The Children First Learning Partnership

Menopause Support Policy

2025-2026

(Version 3)

The Menopause Support Policy in respect of the Children First Learning Partnership has been discussed and adopted by the Directors Board after consultation with Unions	
Chair of Board:	*Mrs N. Chell*
Responsible Officer:	*CEO – Mrs A Rourke*
Agreed and ratified by the Directors	*8th December 2025*
To be reviewed:	*December 2026*

1. Purpose of Policy

This policy sets out the rights of employees experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them. It aims to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is; are clear on the Children First Learning Partnership's policy and practices, supported by Human Resources and Occupational Health.
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support colleagues at work.
- Ensure that employees suffering with menopause symptoms feel confident to discuss it and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure employees that we are a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause.

2. Who does it apply to?

While this Policy uses the term 'women' to talk about people who may experience menopause transition, it can impact trans or non-binary colleagues who do not identify as women in the same manner. All colleagues experiencing menopause transition should be supported.

3. The legislative context

This policy recognises that the menopause could be both equality and health and safety issues and that employees may need appropriate flexibility, support, and adjustments during the time of change before, during and after the menopause.

3.1 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, see section 5.3.

3.2 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

All staff are responsible for health and safety in schools and should:

- take responsibility for looking after their health
- be open and honest in conversations with HR and occupational health
- contribute to a respectful and healthy working environment
- be willing to help and support their colleagues

- accept and support any necessary adjustments their colleagues request or are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

4. Menopause as a health condition

Supporting colleagues experiencing symptoms of menopause transition means understanding that not everyone experiences menopause in the same way.
Like any other health condition, colleagues will have different symptoms and need different support at different times.

The menopause is a natural event in most women's lives during which they stop having periods and experience hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. However, each woman's experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40. Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. Women may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

Definitions:

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for women reaching menopause naturally). The average age for a woman to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness, or other reasons.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when a woman may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Post menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

5. Confidentiality

Information reported by colleagues who report experiencing symptoms will be kept confidential (unless their express consent is provided, or, if, as an Employer, we have got serious concerns for that colleagues' safety or that of other colleagues). Personal data collected in accordance will be used and retained in accordance with the data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the organisation becomes aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by; and disclosed to individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.

6. Symptoms

Symptoms vary greatly and can manifest both physically and psychologically, but they can commonly include:

- psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, memory loss, panic attacks, loss of confidence and reduced concentration
- hot flushes
- sleep disturbances (including night sweats) that can make you feel tired and irritable
- heavy bleeding that might cause pain or embarrassment at work
- muscle and joint stiffness, aches and pains
- recurrent urinary tract infections, including cystitis
- headaches
- skin changes – dryness, itchiness

If they affect a colleague's comfort and performance at work, the organisation has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

7. Making reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments can be made to help colleagues manage menopausal symptoms. These are likely to be temporary changes whilst going through menopause transition.

Risk assessments should be completed by line managers to understand more about how menopausal symptoms are affecting colleagues at work and the adjustments that are needed. Risk assessments should be reviewed periodically and whenever appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments will depend on colleagues' specific circumstances (symptoms, job role etc), but the types of changes that might help could be:

- access to cold water whilst at work
- easy access to toilet facilities
- making sure the temperature is comfortable, providing a fan or access to fresh air
- adjusting uniform requirements, or providing more items of uniform
- providing somewhere to store extra clothes or change clothes during the day
- time off to attend medical appointments
- fitting blinds to windows
- be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance; if an employee's performance suddenly dips, consideration could be given as to whether the menopause may be a contributory factor.

See also Appendix 2.

8. Flexible Working

The organisation aims to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Requests for flexible working will be considered in line with the school's Flexible Working policy, but could include:

- a change to the pattern of hours worked;
- work from home;
- a reduction in working hours; or
- more frequent breaks.

Requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.

9. Data protection

The organisation will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the organisation becomes aware of the issue is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of providing the necessary support.

10. Available support

Colleagues are encouraged to inform their line manager that they are experiencing menopausal symptoms at an early stage to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue rather than as individual instances of ill health.

Sickness absences arising from menopausal symptoms will be dealt with via the Managing Attendance at Work policy and appropriate medical advice sought, if applicable.

Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs. Employees who do not wish to discuss the issue with their direct line manager may find it helpful to have an initial discussion with a trusted colleague or another manager instead.

Employees will be encouraged to seek advice from medical practitioners regarding appropriate treatment and/ or to investigate suitable ways to manage/ reduce symptoms.

A referral to Occupational Health could also be of assistance, to understand what adjustments can be made; so, colleagues are encouraged to give their consent to be referred for advice.

External sources of help and support for employees and managers, is available:

- Menopause matters, which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
- the Daisy Network charity, which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency

- The National Health Service provides an overview of menopause. http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx.
- The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists offer further information in a dedicated area of their website at: https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Consultation and negotiation on proposed changes will take place with staff via the recognised trade unions.

Appendix 1

Risk Assessment – Menopause Support Policy

Please retain a copy of your assessment and ensure that the actions are completed. A copy will also be placed in your personnel file. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Employee Name		**Position**	
School			
Assessment undertaken by		**Position**	
Date of Assessment		**Review Date**	

Section 2: Your Health			
Please tick the box which best describes your current medical position/stage of menopause			
No symptoms (at present)		Perimenopause	
Minor to moderate symptoms		Significant symptoms	
Please detail the symptoms you are experienced including details regarding the severity, frequency and impact on you (whilst at work)			
Please give an indication of the medical intervention you have received to-date			
None		GP diagnosis, no treatment	
Diagnosis, treatment plan in place	Insert details of treatment plan		
No formal diagnosis; alternative/ personal treatment	Insert details		

Section 3: Job and Workstation		
Do you have easy access to drinking water, rest facilities and toilets?	**Yes**	**No**
Insert details:		
Is the environment in which you work comfortable?	**Yes**	**No**
Insert details:		
Is the job self-paced and are you able to avoid long periods of standing/ sitting/ driving or fatigue?	**Yes**	**No**
Insert details:		
Are you concerned about your levels of concentration/ stress/ anxiety? (Complete a stress risk assessment)	**Yes**	**No**
Insert details:		

Section 4: Discussion Points/ Actions Agreed			
Having completed your assessment (Section 2/3), list the points for discussion with your manager.			
Discussion Points		Actions Agreed	
e.g. medical intervention		*Referral to OH, visit GP by (date)*	
Employee Signature		**Manager Signature**	

Assessment Review	
This assessment should be repeated in 3 months' time; the agreed date or immediately, with your line manager, if required.	
Date	**Next Review date:**

APPENDIX 2

EXAMPLES OF SUPPORT

If an employee wishes to speak about their symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic), or if a male employee wishes to speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- Allow adequate time to have the conversation;
- Find an appropriate room to preserve confidentiality;
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly;
- Suggest ways in which they can be supported (see symptoms below)
- Agree actions, and how to implement them (you should use the risk assessment template (See Appendix 1) to record the meeting, so that all parties agree what has been discussed, and the next steps, before the meeting ends).
- Ensure that this record is treated as confidential, and is stored securely.
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom;
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for a follow up meeting.
- Do not rely on quick queries during chance encounters in the corridor or break room.

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including, but not exhaustively or exclusively; support for women should be considered as detailed below:

Hot Flushes:
• Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk (where possible a USB connected desk fan to ensure environmentally friendly) or moving near a window, or away from a heat source;
• Easy access to drinking water;
• Be allowed to adapt prescribed uniform, such as by removing a jacket;
• Have access to a rest room for breaks if their work involves long periods of standing or sitting, or a quiet area if they need to manage a severe hot flush.

Heavy/light Periods:
• Have permanent access to toilet and wash facilities;
• Ensure sanitary disposable products are available in toilet facilities.
• Provide storage space for a change of clothing if required.

Headaches:
• Have ease of access to fresh drinking water;
• Offer a quiet space to work;
• Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices;
• Have time out to take medication if needed.

Difficulty Sleeping:
• Ask to be considered for flexible working, particularly suffering from a lack of sleep.
• Consider homeworking if appropriate to the employees' role, if fatigued to reduce travelling etc.
• Agree time out from others, when required.
• 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;
• Offer coaching to the individual which might help with confidence;
• Offer reassurance about a person's value and worth in the organisation
• 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, and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly;
• Review task allocation and workload;
• Provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory-assisting equipment;
• Offer quiet space to work;
• Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open offices;
• Reduce interruptions;
• Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed;
• Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Anxiety:
• Promote counselling services provided by Thinkwell or other organisations.
• Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to – outside of work their area;
• Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques;
• Undertake mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

Medical Advice and Impact of Work upon
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. Occupational Health can carry out a holistic assessment of the employee to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be contributing to or exacerbating menopause symptoms.

Version Control and History

Version	Author(s)	Reason For Change	Date
V1	Children First Learning Partnership	CFLP adopted from Insight HR Model	August 2023
V2	Children First Learning Partnership	No changes	Octoer 2024
V3	Children First Learning Partnership	No Changes	October 2025