



Manual Handling Policy

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1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out The Cherry Tree Trusts approach to managing the risks from manual handling (lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying and similar activities) for staff, pupils, contractors and visitors across all academies in the Trust. It ensures compliance with UK health and safety law and HSE guidance, and specifically covers manual handling of equipment, school resources and the moving/handling of pupils (including those with disabilities or medical needs).

2. Legal and guidance framework

This policy is implemented to meet the Trust's duties under:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (general duties to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, health and safety of employees and others).
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) — employers must avoid hazardous manual handling where possible, assess any remaining risks and reduce them.
- HSE operational guidance and technical publications including L23 and INDG143 on how to avoid, assess and reduce manual handling risks (including the HSE MAC and RAPP tools).
- Department for Education statutory and good-practice guidance for supporting pupils with medical/physical needs in schools.

3. Policy statement

The Trust will, so far as is reasonably practicable:

1. Eliminate manual handling tasks that are reasonably avoidable.
2. Assess manual handling tasks that cannot be avoided to identify hazards and evaluate risk.
3. Reduce risk by redesigning tasks, providing suitable mechanical aids, or changing procedures.
4. Provide appropriate information, instruction and training for staff involved in manual handling tasks (including moving and handling pupils).
5. Provide specific moving/handling plans and risk assessments for pupils with medical needs or disabilities and keep records.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Trust Board / CEO

- Ensure this policy is in place, resourced and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure senior leadership implement and enforce the policy across academies.

4.2 Headteacher

- Implement the policy day-to-day.
- Ensure risk assessments are carried out, control measures provided and training completed.
- Ensure pupil-specific handling plans (Individual Handling Plans / Healthcare Plans) are prepared where required.

4.3 Line managers / Subject leaders / SENCO

- Carry out or arrange task-specific manual handling risk assessments using HSE tools (MAC/RAPP) where appropriate.
- Ensure staff follow safe systems of work and use equipment provided.
- Ensure new or changed tasks are reassessed.

4.4 Staff (employees)

- Follow procedures, use equipment provided, attend training and report hazards, near misses and incidents.
- Not attempt handling tasks that they reasonably believe are unsafe.

4.5 Employees with specific medical needs / pupils' parents

- Provide information and cooperate in preparing pupil handling plans and healthcare plans.

5. Risk assessment and control measures

5.1 Avoid and substitute

- Where practicable avoid manual handling altogether (e.g., use smaller loads, purchase lighter items, reorganise stores). This is the first duty under MHOR.

5.2 Risk assessment process

- Use HSE guidance and tools (e.g., MAC tool for lifting; RAPP for pushing/pulling) to identify hazardous tasks, considering: load, distance, frequency, posture, environment (floors, slopes), design of the load, worker capability and any pupil-specific considerations (behaviour, mobility). Record assessments and review at least annually or when tasks/pupils change.

5.3 Hierarchy of controls

1. Remove the need for handling (e.g., mechanical delivery to point of use).
2. Redesign task/process (e.g., split loads, change storage heights).
3. Provide mechanical aids (trolleys, hoists, stand-assist devices, sit-to-stand aids) and ensure maintained and inspected.
4. Provide training and safe systems of work (including personal handling plans for pupils).
5. Provide PPE only where appropriate — note PPE is not a primary control for manual handling risks.

5.4 Moving and handling pupils

- Moving and handling pupils is classed as manual handling of people and must be separately assessed. For pupils with medical or physical needs, prepare an Individual Handling Plan / Healthcare Plan that includes: assessed risks, agreed handling methods, number of staff required, mechanical aids required, training needs and consent/communication arrangements with parents. Use DfE statutory guidance as applicable.

6. Training and competence

- Training shall be provided where risk assessments identify a need. Training will be task-specific, include safe handling principles, use of mechanical aids, pupil handling techniques and emergency procedures. Training is not a substitute for good task design. Refresher training will be provided when tasks change or gaps are identified. Training records are to be maintained.

7. Equipment and maintenance

- All mechanical aids and lifting equipment must be suitable for purpose, inspected and maintained in accordance with manufacturer guidance and statutory inspection regimes where required. Faults or damage must be reported immediately and equipment taken out of service until repaired.

8. Incident reporting and investigation

- All manual handling incidents, near misses and work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs) must be reported through the Trust's reporting system. Incidents that meet RIDDOR reporting thresholds will be reported to the HSE as required. Investigations will identify root causes and remedial actions.

9. Record keeping

- Keep records of: risk assessments, individual pupil handling/healthcare plans, training, equipment inspection/maintenance, incident reports and corrective actions. Records will be retained in line with Trust record retention procedures.

10. Monitoring and review

- The Principal and Trust H&S lead will monitor compliance through audits, walk-rounds and review of incident data. This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner if legislative/guidance change or after a significant incident.

11. Equality and reasonable adjustments

- The Trust will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments for staff and pupils with disabilities; individual handling plans must reflect reasonable adjustments, ensuring dignity and safety.