

Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST)

“Empowering our unique schools to excel”



MENOPAUSE POLICY

ODBST Level 1 Statutory Policy:	ALL Schools require this policy with no changes allowed to core text. No changes are necessary to personalise this with school name and branding, as this is a Trust level policy for use, without change, by all schools, except where a school contact is required as identified in the content of the policy. LGBs will note adoption in LGB meetings. Review will take place at Trust level, and schools will be notified of updates and review dates as necessary.
Other related ODBST policies and procedures:	Health & Attendance policy Flexible Working policy Equality and Diversity policy Data Protection policy
Committee responsible:	FRAPP
Approved by:	FRAPP
Date Approved:	Summer term 2025
Review Date:	Summer term 2027

In reviewing this policy the Trust Board has had regards to the Equality Act 2010 and carried out an equality impact assessment. It is satisfied that no group with a protected characteristic will be unfairly disadvantaged.

1. Introduction

We are committed to supporting staff affected by the menopause. We recognise that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that, for some, menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- (a) raise awareness of menopause and its impact in the workplace;
- (b) encourage open conversations between line managers and staff; and
- (c) direct staff to relevant advice and assistance.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services, and we may amend it at any time.

Any information you provide to us about your health will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. We recognise that this data is sensitive and will handle it in a confidential manner.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers and volunteers.

3. Responsibilities

The Trustees have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but have delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the to the Headteachers (for schools) and the Trust Officers (for the Shared Services Team). Suggestions for change should be reported to the Chief People Officer.

You should refer any questions you may have about the day-to-day application of this policy to your line manager in the first instance.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Chief People Officer.

4. What is menopause?

According to the NHS, menopause occurs when periods have stopped for over 12 months due to lower hormone levels. Most women will experience menopause at some point during their life. Menopause can also impact people who may not identify as female, such as trans and non-binary people.

Most of those who experience menopause will do so between the ages of 45 and 55. However, some start experiencing symptoms much earlier. Often, symptoms last between four to eight years, but they can continue for longer.

Symptoms can be psychological (such as anxiety, mood swings and problems with memory and concentration) or physical (such as hot flushes, sleep disturbance and headaches). The majority of those going through menopause will experience some symptoms, although everyone is different and symptoms can fluctuate. Symptoms can vary and, in some cases, may be very severe. Different people may experience symptoms in different combinations which can change with time.

Menopause is preceded by perimenopause, during which periods continue but the body prepares itself for menopause. Perimenopause can also last several years and can involve similar symptoms to

menopause itself. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to menopause includes perimenopause.

5. Open conversations

Menopause is not just an issue for women. All staff should be aware of menopause so that they can support those experiencing it or otherwise affected by it. We encourage an environment in which colleagues can have open conversations about menopause. We expect all staff to be supportive of colleagues who may be affected by menopause in the workplace.

Anyone affected by menopause should feel confident to talk to their line manager about their symptoms and the support they may need to reduce the difficulties menopause can cause them at work. Line managers and the ODBST HR team should be ready to have open conversations with staff about menopause and what support is available. These conversations should be treated sensitively and any information provided should be handled confidentially and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

6. Risk assessments

We are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff and will consider any aspects of the working environment that may worsen menopausal symptoms. This may include identifying and addressing specific risks to the health and well-being of those experiencing menopause.

7. Support and adjustments

While many who experience menopause are able to carry on their working lives as normal, we recognise that others may benefit from adjustments to their working conditions to mitigate the impact of menopause symptoms on their work. If you believe that you would benefit from adjustments or other support, you should speak to your line manager (and/or in schools your headteacher) in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so, you should contact the HR team on hr@odbst.org.

Physical adjustments could include temperature control, provision of electric fans or access to rest facilities. Depending on individual and business needs, adjustments such as flexible working may be considered. We may also consider more frequent rest breaks or changes to work allocation. These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

We may refer you to Occupational Health or seek medical advice from your GP to better understand any adjustments and other support that may help alleviate symptoms affecting you at work. Any request for a medical report or examination will be dealt with as set out in our Health and Attendance Policy.

Employees also have access to the Trust's confidential employee support helpline (currently the Schools Advisory Service) - which offers specific menopause support from qualified nurses. Their phone number is 01773 814403.