

Manual

Handling policy and procedures

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Index

1. Manual handling policy statement
2. Definitions
3. Who should undertake manual handling assessments
4. Duties of managers and supervisors
5. Duties of employees
6. Assessment of the risk
7. Recording of assessments
8. Training and information
9. Safe systems of work
10. Monitoring and reviewing
11. Generic risk assessments

1. Manual Handling Policy Statement

The head teacher and governors/trustees of Downs View recognises its responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its students and employees as so far as is reasonably practicable. It is the policy of Downs View to conform to the requirements of: -

- (a) **The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (miscellaneous amendments 2002)**
- (b) **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (amended 2006)**
- (c) **The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992**
- (d) **The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998**
- (e) **The provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998**
- (f) **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013**

To this end, Downs View aims: -

- 1 to avoid manual handling operations which are a risk to its students and employees as far as is reasonably practicable.
- 2 to complete a risk assessment of all operations which involve manual handling procedures which are judged to be potentially hazardous, and reduce the risk to the lowest level, which is reasonably practicable; this may necessitate a number of risk assessments focused on the needs and capabilities of the individual pupil and the staff involved.
- 3 to provide all employees involved in manual handling of objects or students with thorough training covering all key elements for safe handling processes.

Downs View adopts a 'minimal lift' policy within the organisation. The implications of this policy are that workers are required to avoid manual handling whenever possible and if not possible, to utilise mechanical assistance when undertaking 'hazardous' (as identified by the risk assessment) manual tasks. It should be noted that the expectation is that staff **DO NOT LIFT STUDENTS**, irrespective of their age and size, unless it is an emergency. An example of an emergency situation would be, failure of lifting equipment with student in situ. If the decision is made to lift a student in a scenario such as this, employees must accept that there is a

greater risk when lifting people, due to their unpredictable nature. As per the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, 'every employer shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all control systems of work equipment, are chosen making due allowance for the failures, faults and constraints to be expected in the planned circumstances of use'. A one-off mechanical failure will be deemed as an emergency situation, where as repetitive failures, would require a risk assessment to identify risks and lower the likelihood of injury occurring to anyone.

Staff should also be aware of the following policies, when working with children, young people and adolescents. These legal frameworks aim to ensure that all students have their individual rights protected by promoting dignity, respect, self-help skills, choices and access to experiences. They promote the need to put the rights of the child or young person at the forefront of everything we do.

At the school site, the following regulations apply:

- **Children Act 2004**
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

And at Life Skills and Link College sites, the following apply:

- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Mental Capacity Act 2019**

2. Definitions

Manual handling

This is interpreted as 'the transporting or supporting of a load by hand or bodily force, and can include any lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving'.

Load

The term 'load' refers to any moveable object, including, for example, a student being hoisted.

3. Who should undertake manual handling assessments?

The head teacher, SLT and Governor/trustees are responsible for ensuring, by way of the school's safety policies, that the procedures are in place so that manual handling risk assessments are carried out in their areas of activity.

Manual handling risk assessments are a management tool and therefore nominated Manual Handling Trainers are responsible for their completion, with the technical support from health and safety and other experts.

4. Duties of Managers and Supervisors

Managers or supervisors must ensure that:

- a) they avoid the need for employees to carry out manual handling operations which involve a risk of them being injured
- b) manual handling assessments are carried out where relevant and written records kept (including the development and implementation of individual manual handling plans for pupils)
- c) employees are properly supervised
- d) adequate information, instruction and training is provided to persons carrying out manual handling operations
- e) ensuring that equipment is available and well maintained
- f) any incidents or accidents, which result in injury relating to manual handling, are investigated and any recommended additional control measures are implemented
- g) employees adhere to safe systems of work
- h) safety arrangements for manual handling operations are regularly monitored and reviewed
- i) employees undertaking manual handling operations are suitably screened in terms of any health and safety implications before undertaking the activities, and the physical suitability of the employee to carry out the operations is closely monitored
- j) special arrangements are made, where necessary for those employees with specific health conditions which may be aggravated or otherwise adversely affected by manual handling operations
- k) ensure that employees clothing, footwear or other personal effects they wear are appropriate. Flat shoes should be worn, with no open toes

5. Duties of employees

Employee's health and safety duties are laid down in section 1.8 of Brighton and Hove Council Health and Safety Standard, (September 2022). These duties are also set out in Downs View's own organisational Health & Safety policy and section 3.2 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (amended 2006). Relating these duties to manual handling operations, employees are required to:

- a) undertake manual handling operations in a safe manner in accordance with training, supervision and written handling plans (where applicable)
- b) make full and proper use of any systems of work intended to reduce risk of injury from manual handling activities
- c) use mechanical aids, if provided, in a safe and proper manner not likely to cause themselves or others harm
- d) co-operate in the manual handling risk assessment process
- e) report any potential hazards, incidents or damage to manual handling equipment to the senior leadership team/Business Manager, as soon as possible
- f) report all incidents and near-misses on an incident form (LS2 or HS2) to their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity
- g) report any medical condition (either temporary or permanent) which makes them unfit for work or creates an increased risk to themselves or others during any work activity
- h) make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to their own health and safety to which they are exposed to whilst is at work

6. Assessment of the risk

The Manual Handling Operations, 1992, set no specific requirements, such as weight limits etc, due to the individual capabilities of those undertaking the manual handling and the danger of assuming that a set weight would be safe in all circumstances. However, there are guidelines – see Figure 1, Lifting and Lowering on page 8.

The Regulations apply to all manual handling operations and stress that it is not just heavy loads which can cause injuries – very often, relatively light objects which are lifted or carried awkwardly can cause considerable damage.

Implementation of, and compliance with these Regulations involves a specific hierarchy of measures, namely:

- The avoidance of hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable
- Assessment of any manual handling operations that cannot be avoided
- Reduction of the risk of injury so far as is reasonably practicable

Risk Assessments carried out under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, will identify all manual handling operations that pose a significant risk to the health and safety of Downs View's employees and others.

Where avoidance of hazardous manual handling is not reasonably practicable, a specific assessment of the risks involved must be undertaken in accordance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.

Under these regulations the assessment should:

- a) be suitable and sufficient, i.e. they look at the complete handling operation and have anticipated all reasonably foreseeable factors
- b) be carried out by a competent person(s)
- c) be kept up to date and revised where there has been a significant change, or in the light of an incident or near miss.
- d) record the results except where the risk posed is insignificant
- e) take into account the following factors:
 - The "**task**" itself – how does the load need to be moved/carried, from where to where etc
 - The "**individual capability**" of the "person" doing the manual handling
 - The characteristics of the "**load**" itself
 - The working "**environment**" the task is to be performed in
 - And any other factors, such as "**equipment needed**" that might affect the manual handling operation

A full assessment of every manual handling operation could prove to be a major undertaking and might involve wasted effort. The following numerical guidelines therefore provide an initial filter, which can help to identify those manual handling operations deserving more detailed examination.

The guidelines set out an approximate boundary, within which operations are unlikely to create a risk of injury sufficient to warrant more detailed assessment. This should enable assessment work to be concentrated where it is most needed. There is no threshold below which manual

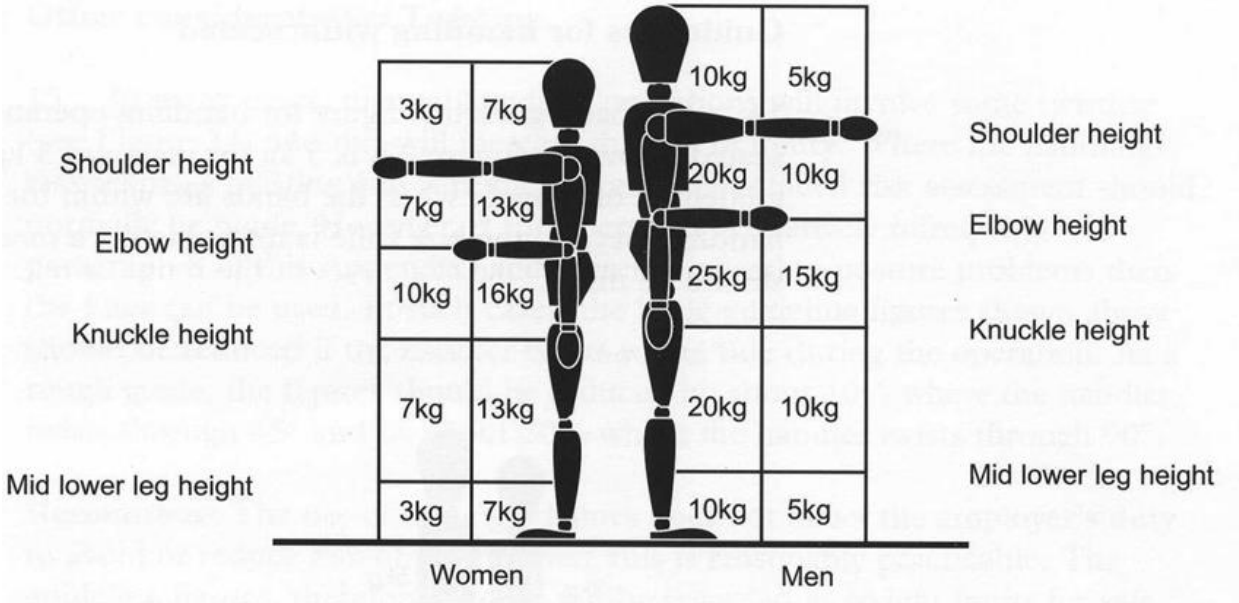
handling operations may be regarded as 'safe'. Even operations lying within the boundary mapped out by the guidelines should be avoided or made less demanding wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so.

For the working population the guideline figures will give reasonable protection to nearly all men and between a half and two thirds of women. To provide the same degree of protection to nearly all women the guideline figures should be reduced by about one third. 'Nearly all' in this context means about 95%.

It is important to understand that the guideline figures are not limits. They may be exceeded where a more detailed assessment shows that it is appropriate to do so, having regard always to Downs View's duty to avoid or reduce the risk of injury where this is reasonably practicable. However, even for a minority of fit, well-trained individuals working under favourable conditions, any operation which would exceed the guideline figures by more than a factor of two should come under close scrutiny.

The basic guideline figures for manual handling operations involving lifting and lowering are set out in figure 1. They assume that the load is readily grasped with both hands and that the operation takes place in reasonable working conditions, with the handler in a stable body position.

Figure 1: Lifting and lowering
NOTE: No attempt should be made to interpret this diagram without first reading the accompanying text.



The guideline figures take into consideration the vertical and horizontal position of the hands as they move the load during the handling operation, as well as the height and reach of the individual handler. It will be apparent that the capability to lift or lower is reduced significantly if, for example, the load is held at arm's length or the hands pass over shoulder height.

7. Recording of Assessments

The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, requires that the significant aspects of the assessments are recorded.

Whatever format is used the following factors should be included:

The Task

Bending and stooping to lift a load significantly increases the risk of a back injury. Items should ideally be lifted from no lower than the knee height to no higher than shoulder height, as outside of this range, lifting capacity is reduced while the risk of injury is increased. Where items are required to be lifted from above shoulder height, a stand or suitable means of access should be used. Items which are pushed or pulled, should be as near to waist level as possible. Pushing is the preferred option particularly where the back can rest against a fixed object to give leverage.

Handling loads whilst still seated can cause considerable strain, and unless the load can be held near to the body, the handler will have to reach or lean forward. This not only causes stress to the back, but it can also lead to the seat moving away unexpectedly resulting in an accident.

When carrying out an assessment there are several aspects of the task that will need to be considered.

Do they involve:

- a) holding or manipulating loads at a distance from the trunk
- b) unsatisfactory bodily movement or posture, especially:
 - twisting the trunk
 - stooping
 - reaching upwards
- c) excessive movement of the loads, especially:
 - excessive lifting or lowering distances
 - excessive carrying distances
- d) excessive pushing or pulling of loads

- e) risk of sudden movements of loads
- f) frequent or prolonged physical effort
- g) insufficient rest or recovery periods
- h) a rate of work imposed by a process

The Individuals capability (the person)

Individual capabilities of the people carrying out manual handling operations must be considered when producing a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk.

Factors to consider are:

- a) does the job require unusual capabilities?
- b) is the individual physically fit for the task?
- c) does the individual have any medical complaints which could be aggravated by manual handling?
- d) is the individual an expectant mother?
- e) has the individual undergone any form of manual handling training?
- f) has the individual been made aware of associated hazards, if any?
- g) is the employee young? It is important to be aware of potential inexperience, lack of awareness of risks and immaturity of young persons

Other Factors

There may be other factors, which are particular to the workplace, task or load, which will need to be taken into account, but are not specifically mentioned above. For example, does existing Personal Protective Equipment hinder movement or posture or will the introduction of automation eliminate the operation?

The Load

Generally, previous regulations have concentrated on the weight of an object without consideration for other important factors such as size, shape, rigidity etc. The load should always be kept as near to the body as possible to reduce strain on the back and therefore the risk of an injury. It may be necessary to provide some form of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to prevent injury from sharp or jagged items during the manual handling operation.

Load factors to be considered are:

- a) is the load heavy?
- b) is it bulky or an awkward shape?
- c) is it difficult to grasp?
- d) is it unstable or likely to shift?
- e) is it sharp, slippery, hot, cold or otherwise potentially damaging to hold?

The Working Environment

There clearly needs to be adequate space around the load in order for it to be moved in a safe manner and without risk of injury to the handler. Similarly, consideration needs to be given to other environmental factors which may have an effect on the person carrying out the task, these are:

- a) do space constraints prevent good handling postures?
- b) are the floors uneven, slippery or otherwise unstable?
- c) are there variations in floor levels, for example steps or ramps?
- d) are there variations in work surface levels?
- e) are there extremes of temperature or humidity?
- f) is there adequate ventilation?
- g) is the lighting sufficient for the task?

8. Training and Information

Manual handling assessments should only be carried out by trained competent people who are sufficiently knowledgeable in the process as well as having an understanding of the Regulations. Suitable information and training will be provided by qualified personnel, to all persons that are required to carry out manual handling activities.

The training needs of staff involved in such activities will be identified by the appropriate manager or other responsible person. Refresher training will be given at annual intervals to re-emphasise good working practices, correct handling techniques and address any changes that may have taken place and have not been sufficiently resolved.

Further training or information on specialised manual handling hazards can be arranged with practical guidance in the workplace.

9. Safe Systems of Work

Poor lifting and carrying techniques can result in discomfort and significantly increase the risk of injury. In some extreme circumstances these injuries can have permanent and possibly devastating effects.

Adopting the following simple precautions can reduce these risks:

- Ensure that formalised systems of work, which have been designed for the work activity, are complied with
- Make full and proper use of aids to lifting and carrying, such as trolleys and hoists etc
- Store heavy items between shoulder and hip height. Where possible only store small, light items above shoulder height and below knee height
- Use legs and knees to bend and lift – do not stoop or bend the back
- Avoid tasks which require stretching and twisting
- Ensure that regular rest breaks are taken where manual handling activities are repetitive
- Ensure that there are no sharp, hot or cold edges which could cause injury
- Make full and proper use of personal protective equipment
- Report any problems or concerns associated with manual handling operations to a responsible person without delay

10. Monitoring and Reviewing

The selection of adequate control measures will not in itself ensure adequate control unless they are monitored for their effectiveness. This involves paying attention to the maintenance of the control measures and ensuring that the selected control measures are properly and consistently used by staff.

Monitoring can take the form of inspections, audits, accidents and ill health record monitoring. There must also be a regular check as to whether anything significant has occurred which would change the manual handling risk assessment.

11. Generic Risk Assessments

There are many activities which take place in many different areas or workplaces which are fundamentally exactly the same. In these cases, it is

possible to undertake generic manual handling risk assessments which reduce the overall burden of producing hundreds of identical assessments. However, it must be emphasised that where a generic assessment has been produced, it must be checked against the actual task, individual, load and environment, to ensure that other hazards have not been introduced.

Assessments must be reviewed annually and following any significant changes in the manual handling operation.

Other instances where a review may need to be done sooner include:

- If you have reasons to believe the assessment is no longer valid
- If the work/task changes significantly
- If there are marked changes to a student's health/medical needs
- When someone returns to work after sickness or injury, or suffers a change in their health, that could affect or be affected by their work
- If a change in personnel occurs for example, a trained member of staff is replaced by an untrained person. Assessments may need to be done based on the capabilities of the new member of staff
- If an accident, incident or near miss occurs

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Manual Handling Lead and Senior Leadership Team, in order to keep it in line with operational changes and any future legal obligations.