

STANELY GROVE PRIMARY & NURSERY Academy

MANUAL HANDLING POLICY

Reviewed October 2024

Definition

Manual handling includes any occasion where any item, person or object is lifted, lowered, pushed, pulled or physically moved in any way.

Schools' Lifting and Handling Operations

Manual handling takes place everyday in school and will include:

The lifting and handling of boxes, equipment, tools, paper, desks, tables etc.

The lifting and handling of pupils.

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 require employers to make an assessment of the risks associated with any manual handling operations that are of concern to the school.

Any risk assessment must begin by analysing what is required for each type of lifting operation. Consideration must also be given to the frequency of the operation, the capability of the lifter and the working environment.

Some lifting and handling in schools will present a very low risk and will not need to be formally assessed. Many lifting and handling operations in the school will have been performed for many years, using efficient and safe methods developed from experience. In such cases a simple record that a check has been made and that the operation is considered to be safe will suffice. It will need to be reviewed, however, if there is any alteration to the lifting and handling operation.

There are some lifting and handling operations which will come immediately to mind as presenting risk to those people who perform them. Such operations may include a technician carrying boxes of equipment, an administration officer carrying boxes of photocopier paper, a teacher who may have to lift a child - for example during P.E. Do not just assess the load - the effects of the lifting and handling operation on the person or persons doing it must also be examined. If this work is likely to cause injury or illness now or in the future, a decision must be made to determine what protective and preventative measures need to be taken to eliminate the risks or reduce them to the minimum.

This could mean stopping this particular operation altogether but it is more likely to mean altering how it is done.

This could be by introducing mechanical means to help people do the lifting and handling, such as introducing a hoist to help lift a disabled child or providing a trolley to help move heavy or unwieldy equipment. Weight is not the only consideration, fragility of the load, awkwardness, shape and size are all factors.

Deliveries

For most deliveries to the school the delivery driver will unload the item from the van into the reception area. Where access is required via a flat pathway, the disabled entrance ramp at the side of the school can be used. The caretaker will then either lift and carry the item to its destination or lift it onto a trolley and then take it to its destination. The caretaker will then, if carrying the item, place it on a shelf, into a

storeroom, on a worktop or in a cupboard. If the item is on a trolley they will lift it from the trolley before placing it on the shelf, etc.

Good Handling Technique

The following, taken from the HSE guidance to the Manual Handling Regulations, provides an outline of the ideal way to lift objects. The principles of lifting in the way stated should be followed for any lifting task. Where a lifting task will not allow these principles to be followed a system will need to be designed to reduce the risk of injury to a minimum.

A good handling technique is no substitute for other risk reduction steps such as changing the task, load or working environment. There may be occasions, however, where it is unreasonable to not lift objects or where it may increase risk to others if a child or an object is not lifted and moved.

Prior to lifting any object, first check whether or not it can be rocked, pivoted, slid or rolled - there will still be some degree of manual effort attached to these types of movement, however they will enable some loads to be moved using their own centre of gravity as a balance.

There is no single correct way to lift every object or person that needs to be moved. Training in good handling techniques should be provided for specific lifting operations - for example the techniques used for lifting a child will differ from those used to lift an adult and will differ again to those used for lifting an object - although the basic principles will remain the same i.e. do not lift and carry difficult, heavy or unwieldy loads that can be moved using other means or that are outside your own capabilities.

If a manual lift is required the following points should always be considered:

Stop, think and plan the lift.

Examine the load to be moved.

Assess its weight and shape and note any sharp edges.

Is the load stable and evenly distributed? If there are appropriate handling aids available, can you use them?

If so use them, if not, can you continue without placing yourself at risk of injury?

If you believe to continue will place you at risk, stop and seek further help.

If you can continue plan your route.

Are you wearing any clothing that may snag on the load or may restrict movement? Do you need to use gloves when lifting the object?

Will you be able to see above the object whilst you are moving?

Plan the route

Is there a clear, unobstructed route between where the object is to be lifted and where it is to be put down?

If not, clear away obstructions and arrange for doors to be held open. If you cannot arrange for doors to be open is there anywhere close to any door where you can safely put the equipment down before opening the door and passing through? Are there rest stops along the route to enable you to take short rest and recovery breaks if carrying a long distance or if carrying a heavy weight?

Is the destination ready to accept the load being carried?

Manual Handling Policy

Adopt a good posture

Place your feet apart to give a balanced stable base for lifting. Your feet should be on either side of the object or along two sides of a box, for example. The leading foot (the one which is first stood on when moving off) should be pointed in the direction in which you intend to move.

Your body should face in the direction in which you intend to move.

Bend the knees so that your hands, when grasping the load, are as nearly level with your waist as possible. Do not kneel or over flex your knees - your knees should not be fully bent as they will not provide enough power to lift the object - when lifting the power is supplied by your leg muscles. Keep your back straight, maintaining its natural curve (tucking the chin in to your neck when lifting will help). Lean forward a little over the load if necessary to get a good grip.

Keep shoulders level and facing in the same direction as the hips.

Get a firm grip

Try to keep your arms within the boundary formed by your legs.

A hook grip will be less fatiguing than keeping your fingers straight.

You may need to vary your grip as you lift the object - if so do this smoothly. If the object is being lifted from the floor it may be necessary to first lift it onto a table at your waist height before altering your grip to carry it further.

Lifting the object

Once you have got into the best posture possible and have a secure grip you should first test the weight of the object - if it is heavier than you thought, or if you have not the strength to lift it fully exerting yourself at this stage could cause injury.

If, after testing the weight, you believe you are capable of lifting the object, smoothly start to lift, lifting your head and gripping the object and using your legs to raise you and the object. At the same time start to move in the direction you are to travel - unless you are lifting onto another surface.

Do not twist your body whilst lifting and do not bend sideways.

Hold the load close to your body - if it is an uneven load hold the heaviest part of it close to your body.

Carrying the load

Keep the load close to your body. Do not bend, twist, stoop or lean back. If you need to change direction move your feet not your trunk. Don't change your grip unless the load is sufficiently supported.

Putting the load down

The method for putting a load down is the reverse of the method for lifting it - keep your back straight and bend your knees, keeping the weight close to your body.

Never bend your back when putting any object down - you will be injured if you do.

Take care not to trap fingers or crush toes when setting an object down.

Lifting Children and Objects

Regular, manual lifting and handling of children, particularly those with physical disabilities, can present significant risk to both the child and the staff. Only those staff whose contract of employment requires them to lift children and where they have been suitably trained should regularly lift children. The use of suitable hoists to aid lifting and moving reduces these risks to a minimum. When lifting children the same principles as

for lifting any object should be applied, however the potential for the child to move whilst being lifted must be considered.

Children with specific needs may have a personal care plan. Lifting requirements should be included within such a plan. If a child does not have a personal care plan but requires lifting and moving on a regular basis a suitable manual handling plan should be drawn up that anyone who is included within the care for that child is made aware of. This plan should include details of any equipment used to assist moving the child, such as the use of a wheelchair or mobile hoist or an evac chair in an emergency. Suitable training must be given to anyone who will be required to use any such equipment.

Lifting objects

With regard to lifting items like heavy boxes, awkward loads or heavy equipment, the same method of risk assessment used for lifting and handling a child can be used.

Examples of operations in schools which may require assessments will be:

- moving furniture around in classrooms;
- taking deliveries of assorted sized items of boxes and packages;
- moving equipment stored at awkward heights;
- pushing and pulling trolleys and P.E. equipment;
- carrying dangerous items such as chemicals and glassware;
- lifting timber;
- setting up temporary stages;

Staff should be consulted and involved on any decision and any subsequent assessment.

Children Lifting

Particular thought needs to be given to children lifting and carrying in school. Children should only lift and carry items suitable to their size and strength. PE is a subject where pupils will often be asked to carry apparatus and equipment. This needs to be carefully assessed and rules should be established, understood and followed.

Assessments of manual handling operations that children will undertake should include details of instruction and training given and levels of supervision required. Instruction and training may be provided as a part of the lesson and as such would be documented within a lesson plan. Levels of supervision would depend upon the class group, individual behaviours within the class and the task being undertaken. In some instances it may be suitable for a teacher to be supervising the whole class whilst they move simple objects e.g. chairs. In other cases, such as moving a heavy or awkward object e.g. stage blocks, stage props, collapsible tabling, netball posts, trampoline, piano etc. the level of supervision may need to be increased.

Training

Manual handling assessments should identify where staff require training in lifting techniques or in the use of specialist equipment. Schools must ensure that such training is provided as soon as possible after the need has been identified. Details of any training provided should be recorded.

Headteachers and risk assessors will need to consider what the risks are involved in any operations and what, practically, can be done to reduce the risks.

The areas of obvious concern are the lifting and moving parts of an operation that will involve bending, stooping, kneeling, rising - usually at the same time as pushing, pulling, twisting and perhaps walking.

The Headteacher/risk assessor should discuss how lifting and handling operations are done in the school with the staff who carry out those operations.

Completion of Manual Handling Assessment Form

The Manual Handling Assessment Form should be used wherever a general risk assessment, or a health and safety inspection, identifies that there is a significant risk that someone may be injured when carrying out a manual handling task.

Section A – Preliminary should be completed and will identify whether the task being assessed needs further assessment. If the answer is NO then no further action is required. If the answer is YES, then the full form should be completed.