



## A School Partnership In Rural England

Motto : ‘ **We Aspire to Inspire**’

**Our Values** – using the initials of the names of the schools.

**K** – Kindness

**U** – Understanding

**P** – Patience

**H** – Honesty

**L** – Love

**B** – Boldness

## Menopause Support Policy

### Document History

KALE Model Policy reviewed and adopted for ASPIRE-Wide use, approved by EHT and noted at Federation

GB 21 May 2024

Bi-Annual Review

*The term ‘school’ refers to the schools in the ASPIRE Federation: Kingswood Primary, Ulcombe CE Primary, Platts Heath Primary and Leeds and Broomfield CE Primary. The term may refer to them jointly or individually.*

At our two Church of England schools this policy will be delivered through strong links made to our Christian values:

### **Leeds & Broomfield Church of England Primary School**

At Leeds & Broomfield we build strong foundations for all; to learn, flourish and fill their hearts with God's love. Everyone is important, valued and needed to make L&B grow. We give a quality all round nurturing education which develops the whole child; If the rain came we would not fall.

*"As many hands build a house, so many hearts make a school."  
(Matthew Ch 7 24-27)*

**RESPECT      RESILIENCE      EMPATHY      CURIOSITY      HONESTY**

Our school Christian Values support the development of the children and all within the school and local community, giving the children and staff a positive outward looking view. The pupils and staff support and help each other and the local community enabling all to flourish.

We have explored the story of Matthew (Ch 7 24-27) showing curiosity, and the children felt empathy for the builder of the house on the sand, but said they must be resilient to try again. Jesus was honest with his followers and people followed and trusted him. The story continues showing how Jesus respected all and everyone who wanted to listen and learn could – no one was turned away. This high level of inclusion and respect is what makes Leeds and Broomfield a great school community to be part of 'many hearts make a school'.

### **Ulcombe Church of England Primary School**

Ulcombe Church of England School is a nurturing, inclusive learning space, where our uniqueness inspires trust and welcomes diversity. Our children all flourish (for however long they are with us), in an environment where learning through making choices (good or bad) is not only embraced but discussed and, when needed, forgiven. This allows our learners to become positive role models in *their* wider communities. The whole school community works together in unity to ensure that our practice fully reflects the passage of Corinthians 12:12-14. The children and adults feel included and appreciated as one body with diverse cultures learning, working and flourishing together to accept everyone and nurture their aspirations for the future.

*"One body, many members, learning together surrounded by God's inclusive love."  
(Corinthians 12:12-14)*

**TRUST      RESPECT      HOPE      ENDURANCE**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Menopause is a normal part of every woman's\* life. This policy recognises that the menopause is an equality and occupational health and safety issue and that some women may need appropriate flexibility, support and adjustments during the time of change before, during and after the menopause.

1.2 ASPIRE Federation has a positive attitude towards the menopause and will treat all individuals with dignity and respect during this time and ensure that the workplace does not make symptoms worse.

ASPIRE Federation is committed to ensuring that women feel confident in discussing menopausal symptoms openly, without embarrassment, and are able to ask for support and adjustments in order to continue to work safely in the organisation. For this reason, the menopause at work is an issue for men as well as women.

\*We acknowledge that while the majority of people affected by the menopause will be women, those who are trans or non-binary may also experience the menopause or menopause-type symptoms. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

## 2. The legislative setting

Under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) require that employers make an assessment of the risks to the health and safety of their employees. This requires undertaking general risk assessments, which should include specific risks to the health of staff affected by the menopause.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include age, sex and disability. Employers are under a statutory duty to consider whether any 'reasonable adjustments' are required to alleviate any disadvantages staff encounter based on these characteristics.

[Section 6](#) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment, **and**
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Relating specifically to menopause symptoms:

- Many of the aforementioned symptoms would be likely to be classified as a physical and/or mental impairment.
- 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial.
- 'Long-term' means an impairment if it has lasted for at least 12 months, is likely to last for at least 12 months, or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.
- 'Day to day activities' are those carried out by most people on a regular basis and include, but are not limited to; walking, driving, carrying or moving things, being able to concentrate, writing, reading, typing, speaking.

Ongoing symptoms linked to the menopause may meet the definition of a disability and where they do, employers will be required to consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required to alleviate any disadvantage.

Any such adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, staff affected by the menopause will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

### 3. Aims

**3.1** Make sure that our school can support staff affected by the menopause and help them to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments.

**3.2** Set out how our school will make reasonable adjustments to minimise the risk of the working environment making menopausal symptoms worse for those experiencing them and recognise that the menopause and perimenopause are individual experiences, therefore there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

**3.3** Minimise menopause-related stigma in our school by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer. Survey findings from the education sector have shown that a quarter of women going through the menopause have considered leaving their jobs (need a ref to the research here). Schools cannot afford to lose this experienced, highly skilled and capable group of educators.

**3.4** Minimise absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff in the workplace.

**3.5** Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR teams, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them.

### 4. Definitions

**4.1** The **menopause** is a stage of life when a woman stops menstruating (having periods) for twelve consecutive months. It typically affects those aged between 45 and 55, when oestrogen (female sex hormones) levels begin to fall. In the UK, the average age to reach the menopause is 51.

**4.2 Perimenopause** is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. This can be several years before menopause is reached.

**4.3 Post-menopause** is the time beyond menopause.

**4.4 Early menopause** is when a woman's periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen naturally, or as a side effect of some treatments.

For the purpose of this policy, any reference to the menopause shall include perimenopause, early menopause and post-menopause.

### 5. Symptoms of Menopause

Individuals suffering from the menopause may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact them at work.

Menopausal symptoms might include:

- Challenges with memory, confidence and concentration
- Low mood, anxiety and depression
- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia and fatigue
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain

- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive

For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse. For example, if the temperature is too high, this may cause symptoms such as hot flushes, dizziness, discomfort, sweating and heart palpitations.

Symptoms affecting sleep can make it difficult for staff experiencing them to concentrate and stay focused, while low confidence, low mood and anxiety may impact on decision-making and relationships with colleagues.

We acknowledge that the menopause will affect everybody differently – some individuals may experience no symptoms at all, and some may experience a variety. However, 75% of women do experience some symptoms, and in 25% of women, these symptoms will have a severe effect on the person's life. We will adapt our response to staff affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

For more information regarding menopause in the workplace, including symptoms see <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/iizekema/20-menopause-in-the-workplace.pdf>

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

It is recognised that everyone who works at ASPIRE Federation has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff, including women experiencing the menopause.

### 6.1. All staff are responsible for:

- Taking responsibility for looking after their health and making appointments to see health professionals if needed
- Being open and honest in conversations with senior leaders and occupational health
- Contributing to a respectful and healthy working environment, treating others with empathy
- Support other members of staff, such as by providing practical assistance or emotional reassurance
- accepting and supporting any necessary adjustments their colleagues request or are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms

Supporting women through the menopause will increase collegiate bonds, and promote a happier, healthier workplace culture for all. Some colleagues may wish to volunteer to be trained as Menopause Ambassadors or just be a buddy for a colleague who would benefit from support.

### 6.1 The governing board

The governing board has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to the head of school

The governing board has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff are not exposed to risks to their health and safety on the school premises.

The governing body as the employer, also has a duty to:

- Assess the risks to staff and others affected by school activities in order to identify and introduce the health and safety measures necessary to manage those risks
- Inform employees about risks and the measures in place to manage them
- Make sure that adequate health and safety training is provided
- Acknowledge that senior leaders may also be experiencing menopausal symptoms and therefore make necessary adjustments to ensure their wellbeing remains high.

## 6.2. Senior Leaders

The most important and valuable thing a senior leader can do is listen and, wherever possible, respond sympathetically to any requests for adjustments at work (See appendix A) by:

- Familiarise themselves with this menopause policy
- Be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance and wellbeing; if someone's performance or wellbeing suddenly dips, consideration will be given as to whether the menopause may be playing a part in this.
- Carrying out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of staff affected by the menopause
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers and staff are aware of the menopause, its potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary
- Promoting information about and access to external support services
- Ensuring good ventilation and air quality throughout the school, leaving doors open where appropriate and ensuring windows can be safely opened
- Ensuring regular access to cold drinking water for all staff
- Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the school and collecting feedback from staff, as well as ensuring the temperature can be regulated per room by turning down radiators for example and the use of fans in the summer months.
- 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
- Fitting blinds to windows
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented, via an action plan. Ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting and that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.
- Designating a member of staff such as a wellbeing champion that staff affected by the menopause can speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager

Senior staff will work to create a culture in the school where staff can talk openly about the menopause by:

- Providing information on the menopause in the staff room, e.g. posters and leaflets
- Creating a support group so that those who want to can seek support from each other
- Providing training for staff and managers to achieve consistent practice. Senior Leaders may feel that ambassador training would be a useful strategy for their school or group of schools.
- Referring to the menopause in the school's staff wellbeing policy

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, the senior leader may:

- Discuss with the employee a referral to occupational health for further advice
- Review occupational health advice, and implement any additional recommendations
- Update the action plan and continue the review process.

### 6.3. Occupational Health

The role of occupational health is to:

- carry out a holistic assessment of the employee to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be exacerbating menopause symptoms
- discuss with the employee what adjustments would help
- signpost to other appropriate sources of help and advice.

### 6.4. Role of line managers

Line managers who work with staff who may be affected by the menopause will:

- Provide a non-judgmental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff
- Appreciate the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them confidentially and sensitively
- Monitor sickness absence, and have support meetings with staff if any patterns emerge
- Have regular, informal conversations with staff that they line manage who are affected by the menopause to discuss what support they need, and record any reasonable adjustments that are agreed
- Consider flexible working requests in order to accommodate acute symptoms
- Allow staff affected by the menopause to take regular breaks from their work if necessary to help manage symptoms
- Give swift permission for absence to attend medical appointments
- Promote information about and access to external support services
- Record menopause-related absences as an 'ongoing health issue' instead of as an individual short-term absence, to avoid triggering sickness absence procedures
- Be sensitive to health issues such as the menopause during the performance management/appraisal process
- If necessary, seek advice from HR or occupational health colleagues, or discuss a referral with the staff member to occupational health for further support

### 6.5. Role of staff members affected by the menopause

We encourage staff who are experiencing menopausal symptoms that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager, or with our designated well being lead/ mental health first aider
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff, such as [know if the menopause is having an impact on this
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services

## 7. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by members of staff before being ratified by the Full Governing Body every 2 years.

## 8. Useful references

- [Menopause](#) (NHS)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [Menopause: diagnosis and management](#) (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)
- The [Daisy Network](#) charity
- [Menopause in the Workplace](#)
- [Menopause resources](#) from the CIPD, particularly for:
  - [Line managers](#)
  - [HR staff](#)



**Appendix A**  
**ASPIRE Federation**  
**Menopause Support Assessment and Action Plan**

<b>Employee name</b>		<b>Role</b>	
<b>Name of Senior Leader completing Assessment and Action plan</b>		<b>Role</b>	
<b>Date of Assessment</b>		<b>Review Date</b>	

**Your Health**

<b>Please tick the box which best describes your current medical condition</b>	
<b>No symptoms</b>	
<b>Mild to moderate symptoms</b>	
<b>Significant Symptoms</b>	
<b>Perimenopausal</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Menopausal</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Post menopausal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Please describe your symptoms below</b>

**Medical Intervention**

<b>Please tick the box to give an indication of any medical intervention / appointments you have received or attended to date</b>		
		<b>Treatment / Medication</b>
<b>None</b>		
<b>GP diagnosis – no treatment</b>		
<b>GP diagnosis – treatment plan in place</b>		
<b>No formal diagnosis – alternative / personal treatment</b>		

**Agreed actions to be taken by employee or employer**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Implementation date</b>	<b>Date for review</b>

<b>Employee signature</b>		<b>Senior Leader signature</b>	
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**Review (3 months or earlier if needed)**

<b>Review Comments:</b>
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