

FEMALE HEALTH

POLICY

Named Senior Leader:
LUCY BAKER-CLARKE

Next Review Date
MARCH 2028



One Child
One Chance

Introduction

Periods and Menopause are a normal part of every woman's life. This policy recognises that female health is an equality and occupational health and safety issue and that women may need appropriate flexibility, support and adjustments during their cycle and in the times of change before, during and after the menopause.

The Compass Federation has a positive attitude towards female health; we will treat all individuals with dignity and respect and ensure that the workplace does not make symptoms worse. The Compass Federation is committed to ensuring that women feel confident in discussing their symptoms openly, without embarrassment and are able to ask for support and adjustments in order to continue to work safely in the organisation. For this reason, female health is an issue for men as well as women.

The Legislative Setting:

The Compass Federation undertakes to comply with its legal obligations as set out below:

- 1.1. The **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974)** requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to undertake general risk assessments which should include specific risks to women who experience periods and menopausal women, see section 5.3.
- 1.2. The **Equality Act (2010)** prohibits discrimination against people on the grounds of certain 'protected characteristics' including sex, age and disability. Conditions linked to both periods and menopause may meet the definition of an 'impairment' under the Equality Act and require reasonable adjustments.

Periods

Contents

1. Aims	9
2. Definitions	9
3. Legislation and guidance	10
4. Roles and responsibilities	11
6. Monitoring arrangements	14
7. Links to other policies	14

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Make sure that our federation can support staff affected by periods (and conditions associated with periods) and help them to feel comfortable at work, both when experiencing symptoms and when asking for support and adjustments.
- Set out how our federation will make reasonable adjustments to minimise the risk of the working environment making period symptoms worse for those experiencing them.
- Minimise period-related stigma in our federation by educating staff on what they are and the symptoms that staff might suffer.
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR teams, to support others through difficulties that periods may cause them.

2. Definitions

A period is the part of the menstrual cycle when a woman bleeds from her vagina for a few days. For most women this happens around every 28 days, but it's common for periods to be more or less frequent than this, ranging from every 21 days to every 35 days.

Periods can last between 2 and 7 days, but it will usually last for about 5 days. The bleeding tends to be heaviest in the first 2 days.

Most women lose about 20 to 90ml (about 1 to 5 tablespoons) of blood during their period, although some women bleed more heavily than this.

*We acknowledge that while the majority of people affected by periods will be women, those who are trans or non-binary may also experience periods or symptoms associated with periods. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

2.1 Symptoms

Individuals suffering from their periods may experience symptoms that cause changes to their emotions and other aspects of their health, some of which may impact them at work.

There are many possible symptoms of PMS, but typical symptoms include:

- Nausea
- Abdominal Pain
- Headaches
- Back Pain
- Diarrhoea
- Constipation
- Fatigue
- Feeling Bloated
- Mood Swings

- Feeling Irritable
- Anxiety
- Acne

Not all women who have periods get PMS.

Women who suffer from conditions such as: endometriosis, adenomyosis and PCOS may suffer from more extreme symptoms such as:

- Painful periods. Pelvic pain and cramping may start before a menstrual period and last for days into it. Women also may have lower back and stomach pain. Another name for painful periods is dysmenorrhea.
- Pain with bowel movements or urination. This is most likely to happen before or during a menstrual period.
- Excessive bleeding. Sometimes, women may have heavy menstrual periods or bleeding between periods.
- Infertility. For some women, endometriosis or PCOS are found during tests for infertility treatment.
- Other symptoms: fatigue, diarrhoea, constipation, bloating or nausea. These symptoms are more common before or during menstrual periods.

For some individuals, being at work may make their symptoms worse.

Symptoms affecting sleep can make it difficult for staff 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 periods will affect everybody differently – some individuals may experience no symptoms at all, and some may experience a variety. We will adapt our response to staff affected by their periods on a case-by-case basis.

3. 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 periods and conditions that are linked with their periods.

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 staff 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 period 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' means 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 on a regular basis, and includes, but is not limited to: walking, driving, carrying or moving things, being able to concentrate, writing, reading, typing, speaking.

On-going symptoms linked to periods 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, staff affected by their periods, or conditions linked to their periods, will be offered a variety of approaches to support them.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The local authority and governing board

Kent County Council has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the federation, but delegates responsibility for the strategic management of such matters to the school's governing board.

The governing board delegates operational matters and day-to-day tasks to the Executive Head Teacher and staff members.

4.1 The governing board

The governing board has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to Ben Hulme – Executive Head Teacher.

The governing board has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff are not exposed to risks to their health and safety on the school premises.

The governing board as the employer, also has a duty to:

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

4.2 Role of senior staff: What steps will we take as an employer?

Lucy Baker-Clarke has been charged with the responsibility of leading the Periods and Menopause working group and therefore if you have any suggestions, queries or concerns, these should be brought to her attention at lbc@compassfederation.com

Senior staff will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support staff experiencing periods, 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 staff affected by their periods.
- Designating a member of staff such as a wellbeing champion that staff affected by periods can speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager.
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff, and establishing a system that allows cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching. **If alone in the classroom, a phone call should be made to an office and the code**

word: _____ used. Once this word is used, another member of staff will come to cover in class for however long is needed.

- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular conversations.
- Providing resources and training opportunities through the school and Compass websites to make sure that all line managers and HR staff are aware of the symptoms associated with periods, their potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary.
- Promoting information about, and access to, external support services via e-mail and the staff area of the website.
- Ensuring toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff, and establishing a system that allows cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching.
- Considering requests for changes to working arrangements, e.g. temporary part-time working.
- Giving swift permission for absence to attend female health-related medical appointments.
- Adjusting workplace procedures and processes to support and avoid any detriment to women who suffer with symptoms relating to their periods.

Senior staff will work to create a culture in the school where staff can talk openly about periods by:

- Providing information/period products in staff toilets.
- Creating a support group so that those who want to can seek support from each other.
- Providing training for staff and managers to achieve consistent practice.
- Referring to periods in the school's staff wellbeing policy.

This is not a definitive list of measures. The Compass Federation will actively listen to women staff and union reps and take on board other suggestions.

It is recognised that many of these practical and easy-to-institute changes to the workplace, will make working life more bearable for women and will benefit all staff.

It is recognised that everyone who works at The Compass Federation has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff, including women experiencing periods.

4.3 Role of all staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Taking personal responsibility to look after their health.
- Being open and honest in conversations with HR and Occupational Health.
- Contributing to a respectful and healthy working environment.
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues.
- Accepting and supporting any necessary adjustments their colleagues request or are receiving as a result of their period symptoms.

4.4 Role of line managers

The most important and valuable thing a manager can do is listen and, wherever possible, respond empathetically to any requests for adjustments at work. Therefore, line managers who work with staff who may be affected by the periods will:

- Familiarise themselves with the Female Health Policy.
- Be aware of the potential impact of period symptoms on performance. (If someone's performance suddenly dips, consideration will be given as to whether their period may be playing a part in this).
- Provide a non-judgemental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff.
- Encourage staff to speak openly and honestly. Be ready and willing to listen and have open discussions about periods, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and confidentially and allowing adequate time for the discussion.
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented, via an action plan.
- Ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting.
- Ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.
- Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, the line manager may:
 - Discuss with the employee a referral to Occupational Health for further advice.
 - Review Occupational Health advice, and implement any additional recommendations.
 - Consider flexible working requests in order to accommodate acute symptoms.
 - Allow staff affected by the period symptoms to take regular breaks if necessary to help manage symptoms.
 - Give swift permission for absence to attend medical appointments.
 - Promoting information about, and access to, external support services via e-mail and the staff area of the website.
 - Record female health-related absences as an 'ongoing health issue' instead of as an individual short-term absence to avoid triggering sickness absence procedures.

4.5 Role of staff members affected by period symptoms:

We encourage staff who are experiencing symptoms relating to their period, especially those that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties that period symptoms can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager, or with our designated female health champion.
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager; another trusted member of staff, such as the female health champion, know if their symptoms are having an impact on their work.
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services.

4.6 Role of Occupational Health

The role of Occupational Health is to:

- Carry out a holistic assessment of the employee to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be exacerbating period symptoms.
- Discuss with the employee what adjustments would help.
- Signpost to other appropriate sources of help and advice.

5. Further resources

We've included some resources here to provide support for staff affected by symptoms relating to periods and associated condition:

- [Female Health \(NHS\)](#)
- [Women's Health Gov Strategy](#)
- [Periods \(NHS\)](#)
- [Endometriosis](#)
- [Endometriosis UK](#)
- [Period Poverty UK](#)
- [Wellbeing of Women](#)

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Executive Head teacher..

7. Links to other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Staff wellbeing policy
- Health and safety policy
- Sickness absence policy
- Performance management policy
- Flexible working policy
- Equality / inclusion policy
- Dignity at work policy

Menopause

Contents

1. Aims	9
2. Definitions	9
3. Legislation and guidance	10
4. Roles and responsibilities	11
6. Monitoring arrangements	14
7. Links to other policies	14

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Make sure that our school can support staff 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 school 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 school by educating staff on what it is and the symptoms that staff affected by it might suffer
- Provide further resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR teams, to support others through difficulties the menopause may cause them

2. Definitions

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 is the time of hormonal change leading up to this, when a woman may experience symptoms. **Post-menopause** is the time beyond 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.

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. The support outlined in this policy is designed to meet the above aims for all affected colleagues.

2.1 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.

Menopausal symptoms might include:

- Challenges with memory, confidence and concentration
- Low mood, anxiety and depression

- Hot flushes, night sweats and palpitations
- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia and fatigue
- Headaches and joint and muscle pain
- Weakened bladder function and urinary tract infections
- Vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive

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 staff 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 staff affected by the menopause on a case-by-case basis.

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

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The local authority and governing board

Kent County Council has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but delegates responsibility for the strategic management of such matters to the school's governing board.

The governing board delegates operational matters and day-to-day tasks to the headteacher and staff members.

4.1 The governing board

The governing board has ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters in the school, but will delegate day-to-day responsibility to Ben Hulme – Executive Head Teacher.

The governing board has a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that staff are not exposed to risks to their health and safety on the school premises.

The governing board as the employer, also has a duty to:

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

4.2 Role of senior staff

Lucy Baker-Clarke has been charged with the responsibility of leading the Periods and Menopause working group and therefore if you have any suggestions, queries or concerns, these should be brought to her attention at lbc@compassfederation.com

Senior staff (Line Managers and Gerry Simmons) will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace to support staff 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 staff affected by the menopause.
- Designating a member of staff such as a wellbeing champion that staff affected by periods can speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager.
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff through regular conversations.
- Providing resources and training opportunities through the school and Compass websites to make sure that all line managers and HR staff are aware of the symptoms associated with periods, their potential impact on work, and what adjustments may be necessary.
- Promoting information about, and access to, external support services via e-mail and the staff area of the website.
- Considering requests for changes to working arrangements, e.g. temporary part-time working.
- Giving swift permission for absence to attend female health-related medical appointments; an
- Adjusting workplace procedures and processes to support and avoid any detriment to women who suffer with symptoms relating to the menopause.

- 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 cold drinking water for all staff.
- Regulating and monitoring the temperature of the school and collecting feedback from staff, 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 staff, and establishing a system that allows for cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching. If alone in the classroom, a phone call should be made to an office and the code word: _____ used. Once this word is used, another member of staff will come to cover in class for however long is needed.
- Providing small desk fans to help staff cool down.
- Fitting blinds to windows.
- Designating a member of staff such as a wellbeing champion that staff affected by the menopause can speak to about their symptoms in confidence, if they do not feel comfortable doing so with their line manager.

Senior staff will work to create a culture in the school where staff can talk openly about the menopause by:

- Providing information on the menopause e.g. CPD, posters and leaflets via e-mail and the staff area of the website.
- Creating a support group so that those who want to can seek support from each other.
- Providing on-going training for staff and managers to achieve consistent practice.
- Referring to the menopause in the school's staff wellbeing policy.

This is not a definitive list of measures. The Compass Federation will actively listen to women staff and union reps and take on board other suggestions.

It is recognised that many of these practical and easy-to-institute changes to the workplace, will make working life more bearable for women and will benefit all staff.

It is recognised that everyone who works at The Compass Federation has a role to play in ensuring a comfortable working environment for all staff, including women experiencing the menopause.

4.3 Role of all staff

All staff are expected to:

- Taking personal responsibility to look after their health.
- Being open and honest in conversations with HR and Occupational Health.
- Contributing to a respectful and healthy working environment.
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues.
- Accepting and supporting any necessary adjustments their colleagues request or are receiving as a result of their menopause symptoms.

4.4 Role of line managers

The most important and valuable thing a manager can do is listen and, wherever possible, respond sympathetically to any requests for adjustments at work. Therefore, line managers who work with staff who may be affected by the menopause will:

- Familiarise themselves with the Female Health Policy.
- Be aware of the potential impact of the symptoms of menopause on performance. (If someone's performance suddenly dips, consideration will be given as to whether their menopause may be playing a part in this).
- Provide a non-judgmental, empathetic and confidential support system to staff.
- Encourage staff to speak openly and honestly. Be ready and willing to listen and have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and confidentially and allowing adequate time for the discussion.
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented, via an action plan.
- Ensure ongoing dialogue via a follow-up meeting.
- Ensure that all agreed adjustments are adhered to and reviewed as regularly as necessary.
- Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving particularly severe, the line manager may:
 - Discuss with the employee a referral to Occupational Health for further advice.
 - Review Occupational Health advice, and implement any additional recommendations.
 - Consider flexible working requests in order to accommodate acute symptoms.
 - Allow staff affected by their symptoms to take regular breaks if necessary to help manage symptoms.
 - Give swift permission for absence to attend medical appointments.
 - Promote information about and access to external support services.
 - Record female health-related absences as an 'ongoing health issue' instead of as an individual short-term absence to avoid triggering sickness absence procedures.

4.5 Role of staff members affected by the menopause

We encourage staff who are experiencing symptoms relating to the menopause, especially those that are impacting their health and wellbeing at work to:

- Share their practical needs to reduce the difficulties that their symptoms can cause and their preferred coping strategies with their line manager, or with our designated female health champion.
- Report honestly about their wellbeing and let their line manager; another trusted member of staff, such as the female health champion, know if their symptoms are having an impact on their work.
- Make time in their schedule to visit their GP and other support services.

4.6 Role of Occupational Health – Line Managers and Gerry Simmons.

The role of Occupational Health is to:

- Carry out a holistic assessment of the employee to ascertain whether or not the working environment may be exacerbating menopause symptoms.
- Discuss with the employee what adjustments would help;
- Signpost to other appropriate sources of help and advice.

5. Further resources

- We've included some resources here to provide support for staff affected by the menopause:
- [Menopause](#) (NHS)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [Menopause: diagnosis and management](#) (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)
- The [Daisy Network](#) charity
- [Menopause in the Workplace](#)
- [Menopause resources](#) from the CIPD, particularly for:
 - [Line managers](#)
 - [HR staff](#)

6. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the Executive Head teacher.

7. Links to other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Staff wellbeing policy
- Health and safety policy
- Sickness absence policy
- Performance management policy
- Flexible working policy
- Equality / inclusion policy
- Dignity at work policy
- Fertility
- Pregnancy

Snapshot View

- Recognise that women may need appropriate flexibility, support and adjustments during their cycle and in the times of change before, during and after the menopause.
- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect and ensure that the workplace does not make symptoms worse.
- Ensure that women feel confident in discussing their symptoms openly, without embarrassment and are able to ask for support and adjustments in order to continue to work safely in the organisation.
- Provide resources to help staff, particularly line managers and HR teams, to support others through difficulties that periods and menopause may cause.
- Have a designated wellbeing champion that staff affected by periods and menopause can speak to about their symptoms in confidence.
- Ensure toilet, washing and sanitary facilities are accessible for staff, and establish a system that allows cover for staff to access these facilities where necessary while they are teaching.
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff through regular conversations.
- Promote information about, and access to, external support services via this policy, e-mail and the staff area of the website.
- Consider requests for changes to working arrangements, e.g. temporary part-time working.
- Give swift permission for absence to attend female health-related medical appointments.