



ILSA Southchurch & Westcliff

Manual Handling Policy for Students with Physical Needs

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1. Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for manual handling in relation to students with physical needs. The purpose is to ensure that any manual handling activities are conducted safely, in accordance with UK legislation, and to protect the health and wellbeing of both students and staff. All staff involved in manual handling must receive appropriate training and be familiar with this policy.

2. Definition of Manual Handling for Students with Physical Needs

Manual handling refers to any task that involves lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, or moving a student, or assisting them with their movement, in any form. For students with physical needs, manual handling tasks can include actions that help a student with limited mobility or physical disabilities to participate in educational activities, daily routines, or personal care.

Examples of manual handling activities for students with physical needs include:

Lifting a student from one position to another (e.g., from a wheelchair to a classroom chair, or from the floor to a standing position).

Repositioning a student to help them maintain comfort or access activities (e.g., moving a student in a wheelchair for classroom participation).

Assisting mobility by supporting a student to walk, transfer, or navigate different areas (e.g., from classroom to playground).

Supporting students during transitions, such as moving from one location to another within the school (e.g., from the school bus to the classroom).

Carrying or moving mobility aids, assistive equipment, or personal care items that support the student's needs.

Due to the diverse range of needs among students with physical disabilities, each manual handling task will be assessed individually to ensure safety and comfort for the student, as well as the well-being of staff involved in these activities.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is developed in line with the following UK legislation and regulatory requirements:

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – Employers must ensure the health, safety, and welfare of employees and others affected by their work. (HSE, 1974).

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR) – Employers are required to assess the risks associated with manual handling and implement measures to reduce the risk of injury.

The Equality Act 2010 – Ensures that students with physical needs are provided with reasonable adjustments to ensure access to education and services.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 – Addresses any risks that may arise from substances or conditions involved in manual handling activities.

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 – Ensures that equipment used in the workplace is suitable for the tasks, maintained, and properly serviced.

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998 – Ensures that lifting equipment, such as hoists and slings, is thoroughly inspected, tested, and maintained in a safe working condition.

4. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- All manual handling activities are carried out in a safe manner.
- There is a systematic risk assessment process for students with physical needs.
- Employees and staff are properly trained in safe manual handling techniques.
- Reasonable adjustments are made to prevent injuries to students and staff involved in manual handling tasks.
- Equipment, including hoists and mobility aids, are legally compliant, regularly serviced, and maintained to ensure safety.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, including Tutors, Education Care Assistants, special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), therapists, and other employees who may be involved in the manual handling of students with physical needs. It covers activities including, but not limited to:

Lifting, carrying, or repositioning students

Assisting students with mobility aids

Supporting students during transitions (e.g., moving between classrooms, outdoors)

Moving equipment or furniture as part of a student's care or educational needs

6. Risk Assessment Process

A comprehensive risk assessment must be carried out for every student who requires manual handling support. This risk assessment should be reviewed regularly and whenever the student's needs, environment, or care requirements change.

Steps for conducting a risk assessment:

Identify the task – Assess the type of manual handling task required and the risks involved.

Evaluate the risks – Identify potential hazards such as the weight of the student, their level of mobility, any physical conditions, and environmental factors (e.g., space constraints, floor surfaces).

Control measures – Put in place reasonable adjustments and adaptations to reduce risks (e.g., use of specialist equipment like hoists, or adjusting the environment to ensure safe movement).

Training needs – Ensure staff are trained in handling students with physical needs and are familiar with equipment.

Review – Regularly review the assessment and update, when necessary, especially if the student's condition changes.

7. Responsibilities

Principal / College Leadership Team:

Ensure the manual handling policy is implemented and followed across the school.

Allocate resources for training, equipment, and additional support.

Review risk assessments and ensure compliance with health and safety regulations.

Staff:

Follow all guidelines and procedures outlined in this policy.

Report any potential manual handling issues or concerns.

Participate in relevant training and refresher courses.

Parents/Carers:

Provide information regarding the student's physical needs and limitations and collaborate in developing suitable care and handling plans.

8. Manual Handling Procedures

Lifting and Repositioning: Only lift or reposition a student if it is safe to do so. Where possible, use mechanical aids (e.g., hoists, lifting slings) to support the process. Never attempt to lift a student without proper equipment or assistance.

Assisting with Mobility: When assisting a student to move, ensure that the correct posture and techniques are used. Always maintain the student's dignity, ensuring they are comfortable and feel safe.

Carrying: When carrying any equipment that is necessary for the student's care or participation in activities, ensure that it is lightweight, balanced, and ergonomically manageable. Ensure that the student is always supported.

Use of Equipment: Ensure that any lifting or mobility aids, such as hoists, are regularly inspected and well-maintained. Only staff trained in the use of such equipment should operate it.

9. Manual Handling Techniques

When performing manual handling tasks, it is crucial that staff follow safe lifting and moving techniques to reduce the risk of injury. Below are key techniques to be used when manually handling students with physical needs:

Plan the task: Before lifting or moving a student, assess the task to ensure that it can be carried out safely. Ensure you have enough space, the correct equipment, and the necessary support from colleagues.

Use of body mechanics:

Stand close to the student: Position yourself close to the student to ensure a stable base of support.

Bend your knees, not your back: When lifting, bend at the knees and keep your back straight to avoid straining your spine.

Use your legs, not your back: Push or pull using the strength of your legs, rather than your back or arms. This will reduce the risk of back injuries.

Keep the load close: Keep the student as close to your body as possible when lifting or moving them to reduce the strain on your muscles.

Two-person lifts: When a student requires two staff members to assist, make sure both individuals understand their roles and communicate effectively. One person should take the lead and instruct the other in the movement sequence.

Use of aids and equipment: Always use the appropriate mechanical aids (e.g., hoists, slings, wheelchairs) where possible. These should be used according to the manufacturer's guidelines and the training provided.

10. Checking Equipment Before Use

Before each use, staff must conduct a visual check to ensure that all equipment is in safe working condition. This includes hoists, slings, wheelchairs, and any other mobility aids. The following steps should be taken to ensure equipment is safe:

Hoists and Lifting Equipment:

Inspect the hoist, lifting slings, and any associated hardware for signs of wear, damage, or fraying before each use.

Ensure that the hoist is operating smoothly and that all moving parts are functioning correctly.

Check that all weight limits are clearly marked and that the hoist is appropriate for the task and the student's needs.

Ensure the sling is positioned correctly, with no tangles or defects that could affect the lift.

Wheelchairs and Mobility Aids:

Inspect the wheelchair's brakes, wheels, and seating area for any damage or wear.

Check the condition of any other mobility aids, such as walking frames or crutches, to ensure they are safe to use.

Ensure all straps, buckles, and supports on mobility equipment are secure and functioning properly.

General Equipment:

Inspect any furniture or classroom equipment used to support manual handling tasks (e.g., changing tables, specialized chairs) for stability and safety.

If any equipment shows signs of damage, remove it from use immediately and inform Centre Manager via email to arrange for it to be repaired or replaced.

11. Legal Checks and Services for Equipment

To ensure that lifting and mobility equipment, such as hoists, slings, and other related aids, are safe and comply with legal standards, the following checks and services will be carried out:

Equipment Inspections:

All lifting equipment (e.g., hoists) will be inspected at least every 6 months to ensure it is safe to use and functioning correctly. Inspections must be carried out by a competent person with appropriate qualifications and experience.

Visual inspections should be conducted by staff prior to each use to check for visible defects or damage.

Thorough Examinations (LOLER Compliance):

Under the "Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998", all lifting equipment used for manual handling tasks must undergo a thorough examination by a qualified professional at least once every 6 months (or as required based on the equipment's use). This includes hoists, slings, and other mobility aids.

The thorough examination report must be kept for inspection, and any faults identified must be rectified immediately.

Servicing and Maintenance

All lifting equipment and hoists will be serviced annually or more frequently as recommended by the manufacturer. Service records will be maintained, detailing the service dates, any repairs conducted, and parts replaced.

Slings and other accessories will be regularly inspected for wear and tear and replaced according to the manufacturer's guidelines or more frequently if damage is detected.

Manufacturer's Guidelines

All equipment will be used and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions, which must be readily available to staff and included in the equipment service and maintenance records.

Documentation and Reporting

A record of all equipment inspections, servicing, and maintenance will be kept, ensuring all equipment used for manual handling tasks is safe and compliant with UK law.

Staff should immediately report any equipment faults, damage, or potential risks to the designated safety officer or head teacher. Equipment found to be unsafe must be taken out of use until repaired or replaced.

12. Procedures in Case of Injury

In the event of an injury occurring during manual handling activities, whether involving a student or staff member, the following procedures must be followed:

Immediate Action

Ensure safety: Stop the manual handling activity immediately and ensure that the injured person is moved to a safe position, if required, without causing further harm. If necessary, summon additional staff support.

Assess the situation: Check the extent of the injury and provide first aid, if appropriate. If the injury appears serious, seek medical assistance immediately.

Notify Authorities

Report the incident immediately to the head teacher or designated person in charge. Complete an accident report form.

If the injury is serious or requires medical attention, contact emergency services (e.g., ambulance). Record the details of the injury in the accident book.

First Aid

Any injuries will be treated according to the school's first aid policy. Ensure that a trained first aider is on-site and available.

Administer first aid as necessary and keep the injured individual under observation until further medical help arrives, if needed.

Medical Attention and Follow-up

Ensure that the injured individual receives the necessary medical treatment and follow-up care, if required.

In the case of a staff member, they should be advised to seek medical advice and follow the process for reporting work-related injuries to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), if necessary.

Investigation

The incident will be investigated to determine its cause. The risk assessment for the task will be reviewed, and any necessary changes will be made to prevent future occurrences. This may include changes to manual handling techniques, equipment used, or staff training.

Incident Reporting

All injuries, regardless of severity, must be reported to the appropriate authority as per the school's accident reporting procedures. This includes completing an accident form and notifying the HSE if the injury is reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013).

Record Keeping

Maintain accurate records of the incident, the investigation process, and any actions taken to prevent recurrence. These records should be reviewed regularly to ensure improvements are made in the manual handling practices.

13. Training and Competency

All staff involved in manual handling of students with physical needs will be trained in:

- Safe manual handling techniques.
- The use of specialist equipment such as hoists, wheelchairs, and mobility aids.
- Recognising risks and knowing how to implement control measures.
- Understanding student-specific needs as outlined in the student's individual care plan.

Training will be provided before staff are able to take part in manual handling tasks for learners with physical disabilities and will be refreshed annually, or more frequently if the nature of the tasks or student needs change.

14. Safe Working Environment

The environment should be made as safe as possible for both staff and students:

- Ensure there is adequate space for handling and moving students.
- Keep walkways clear of obstacles.
- Maintain appropriate flooring conditions to prevent slips or trips.
- Provide appropriate signage where necessary (e.g., for hoist areas).

15. Reporting and Monitoring

Any incidents or near-misses related to manual handling must be reported immediately to the Centre Manager and Health & Safety officer. A thorough investigation will be conducted to prevent reoccurrence. Additionally, regular monitoring of the risk assessments will ensure they remain relevant to the needs of the student and the school.

16. Conclusion

By following this manual handling policy, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment for both students with physical needs and the staff responsible