



Barnett Wood Infant School

**Manual Handling
Policy**

2026-28

Barnett Wood Infant School

Policy Impact Statement and Updates

Policy:	Manual Handling Policy
Date of review:	September 2026
Governor/s responsible:	Non-statutory policy - approved by Headteacher
Status / date of next review:	Every 2 years - September 2028
How well has the policy achieved its purpose and outcomes?	
The policy continues to support safe working by requiring hazardous manual handling to be avoided where reasonably practicable, assessed where it cannot be avoided, and reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level. The September 2026 review also strengthens arrangements for pupil moving and handling, individual capability, competent assessment, equipment, training and review.	
Updates and/ or changes to policy:	
Sept 2026	Updated to reflect current HSE guidance; removed fixed male/female lifting limits; strengthened risk assessment, pupil moving and handling, training, equipment and review arrangements.
Sept 2024	No updates to policy

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils and or staff with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

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Statement of intent

Barnett Wood Infant School is committed to preventing injury and ill health arising from manual handling. The school will follow the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended) by avoiding hazardous manual handling so far as reasonably practicable, assessing any hazardous handling that cannot be avoided, and reducing the risk of injury to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

This policy covers the handling of objects and, where relevant, the moving and handling of pupils. It is intended to support safe, proportionate practice while maintaining pupils' dignity, participation and access to education.

1. Scope and legal framework

1.1 This policy applies to employees and to school activities on and off site, including educational visits. Visitors, volunteers and contractors must follow the school's health and safety arrangements where relevant; contractors remain responsible for their own employees and risk assessments.

1.2 This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance, as applicable:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER), where lifting equipment is used to lift or support people or loads.
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments where applicable.

- Current Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on manual handling and supporting pupils with disabilities or special educational needs.

1.3 This policy should be read alongside the school's Health and Safety Policy, First Aid arrangements, Educational Visits procedures, Behaviour/Positive Handling arrangements and any individual pupil care, medical or moving and handling plans.

2. Definitions and principles

2.1 Manual handling means any transporting or supporting of a load, including lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving it, by hand or bodily force. A load may be an object, person or animal.

2.2 Manual handling risk is influenced by the task, the individual, the load, the environment and other factors such as frequency, duration, team working, clothing or equipment. Poor posture, high force, repetition, sudden movement and fatigue can increase the risk of musculoskeletal injury.

2.3 There is no legal maximum or universally "safe" lifting weight. HSE guideline figures are screening filters only and must not be treated as school lifting limits. A more detailed assessment is required where the task, load, individual or environment presents additional risk.

2.4 Blanket "no lifting" rules will not be used for pupils. Where a pupil needs assistance, the school will seek a safe, person-centred solution that balances the safety of staff with the pupil's needs, rights, dignity and participation.

3. Risk management: avoid, assess and reduce

3.1 Avoid: hazardous manual handling will be eliminated so far as reasonably practicable, for example by changing the task, delivery point, storage location, room layout or by using suitable handling aids.

3.2 Assess: where hazardous manual handling cannot be avoided, a suitable and sufficient assessment will be completed by a person who is competent for the complexity of the task. The assessment will consider:

- Task - posture, reach, twisting, lifting/lowering height, carrying distance, pushing/pulling force, repetition, duration, pace and team handling.
- Individual - capability, competence, experience, height/reach, fatigue and any known factors that may increase risk, including pregnancy, disability, recent injury or other relevant health issues.
- Load - weight, size, shape, stability, grip, contents, movement and whether the load is a person.
- Environment - space, flooring, slopes, steps, lighting, temperature, access, storage height and obstacles.
- Other factors - clothing/PPE, availability and condition of equipment, staffing, time pressure, communication and foreseeable emergency situations.

3.3 HSE tools may be used where appropriate: the MAC tool for lifting, carrying and team handling; the RAPP tool for pushing and pulling; and HSE manual handling risk filters for identifying genuinely low-risk tasks. These tools do not replace a full assessment where one is needed.

3.4 Reduce: control measures will follow the hierarchy of risk control and may include redesigning the task, reducing the load or frequency, improving storage and access, using suitable trolleys or other handling aids, providing sufficient competent staff, changing working methods, and providing task-specific information and training.

3.5 Assessments and control measures will be recorded and communicated to staff who need to follow them. Risk assessments will be reviewed periodically and sooner where there is a significant change, an incident or near miss, new equipment, a change in the environment or a change in an individual pupil's or employee's needs.

4. Moving and handling pupils

4.1 Where a pupil requires regular or foreseeable physical assistance with mobility, transfers, toileting, personal care, floor recovery, transport, educational visits or emergency arrangements, an individual moving and handling assessment/plan will be completed before the task is undertaken wherever reasonably practicable.

4.2 The plan will be person-centred and developed with appropriate input from the pupil (where appropriate), parents/carers and relevant professionals such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists or manual handling advisers. It will identify:

- what the pupil can do independently and the level of assistance required;
- communication needs, ability to cooperate, ability to bear weight, and any relevant physical or behavioural factors;
- the agreed technique for each transfer or activity, including what must not be done;
- the equipment required, including type/size where relevant, and how it is checked before use;
- the number and competence of staff required;
- environmental requirements, including sufficient space and a clear route;
- arrangements for educational visits, transport and emergencies, including recovery from the floor where foreseeable;
- when the plan must be reviewed.

4.3 Staff must follow the individual plan and use the specified equipment. A technique used by a family member at home will not automatically be adopted in school if it exposes staff or the pupil to unacceptable risk.

4.4 Physical intervention used to manage behaviour is governed by the school's Behaviour/Positive Handling arrangements. Any foreseeable moving and handling element must nevertheless be considered in relevant risk assessments and staff training.

5. Individual capability and health

5.1 No employee should undertake a manual handling task that they believe they cannot carry out safely. Staff should stop and seek assistance where a load is unexpectedly heavy, unstable or difficult to grip, where the route is unsafe, or where the task differs materially from the risk assessment.

5.2 Staff should inform the Headteacher, in confidence, of any condition or change that may affect their ability to carry out manual handling safely. Occupational Health advice will be sought where appropriate, and reasonable adjustments will be considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

5.3 A specific workplace risk assessment will be completed for new or expectant mothers where the work could present a risk. Controls will be reviewed as pregnancy progresses and following return to work. Decisions will be based on the individual risk assessment rather than a blanket prohibition on manual handling.

5.4 Staff are encouraged to report pain, discomfort or other musculoskeletal symptoms early so that work can be reviewed and appropriate support considered.

6. Equipment and workplace arrangements

6.1 Suitable handling aids and equipment will be provided where reasonably practicable and where identified by risk assessment. Staff must use equipment only if they have been instructed or trained and are competent to do so.

6.2 Work equipment will be maintained and inspected in accordance with manufacturer instructions and applicable legislation. Lifting equipment used for lifting people or loads will be subject to the requirements of LOLER where applicable. Defective equipment must be taken out of use and reported promptly.

6.3 Manual handling will be considered when rooms, storage, furniture and work areas are designed, refurbished or rearranged. Frequently handled items should, where practicable, be stored at accessible heights and routes kept clear.

7. Information, instruction and training

7.1 Staff will receive information, instruction and training proportionate to the manual handling risks in their role. General awareness alone is not a substitute for suitable risk control.

7.2 Staff who carry out higher-risk or specialist tasks, including moving and handling pupils or using handling/lifting equipment, will receive practical task-specific training from a competent person and will be assessed as competent where appropriate.

7.3 Training will cover the school's risk assessment process, safe use of equipment, individual pupil plans where applicable, recognising personal limits, and reporting hazards, near misses, discomfort and injuries. Refresher or additional training will be provided when tasks, equipment or needs change, or where monitoring identifies a need.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 Headteacher

- Ensure suitable arrangements are in place to identify, assess and control hazardous manual handling.
- Ensure competent people carry out assessments and that staff are consulted about risks and practical controls.
- Ensure individual pupil moving and handling plans are in place where required and relevant professional advice is sought.
- Ensure suitable equipment, maintenance, inspection and training arrangements are provided.
- Ensure accidents, incidents, near misses and reports of musculoskeletal symptoms are acted upon and risk assessments reviewed.
- Ensure reportable incidents are managed in accordance with RIDDOR and the Surrey reporting process where applicable.

8.2 Premises Manager

- Follow risk assessments for premises-related handling tasks and use suitable aids for moving furniture, deliveries, waste and equipment.
- Carry out or support routine checks of handling equipment within their competence, report defects and remove unsafe equipment from use.
- Support good housekeeping, safe access routes and suitable storage arrangements.

8.3 All staff

- Follow this policy, relevant risk assessments, safe systems of work and individual pupil plans.
- Use equipment provided correctly and only where trained/authorised to do so.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others, and cooperate with the school's arrangements.
- Do not improvise higher-risk lifts or attempt a task that they do not believe can be completed safely; seek help or reassessment.
- Report hazards, equipment defects, unsafe practices, accidents, near misses and early symptoms of musculoskeletal injury promptly.
- Attend training identified as necessary for their role.

9. Incident reporting, monitoring and review

9.1 Manual handling accidents, injuries and near misses must be reported promptly to the Headteacher or Caretaker and recorded through the school/Surrey reporting process. The task and risk assessment will be reviewed and additional controls introduced where necessary.

9.2 The Headteacher will monitor implementation of this policy, including the effectiveness of controls, use and condition of equipment, training needs and recurring incident themes. Staff feedback will be used to identify practical improvements.

9.3 This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if there is a significant change in legislation, HSE guidance, school activities or following a relevant incident.

10. Key guidance

- HSE, Manual handling at work: a brief guide (INDG143, rev4).
- HSE, Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended): Guidance on Regulations (L23, fourth edition).
- HSE, Simple manual handling risk filters; Manual Handling Assessment Charts (MAC); Risk Assessment of Pushing and Pulling (RAPP).
- HSE, Supporting pupils with disabilities, special educational needs and additional support needs - moving and handling guidance.
- HSE, Moving and handling people guidance (used where relevant as good practice for person-centred moving and handling assessments).