Manual Handling

At Millwood House Nursery we recognise that staff need to carry out manual handling especially in relation to lifting children. A variety of injuries may result from poor manual handling and staff must all be aware and adhere to the nursery's manual handling policy. We instruct all staff in correct handling techniques and expect them to follow these to minimise the risks of injury.

We know that lifting and carrying children is different to carrying static loads and therefore our manual handling training reflects this. All staff will receive training in manual handling within their first year of employment and will receive ongoing training as appropriate.

Preventing injuries

As with other health and safety issues, we recognise that the most effective method of prevention is to remove or reduce the need to carry out hazardous manual handling. Wherever possible, we review the circumstances in which staff have to carry out manual handling and re-design the workplace so that items do not need to be moved from one area to another.

Where manual handling tasks cannot be avoided, for example lifting children when changing nappies, we carry out a risk assessment by examining the tasks and deciding what the risks associated with them are, and how these can be removed or reduced by adding control measures.

Our manual handling assessment considers the following:

- The tasks to be carried out.
- The load to be moved (including moving children).
- The environment in which handling takes place.
- The capability of the individual involved in the manual handling.

We expect staff to use the following guidance when carrying out manual handling in order to reduce the risk of injury.

Planning and procedure

- Think about the task to be performed and plan the lift.
- Consider what you will be lifting, where you will put it, how far you are going to move it and how you are going to get there.

- Never attempt manual handling unless you have read the correct techniques and understood how to use them.
- Ensure that you are capable of undertaking the task – people with health problems and pregnant women may be particularly at risk of injury.
- Assess the size, weight and centre of gravity of the load to make sure that you can maintain a firm grip and see where you are going.
- Assess whether you can lift the load safely without help. If not, get help or use specialist moving equipment e.g. a trolley. Bear in mind that it may be too dangerous to attempt to lift some loads.
- If more than one person is involved, plan the lift first and agree who will lead and give instructions.
- Plan your route and remove any obstructions. Check for any hazards such as uneven/slippery flooring.
- Lighting should be adequate.
- Control harmful loads – for instance, by covering sharp edges or by insulating hot containers.
- Check whether you need any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and obtain the necessary items, if appropriate. Check the equipment before use and check that it fits you.
- Ensure that you are wearing the correct clothing, avoiding tight clothing and unsuitable footwear.
- Consider a resting point before moving a heavy load or carrying something any distance.

Carrying children

- 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.
- Where a child is young and is unable to hold onto you, ensure you support them fully within your arms.
- 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 and pregnant staff members will not carry children.

Position

Stand in front of the load with your feet apart and your leading leg forward. Your weight should be even over both feet. Position yourself, or turn the load around, so that the heaviest part is next to you. If the load is too far away, move toward it or bring it nearer before starting the lift. Do not twist your body to pick it up.

Lifting

Always lift using the correct posture:

- Bend the knees slowly, keeping the back straight.
- Tuck the chin in on the way down.
- Lean slightly forward if necessary and get a good grip.
- Keep the shoulders level, without twisting or turning from the hips.
- Try to grip with the hands around the base of the load.
- Bring the load to waist height, keeping the lift as smooth as possible.

Moving the child or load

- Move the feet, keeping the child or load close to the body.
- Proceed carefully, making sure that you can see where you are going.
- Lower the child or load, reversing the procedure for lifting.
- Avoid crushing fingers or toes as you put the child or load down.
- If you are carrying a load, position and secure it after putting it down.
- Make sure that the child or load is rested on a stable base and in the case of the child ensure their safety in this new position.
- Report any problems immediately, for example, strains and sprains. Where there are changes, for example to the activity or the load, the task must be reassessed.

The task

- Carry children or loads close to the body, lifting and carrying the load at arm's length increases the risk of injury.
- Avoid awkward movements such as stooping, reaching or twisting.
- Ensure that the task is well designed and that procedures are followed.
- Try never to lift loads from the floor or to above shoulder height. Limit the distances for carrying.
- Minimise repetitive actions by re-designing and rotating tasks.
- Ensure that there are adequate rest periods and breaks between tasks.
- Plan ahead – use teamwork where the load is too heavy for one person.

The environment

- Ensure that the surroundings are safe. Flooring should be even and not slippery, lighting should be adequate, and the temperature and humidity should be suitable.
- Remove obstructions and ensure that the correct equipment is available.

The individual

- Never attempt manual handling unless you have been trained and given permission to do so.
- Ensure that you are capable of undertaking the task – people with health problems and pregnant women may be particularly at risk of injury.
- Where applicable and age/stage appropriate encourage children to use ladders up to the changing table for nappy changes rather than lifting. Where this is not appropriate always follow the lifting process.
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This policy was reviewed	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
June 2026		*May 2027*