



Menopause Policy

New Policy: January 2022 v1.0

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Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	December 2021	HR Manager	All Staff	New Policy

Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Board	Chair	CEO	Date Approved	Version	Date for Review
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	December 2021	1.0	September 2024

National/Local Policy

☐ This policy must be localised by Academies

☒ This policy must not be changed, it is a CAST/National Policy (only change logo, contact details and any yellow highlights)

Position with the Unions

Does the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement? ☒

Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, the policy status is: ☒ Consulted and Approved ☐ Consulted and Not Approved

☒ Awaiting Consultation

Distribution

This draft document has been distributed to:

Position	Date	Version
All CAST Central employees, CAST Headteacher, CAST Directors, JCC	Spring 2022	1.0

1. Vision and Values

- 1.1.** Plymouth CAST is a multi-academy trust of Catholic schools which is part of the mission of the Catholic Church dedicated to human flourishing and the building of a kingdom of peace, truth and justice. The Trust is to be conducted in all aspects in accordance with canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and at all times to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 1.2.** Our vision and values are derived from our identity as a Catholic Trust. Central to our vision is the dignity of the human person, especially the most vulnerable. Our academies are dedicated to providing an education and formation where all our pupils and young people flourish in a safe, nurturing, enriching environment. All governors in our academies are expected to be familiar with the vision, mission, values and principles of the Trust and not in any way to undermine them. They should support and promote the vision and conduct themselves at all times in school and on school business according to the vision and principles of the Trust
- 1.3.** Plymouth CAST expects all its employees to recognise their obligations to each school within the Multi-Academy Trust, the public, pupils and other employees and to provide consistently high standards of education and performance at all times and in accordance with Plymouth CAST's vision, mission and principles.

2. Purpose

- 2.1.** This policy sets out procedures for members of staff and managers to follow in providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

3. General

- 3.1.** Plymouth CAST is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for all its employees and recognises that women may need additional consideration, support and adjustments before (perimenopause), during and after the menopause.
- 3.2.** It is estimated that between 75% and 80% of menopausal women are in work in the UK. It is therefore imperative that workplaces have a workable, informative and robust policy in place that is fully consistent with UK legislation.
- 3.3.** The menopause is a natural part of every woman's life, and marks the end of her reproductive cycle. For many reasons, it may not be an easy time in a woman's life and so it is imperative that workers who require additional support during this time are treated with understanding, dignity and respect.
- 3.4.** 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 workers. All stakeholders agree to work proactively to make adjustments where necessary to support women experiencing the menopause and to ensure the workplace does not make their symptoms worse.

- 3.5.** 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 other people who menstruate also require consideration.
- 3.6.** 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.
- 3.7.** The menopause can also affect partners and families too.
- 3.8.** 'Male menopause' is a misleading term because it suggests that hormone levels drop in a similar way to the female menopause and this is not true. Testosterone declines gradually and is unlikely to cause problems in itself. However, some men experience physical and emotional symptoms when they reach their late 40s to early 50s and these symptoms can interfere with everyday life and happiness. Men are advised to seek guidance from their GP. Information can be found on the NHS website. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/male-menopause/>

4. Equal Opportunities

- 4.1.** This policy applies to all Plymouth CAST employees.

5. Legislation

- 5.1.** The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. 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.
- 5.2.** 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.

6. Aims

- 6.1.** The aim of this policy is:
- to create an environment where staff members feel confident enough to raise issues about their menopausal symptoms and ask for support and adjustments at work;

- to ensure that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that appropriate adjustments and support are put in place, recognising that the menopause and perimenopause is an individual experience and therefore there is no 'one size fits all' solution;
- to reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace;
- to educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of the menopause, and how they can support such staff at work;
- to raise a wider awareness and understanding among the workforce; and
- to outline support and reasonable adjustments that are available.

7. Definitions

- 7.1.** Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a person's life that occurs when they stop menstruating and reaches the end of their natural reproductive life. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when they have not had a period for twelve consecutive months. The average age to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons.
- 7.2.** Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when a person may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.
- 7.3.** Post menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a they have not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

8. Symptoms

- 8.1.** It is important to note that not everyone will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, 75% of women do experience some symptoms, and 25% could be classed as severe.
- 8.2.** Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence. Some also experience difficulty sleeping.

9. Roles and responsibilities

- 9.1.** All staff are responsible for:
- taking a personal responsibility to look after their health;
 - being open and honest in conversations with managers/Central HR team;
 - if a member of staff is unable to speak to their line manager, or if their line manager is not supporting them, they can speak directly to the Central HR team or another member of the school's SLT;
 - contributing to a respectful and productive working environment;
 - being willing to help and support their colleagues; and

- understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

9.2. All line managers should:

- familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy;
- be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally;
- use the guidance in Appendices 1 and 2, signposting and reviewing together, before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported, and any adjustments required;
- record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented;
- ensure ongoing dialogue and review dates;
- ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to; where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the Line Manager may:
 - discuss a referral to Occupational Health for further advice;
 - refer the employee to Occupational Health with the assistance and guidance from the Central HR Team;
 - review Occupational Health advice, and implement any recommendations, where reasonably practical; or
 - update the action plan, and continue to review.

9.3. Trust Central Team and SELT

- offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this Policy;
- attend training sessions, and develop briefing sessions, for staff; and
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in respect of related absence levels and performance.

10. Review

- 10.1.** The content of this policy and procedure may be subject to revision from time to time following consultation with the recognised trade unions.

Date	Page	Details of the change	Agreed by

10.2. History of changes

Policy to be reviewed by the Plymouth CAST Board in consultation with the JCC in (date) or when legislation changes or operational reasons arise.

Appendix 1 - Guidance for Managers Discussions with Employees

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

Regular, informal conversations between manager and employee can enable discussions about issues related to menopause. One of the most valuable things a manager can do is listen and respond sympathetically if issues relating to menopause are reported. These conversations can assist to identify support at work, which can make a real difference with how employees cope with menopause. This may enable them to continue working well, productively and to remain at work.

It is important to note that employees experiencing menopausal issues (directly or indirectly) may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed to approach their manager however, if a manager is aware of the symptoms associated with the menopause and how this can affect a person, this can greatly assist in promoting an environment where employees feel more confident to approach their manager and seek support, if required.

If an employee wishes to talk about changes in health including symptoms of menopause it is important to:

- Encourage the employee to discuss any relevant health concerns with their GP practice;
- Maintain confidentiality when handling health information (seek a private room/office and ensure any records are stored in a safe and confidential manner);
- Allow the employee to be accompanied if they want it. This can be a trade union representative or a colleague;
- If the employee wishes to speak to another manager, this should be allowed;
- Allow for sufficient time to have the conversation and encourage the employee to be open and honest when discussing any difficulties they may be experiencing;
- Explore with them ways in which they can be supported;
- Agree an action plan, record the outcome of the discussion and agree a review timeframe;
- Provide details of support and external services available.

Confidential Discussion Record- Menopause

School:

Date of Meeting:

Employee Name:	
Employee Job Title	
Line Manager Name:	
Line Manager Job Title	
Summary of Discussion	
Agreed Action Points/Reasonable Adjustments	
Agreed Date of Review	

Signed (Employee):

Signed (Manager):

Appendix 2 – Workplace issues/suggested adjustments

Symptoms support

Symptoms can manifest physically and psychologically. Support for employees should be considered as detailed below.

Hot flushes

- request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk or moving near a window, or away from a heat source
- provide easy access to drinking water
- encourage use of the staff room for breaks

Heavy/light periods

- have permanent access to washroom facilities

Urogenital problems

This will include an increased frequency and urgency to pass urine, with a need to access toilet facilities more frequently and to drink more fluids.

Suitable adjustments may include:

- providing ready access to suitable toilet facilities
- providing ready access to suitable washing facilities
- allowing more frequent breaks to go to the toilet
- providing easy access to drinking water

Headaches

- have ease of access to fresh water
- use the staff room as a quiet place to work when not teaching or when time out is required
- have time out to take medication if needed

Low mood

- agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission
- identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of the work area
- identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head'

Loss of confidence

- ensure there are regular personal development discussions
- have regular protected time with their manager to discuss any issues
- have agreed protected time to catch up with work

Poor concentration

- discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse
- review task allocation and workload
- provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment
- offer quiet space to work

Anxiety

- identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to
- be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques
- encourage your colleague to undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

Panic attacks

- agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission
- identify a 'buddy'
- undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk

Muscular aches and bone and joint pain

For individuals experiencing these symptoms, moving and handling or adopting static postures may be more uncomfortable. Suitable adjustments may include making any necessary temporary adjustments through review of risk assessments and work schedules.

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited their GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety. If they have visited their GP, and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to make an occupational health referral to give specific advice regarding the workplace.

External links

Menopause Matters

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

NHS Choices

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

The Daisy Network (support for early menopause/premature ovarian insufficiency)

<https://www.daisynetwork.org/>

The Menopause Exchange

<https://menopause-exchange.co.uk/>

Women's Health concern

<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

Henpicked (community site for women over 40)

<https://henpicked.net/>