

MENOPAUSE & MENSTRUATION POLICY

Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd (VTS) is committed to providing a high-quality education & training delivery service throughout Essex and into the surrounding counties. We are a small independent training provider delivering peripatetic, work-based education & qualifications (mainly apprenticeships) to learners of all ages. Training predominantly takes place on employers' premises; however, learners do attend one of our offices from time to time to attend learning sessions and sit online assessments.

Integral to our ongoing success and in accordance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, VTS has a legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety & welfare of its employees. We are committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for all colleagues. This policy is intended to help employees feel able to ask for the adjustments they need to help them manage their symptoms at work.

At VTS, we accept that individuals' experiences of menstruation and menopause range from feeling no or mild discomfort to having debilitating symptoms and finding it difficult to do everyday activities like going to work. We believe employees shouldn't have to mask their symptoms when they're working and try to cope on their own. We want to encourage an open culture where staff feel able to talk about their menopause or periods without embarrassment.

We expect all managers and staff to be respectful towards colleagues who experience symptoms related to menstruation or menopause and to recognise that they may require unique support or adjustments.

We have introduced menopause awareness sessions into our monthly staff meetings and a staff member (Jacqui Pile) has been given special responsibility for raising awareness and seeking out informative & supportive resources for staff.

Below is a link to a video which educates you on how menopause can affect cognition.

<https://cognassist.com/videos/how-the-menopause-can-affect-cognition/>

Any staff member who is struggling at work due to adverse symptoms of menopause or menstruation should speak to their line manager about adjustments we could consider helping them cope with their symptoms. An example of suitable adjustments could be:

- Provision of a desk fan
- Regular breaks and time away from immediate pressures of work

If staff members feel unable to talk to their line manager, they can seek advice & support from Jacqui Pile or the Managing Director.

Ultimately, if symptoms are so debilitating that the staff member feels unable to work, they are entitled to take sick leave in accordance with the VTS sickness policy without fear of recrimination or reprisal.