

Moving and Handling Pupils

Introduction

The governing body recognises its responsibility to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as is reasonably practicable. It is the policy of the governing body to conform to the requirements of the relevant Health and Safety legislation.

To this end, St. Luke's Primary School aims to:-

1. avoid moving and handling operations which are a risk to its employees as far as is reasonably practicable;
2. assess all operations involving moving and handling procedures judged to be potentially hazardous, and reduce the risk to the lowest level which is reasonably practicable;
3. ensure that all potentially hazardous operations involving moving and handling are assessed at least annually and that reports of these risk assessments and plans to address them are communicated to all employees;
4. provide all employees, since all will be involved in moving and handling pupils, with a thorough training covering all the key elements for safe moving and handling processes.

Employees have responsibilities too. Every employee has health and safety responsibilities relating to:

1. safeguarding themselves, pupils and others in the school
2. cooperating with the designated staff who have responsibilities for risk assessment and developing moving and handling plans in relation to each individual pupil
3. using all equipment provided for moving and handling and using it appropriately in accordance with the individualised moving and handling plans.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body in order to keep it in line with operational changes and any future legal obligations.

The Moving and Handling Team

The Moving and Handling Team (called the Team hereafter) is a group of staff who have been specifically trained to conduct risk assessments to identify the level of risk and to formulate moving and handling plans that will reduce these risks. They receive regular refresher training from an approved training organization to keep them up to date with best practice.

Each member of the Team has a caseload of several pupils who require regular moving and handling. They each receive regular non-contact time (on average one morning or afternoon per fortnight) to work alongside colleagues to conduct risk assessments and to develop moving and handling plans. They may also require unplanned non-contact time to deal with emergency needs for new risk assessment. They may receive payment for any additional time worked. There will be a meeting of the team at least once per half-term for networking.

The expectation is that a class teacher, or the senior teaching assistant in the case of lunchtime operations, must complete a referral form when they require a risk assessment update in relation to a particular pupil. The designated member of the Team will then arrange to spend time with class team members and/or lunchtime assistants as soon as practicable - usually within two weeks.

The Team members are mostly full members of class teams and cannot be expected to stop their normal work. However, in an emergency situation, a member of the Team will be made available the same day or next day after request to the headteacher.

The members of the Team are empowered by the headteacher and the governing body to prescribe or ban particular moving and handling processes or equipment. Their guidance must be followed; it is not an option for staff to choose to ignore this.

The role of other specialists

The Team members do not have certain responsibilities which are held properly by other staff or therapists. When appropriate, these professionals will liaise with the Team and the appropriate Team members will consult them.

1. The physiotherapist has a detailed knowledge of normal and abnormal movement and an understanding of how conditions specific to children may affect each pupil's movement and development. She uses this knowledge to teach the staff, the parents and others how to develop the pupil's movement skills. This can involve passive and active exercises and positioning techniques. She will advise on standing frames, walking aids, splints and footwear.
2. A specialist orthotist does a joint clinic with the physiotherapist to assess and advise on footwear and splintage.
3. The occupational therapist is able to advise on the development of children's arm/hand function and self help skills. She takes into account the pupil's age and learning or physical difficulties. She will be able to

advise on how best to seat the pupil. If a pupil is in need of a wheelchair or a buggy, she will liaise with other agencies on the provision of such equipment.

4. The MOVE team of school staff is able to advise on assessment for learning in relation to the MOVE programme, and on use of specialist mobility equipment (e.g. Rifton Pacers) and mobility teaching practices.

Risk Assessment for Moving and Handling

The Team members follow specific methods for identifying moving and handling tasks which are likely to require a formal, written risk assessment. They will develop a moving and handling plan which attempts to reduce the risk of injury during moving and handling. Consideration should be given to the following:

1. Equipment: type of equipment, availability, condition, training
2. Load: the pupil's independence and communication skills, confidence, cooperativeness, bodily weight, postural control, floppiness or stiffness, flexion and extension patterns, clothing, splintage, sensory impairment, etc.
3. Individual capability of staff: personal capacity, knowledge and training
4. Task: layout of area, context of work routines, accessibility of equipment, space constraints, condition and nature of floor, lighting conditions

Implementation

All employees should be aware that there is no such thing as a 'safe' or risk-free moving and handling procedure. All moving and handling tasks, being physically demanding activities, always contain a degree of risk.

The Team members aim to select and describe appropriate moving and handling methods based on informed judgement of the risks associated with a given procedure. All employees are responsible for ensuring that every task they perform is undertaken safely and correctly in strict correspondence with the prescribed methods. The cost of ignoring plans and training is that employees are rendered legally liable for any accidents or injuries that arise from the way that they move or handle pupils.

Before an appropriate moving and handling method can be applied safely and successfully, employees must prepare for it in accordance with the moving and handling plan. Then - and only then - is the operation ready to be performed.

Employees should wear appropriate clothing: non-slip, enclosed shoes (no boots), and clothes that allow free, unrestricted movement without compromising modesty. They should also be fit to undertake the physical activity of moving and handling pupils and operating equipment. If they are in any doubt as to their fitness for such activity, they should not participate in it and should inform the headteacher. Medical advice will be sought by the school.

Evaluation

It is important to consider the success with which the tasks are performed on each occasion so that any mistakes, however minor, can be rectified prior to the procedure being repeated. This information must be conveyed to the designated member of the Team.

Employees must follow a minimal handling policy, but also take the time to problem solve, think creatively, and innovate. This requires set aside time to develop fresh approaches, in a controlled environment, in consultation with the designated member of the Team. Non-contact time or additional time can be made available if essential.

Accidents

All accidents that occur while following a moving and handling plan must be reported to the designated member of the Team.

Accidents resulting in injury must be written up in the Accident book kept in the office. All accidents will be investigated as quickly as possible.