



Manual Handling Policy

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Introduction

Manual handling operations means any transporting or supporting of a load (including the lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving thereof) by hand or bodily force.

Background

Manual handling Operations Regulations 1992 place a duty on every employer to reduce the risk of injury from all manual handling operations which cannot be avoided, and avoid hazardous manual handling as far as possible.

Manual Handling Team

Natalie Stewart is the trained and accredited Manual Handling Coordinator. She has responsibility for this area of the school's work, including assessing, record-keeping and risk assessments.

Training

All staff complete online training in Manual Handling through TES training. In addition, staff working in any class in which there are wheelchair users, they receive bespoke face-to-face training.

The training includes the theory of lifting and back care, risk assessment, practical lifting techniques, and the safe use of equipment. Staff will receive accredited certification for manual handling training.

Risk Assessments

The key to the regulations is the identification of hazardous handling operations and their assessments. Managers must address manual handling issues when performing risk assessments. The regulations require a suitable and sufficient assessment of all manual handling operations to reduce the risk of injury.

This can be done by increasing awareness, providing information and training, and by providing mechanical aids (hoists), or by redesigning the task to avoid manual handling. Lifting and handling of students at Maple Haven School has been identified as a priority area. It is important to eliminate as many risks both to students and staff as possible.

The Manual Handling Coordinator holds the responsibility for carrying out and updating profiles, for monitoring and coordinating the maintenance of equipment, and for running hoist training sessions for staff in classes in which there are wheelchair users.

All equipment must be handled by trained staff, especially the use of the hoists. If you see any member of staff using unsafe lifting techniques, please warn them, it is dangerous to both staff and students. If you are in any doubt, seek advice from the Manual Handling Coordinator.

The following checklist provides examples of the type of actions which may cause injury during manual handling. These relate to the lifting task, the individuals capability, the load and the working environment.

The distance between the load and the lifter's trunk.

This has a direct impact on the level of stress on the lower back. If the load is not kept close to the trunk, then regardless of the lifting technique used, there will be stress on the lower back.

Twisting the trunk

If the lift involves twisting the trunk, this will increase stress on the lower back.

Stooping

If the lift involves stooping, this can also cause stress to the lower back. When the lifter stoops, the trunk is thrown forward and its weight is added to the load being lifted.

Reaching upwards

Reaching upwards puts additional stress on the arms and the back and the load becomes more difficult to control. This is a relevant safety consideration. The distance of the lift adds to the level of effort needed. It may also mean that the lifter's grip has to be changed or adjusted during the lift. This could lead to an accident or injury.

The carrying distance

In general, if it is safe to lift and lower the load, then the distance of the carry is not a risk factor unless it is an excessive distance.

Pushing and pulling

Excessive pushing and pulling adds to the physical stress of the lift. It also creates the risk of a slipping accident.

Sudden movement

The combination of sudden movement and an unstable lift can be very dangerous. The unpredictability of some of our pupils can be the greatest risk during the lift.

Frequency of lifts and rest periods

A relatively small lift carried out frequently can create as large a risk of injury as a one-off large lift. The more lifts that are carried out without rests and recovery periods, the more likely it is that there will be an accident or injury caused by fatigue.

Weight

This is one factor, but not the sole factor, in the risk assessment

Shape

The shape of a load affects the way it is held, if it is bulky or unwieldy this will often add to the difficulty of the lift.

Grip

Extra grip strength is often needed to lift SEN students. They are often unpredictable during a lift, and in this respect the lift can be more dangerous.

Capability

The staff member's capability must be considered. Does the job require unusual strength? Does it create a hazard for pregnant staff or staff with a health problem? Is special information or training required to do the job safely? As a general rule, the risk of injury should be regarded as unacceptable if the lifting operations cannot be performed satisfactorily by most reasonably fit, healthy employees.

Working environment

The working environment is another important safety consideration.

Space constraints

The working environment may restrict staff from adopting a good posture when lifting. This means that risk of injury will be increased. Restricted headroom forces a stooping posture. Furniture, fixtures or other obstructions may increase the need of twisting or leaning. Constricted working areas and narrow gangways restrict movement and manoeuvrability.

Floors

Slippery or uneven floors increase the likelihood of slips, trips and falls, they also hinder smooth movement and create additional unpredictability

Floor levels

Steps and steep slopes can increase the risk of injury because they add to the complexity of movement when lifting.

Temperature

The risk of injury during lifting can also be increased by unsuitable temperature at the workplace. A high temperature or too humid an atmosphere can cause fatigue. If the temperature is too low, this may impair dexterity.

Lighting

Clear lighting is needed so that the lifter can see what he or she is doing and make proper judgments about distance and space.

Appendix 1: Rules for Safe Manual Handling

1. Stop and think. It is important to plan the lift. 'Where is the load being moved to? Are hoists or other lifting aids needed? Is someone else needed to help? Is there any obstruction in the way?
2. Position the feet. A lift should be carried out with the feet apart. This gives a balanced and stable base for the lift. The leading leg should be as far forward as is comfortable.
3. Adopt a good posture. When lifting from a low level, the knees should be bent. However, the lift should not begin from a kneeling position. The lifter should avoid over flexing the knees. It is very important to keep the back straight. If necessary, the lifter can lean forward a little over the load, for a better grip. The shoulders should be level and facing the same direction as the hips.
4. Get a firm grip. The best position and the best type of grip depend on the Circumstances of the lift and the individual's preference. There needs to be a firm grip.
5. Raise your head as you start to lift, lift using your leg muscles, use smooth movements.
6. Tuck your arms in to avoid straining your neck or shoulder muscles.
7. Hold the load or student, close to your body.
8. Don't block your view by carrying too large a load.
9. Move the feet. The lifter should not twist his or her trunk when turning to the side but should remember to move his or her feet instead.

To apply the above principles, you must:

- Wear suitable clothing, loose comfortable garments and flat shoes. Inform the senior management team if there is any reason why you should not lift.
- Be aware of your own fitness and capability to follow safe lifting procedures.

Please remember staff should have regard to the school's Intimate Care Policy when handling/lifting pupils in preparation for intimate care. They should ensure that every student is treated with dignity and respect and privacy is ensured.

Safe Moving and Handling of Students

We recognise our responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practical. It is the policy of Maple Haven to conform to the requirements of the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.

To this end we aim:

1. To avoid manual handling operations which are a risk to its employees as far as reasonably practical
2. Assess all operations involving manual handling procedures judged to be potentially hazardous, and reduce the risk to the lowest level which is reasonably practical
3. To provide all employees involved in manual handling of clients with thorough training covering all the key elements for safe handling processes

The First 3 Principles of Good Manual Handling

Remember to follow the first three principles of good manual handling to avoid placing unnecessary pressure on your spine.

1. Keep your spine in line
2. Create a stable base
3. Keep any load close to your body

Clothing

Wear comfortable clothes and flat heels

Individual Capabilities

If you feel you are being put at risk you must speak to someone about it before you injure yourself. It may be possible to reorganise the task to suit you. It is your responsibility to look after your back

Equipment

All equipment must be handled by trained staff, especially the use of the hoist

Time

Remember it is important to take your time and think before any handling task to ensure the safest way to do it. If you are in any doubt, stop and seek advice from trained staff.

Intimate care

Please remember staff should have regard to the Intimate Care Policy when handling students in preparation for intimate care. You should ensure that every student is treated with dignity and respect and that privacy is ensured.