



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

MENOPAUSE POLICY

ADOPTED: JULY 2023
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NEXT REVIEW DATE: OCTOBER 2027

SPARKEN HILL ACADEMY
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MENOPAUSE POLICY

Introduction

Sparken Hill Academy is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here. We recognise that women may require additional consideration, support and adjustments before, during and after the menopause.

The menopause is a natural event in most women's lives when 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.

Sparken Hill Academy recognises that members of the transgender, non-binary and intersex communities may also experience menopausal symptoms if they are taking hormonal treatments. Although this policy refers to women, it should be noted that 'people who menstruate' also require consideration.

If any woman is suffering from a condition identified by the NHS as related to the menopause that is affecting their work life, we encourage them to speak to their line manager (or a suitable colleague). Sparken Hill Academy will endeavour to support the employee, applying the approach detailed in this policy.

This policy sets out the rights of women experiencing menopausal symptoms and explains the support available to them.

This policy has been developed as part of our commitment to support employees' health and wellbeing at work.

Aims

Sparken Hill Academy aims to:

- Create an environment where women feel confident enough to raise issues about their symptoms and ask for reasonable adjustments and for additional support at work.
- Ensure that conditions in the workplace do not make menopausal symptoms worse and that appropriate adjustments and support are put in place, as well as recognising that the menopause and perimenopause are individual experiences.
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of the menopause and how they can support women at work.
- Raise a wider awareness and understanding among the workforce.
- Reduce sickness absence due to menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff.
- Ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect within their working environment.

Definitions

Perimenopause

This is the time in a woman's life when she starts to experience hormonal fluctuations and changes to her periods. The average time for a woman to be perimenopausal is between four and five years.

Menopause

A woman is described as being menopausal when she has gone 12 months without a period. The average age for a woman to reach the menopause in the UK is 51. Evidence from the USA, though, suggests that the age is different for Asian and black women, with Asian women starting the menopause later and black women slightly earlier. However, there is currently no UK evidence available.

Post-menopausal

This refers to the time after menopause has occurred. The average time for a woman experiencing symptoms of the menopause is five years, but many women experience symptoms for up to 10 years and 3% of women will experience symptoms for the rest of their lives.

Symptoms

While symptoms vary, they may include:

- Hot flushes and night sweats.
- Low mood/mood swings and irritability.
- Poor memory and concentration.
- Increased anxiety and panic attacks.
- Headaches.
- Joint stiffness, aches and pains.
- Fatigue.
- Depression.
- Recurrent urinary tract infections.
- Heavy periods.

These symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. Sparken Hill Academy has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and therefore commits to ensuring that reasonable adjustments and additional support are available to those experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Support available

Sparken Hill Academy will educate and inform managers and staff to be aware of:

- How the menopause can affect working women.
- The potential symptoms of menopause.
- How women can be supported.

Women 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. Where someone does not feel comfortable speaking to their line manager, they are encouraged to talk to a colleague.

Early notification will also help line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs.

Support, information and resources

Reasonable adjustments

Sparken Hill Academy recognises the potential impact that menopausal symptoms can have on performance, together with the potential effects on health and wellbeing. We recognise that the menopause is a very personal experience, therefore, different levels and types of support, and adjustments may be needed. Managers will seek to support staff sympathetically in the first instance rather than moving directly to capability or disciplinary procedures. We aim to provide as much support as is reasonably practicable for individuals.

Reasonable adjustments could include:

- Ensuring windows can be safely opened.
- Provision of fans, where appropriate.
- Considering flexible working requests, which could include:
 - A change to the pattern of hours worked.
 - A reduction in working hours.
 - More frequent breaks.

This is not a definitive list of adjustments. Sparken Hill Academy will consider additional suggestions put forward by members of staff.

Employees should discuss such requests with their line manager. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.

Managers will consider all requests for support and adjustments sympathetically and will not discriminate against those employees who are experiencing the menopause.

Sparken Hill Academy will, where possible, provide private spaces for women to rest temporarily, to talk with a colleague or to phone for personal or professional support. Colleagues will be encouraged to adopt a sympathetic approach.

The following external resources provide help and support for employees and managers:

- Menopause matters (www.menopausematters.co.uk) provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options.
- The British Menopause Society (<https://thebms.org.uk>).
- Menopause in the workplace – Women's Health Concern (www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/menopause-in-the-workplace).

- ACAS guidance: Supporting staff through the menopause (www.acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work/supporting-staff-through-the-menopause).
- The CIPD guide: The menopause at work: guidance for people professionals (www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/menopause/people-professionals-guidance).
- The Daisy Network charity (www.daisynetwork.org) which provides support for women experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency.
- The Menopause Café (www.menopausecafe.net) which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause.

Roles and responsibilities

Everyone who works at Sparken Hill Academy has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff, including women experiencing menopause.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Taking responsibility for looking after their health.
- Being open and honest in conversations with human resources and occupational health.
- Contributing to a respectful and healthy working environment.
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues.
- Accepting and supporting any necessary adjustments that colleagues request or are receiving because of their menopausal symptoms.

Line managers

Line managers should:

- Be familiar with the menopause policy.
- Be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance.
- Provide a safe space to allow members of staff to speak openly and honestly.
- Record adjustments agreed and actions to be implemented, as part of an action plan.
- Ensure on-going dialogue through follow-up meetings.
- Ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.

Where adjustments are not successful, or the symptoms experienced are particularly severe, the line manager may:

- Discuss referring the employee to occupational health.
- Review the advice from occupational health and consider implementing any additional recommendations.
- Update the action plan and continue the review process.

Data protection

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