

Menopause Policy



Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
March 2024	March 2025	Mr Smith

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The menopause is part of the natural ageing process for women, it refers to the point in time when menstruation has ceased for twelve consecutive months and a woman has reached the end of her reproductive life. It usually happens between 45 and 55 years of age, although can happen any time up until a woman's mid 60s or a premature menopause can occur in women before the age of 45.¹

The perimenopause, which is the period of hormonal change leading up to the menopause, can often last for four to five years although for some women it may continue for many more years or for others last just a few months. During the time of the perimenopause women may begin to experience symptoms due to changes in their hormone levels. These symptoms may vary in degree between different individuals from mild to very significant.

1.2 Purpose

Through adopting a workforce policy Earlview Primary School and Nursery can ensure women continue in employment throughout the menopause with their needs taken into account. This should have a positive impact on the levels of absenteeism and confidence for the women in this age group.

Legislation applicable to the policy:

- The **Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978 (Amended 1998)** requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. Under the Order, employers are required to do risk assessments under the Management Regulations which should include specific risks to menopausal women if they are employed.
- The **Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976** as amended prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of sex.
- **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995** as amended prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of disability. It is also important to note that conditions linked to the menopause may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the DDA and require reasonable adjustments.

¹ NHS Conditions – [Early Menopause](#)

- **Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006** prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of age.
- **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998** places a duty on Earlview Primary School and Nursery to consider positive action through paying due regard, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations, Earlview Primary School and Nursery also have a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination.

1.3 Objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure line managers are aware of their responsibility to understand the menopause and related issues and how they can affect staff. It also aims to raise wider awareness and understanding amongst employees and to outline support and reasonable adjustments that are available.

Earlview Primary School and Nursery want to create an environment where women feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments at work, if necessary. Earlview Primary School and Nursery are committed to ensuring that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that appropriate adjustments and support are put in place, where necessary.

This Policy is intended to provide clarity and direction on how staff should deal with menopause related issues, either for individual colleagues experiencing the menopause or those who are affected indirectly for example partners, colleagues or line managers.

The policy will also support women who experience induced menopause due to conditions such as endometriosis or having a hysterectomy.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY, PROCEDURE, GUIDELINE OR PROTOCOL

The policy is aimed to support all women working for Earlview Primary School and Nursery although we understand that others may experience menopause-type symptoms, while we use the words women/she/her throughout this document, this support is designed for all our colleagues.

The definition of the menopause is the period in a woman's life (typically between the ages of 45 and 50) when menstruation ceases. But it is important to note that women can suffer from menopause symptoms at both a younger and an older age and therefore it is key to be mindful of the circumstances of the staff member themselves.

Although this guide aims to be of use to women in the workplace who are experiencing symptoms of the menopause, reading this guide may also help better understand family or friends who are experiencing difficult symptoms regardless of their perceived gender.

3.0 ROLES/ RESPONSIBILITIES

Line managers should make themselves aware of this policy and the symptoms. Staff should approach their line manager if they need a reasonable adjustment due to menopause symptoms, the supporting template is there as a guide only.

4.0 KEY PRINCIPLES

It is recognised that the **menopause is a very individual experience** and that people can be affected in different ways and to different degrees, therefore different levels and types of support and adjustments may be needed.

As menopausal symptoms are typically experienced for several years, it will be treated as a 'transition' rather than a one-off event.

Employees experiencing issues due to the menopause can be supported through the EA - Health and Wellbeing Team or the Disability Employment Support Service (DESS) who advise on reasonable adjustments. They may also wish to talk to a GP or Occupational Health or external groups such as NICE.

A personal menopause assessment template is included with the policy and can be carried out by a member of staff before approaching their line manager about adjustments to working conditions but does not have to be shared.

Any adjustments will be considered and when appropriate acted on within a fitting timescale. A confidential point of contact/support will be provided by the EA - Disability Employment Support Team within the Equality & Diversity Unit.

5.0 Symptoms

Women may experience only some or all of these symptoms (the list is not exhaustive).

- Hot flushes;
- Changes to mood;
- Fatigue;
- Problems with memory;

- Palpitations;
- Loss of confidence.
- Night sweats;
- Joint aches;
- Insomnia and sleep disturbances;
- Dry skin and skin irritation;
- Headaches;
- Vaginal dryness, itching and discomfort;
- Irregular and/ or heavy, painful periods, clots and flooding;
- Increased perspiration during the day;
- Depression;
- Dry eyes;
- Anxiety;
- Hair loss;
- Panic attacks;
- Urinary problems;
- Poor concentration

Symptoms can begin months or even years before a woman's periods stop and last around four years after the last period, although some women experience them for longer and can need medication to alleviate the symptoms.

The effects on a woman's physical and emotional health can significantly impact how she does her work and her relationships with colleagues. There are a number of varying treatment options for women ranging from natural remedies to medical intervention.

Earlview Primary School and Nursery recognises its responsibility to take into account difficulties women may experience during the menopause and to provide support and advice in this regard.

Reasonable Adjustments

Line managers should be aware of symptoms and realise that it can be daunting or embarrassing for a woman to openly discuss their issues.

There is a range of reasonable adjustments that can be considered by managers, should a female member of staff seek support due to the menopause or a condition that can affect the onset of menopause such as a hysterectomy or endometriosis. It is important that any reasonable adjustment is tailored to the needs of the needs of the employee and no one size will fit all in this regard.

Any adjustment should be tailored to an individual's needs through discussion, It is essential that assumptions are not made regarding a woman's health and experience during menopause or the age at which she is displaying symptoms.

Any reasonable adjustments will have to be fully considered by the Board of Governors for Earlview Primary School and Nursery Board. Any barriers to a woman fulfilling her job because of the menopause will be removed where possible.

In certain circumstances, where a woman experiences extreme symptoms, it may be necessary for them to be referred to occupational health.

The assessment could look at issues such as:

- Temperature and ventilation
- Restrictive uniforms or corporate clothing
- Access to toilet facilities and cold water.

The Health and Safety Executive's tools and templates for carrying out such assessments can be found at: bit.ly/hse-controlling-risks. The HSE also has tools to help carry out a stress risk assessment, if applicable, at: bit.ly/hse-stress-risk-assessment.

Further information can be sought from the EA - Equality & Diversity Team at equality.unit@eani.org.uk or 02890 904213

Access to support

Although Earlview Primary School and Nursery expect line managers to take a positive and supportive approach towards discussions about menopause, we know that individual staff members who are affected may still feel uncomfortable talking directly to their line manager.

In order to meet the needs of these individuals, staff can avail of dedicated support from the Equality & Diversity Unit, Disability Employment Support Service who have expertise in reasonable adjustments. Support can also be obtained from EA - Health and Wellbeing.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Dissemination

This policy will be relevant to all women experiencing menopausal symptoms. The policy will also give advice and guidance to line managers.

The policy should be used as guidance for line managers effective immediately. The Equality & Diversity Unit can be contacted to discuss concerns with the policy.

7.0 MONITORING

The policy will be revisited after a year for monitoring purposes. Line managers can feed any difficulties they have encountered with the policy to Mr. Smith.

8.0 EVIDENCE BASE/ REFERENCES

Clear evidence for the need for a workplace policy on menopause was set out in the [Irish Congress for Trade Unions survey report](#)

Other sources used to develop the policy were:

[NIPSA Guidance on Menopause](#)

Nottinghamshire Police Force, [Menopause guidelines for managers](#) (this policy was well received and was offered awards in GB)

[NHS Employers Website](#)

[PSNI Menopause Workplace Guide](#) based on research by the Police Federation NI

9.0 DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018

This policy will adhere to the procedures laid out in the Earlview Primary School and Nursery Data Protection Policy.

Personal Menopause Assessment *(optional)*

Below is a list of some of the key symptoms that you may experience during the menopause and which may hinder your ability to fulfil your day to day duties. The below list is not exhaustive but may help you consider what symptoms you are suffering and what you feel may assist you to undertake your role. NB You do not need to share this with your line manager unless you wish to do so.

Symptom	Location you have the symptom (if both tick both)		Severity of the symptom				How frequently do you experience the symptom					
	Home	Work	Mild	Moderate	Intense	Severe	Less than monthly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Hourly	Constant
Hot flushes												
Night Sweats												
Irregular Periods												
Mood Swings												
Fatigue												
Hair Loss												
Sleep Disorders												
Difficulty Concentrating												
Memory Lapses												
Dizziness												
Weight Gain												
Incontinence												
Bloating												
Allergies												
Brittle Nails												
Changes in Odour												
Irregular Heartbeat												
Depression												
Anxiety												
Irritability												
Panic Disorder/Attacks												
Breast Pain												
Headache												
Joint Pain												
Burning Tongue												
Electric Shocks												
Digestive Problems												
Gum Problems												
Muscle Tension												
Itchy Skin												
Tingling Extremities												
Osteoporosis												
Other:												