

**THE CAM ACADEMY TRUST  
MENOPAUSE POLICY**

to be read in conjunction with the following policies:  
Flexible Working Policy, Staff Grievance Procedure, Health and Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy and the Staff Absence Policy

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## Introduction

The Cam Academy Trust is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for all. We recognise that some colleagues may require additional consideration, support and adjustments before, during and after the menopause.

The menopause is a natural event in most individuals lives when they stop having periods and experience changes in hormone levels. It usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and typically lasts between four and eight years. However, each individual experience will differ, and menopausal symptoms can occasionally begin before the age of 40.

Perimenopause, or menopause transition, begins several years before menopause, with some experiencing menopausal symptoms during the final two years of perimenopause.

Menopause should not be taboo or ‘hidden’. We want everyone to understand what menopause and perimenopause are and to be able to talk about them openly, without embarrassment. This is not just an issue for women, it will affect trans men and some non-binary people, and all men will be affected by it indirectly.

If an individual 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 a suitable colleague or HR for guidance and support. The Trust and its Schools will endeavour to support the employee, applying the approach detailed in this policy.

This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to individuals to help them manage perimenopause and menopause symptoms at work. It is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment. This policy has been developed as part of our commitment to support employees' health and wellbeing at work.

## **Aims**

The Cam Academy Trust aims to:

- Create an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably initiate conversations about perimenopause, menopause and their symptoms, and ask for reasonable adjustments and/or additional support at work so they can continue to be successful in their roles.
- Ensure that everyone understands what perimenopause and menopause are, can confidently have open and supportive conversations and are clear on the Trusts policy and practices.
- Ensure that the 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 perimenopause and menopause, and how they can support colleagues at work.
- Raise a wider awareness and understanding among the workforce.
- Reduce absenteeism due to perimenopause and menopausal symptoms and retain valued staff.
- Ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and with dignity and respect within their working environment.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff at every level.

## **Definitions**

The menopause is when someone stops having periods. It occurs when the ovaries stop producing eggs and as a result, levels of hormones called estrogen, progesterone and testosterone fall.

There are four key stages:

- **Pre-menopause:** the time in life before any menopausal symptoms occur.
- **Perimenopause:** when menopausal symptoms occur due to hormone changes, but periods still happen (even if irregular).
- **Menopause:** when there has been no period for 12 consecutive months.
- **Post-menopause:** the time in life after 12 months with no periods

## **Symptoms**

Over 80% of women, trans men and some non-binary people experience symptoms due to changes in hormone levels. 25% of these experience symptoms which could be classed as severe and have a significant impact on their daily life.

There are many symptoms including, but not exclusively, anxiety, brain fog, fatigue, hot flushes, trouble sleeping, poor concentration, headaches or migraine. Heavy periods, aching muscles and joints, and loss of confidence and self esteem can also occur.

It is important to remember that reduced levels of estrogen last for ever. This is not a phase that people go through and 'come out the other side'. Without replacing hormones, ongoing symptoms can occur for the rest of someone's life. Lack of estrogen has a further effect on future health as it is linked with loss of bone density (leading to osteoporosis), heart disease, diabetes and dementia.

These symptoms can affect an employee's comfort and performance at work. The Trust 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 perimenopausal or menopausal symptoms.

### **Support available**

The Trust will educate and inform managers and staff to be aware of:

- How the perimenopause and menopause can affect colleagues at work.
- The potential symptoms of perimenopause and menopause.
- How colleagues can be supported.

Colleagues are encouraged to inform their line manager and/or HR if they are experiencing perimenopause and/or 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 or HR then they are encouraged to talk to a suitable colleague.

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

### **Support, Information and Resources**

#### **Reasonable adjustments**

The Cam Academy Trust recognises the potential impact that perimenopause and 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. Line Managers will seek to support staff sympathetically and provide as much assistance as is reasonably practicable for individuals.

Reasonable adjustments could include:

- Leaving doors open where appropriate.
- Ensuring windows can be safely opened.
- Provision of fans.
- Access to cold drinking water

Considering flexible working requests, which could include:

- A change to the pattern of hours worked.
- A temporary reduction in working hours.
- More frequent breaks.

This is not a definitive list of adjustments. The Trust and its Schools will consider additional suggestions made by colleagues.

Employees should discuss such requests with their Line Manager and/or HR. Depending on the circumstances, requests may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis.

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

The Trust will, where possible, provide private spaces for colleagues 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:

[National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) (NICE) Guidelines. These explain how your clinician can determine what types of treatment and interventions they can offer.

The [NHS](#) provides an overview of the menopause.

[Balance](#) offer free information with a vast library of menopause information, films, podcasts, stories etc.

The Balance app provides free perimenopause and menopause support and information. The app has a symptom tracker and personalised health reports which can be used to help individuals talk to their doctor about their symptoms. Find it in the App Store on your phone or download from [here](#).

Watch this documentary with [Davina McCall](#).

[Menopause matters](#) provides information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options.

[The British Menopause Society](#).

Menopause in the workplace – [Women's Health Concern](#).

ACAS guidance: [Supporting staff through the menopause](#).

The CIPD guide: [The menopause at work: guidance for people professionals](#).

The [Daisy Network](#) charity which provides support for women 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.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

Everyone who works for The Cam Academy Trust has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff experiencing menopause.

### **Colleagues**

All colleagues 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 productive working environment.
- being willing to help and support their colleagues.
- understanding any necessary adjustments that colleagues request or are receiving because of their menopausal symptoms.

### **Line managers**

All Line managers should:

- be familiar with the menopause policy.
- be aware of the potential impact of the perimenopause and menopause on performance.
- be ready and willing to have open discussions about the perimenopause and menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally.
- respect colleagues right to privacy and confidentiality, ensure all information shared with colleagues, line managers and HR regarding experiences of staff members is treated as confidential (special category data).
- 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.

HR will:

- offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this policy and guidance
- have open discussions with colleagues about menopause, and offer guidance, support, or adjustments in an attempt where possible to support the individual's requirements

- respect worker's right to privacy and confidentiality, ensuring all information shared with colleagues, line managers and HR regarding experiences of staff members is treated as confidential (special category data)
- attend appropriate training if required

## **Andropause**

Some men develop depression, lack of drive, and other physical and emotional symptoms when they reach their late 40s to early 50s. This is referred to as andropause.

Other symptoms common in men this age are:

- mood swings and irritability
- loss of muscle mass and reduced ability to exercise
- fat redistribution, such as developing a large belly or "man boobs" (gynaecomastia)
- a general lack of enthusiasm or energy
- difficulty sleeping (insomnia) or increased tiredness
- poor concentration and short-term memory

Line managers need to be supportive and maintain awareness so that colleagues are not embarrassed to approach them to discuss how the andropause is affecting their health and role at work. Symptoms can interfere with everyday life and happiness, so it's important that adequate support is put in place for colleagues.

Regular, informal conversations between the Line Manager and employee may enable discussion on changes in health, issues relating to the andropause and any suitable adjustments that could be made. Such conversations can identify the support mechanisms available, help to encourage colleagues to discuss any relevant health concerns and to ensure that they consult with their GP, if required.

Line Managers should ensure that confidentiality is maintained when addressing health information associated with the andropause.

## **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.