

MENOPAUSE POLICY

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HR Advisor

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MENOPAUSE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Romero Catholic Academy Trust is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees, recognising that there is a strong link between employee wellbeing and performance. We are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and will provide suitable support for all employees.

The purpose of this Menopause Policy is to:

- Promote a greater understanding of the menopause and its symptoms
- Support an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably hold conversations about the menopause
- Ensure every staff member understands what the menopause is and the common signs & symptoms
- Ensure senior leaders/line managers are aware of the reasonable adjustments that may be put in place to support staff members
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms

Whilst some individuals go through this natural stage without too many problems, for others it is more difficult. It can pose significant challenges to daily living and can impact on work.

Employees are encouraged to inform their headteacher/line manager that their menopausal symptoms are impacting on their work at an early stage, to ensure that symptoms are treated as an ongoing health issue. Early notification will also help headteachers/line managers to determine the most appropriate course of action to support an employee's individual needs.

This policy is also applicable to transgender, intersex people and non-binary employees who may also experience menopausal symptoms. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

The menopause policy underpins Romero Catholic Academy Trust's Health and Wellbeing Policy, which is based on the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) seven domains of wellbeing:



SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees employed by Romero Catholic Academy Trust.

AIM OF THE POLICY

The aim of our Health and Wellbeing Policy is:

To have a workplace culture that promotes, and supports, the health and wellbeing of all employees of Romero Catholic Academy Trust.

In support of this over-arching aim, the Menopause Policy aims to:

- Make sure that Romero Catholic Academy Trust can support employees affected by the menopause and help them to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments
- Set out how our Trust will make reasonable adjustments, to minimise the risk of the working environment making menopausal symptoms worse for those experiencing them
- Minimise menopause-related stigma in our Trust, by educating employees on what the menopause is and the symptoms that employees affected by it might suffer
- Provide further resources to help employees, particularly line managers and the HR team, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them
- Work alongside our Trust Menopause Action Plan and help us implement it

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The objectives of this policy are to fulfil the following domains of wellbeing and their underlying elements:



Health

Health is the overall state of physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing that enables a person to function and thrive in daily life, including:

- **Physical health** – physical wellbeing.
- **Physical safety** - protection from, and prevention of, harm, injury, or danger.
- **Mental health** - the state of a person's emotional and psychological well-being, affecting how they think, feel, cope with stress and relate to others.



Good Work

Good work refers to having safe, meaningful, and fairly rewarded employment or activities that provide purpose, stability, and opportunities for personal growth.

- **Working environment** – ergonomically designed working areas, open and inclusive culture.
- **Good line management** - effective people management policies and effective application.

- **Work demands** - job design, job roles, job quality, workload, working hours, job satisfaction, work-life balance.
- **Autonomy** - control, innovation and whistleblowing.
- **Change management** – leadership, communication and employee involvement and engagement.



Values/Principles

The beliefs and guidelines that shape choices, behaviours, and relationships, supporting a sense of purpose, fairness, respect, and personal fulfilment.

- **Leadership** - values-based leadership, clear mission and objectives, health and wellbeing policy, corporate governance, building trust.
- **Ethical standards** - dignity at work, corporate social responsibility, community investment and volunteering.
- **Inclusion and diversity** - valuing difference, cultural engagement, training for employees and managers.

From spring 2027, large employers (250 staff or more) will be required to develop and publish a menopause action plan, as set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025. The Menopause Action Plan can be found within our Health and Wellbeing Guide.

DEFINITIONS

The menopause is a natural stage of life, when a female’s oestrogen levels decline and they stop having periods. As menopausal symptoms are typically experienced for several years it is best described as a ‘transition’, rather than a one-off event.

It should be recognised that the experience will vary significantly for each individual. The menopause usually occurs between 45 - 55 years of age, with the average age in the UK being 51 years. More information about the menopause, symptoms and treatment can be found on the [NHS website](#).

Anyone with female anatomy can experience menopause regardless of gender or gender identity. While all women experience the menopause, an individual's experience of the menopause may differ greatly. Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status.

MENOPAUSE

The **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

Perimenopause is the time of hormonal change leading up to the menopause, when a woman may experience symptoms such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms - this can be years before menopause.

POST-MENOPAUSE

Post-menopause is the time beyond menopause.

EARLY 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.

Menopause before 40 years of age is known as premature ovarian insufficiency (POI). Surgical and medical conditions, such as cancer, hysterectomy, fertility treatment, endometriosis and hormone therapy as part of someone's transition to a true gender can also bring about early menopause symptoms.

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.

ANDROPAUSE (MALE MENOPAUSE)

The term 'male menopause' is somewhat misleading because it suggests the symptoms are the result of a sudden drop in testosterone in middle age, similar to the hormonal changes experienced during the female menopause, however this is not the case (further details can be found on the NHS website).

The symptoms may interfere with home and work life and include mood swings and irritability, loss of muscle mass and reduced ability to exercise, fat redistribution, a general lack of enthusiasm or energy, difficulty sleeping/increased tiredness and poor concentration/short-term memory.

SYMPTOMS

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.

Below is a (non-exhaustive) list of symptoms that may affect work ability:

Symptom	Potential Impact
Hot flushes	May cause embarrassment and distress, and individuals may isolate themselves from colleagues. Stressful situations might also trigger hot flushes
Sleep disturbance	May lead to tiredness, memory problems and reduced concentration
Heavy and/or erratic periods	May cause embarrassment. Some individuals may need to more frequently change sanitary protection, requiring breaks to use toilet facilities
Headaches	Might cause work impairment, lower productivity and increased sickness absence
Mood change	May lead to increased sickness absence levels (e.g. with anxiety & depression)

Loss of confidence	Especially in severe cases, it may lead to loss of confidence in ability and low self esteem
Cognitive difficulty	Often termed 'Menopause Fog', this can affect short term memory, concentration and attention to detail, leading to worry about performance and loss of confidence in ability.

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 employees 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. We will adapt our response to employees affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

RESPONSIBILITIES

THE TRUST BOARD

The Trust Board has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the Trust, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer/Catholic Senior Executive Leader.

The Trust Board has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that employees are not exposed to risks to their health and safety on the Trust premises.

Romero Catholic Academy Trust, as the employer, also has a duty to:

- Assess the risks to employees, and others, affected by Trust activities in order to identify and introduce the health and safety measures necessary to manage those risks
- Inform employees about the risks and the measures in place, to manage them
- Make sure that adequate health and safety training is provided

ROLE OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Senior Leadership Team will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support employees experiencing the menopause, and to make sure the workplace doesn't make their symptoms worse, by:

- Carrying out individual risk assessments to assess working conditions in line with the specific needs of employees affected by the menopause
- Monitoring the wellbeing of employees through regular surveys and structured conversations
- Providing resources and training opportunities to make sure that all line managers and the HR Team 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 fresh drinking water for all employees

- Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the school and collecting feedback from all employees, as well as ensuring the temperature can be regulated per room by turning down radiators for example
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for all employees
- Designating a member of staff such as a wellbeing champion that employees affected by the menopause can speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager
- Using our menopause action plan to make sure we have appropriate support in place

Senior staff will work to create a culture in the school where employees 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 employees and managers to achieve consistent practice
- Accessing occupational health services and our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS

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

- Provide a non-judgmental, empathetic and confidential support system to employees
- Appreciate the personal nature of any conversations about the menopause and treat them confidentially and sensitively
- Monitor sickness absence and have support meetings with employees if any patterns emerge
- Have regular, informal conversations with employees 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
- Support employees, affected by the menopause, with reasonable adjustments 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'
- 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

ROLE OF EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY THE MENOPAUSE

We encourage employees 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

- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager or another trusted member of staff know, if the menopause is having an impact on this
- Make time to visit their GP and other support services
- Access our employee assistance programme (EAP) for further support

ROLE OF ALL EMPLOYEES

All employees

- Take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing
- Promote health and wellbeing for themselves and others at all times
- Behave in a manner that respects their own health and safety needs and that of others in the workplace
- Be aware of the policies and procedures relevant to employee wellbeing
- Treat others with consideration, respect and dignity
- Ensure that they do not, through their own actions or omissions, create unnecessary work for themselves or others
- Where appropriate, engage with training on health and wellbeing issues
- Seek support or help when they think they are experiencing a problem
- Where appropriate, engage with the Employee Assistance Programme and/or Occupational Health
- Report honestly about their wellbeing to their line manager, or to another trusted member of staff

FURTHER RESOURCES

- [Dr Louise Newson – Hormone expert](#)
- [Menopause in the education workplace – Education Support](#)
- [Menopause - NHS](#)
- [Menopause Matters, menopausal symptoms, remedies, advice](#)
- [Overview | Menopause: identification and management | Guidance | NICE](#)
- [daisynetwork.org – The Daisy Network](#)
- [Home - Rockmy – Rock My Menopause](#)
- [Women's Health Concern | Confidential Advice, Reassurance and Education](#)

COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

The Menopause Policy, and Menopause Assessment, will be promoted to all employees through the Romero Catholic Academy Trust Portal and 'Romero Roundup', the weekly newsletter.

Within the Health and Wellbeing Guidance, we have identified opportunities to promote, and raise awareness of, our Menopause Policy through a network of Health and Wellbeing Champions, Mental Health First Aiders and leadership training, development and induction.

Improved communication of our Menopause Policy will ensure that the policy is embedded across Romero Catholic Academy Trust and support achievement of our aim:

To have a workplace culture that promotes, and supports, the health and wellbeing of all employees of Romero Catholic Academy Trust.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

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 employees 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' mean 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 in a regular basis and includes, but is not limited to, walking, driving, carrying or moving things, being able to concentrate, writing, reading, typing and 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, employees affected by the menopause will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

EQUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

We are mindful of the obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and this policy will be applied fairly and consistently to all employees. Reasonable adjustments will be made for those with disabilities as appropriate.

A copy of this policy and a copy of all relevant documents will be made available for all employees. The policy is also available in hard copy on request and can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

The effectiveness of the Menopause Policy, and associated guidance, will be measured through:

- Employee feedback
- Employee questionnaires and surveys
- Employee sickness absence and presenteeism
- Return to Work Interviews
- Staff turnover levels
- Risk Assessments – focussing on both mental and physical wellbeing
- Occupational Health Referrals
- Counselling service referrals
- Staff complaints
- Feedback from Romero Catholic Academy Trust Mental Health Leads and/or Teams

Romero Catholic Academy Trust will monitor the operation of this policy with particular reference to our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Romero Catholic Academy Trust recognises the importance of collaborative relationships with recognised trade unions in promoting and maintaining positive health and wellbeing in the workplace. This policy does not form part of the employee's contractual terms and conditions and may be amended from time to time, subject to review with the recognised trade unions.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

Romero Catholic Academy Trust has a range of policies which support employee health and wellbeing, through provision of fair and consistent treatment of employees:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Leave of Absence Policy
- Family friendly policies
- Menopause Policy
- Mental Health and Stress Policy (to be drafted)
- Pay Policy
- Performance Management Policy/Appraisal Policy

Romero Catholic Academy Trust has a duty of care as an employer to all employees and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty. These include:

- Equalities Statement
- Grievance Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy/Procedure
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

