

Menopause Policy

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1. Definitions

DEMAT means the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.

Trust means the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust

Academy means a constituent academy of DEMAT.

Central Team means Staff who are not employed within an Academy.

CEO means the Chief Executive Officer of DEMAT, or any officer or other person exercising relevant authority delegated by the Chief Executive Officer to them.

COO means the Chief Operating Officer of DEMAT or any officer or other person exercising relevant authority delegated by the Chief Operating Officer to them.

Senior Manager means any Director or Head of a Function in the Central Leadership Team other than the Director of Education, the COO and the CEO.

Headteacher means leader of an academy, in any Academy that has an Executive Headteacher, it means that Executive Headteacher.

Line Manager means any member of staff with line management responsibilities including Headteachers.

Staff means any person employed by DEMAT, temporarily or permanently.

Employee means any person employed by DEMAT, temporarily or permanently.

Menopause is a stage of life when a woman* stops having periods. 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.

Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms.

Post-menopause is the time beyond menopause.

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 and early menopause.

*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. Application of this Policy

The policy is applicable to all employees (permanent and temporary) of DEMAT. Where applicable, it is also applicable to all Volunteers supporting DEMAT.

The above definitions are included for reference purposes for both School and Central Team staff to enable clarify and transparency when applying this policy.

3. Relationship with DEMAT Values

The application of this policy must be applied at all times in a way that reflects the values of DEMAT:

Love – We engender love and tolerance between and for our staff, pupils and others to foster an inspiring atmosphere of mutual support.

Community – We are committed to ensuring our schools are a living part of the community and contribute positively to its needs.

Respect – We do everything to provide a caring, safe and secure place for our staff and pupils to be happy and respected in our schools so they may achieve their potential.

Trust – We acknowledge accountability and responsibility for our actions and ensure that we encourage each other to make brave decisions and then learn from any mistakes.

Ambition – We are determined that our schools offer a place for the joy of learning, enabling those of all abilities to thrive and go on to lead rewarding lives

This is further defined in the four key strands of DEMAT, all of which are underpinned by our Christian distinctiveness,

Children are at the heart of all we do

Keep close to the work

Maintaining a legacy, creating new traditions

Aspirational, yet sustainable

4. Associated Policies and Documents

This Policy/Procedure should be read in conjunction with the following DEMAT Policies/Procedures:

Sickness absence policy

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Flexible working policy

Health and Safety policy

Discretionary Time off Policy

5. Version control

Policy type	DEMAT Trust Policy
Author	Helen Fisher, HR
Reviewed by	Helen Rothwell, Head of HR
Approved by	Personnel Committee Date: September 2023
Release date	15 April 2024
Review	ANNUAL Review May 2025 no changes. Policies will be reviewed in line with DEMAT's internal policy schedule and/or updated when new legislation comes into force.
Description of changes	The policy has been reviewed in line with legislation and best practice to provide clarity, greater consistency and support for staff. For further information regarding the specific changes please contact the HR Team at hrteam@demat.org.uk

6. Purpose and Scope

6.1 DEMAT are committed to creating an open and supportive culture. It is important employees feel comfortable speaking about how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting them at work and able to ask for the support they need to help manage symptoms.

6.2 This policy sets out guidelines for providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms within an inclusive and positive working environment.

6.3 The aims of this policy are:

- To build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that supports staff during the menopause;
- To create an environment where men and women who may not be experiencing menopausal symptoms but who may be affected by it can also speak openly and receive appropriate support.
- To highlight the availability of effective interventions to managers and staff through increased provision and availability of information;
- To ensure appropriate risk assessments which reflect the needs of menopausal women are undertaken as and when required.

- To provide appropriate training, information, and support for managers to allow them to discuss concerns with and provide support to their staff.
- To increase employee knowledge and awareness of support available

7. Policy Statement

- 7.1 DEMAT is committed to providing a working environment for all its staff and recognises that women may need additional consideration, support and adjustments before, during and after the menopause.
- 7.2 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 staff who require additional support during this time are treated with understanding, dignity and respect.
- 7.3 This policy will provide a framework within which DEMAT will encourage and facilitate working practices and services that support staff. The policy acknowledges that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach and so it is intended as a support guide for all staff.
- 7.4 It is important to recognise that for many reasons, people's individual experiences of the menopause may differ greatly. The menopause can impact on partners, friends and associates.
- 7.5 The Trust recognises it is important to develop and promote policies and systems to ensure that our pupils, staff and anyone associated with our Trust are not unlawfully discriminated against and we encourage a commitment to equality, diversity and fair treatment of all. We have therefore considered the impact of this policy, on those individuals with a protected characteristic(s).

8. Legislation & Guidance

- 8.1 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act employers have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 The Equality Act (2010) prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of certain 'protected characteristics' including sex, age and disability.
- 8.4 The menopause is not a specific protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010) but if an employee or worker is put at a disadvantage and treated less favourably because of their menopause symptoms, this could be discrimination if related to a protected characteristic for example age, disability, gender reassignment and sex.
- 8.5 Whilst the menopause is not in itself a disability, the Trust recognises that conditions arising from it may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the Equality Act and will therefore consider what reasonable adjustments may necessarily have to be applied on a case-by-case basis.

- 8.6 It is also possible that the menopause may worsen the effects of a disability or long-term health condition, or a disability or long-term health condition can worsen the impact of the menopause.

9. Roles & Responsibilities

9.1 The roles and responsibilities which apply in relation to this policy include but is not limited to:

9.1.1 Chief Executive Officer

- The CEO will ensure all leaders within the organisation are positive role models, championing and shaping a culture where the importance of wellbeing for those experiencing the menopause is recognised and supported.

9.1.2 Senior Managers and Line Managers

- Promote a culture that encourages employees to talk about any issues related to menopause that they may have.
- Be familiar with the Menopause policy and undertake any relevant training provided.
- Be aware of and providing signposting to sources of information and support as appropriate
- Be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance; if someone's performance suddenly dips, consideration will be given as to whether the menopause may be playing a part in this.
- Be ready and willing to listen and have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation and treating the discussion sensitively and confidentially and allowing adequate time for the discussion.
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented, via an action plan. Ensure ongoing dialogue with a follow up meeting.
- Ensuring that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.
- Maintain confidentiality.

9.1.3 Employees

- Take responsibility for looking after their health and wellbeing, accessing support where required.
- For those experiencing the menopause, share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties the menopause can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager.
- Report openly and honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager know if the menopause is having an impact on this.
- Be willing to help and support their colleagues by providing information and sharing knowledge and resources where appropriate.
- Accept and support any necessary adjustments their colleagues request or are receiving because of their menopausal symptoms.

- Recognise that should adjustments be implemented for a colleague due to menopausal symptoms they may not be made aware of the reason but should still treat the colleague with ongoing respect.

10. Who may be affected?

- 10.1 The Trust recognises that a large and increasing proportion of its employees will be working through and well beyond the menopause. In the UK it is estimated that around 1 in 3 women are either currently going through or have reached the menopause.
- 10.2 The menopause affects most women, and it can often indirectly affect their partners, families and colleagues as well. In the UK, the average age is 51, but it can happen much earlier. Many women experience the menopause before 45 (early menopause) - therefore their symptoms are not always recognised, and this can create additional barriers and stigma.
- 10.3 Some women experience a medical/ surgical menopause which can occur suddenly when the ovaries are damaged or removed by specific treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery. It is important to be aware that many women will experience the menopause at a time when other pressures are also increasing, for example many women at this age may be taking on additional caring responsibilities for elderly parents or grandchildren which may add to the impact of the menopause.
- 10.4 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, especially during some people's transition.
- 10.5 Menopause support should consider these additional barriers and needs. 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. It is particularly important that no assumptions are made by managers about who or how the menopause may impact.
- 10.6 Some women seek medical advice and treatment for the symptoms of the peri-menopause and menopause. A common form of treatment is known as hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Many women find these treatments helpful for alleviating symptoms, but HRT is not suitable or appropriate for all women. Some women using HRT may experience side effects which may also require adjustments in the workplace.

11. Symptoms of Menopause

- 11.1 The menopause is a natural event during which a person stops having periods and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels.
- 11.2 Peri-menopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause. An individual may start to experience menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

11.3 While menopausal symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

- hot flushes;
- night sweats;
- anxiety;

- dizziness;
- fatigue;
- memory loss;
- depression;
- headaches;
- recurrent urinary tract infections;
- joint stiffness, aches and pains;
- reduced concentration; and/or
- heavy periods.

12. Accessing Support

- 12.1 It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience and different adjustments and levels of support may be needed for different individuals.
- 12.2 The Trust is committed to ensuring that line managers are sympathetic and provide appropriate support and adjustments when needed to help deal with issues arising from the menopause.
- 12.3 We encourage employees to be as open as possible about any particular issues they are experiencing or adjustments they may need to ensure they are provided with the right level of support.
- 12.4 If an employee is finding it difficult to cope at work because of menopausal symptoms, they are encouraged to speak to their line manager. If for any reason they feel unable to approach the line manager, the HR Department can be contacted.
- 12.5 Any health-related information disclosed during discussions with a line manager or the HR department will be treated sensitively and in confidence.
- 12.6 There are also external organisations which can offer support. Please see section 22 for further details.

13. Flexible Working

- 13.1 The Trust recognises that employees experiencing menopausal symptoms may wish to adjust their working arrangements to balance their work and personal lives.
- 13.2 Employees who have worked for the Trust continuously for 26 weeks have a statutory right to submit a formal flexible working request.
- 13.3 However, it is recognised that for individuals affected by menopausal symptoms, the option to submit an informal flexible working request and work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate.

13.4 If an employee feels they would benefit from a temporary change to their working arrangements because of symptoms that may be impacting on their performance, they should discuss these with their line manager.

- 13.5 We will try to facilitate temporary and permanent flexible working requests wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet the needs of the employee whilst also maintaining the educational needs of our children.

14. Working Environment

- 14.1 If an employee feels that the working environment is exacerbating menopausal symptoms, they should raise this with their line manager.
- 14.2 There may be a range of practical adjustments that we can implement to make working life easier, but we appreciate these may differ based on individual needs. We therefore encourage employees to approach their line managers to discuss this in more detail.

15. Quiet Place to Work

- 15.1 If an employee need time out to relax, a short break to manage any symptoms or take medication, or a quiet space to work, they should speak to their line manager who will try their best to accommodate this, where possible

16. Sickness Absence

- 16.1 If an employee is sick and unable to work due to menopausal symptoms, the procedure set out in DEMAT's Sickness Absence policy should be followed.
- 16.2 Where possible, as we would like to encourage openness, please inform your manager that the absence relates to the menopause. The absence will be recorded as related to menopausal symptoms but managers will consider such absence as an ongoing condition requiring the consideration of reasonable adjustments and flexibility in absence procedure triggers.

17. Occupational Health

- 17.1 In some cases, the Trust may refer an employee to occupational health so that they can advise on how menopausal symptoms are impacted at work and make recommendations on the types of adjustments that may be appropriate. Occupational health may also signpost the employee to external sources of help and advice.

18. Employee Assistance

Programme

- 18.1 Help and support is also available through our employee assistance programme (EAP). Employees can use the EAP to speak to an independent adviser on a confidential basis about any issue that may be troubling them.
- 18.2 The EAP is provided by Employee Assist and can be contacted 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year on 0800 328 1437. Alternatively, an appointment can be arranged online at www.employeeassistance.org.uk. The login access code is diocese.

19. Risk Assessments

- 19.1 An effective approach to assessing the impact of the work environment on menopausal symptoms is undertaking a Risk Assessment. Risk assessments will be carried out which take the specific needs of menopausal women into consideration to ensure that the working environment will not make their symptoms worse. The risk assessment will assist with the identification of any potential adjustments that may be required.
- 19.2 Common areas in particular to consider are:
- workplace temperature and ventilation
 - access to adequate toilet and washing facilities
 - access to drinking water
 - working times and break times
 - workplace stress and workload
- 19.3 It is reasonable for managers to review reasonable adjustments to ensure they are still effective.
- 19.4 It is recognised that there can also be long term effects of the menopause where reasonable adjustments may be needed on a permanent basis. It may be necessary to refer the employee to Occupational Health to obtain further information about what may need to be considered to support the employee.

20. Time off to attend Medical Appointments.

- 20.1 The Trust will support employees needing to attend a medical appointment connected with the menopause. The Trust has a discretionary leave policy where upon production of a medical appointment letter/card up to half a day paid leave may be granted to attend an appointment at hospital. Additionally, up to 3 days unpaid leave in a rolling 12- month period may be granted to attend medical appointments.
- 20.2 Further details can be found in the discretionary leave policy.

21. Data Protection

- 21.1 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.

22. External Support and

Information

22.1 There are various organisations that provide help and support on the menopause, including:

- [Menopause matters](#), which provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options;
- the [Daisy Network](#) charity, which provides support for people experiencing premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency;
- the [Menopause Café](#), which provides information about events where strangers gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss the menopause; and
- [Women's Health Concern](#), which provides a confidential, independent service to advise, inform and reassure women about their gynaecological, sexual and post reproductive health.