



MANUAL HANDLING POLICY

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.

LEGAL 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.

RISK ASSESSMENT

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 pupils at The Brook School has been identified as a priority area. It is important to eliminate as many risks both to pupils and staff as possible.

One member of staff has been trained in manual handling. This staff member has the responsibility for carrying out and updating profiles, for monitoring and coordinating the maintenance of equipment and for running training sessions for staff.

Their 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. All equipment must be handled by trained staff, especially the use of the hoists. If any member of staff is seen using unsafe lifting techniques, this must be challenged immediately due to the danger to staff and pupils, and additional training will be put in place. Trained staff are always available to offer advice and support.

CHECKLIST

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 the 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 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 lifters 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 pupils. They are often unpredictable during a lift, and in this respect the lift can be more dangerous.
- **CAPABILITY**
The individual'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 maneuverability.
- **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 judgements about distance and space.

RULES FOR MANUAL HANDLING

- 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?
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Raise your head as you start to lift; lift using your leg muscles; use smooth movements.
- Tuck your arms in to avoid straining your neck or shoulder muscles.
- Hold the load or pupil, close to your body.
- Don't block your view by carrying too large a load.
- 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.

In order 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 "Guidelines for good practice in intimate care" when handling/lifting pupils in preparation for intimate care. They should ensure that every pupil is treated with dignity and respect and privacy is ensured.