toilets.
- Ensure that sanitary products are readily available.
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing, should the staff member require it.
- Allow the staff member to bring extra clothing with them, providing it is in accordance with the school's Staff Code of Conduct.

Headaches and lack of sleep – the school will:

- Ensure there is access to fresh drinking water at all times.
- Offer a quiet space to work, if necessary.
- Discuss the effects of a healthy balanced diet on improving symptoms.
- Allow staff members time to take a break if they experience a headache.
- For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has support from a higher-level teaching assistant (Level 3) who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break.
- Allow staff members to be considered for flexible working, in line with the Flexible Working Policy.

Low mood and loss of confidence – the school will:

- Allow staff members time to take a break whenever required, without needing to ask for permission. Identify a 'time out space' where the staff member may go if they need to take a break, e.g. the staff room.
- For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has support from a Level 3 TA who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break.
- Ensure the staff member has a sufficient support mechanism in place from their line manager, and another colleague should they require it.
- Ensure there are personal development discussions in place with the staff member's line manager.
- Establish, with the staff member's line manager, an agreed time for the staff member to catch up on any missed work as a result of absence.

Poor concentration – the school will:

- Discuss with the staff member if there are times of the day where concentration is better or worse, and review how working can be managed around this.
- Review the staff member's task allocation and workload, distributing tasks to others where possible.
- Provide materials to assist with concentration and memory, such as action boards.
- Offer quiet spaces to work wherever possible.
- Establish, with the staff member's line manager, an agreed time for the staff member to catch up on any missed work as a result of absence.

Anxiety and panic attacks – the school will:

- Provide the staff member with contacts for external support and counselling.
- Ensure the staff member has a sufficient support mechanism in place from their line manager, and another colleague should they require it.
- Encourage the staff member to seek help from their GP.
- Identify a time out space where the staff member may go if they need to take a break.
- For teaching staff, ensure the staff member has support from a Level 3 TA who can lead the class should the staff member need to take a break.
- Discuss relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises, and encourage the staff member to practise these when taking a break.

8. Staff training

The Head Teacher is responsible for organising training for staff members.

The school will ensure that all line managers be aware of the signs and symptoms of the menopause, how it can affect work, and what adjustments should be made to support staff members.

The school will ensure that issues of the menopause are highlighted so all staff members understand how it affects staff, and to create a positive attitude towards managing the menopause whilst being employed at the school.

The school will ensure all staff members are provided with sufficient information as to where they can access support for any issues that arise as a result of the menopause.

Training will be refreshed on an annual basis for all relevant staff members.

9. Attendance procedures

Attendance of staff members experiencing the menopause will be managed in line with the Staff Attendance Management Policy.

All menopause-related sickness absences will be recorded as ongoing issues, rather than individual absences.

The school will ensure staff members experiencing the menopause are able to request flexible working, in line with the Flexible Working Policy.

Any requests for breaks or flexible working will be outlined in the employee's risk assessment/action plan.
The school will ensure that any appraisal, capability and performance procedures are not applied in a way as to discriminate unlawfully against women staff members experiencing the menopause.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Head Teacher on an annual basis.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff members.