

St Marychurch Pre-school

Menopause Policy

Statement of intent

It is our intention to make our setting welcoming for women practitioner even during the menopause. The setting is aware that the average age of menopause is 51 but can occur earlier, or later.

Aim

We aim to ensure every practitioner feels comfortable when working in the setting and to be able to discuss their needs with management and colleagues when going through the menopause.

Methods

- Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a big impact on the daily life of women, including relationships, social life, family life and work.
- Premature menopause: The setting understands this can be devastating for women, especially if women has not yet started, or completed her family. Women can be shocked and unbelieving of the diagnosis and need to have adequate support, or advice to cope with either the physical or psychological effects. It can happen earlier naturally, or due to surgery, cancer treatments or genetic reasons.
- The setting is aware that women can suffer both physically and psychological symptoms and therefore may need extra support, treatment, or medical/surgical interventions and time away from work. Any time off for symptoms will be given as stated in contracts. A doctor's fit note will be required.
- This stage of their life may last for many years and severity varies between individuals.

Mental health symptoms

The setting is aware that psychological menopause and perimenopause are common and complex and include:

- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating and memory (brain fog)
- Difficulty coping
- Depression
- Sadness
- Overreacting to minor upsets, anger and forgetfulness
- Low self-esteem

Physical symptoms

The setting is aware the common physical symptoms of menopause and perimenopause include:

- Hot flushes - sudden feelings of hot or cold in the face, neck and chest. Hot flushes can be severe and cause significant interference with work, sleep and quality of life. Hot flushes can be embarrassing, disruptive and make women dizzy.

- Palpitations, (sensation of heart racing) and dizziness
- Headaches and migraines that are worse than usual
- Changed body shape and weight gain
- Skin changes including dry and itchy skin
- Sexual problems leading to difficulties in relationships for the wellbeing of the women.
- Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs)
- Irregular periods.
- Insomnia (sleeplessness) or disturbed sleep (leading to tiredness, fatigue and irritability during the day), may be partly due to the night sweats. Brain fog.
- Muscle aches and joint pains commonly occur, often affecting neck, wrists and shoulders

Later menopause symptoms include:

- Passing urine more often by day and/or by night
- Discomfort on passing urine
- Urine infection
- Leakage of urine
- Vaginal dryness, discomfort, discharge, burning and itching

The setting is aware that vaginal and bladder symptoms are very common and can cause significant distress.

The setting understands that situations and life events may overwhelm women in their late forties and fifties and can include:

- Teenage children or children leaving home
- Divorce
- Retirement (of self or partner)
- Widowhood
- Illness or death of parents
- Physical ageing
- Worry over elderly relatives

Menopause in the workplace.

The setting is aware that women tend not to disclose their symptoms and problems to their manager (especially if a male)

Women may need further advice and support.

Women may be embarrassed and have lowered confidence when dealing with heavy and painful periods, hot flushes, mood swings, fatigue and poor concentration.

Women may not reveal the real reasons for their absence from work when taking time off to deal with their symptoms.

Some women say they have to work extremely hard to overcome their perceived shortcomings due to the menopause.

Menopause Policy continued.....

How the setting may be able to support practitioners:-

The setting may support women to work part-time or support their change in career.

The setting will try to provide flexible working hours and working arrangements, to help manage symptoms, where possible.

Provide a culture within the setting where women feel comfortable about discussing their symptoms and the impact they have on their working lives.

Support practitioners in gaining access for support from a GP, nurse or pharmacist to help with symptoms.

To support women with mental illness should they no longer be able to have children and are deemed to have become obsessive with a child within the setting, or showing other behaviours.

Seek options to improve the temperature and ventilation in the work environment.

Staff will be given the opportunity to have a break from their usual role, if safe to do so, to support them when they are having any of the menopausal symptoms.

The manager will discuss and use the Staff Concern form. All information will be kept private and confidential and discussed with Practitioner as to what needs to be shared for safety in the setting.

The staff supervision meetings every 6 weeks will include the specific item (Menopause discussion), to be discussed.

Further information

Charities offering information and support include:

- [Women's Health Concern](#)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [Daisy Network](#) for premature menopause
- [Menopause Café](#)
- [Queermenopause](#) for people who identify as LGBT+

Signed _____ Position _____

Dated _____

We aim to provide a safe, stimulating, caring, happy Pre-school where all children and their families are welcome. We provide a curriculum based on the Early Years Foundation Stage using individual children's interest and needs.

