

Rawdah Montessori School

Manual Handling Policy

Version: 1.1

Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review Due: October 2026

Policy Statement

Rawdah Montessori School is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all employees, pupils, contractors, and visitors. The school recognises that poor manual handling practices can lead to injury and that safe handling procedures must be consistently followed in all areas of school life. This policy aims to prevent injury and promote safe systems of work when lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, or moving any load, including children and equipment.

Aims and Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and visitors involved in manual handling activities within the school. It covers all types of manual handling, including the movement of classroom furniture, deliveries, teaching resources, and, where appropriate, assisting children with physical or medical needs.

Legal Framework

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance – Manual Handling in Schools (INDG143)
- Equality Act 2010 (in relation to making reasonable adjustments for pupils/staff)

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
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Headteacher: <i>[Name]</i>	Holds overall responsibility for ensuring that safe manual handling practices are implemented across the school.
Health and Safety Lead / Site Manager: <i>[Name]</i>	Responsible for conducting manual handling risk assessments, ensuring control measures are in place, and providing appropriate equipment (e.g., trolleys, steps).
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): <i>[Name]</i>	Oversees the safeguarding implications of manual handling, particularly in relation to intimate care and physical intervention.
All Staff:	Must take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others. They must follow training, report hazards, use correct techniques, and seek assistance when loads are too heavy or awkward.

The TILE Principle

All manual handling tasks must be risk assessed before being carried out. Staff must consider the following four key elements, as recommended by the HSE (TILE):

Element	Key Questions
T – Task	What does the task involve? Is it repetitive, twisting, strenuous, or involve carrying distances?
I – Individual	Does the individual have any physical limitations, injuries, pregnancy, or medical conditions? Are they trained?
L – Load	What is the size, shape, and weight of the item being moved? Is it stable, hot, sharp, or likely to shift?
E – Environment	Is the route clear? Is there enough space, lighting, and grip? Are there steps, doors, or uneven surfaces?

If any of these factors present a risk, staff must stop, reassess, and seek assistance or equipment before proceeding.

Specific Guidance for Working with Children

Rawdah Montessori operates a **minimal lift** philosophy. Staff are not expected to lift children as a routine part of their role. Children are encouraged to develop independence and move using age-appropriate support.

- **Avoid Lifting:** Encourage children to walk, climb, or move independently. Use step stools, low chairs, and accessible resources to promote independence.
- **When Lifting is Unavoidable:** Lifting may be necessary in an emergency (e.g., immediate danger), for safeguarding reasons, or to support a child with identified medical or physical needs.
- **Safe Posture:** If lifting is necessary, staff must:
 - Bend the knees, not the back.
 - Keep the back straight and engage core muscles.
 - Hold the child close to the body.
 - Avoid twisting – move the feet instead.
 - Never lift a child above shoulder height.
- **Two-Person Lift:** For children over the age of three, or for any child where the lift feels unsafe, a two-person lift must be used. Staff must communicate clearly during the lift (e.g., "Lifting on three: 1, 2, 3").
- **Intimate Care:** Where lifting is required for toileting or personal care, this must be covered by an individual **Personal Handling Plan (PHP)**.

Personal Handling Plans (PHPs) and PEEPs

For any child who requires regular physical assistance (e.g., moving between spaces, toileting support, using mobility aids), an individual **Personal Handling Plan (PHP)** must be completed in consultation with parents/carers and, where appropriate, occupational health or physiotherapy services.

- The PHP must detail:
 - The specific tasks requiring assistance.
 - The agreed safe handling techniques (e.g., hoist, two-person lift).
 - The equipment required.
 - Any training needs for staff.
- The PHP should be cross-referenced with the child's **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)** to ensure consistency during fire drills or emergencies.

- PHPs must be reviewed at least annually or whenever the child's needs change.

Staff must never lift a child unaided if they feel it may cause strain or injury. Seek assistance immediately.

Safe Handling of Equipment and Furniture

- **Use Aids:** Use trolleys, sack trucks, or appropriate moving aids for large or heavy items such as boxes, furniture, or deliveries.
- **Plan the Route:** Before moving heavy loads, check the route is clear of obstructions, doors are open, and there are no trip hazards.
- **Storage:**
 - Store heavier items at waist height to avoid bending or reaching.
 - Do not store heavy items above shoulder height.
 - Ensure frequently used resources are within easy reach to minimise stretching.
- **Vision:** Do not carry loads that obstruct your vision. Use a trolley or ask for a second person to guide you.
- **Team Lifting:** When lifting with a colleague, agree on the plan, count down together, and move in sync. One person should act as the leader to coordinate the lift.

Classroom Environment (Montessori-Specific)

- **Child-Sized Furniture:** Children are encouraged to move their own chairs and tables as part of the Montessori practical life curriculum. Staff should supervise these activities to ensure children use safe techniques (bending knees, carrying with two hands).
- **Heavy Materials:** Some Montessori materials (e.g., metal insets, large puzzles) can be heavy. Staff should model safe carrying techniques and assist children where necessary.
- **Floor Beds:** Where floor beds are used, staff should be mindful of bending and kneeling. Use a kneeling pad if assisting a child on the floor for extended periods.

Training and Awareness

Training Type	Frequency	Audience
Manual Handling Awareness	Induction and every 3 years	All staff
Practical Lifting Techniques	As required	Staff working with children with PHPs
PEEP / PHP Training	As required	Key Persons and Fire Wardens
Equipment Training (e.g., hoists)	On introduction of equipment	Relevant staff only

Records of all training will be retained by the school administrator.

Accidents and Reporting

Any manual handling incident, injury, or near miss must be reported immediately to the Headteacher or Health and Safety Lead.

- An accident form must be completed.
- An investigation will be undertaken to identify the root cause and prevent recurrence.
- Injuries or concerns should also be recorded in the school's Health and Safety file and, where applicable, reported to RIDDOR.

Monitoring and Review

This policy and associated risk assessments will be reviewed annually or following any incident, significant change in work activity, or update to relevant legislation or guidance. The review will be led by the Health and Safety Lead and approved by the Headteacher.

Review of Policy Dates

REVIEW DATE	REVIEWED BY	SIGNED OFF (Name & Role)
October 2025	Governing Body	Chair: Sohaib Tanvir
Next Review Due:		
October 2026	Governing Body	Chair:
	Headteacher	Headteacher: