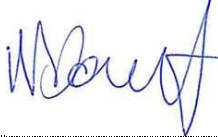




# Menopause Guidance

November 2023

Signed (Chair of Trustees):	
Date:	November 2023
Review:	November 2024

The Arbor Academy Trust reviews this policy annually. The Trustees may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the Trust receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

This document is also available in other formats e.g. e-mail and enlarged print version, on request to the School Offices and is displayed on the schools' websites.

## **1.1 Menopause Guidance**

Menopause and its effects are increasingly becoming recognised as a potential occupational health and work problem and is no longer considered a 'taboo' subject. More awareness and some simple changes could make an employees working life during this time much easier and that's what this guidance aims to do,

In the UK there are around 4.3 million women aged 50 and over in employment. This means that more women than ever will experience the menopause during their working lives. The Menopause represents a major change in a woman's life and for many women symptoms can impact daily life both inside and outside work. Despite this, the menopause is still largely misunderstood amongst employers. The support and guidance on the menopause for employees and managers in schools over the next few pages intend to address this by offering practical tips and advice. It should be noted that whilst most women do experience symptoms (some do not) most will find the impact of the menopause can be managed with small adjustments to their work and personal life.

## **1.2 What is the Menopause?**

The menopause is a natural and temporary stage in a woman's life; the term is used to refer to the range of symptoms women can experience in the years leading up to, during and after her last period, this is the medical definition of the menopause.

The menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. In the UK the average age is 52 although some women do not reach menopause until their mid-60's and 1 in 100 women experience premature menopause before the age of 40.

## **1.3 What happens during the Menopause?**

During the menopause women experience hormonal changes, these are associated with a decrease in the body's production of oestrogen.

Menopause symptoms vary widely between women, on average women can experience symptoms for a period of 4-8 years.

Symptoms of the menopause can be both physical and emotional;

Physical symptoms include:

- Hot flushes
- Palpitations
- Night sweats
- Fatigue
- Joint and muscle pain
- Weakened bladder function
- Skin irritation and dryness
- Headaches

Emotional symptoms include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Poor concentration
- Irritability
- Decreased confidence
- Insomnia

In some cases, symptoms can be exacerbated by the work environment, for example if office temperature is too high this can worsen or increase the frequency of hot flushes. A hot flush is a sudden onset of feverish heat all over the body; these can cause dizziness, discomfort, and sweating and heart palpitations and are one of the most common symptoms of the menopause.

Symptoms such as insomnia can reduce the ability to concentrate and stay focused. Decreased confidence could affect a woman's feelings towards carrying out certain aspects of her role. Changes in mood and irritability could impact on relationships with others at work.

#### **1.4 What practical measures can managers undertake to help employees?**

It is important to remember that not all employees will want to discuss this health matter with their manager, however if they wish to, the following information may be of assistance to those employees that want support from their School.

- Regular, informal conversations between managers and employees may enable discussion of changes in health, including issues relating to the menopause. It may be valuable simply to acknowledge this is a normal stage of life and that adjustments can be made.
- Managers should consider accommodating - flexible working requests that will help women manage any menopause related health issues.

During the menopause women may experience bouts of feeling unwell at work and managers should take a flexible and sympathetic approach to requests for a

- For women experiencing difficulty managing symptoms, managers should refer employees to - an occupational health assessment, if necessary:
- Where possible, managers should review control of workplace temperature and ventilation and see how they might be adapted to meet the needs of individuals.
- As with all staff, managers are reminded to allow employees to take breaks where possible in the context of the school day

#### **1.4 What practical measures can employees take?**

For women who find their menopausal symptoms are affecting their wellbeing and their capacity to work:

- Stay hydrated, drinking plenty of water can help reduce a number of common symptoms such as fatigue, skin problems and hot flushes
- Breathing exercises, yoga and meditation can all help relieve menopause symptoms
- Confide in colleagues, having a few people around you who understand your situation reduces pressure and stress and can help you feel better
- Find out more about the menopause from available sources of information, see useful links below
- See your GP for advice on available treatment options
- Discuss your practical needs with your line manager, -another manager you feel comfortable talking to
- If symptoms are difficult to manage, please speak to your manager, as they may be able to arrange an occupational health referral
- Access the councils employee assistance programme [Workplace Options](#) which offers confidential advice and counselling 24 hours per day / 7 days a week, 365 days a year, provided by an external provider. Further support can be found on under the women's health section on the Workplace Options website.

Useful links:

<http://menopausesupport.co.uk/> <http://www.menopause-exchange.co.uk/>  
<https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>  
<https://www.managemymenopause.co.uk/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>  
<https://www.bupa.co.uk/health-information/directory/m/menopause>  
<https://www.webmd.com/menopause/guide/learning-relax-during-menopause#1>  
<https://www.teachers.org.uk/help-and-advice/health-and-safety/m/teachers-working-throughmenopause>