

MANUAL HANDLING POLICY

Purpose

Our aim is to promote and maintain the health and wellbeing of staff, students and visitors.

Manual Handling is defined under the occupational Health and Safety (Manual Handling) Regulations 1999 as “any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, push, pull, carry or otherwise move or restrain any object”. **Object** is defined as animate or inanimate object, plant and any substance or material contained by an object.

Hazardous manual handling means:

- (a) manual handling having any of the following characteristics: -
 - (i) repetitive or sustained application of force;
 - (ii) repetitive or sustained awkward posture;
 - (iii) repetitive or sustained movement;
 - (iv) application of high force;
 - (v) exposure to sustained vibration;
- (b) manual handling of live persons or animals;
- (c) manual handling of unstable or unbalanced loads, or loads which are difficult to grasp or hold.

Aims

This Policy applies to all school staff, students, visitors, contractors, and volunteers – especially on working bees. It also applies to all activities both on and off property, including school camps, excursions, and any other programmed activity outside the school grounds.

The Principal will co-ordinate the plan for managing manual handling in the school and will ensure that resources are provided to meet OHS commitments.

Implementation

To minimise the risks of manual handling injuries by implementing a systematic approach as outlined below.

- 1) Where possible, manual handling risks will be considered and **designed out** prior to any building upgrade, new activities and/or the purchase of all goods to be used at the school. Staff need to refer to Attachment No.1 that is also in the Staff Handbook.
- 2) A **risk assessment** will be undertaken on tasks identified as having a manual handling component, and tasks will be ordered in priority for assessment. Records of the risk assessment will be retained by the School Council representative in charge of Buildings & Grounds.
- 3) The Health and Safety Representative should be **consulted** about the identification, risk assessment or control of risks.
- 4) Once the risk assessments have been conducted, they will be ordered to establish **priorities for control**.

- 5) The risk control hierarchy will be as follows:
- a) **redesign** to eliminate or reduce the risk as a first step;
 - b) **change the workplace, systems or work and/or the object;**
 - c) **provide mechanical aids** to reduce the risk and **training** in their use;
 - d) **training and education** appropriate to the task.
- 6) Once the control measures are in place, they must be **evaluated** to make sure they
- are being used correctly
 - are not increasing the risk of injury, and
 - do help to reduce the manual handling risk.

For some manual handling tasks a combination of the risk control methods of reducing risk may be appropriate, however information, training or instruction should not be the sole or primary means of controlling the risk.

Manual handling risk identification

In the Department of Education manual handling injuries are common and costly, and range from sprains and strains due to sudden over exertion or forceful movement, to long term wear and tear related injuries including Occupational Overuse Syndrome (previously RSI). Other related injuries such as slips, trips and falls may occur after someone has been undertaking manual handling tasks because for example, they are tired.

In schools, manual handling risks include

- moving furniture
- carrying computers
- pushing a trolley
- lifting a ladder
- restraining a frightened child
- typing school reports using a laptop in an awkward posture
- stretching to reach a high shelf
- separating fighting students
- lifting high jump mats and other PE equipment
- standing on a table and/or chair to pin up students' work
- bending to a bottom shelf to reach a carton
- carrying large slabs of soft drink
- lifting 25 litre containers of cleaning chemicals with one hand
- moving rocks, digging etc. at a gardening bee
- bending over for extended periods to be at the same height as students
- in special settings, lifting, changing, supporting and catching (dropping) children.

Attachment No.1 Refer to Staff Handbook

MANUAL HANDLING

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Stop and think before you move anything*
2. The safest lift is between mid-thigh and shoulder, with heavier items safest lifted at waist height.
3. The risk increases greatly from 16 kilos up.

***Plan the move**

How heavy is it?

Can I move smaller amounts at a time?

Do I need help?

Should I use a trolley?

Is my path clear? (If you have to step over anything, twist or jerk, you might injure yourself).

Where will I put it down?

Is there a better time to move it?

Whom do I tell if I am having problems?