



MANUAL HANDLING (CHILDREN & EQUIPMENT) POLICY

Last reviewed:	January 2025
Next review due:	January 2026

The purpose of this policy is to introduce procedures and provide training designed to ensure that our employees apply an ergonomic approach whilst carrying out tasks and operations that involve manual handling, in order to prevent injury.

Training and awareness

- All staff must receive training in correct manual handling techniques within their first year of employment, with ongoing training as necessary.
- Staff should be aware of the specific risks associated with lifting and carrying young children, which differ from handling static loads.

Risk assessment

- Risk assessments should be conducted for ongoing manual handling tasks, considering factors such as the task, the load's size, weight, the individual and the environment in which handling occurs. Due to the nature of the role, staff should be dynamically risk assessing throughout the day.
- The capability of individuals involved in manual handling should be assessed, especially those with health issues or pregnant staff.

Responsibilities of employees

- Follow appropriate systems of work laid down for their safety
- Make proper use of equipment provided for their safety
- Co-operate with their employer on health and safety matters
- Inform employer if they identify hazardous handling activities
- To undergo any training required around manual handling
- Take care to ensure that their activities do not put others at risk.

Common tasks and operations involving manual handling operations include:

- Lifting and carrying children
- Nappy changing routines
- Lifting and moving outdoor play equipment
- Lifting and moving furniture
- Lifting and moving supplier's deliveries

- Lifting and moving storage equipment
- Maintenance tasks involving the upgrading of fixtures and fittings
- Lifting and moving of objects should always be done by mechanical devices rather than manual handling wherever reasonably practicable. The equipment used should be appropriate for the task at hand.
- The load to be lifted or moved must be inspected for sharp edges and wet patches
- The route over which the load is to be lifted should be inspected to ensure it is free of obstructions
- Employees should not attempt to lift or move a load which is too heavy to manage comfortably. Employees should ask for assistance if there is any danger of strain.
- When lifting an object off the ground, employees should assume a squatting position, keeping the back straight. The load should be lifted by straightening the knees, not the back.
- Employees should not attempt to obtain items from shelves which are beyond their reach. A ladder or stepping stool should be used.
- Employees should not use chairs or any makeshift device for climbing.

Safe handling techniques

- Planning: Before lifting, staff should plan the task, considering what they will lift, where it will go, and the distance.
- Proper techniques: Staff should be trained to use proper lifting techniques, such as keeping the load close to the body, bending the knees, and maintaining a straight back.
- Use of equipment: Encourage the use of equipment like trolleys for heavy loads and ensure that staff know when to seek assistance.

Here is some guidance for good handling techniques. Before taking on any task or operation that involves lifting or moving, staff must observe the following:

1. Plan the lift

- Decide where is the load to be placed;
- Use appropriate handling aids if possible;
- Get help with the load if required;
- Remove any obstructions;
- Where possible use a mechanical aid such as a trolley or barrow.

2. Lifting technique

- Position the feet apart giving a balanced stable base for lifting;
- Place the leading leg as far forward as is comfortable and if possible pointing in the direction you plan to go.

3. Adopt a good posture

- When lifting from a low level, bend the knees;
- Do not kneel or over flex the knees;
- Keep the back straight;
- Lean forward over the load if necessary to get a good grip;
- Keep the shoulders level and facing in the same direction as the hips.

4. Get a firm grip

- Try to keep the arms within the boundary formed by the legs;
- The best position and type of grip depends on the circumstances and individual preference: but it must be secure;
- A hook grip is less tiring than keeping the fingers straight;
- If you need to vary the grip as the lift proceeds, do it as smoothly as possible.

5. Keep close to the load

- Keep the load close to the trunk for as long as possible;
- Keep the heaviest side of the load next to the trunk. If a close approach to the load is not possible, slide it towards you before trying to lift.

6. Don't jerk

- Lift smoothly, keeping control of the load.

7. Move the feet

- Don't twist the trunk when turning to the side.

8. Put down, and then adjust

If precise positioning of the load is necessary, put it down first, then slide it into the desired position.

Lifting and carrying children

As part of our nursery care routine, there are times when we are required to lift children, e.g. to give comfort etc. We advise all our staff to sit or crouch with the child to comfort them rather than standing or walking around.

If a child does need carrying:

- If the child is old enough, ask them to move to a position that is easy to pick up, and ask them to hold onto you as this will support you and the child when lifting
- Do not place the child on your hip, carry them directly in front of you in order to balance their weight equally
- Wherever possible, avoid carrying the child a long distance
- Avoid carrying anything else when carrying a child. Make two journeys or ask a colleague to assist you
- If a child is struggling or fidgeting whilst you are carrying them, stop, place them back down and use reassuring words to calm the child before continuing
- Students, volunteers, visitors and pregnant staff members will not carry children.

Slips, trips, accidents, incidents and near-misses

Potential areas for accidents and incidents will be noted as part of The Little Firefly Forest School's risk assessment procedure. Where possible these hazards will be eliminated. Any residual risk will be noted and shared with all other staff and recorded if necessary.

Staff should follow The Little Firefly's accident and incident policy in regards to reporting unsafe conditions or incidents related to manual handling.

The Little Firefly should ensure that all staff are familiar with these procedures and know how to respond in case of an injury.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments referred to in this document:

- Risk assessment policy
- Accident and incident policy
- Health and safety (inc COSHH) policy
- Manual handling risk assessment

External references:

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