

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Trust Policy

Menopause

Policy type	Trust wide
Review	Three yearly
Author	Trust People Manager
Approved by	Deputy CEO Operations
To be ratified by	Finance, People and Operations Committee
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Date of next review	October 2025

This policy is a mandatory policy for all DSAMAT Academies and must be implemented without any amendments

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The Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee.
Registered in England No 10449374 Registered Office:
Manshead CE Academy, Dunstable Rd, Caddington, Luton, LU1 4BB



Our mission, vision and values

The Trust has a clear **mission** at its core, ensuring that all pupils are enabled to flourish, rooted in God's Love - academically, socially, spiritually, physically and mentally. This is central to our work, and rooted in our Christian foundation (John 10 v 10). Our commitment to mutual flourishing within the school community is built upon our shared belief in Church of England principles. In our Trust, just as in the wider Church of England community, 'flourish' refers to prospering, thriving and growing – not shrinking out and dying. It means prayerfully encouraging all within our schools so that they might prove fruitful, successful and contented in the longer term. We seek to provide space generously for all to flourish in life and all of its structures. Equitable treatment for all pupils, staff and the wider community is a core part of enabling this long term, holistic flourishing.

We have a clear **vision** about creating successful schools for the benefit of their communities. We expect any school in the Trust to continuously improve, and those graded by OFSTED as RI/Serious Weaknesses/Special Measures to make rapid progress and be able to secure an OFSTED grading of at least "Good" within 3 years post-conversion. All schools provide rich and diverse curricula which evolve to meet the needs of their children and local communities, as well as delivering educational excellence to enable them to continue to flourish in later life.

The way we work and deliver against our mission is critical to our Trust. We have shared, agreed **values** of:

Hope; Nurture; Equality; Respect; Collaboration

The Trust's vision is underpinned by a Christian values framework which is adopted by all schools. It provides clear expectations for all Trust employees on how we wish our values to impact on all areas of school life. It draws on, and is informed by, the National Church of England Vision for Education and the Diocesan Board of Education Vision.

Each school within the Trust has a personalised vision for education, developed locally to reflect the individual character and needs of the school community. This vision is underpinned by the Trust's wider vision, and agreed with the Trust, but it is owned and driven by the headteacher and their LGB.

Our community

The Trust are dedicated to delivering education that serves local communities. Our schools are inclusive, welcoming those from all and no faiths, from all abilities and backgrounds. We believe in providing a high-quality education, underpinned by Christian values, which enables every child to flourish.

Underpinning all of the Trust's work is a belief in educational excellence. The Trust serves all stakeholders by providing schools with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care.

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Our schools are places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually. All of the Trust's schools teach a broad and balanced curriculum within national guidelines focusing on core skills. This is designed to ensure that all pupils reach their academic potential and seek to enrich their experience along the way. Pupils will be enabled to succeed in an atmosphere of high expectation, aspiring to educational excellence with a firm foundation of values.

This policy forms part of our Trust governance and ensures that we are held to the highest standards as we carry out our duties.

Statement of Intent

This is the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust (DSAMAT) Menopause Policy and must be implemented and adhered to in each of the academies within the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust along with those working within the central team.

This policy will also be implemented and adhered to from the first day of any other academy joining the Trust. For the remainder of this document, the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust will be referred to as DSAMAT. Please read the DSAMAT Staffing Policy Statement in conjunction with this policy.



1. Overview

1.1 Hormonal changes can affect women at various stages in their life including when they are pregnant, having fertility treatment, under-going gender transitioning, receiving hormone treatment and during the menopause. Those changes can bring symptoms which manifest both physically and psychologically.

1.2 This policy focuses on menopause which is a natural part of every woman's life.

1.2.1 Menopause - This is when a woman's oestrogen levels decline and stops having periods (for 12 consecutive months). This is typically around the age of 50 but could be earlier or later.

1.2.2 Peri-menopause - This is the phase leading up to the menopause, when changing levels of hormones lead to menopausal symptoms. This typically starts in a woman's mid to late forties but can be earlier.

1.2.3 Premature menopause - This happens when a woman's periods stop before the age of 45. It can happen when a woman's ovaries stop making normal levels of reproductive hormones including oestrogen or because of certain medical treatments including some cancer treatments.

1.3 Trans and non-binary employees may also experience the menopause and are covered by this policy.

1.4 Going through the menopause and the phase leading up to it isn't always an easy transition. Symptoms can have a significant effect on a woman's comfort and feelings of well-being in work including how she feels in work and about her work.

1.5 With the right support, it can be made much better. Not everyone will have symptoms, but the Trust aims to support those that do to improve their experience at work and to ensure that they continue to flourish.

1.6 This policy should be read alongside the Trust's other policies which support an inclusive and supportive working environment, including the Health and Attendance Policy and Flourishing Policy.

1.7 This policy sets out the guidelines for our employees and line managers. It is not contractual, and we may update it at any time.

2. Aims

2.1 The aims of this policy are to:

2.1.1 Foster an environment in which our employees can openly and comfortably start and engage in conversations about the menopause.

2.1.2 Ensure everyone understands what the menopause is and are clear about the Trust's policies and practices.

2.1.3 Educate and inform line managers and leaders about the potential symptoms of menopause and how they can support women at work.

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- 2.1.4 Ensure that women suffering from menopausal symptoms feel confident to discuss these and ask for support and reasonable adjustments as required to help them to continue to work effectively.
 - 2.1.5 Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- 2.2 The Trust aims to create an environment in which all our employees feel informed about the menopause and are comfortable and confident talking about its impact on their physical and mental health. DSAMAT wants all employees to understand what the menopause is and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment. The Trust recognises that this is not just an issue for women and aims to raise awareness of it with our male colleagues as well.

3. What are the menopause symptoms?

- 3.1 The menopause produces a range of physical and psychological symptoms that can affect many aspects of life, all related to the changes in hormone balance. Every woman is different and not all will be affected in the same way or the same extent.
- 3.2 Common symptoms include:
 - 3.2.1 Hot flushes
 - 3.2.2 Headaches
 - 3.2.3 Poor concentration
 - 3.2.4 Dry eyes
 - 3.2.5 Anxiety
 - 3.2.6 Low mood
 - 3.2.7 Lack of confidence
 - 3.2.8 Panic attacks
 - 3.2.9 Poor sleep
 - 3.2.10 Weight gain
 - 3.2.11 Fatigue
 - 3.2.12 Poor memory
 - 3.2.13 Joint and muscle pain
- 3.3 On average, menopause symptoms last around four years but can last as long as 10 years. All women are different. Some will experience symptoms over a relatively short period; others may experience symptoms for many years. Women can also experience different symptoms at different times during this transition.

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4. Understanding the menopause

- 4.1 Despite its potentially serious impact on a woman's everyday life, the menopause is still not spoken about as freely as some other physical or mental health issues. The Trust aims that this will not be the case at DSAMAT and that the menopause becomes a normal part of the health and well-being conversation.
- 4.2 Through raising awareness of the symptoms and related issues, DSAMAT aims to promote a Trust wide understanding of what the menopause means for those going through it. This is essential to building a culture of openness, trust, sensitivity and respect around what is for many women, a challenging time in their lives.
- 4.3 The Trust may be able to make certain things easier for women going through it to ease their symptoms or to help them to manage them. Some small adjustments can make a large impact in enabling women to carry out the daily responsibilities of their role, feel supported in work and feel comfortable in the work environment. In doing this, the Trust hopes to have discussions and put arrangements in place which is part of our inclusive work culture.
- 4.4 If an employee treats a colleague badly (including making unwanted comments or jokes) because of her menopause symptoms, disciplinary action could be taken.
- 4.5 For line managers and leaders, recognising the symptoms of the menopause is vital to treating an affected employee fairly. It can explain certain behaviours that may not normally be displayed by an individual which are affecting their conduct, performance or attendance at work.
- 4.6 Good support at work leads to happier and better performing employees which for DSAMAT, means better pupil attainment and outcomes in our schools. For line managers and leaders who believe that an employee who reports to them may be going through the menopause and it is affecting their performance, but they are not sure what to do, please contact the Trust People Team for support. Good people management is fundamental to supporting employee health and well-being, spotting early signs of ill health or distress and initiating early intervention.

5. Helping employees through the menopause

- 5.1 If you are going through the menopause and are finding things difficult at work, please don't suffer in silence.
- 5.2 The Trust is aware that the menopause is a very personal matter, so it won't normally be raised with you. You may be asked how you are, in general terms and be encouraged to be open. Employees may then decide whether to talk about the menopause or not. The Trust encourages employees to talk because we will want to support you and are best placed to do that if we know what's happening.
- 5.3 Links to organisations that provide useful information about the menopause are at the end of this policy and employees are recommended to access these for more information.
- 5.4 The Trust has a four step procedure that applies to discussions around the menopause and the actions we'll take:

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Step 1

- 5.5 It is suggested that employees speak with their GP or medical specialist about their menopause related concerns as a starting point. Information obtained may help in conversations around the impact symptoms have on the workplace.
- 5.6 Employees can also talk to their line manager, call the Employee Assistance Programme on 0800 269 616 or talk to a supportive colleague or the Trust People Team.

Step 2

- 5.7 Line managers will meet with employees to discuss ideas that could help alleviate some of the symptoms. Employees may bring someone to the meeting such as a member of the Trust People Team or a supportive colleague, if they wish.
- 5.8 Adjustments will depend on the symptoms but suggestions that some women may find helpful include:
- 5.8.1 Hot flushes
 - 5.8.1.1 Controlling the temperature of the work area, such as providing a desk top fan, moving near a window or away from a heat source
 - 5.8.1.2 Providing easy access to drinking water
 - 5.8.1.3 Taking a break in the Staff room or a quiet area
 - 5.8.2 Heavy periods
 - 5.8.2.1 Providing easy access to toilet facilities
 - 5.8.2.2 Providing access to sanitary products in the washrooms
 - 5.8.2.3 Considering ad hoc home-working if the job role allows
 - 5.8.3 Headaches and fatigue
 - 5.8.3.1 Providing easy access to drinking water
 - 5.8.3.2 Providing a quiet space to work
 - 5.8.3.3 Considering a temporary adjustment to work duties
 - 5.8.3.4 Allowing regular breaks and opportunities to take medication
 - 5.8.4 Muscular aches, bone and joint pain
 - 5.8.4.1 Making any necessary temporary adjustments through review of risk assessments and work schedules
 - 5.8.4.2 Allowing someone to move around and stay mobile, if that helps
 - 5.8.5 Psychological symptoms – loss of confidence, poor concentration, anxiety
 - 5.8.5.1 Encouraging employees to discuss concerns regularly at one-to-one meetings
 - 5.8.5.2 Discussing possible adjustments to tasks and duties that are proving a challenge
 - 5.8.5.3 Addressing work related stress by carrying out a stress risk assessment recommended by the HSE

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- 5.8.5.4 Identify a supportive colleague to talk to away from the work area
- 5.8.5.5 Providing quiet spaces to work or time out when needed to undertake relaxation or mindfulness activities
- 5.8.5.6 Signposting to the Employee Assistance Programme 0800 269 616
www.bupa.co.uk/eaponline
- 5.8.5.7 Providing the opportunity to work from home on an ad hoc basis if aspects of the role lends itself to homeworking
- 5.8.5.8 Discussing whether it would be helpful for the employee to visit their GP, if they haven't already.
- 5.9 Each case will be considered on an individual basis. Line managers will record any adjustments agreed, any actions to be implemented and these will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they remain suitable. Line managers may need to discuss issues and possible solutions with other professionals including the Trust People Team, other school leaders or Occupational Health. The Trust will work hard to balance the needs of employees with their colleagues, but on occasions it may not be possible to find a solution that works for everyone. Notes of discussions that take place will be kept in line with the Trust's Data Protection Policy.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)

CBT can help people develop new techniques to tackle stress and manage anxiety. Physical symptoms such as hot flushes and trouble sleeping can also be helped by CBT. An employee can discuss this possibility with their GP or could contact the Employee Assistance Programme.

Step 3

Taking account of any specialist advice, the Trust will discuss with employees any adjustments to be put in place. Further meetings may be held to ensure that the adjustments are working for the individual and for the Trust, or if any modifications are needed, this will also be discussed.

Step 4

Meetings will be held on an on-going basis to check that employees' symptoms are being managed effectively. The regularity of the meetings will depend on individual need.

It may be that the symptoms change over time. If the adjustments are not working as well as anticipated or employees start to experience new symptoms, they should let their line manager know and a further meeting will be held to try to offer more support. Once the symptoms have passed, the Trust would expect to be told so that a discussion can take place regarding removing the adjustments that were put in place.

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6 Some useful resources

The following are links to some sites which provide information that may be helpful to both line managers and women who are having menopausal symptoms:

- The NHS website has some good, basic information about the menopause:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/

- The British Menopause Society:

www.thebms.org.uk

- Women's Health Concern:

www.womens-health-concern.org

- The Daisy Network (for women experiencing premature menopause or ovarian insufficiency):

www.daisynetwork.org

- You can also download a free app to help manage and track symptoms, access personalised expert advice and obtain support. An example is this one:

www.balance-app.com/

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