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## MOVING AND HANDLING CHILDREN



Two pieces of legislation affect the moving and handling of pupils in school: the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 recommends that a moving and handling policy is developed to cover those who need help (children with special needs, for example) and those who will be doing the moving and handling; the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 place a legal obligation on employers and employees to avoid lifting wherever possible, when moving and handling objects or people.

Most children with a neuromuscular condition will need to be moved and handled as they become unable to support some or all of their weight. They may need help with toileting, for example, or altering their position in the wheelchair, or require assistance transferring to therapeutic equipment, such as a standing frame.

Schools need to plan ahead and develop a moving and handling strategy to address this need and ensure pupils are safely transferred.

When a pupil requires moving and/or handling, the school should carry out a risk assessment to identify the correct procedures. This assessment should be reviewed annually to keep up with the pupil's changing physical ability.

### HOW TO ASSESS THE RISKS

- Step 1:** Look for the hazards
- Step 2:** Decide who might be harmed and how
- Step 3:** Evaluate the risks and assess whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done
- Step 4:** Record the findings
- Step 5:** Review your assessment and revise if necessary

### TRAINING

Training should be provided for all staff involved in moving and handling pupils. The LEA can advise which agencies to approach.

### EQUIPMENT

Health professionals can recommend aids, and moving and handling equipment, but it is the school's responsibility to ensure it is correctly maintained.

### RISK ASSESSMENT FORMS

Contact your LEA for risk assessment forms. Examples of joint health/education risk assessment, and moving and handling forms are provided in Appendix 1<sup>1</sup>. These can be adapted for use by your school, in conjunction with your local health trust.

1. Wakefield LEA and Wakefield West/Eastern NHS Primary Care Trust



## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- Ensure that provision/support for moving and handling is incorporated into existing health and safety policy, or becomes a separate policy.
- Identify a named individual (the person responsible for health and safety, for example) to act as co-ordinator of moving/handling concerns and policy.
- Avoid, as far as possible, moving/handling operations that put an employee at risk.
- Carry out risk assessments of all moving/handling operations and decide on the appropriate procedures for each situation (follow recommendations in *5 Steps to Risk Assessment*<sup>2</sup>).
- Use appropriate equipment to reduce the risk of injury to pupils and staff.
- Provide training for staff, which covers the key elements of safe handling procedure, via the LEA or an external agency.
- Always give consideration to the privacy, dignity, independence and views of the pupil being moved.
- Obtain written consent from parents which indicates their recognition and approval of the physical management of their child.
- Review procedures annually.
- Ensure that equipment is maintained and checked according to Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (Nos. 9 and 10).
- Review emergency/fire drill procedures and consult with the local fire service, if necessary.

<sup>2</sup> *5 Steps to Risk Assessment*. HSE Books. 1998. ISBN: 0717615804. [www.hsebooks.com](http://www.hsebooks.com)