

Overview of Procedures for Manual Handling of Students

1. Several basic principles should be applied to all manual handling tasks
 - A 'minimum lift' approach should be adopted
 - A risk management approach should be applied – identification, assessment and control of risks followed by review of the controls
 - Design controls should be implemented in preference to administrative controls.
2. The manual handling requirements of students with disabilities should be assessed (and documented where necessary) and regularly reviewed to determine safe procedures for the handling and positioning of the student in a variety of situations. How can manual handling tasks be *identified*?
 - The handling requirements of students with disabilities may be identified within the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Health Plan
 - A daily or weekly routine of activities undertaken by each student will assist in identifying manual handling tasks
 - Unusual and unplanned activities e.g. swimming, access to an alternative building or a fall to the floor should also be considered
3. The *People Handling Advisory Standard* states that a risk management process should be undertaken for all people handling tasks. The level of detail of the risk management process will depend on the complexity of the task being performed. For example:
 - A simple risk assessment could be performed through discussion and the results used to develop a 'bathroom handling plan' for a student.
 - An assessment of a complex task may need to be documented due to a large number of factors to consider. This documentation should be retained and used to keep track of progress and future control measures to be implemented.

The risk management process is usually best achieved through a group approach. A group will provide a wide range of experiences and knowledge to identify issues and solve problems. The people who perform the task should be involved in the process.

School staff should progress the risk management process and consult specialists or others for guidance when required. For complex tasks a wide range of people could be consulted during the process, for example:

- Classroom Teachers and Teacher Aides
- Advisory Visiting Teachers
- Other Specialist Support Staff such as Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists and Nurses
- Occupational Health & Safety Consultants
- School based health & safety committee members
- Parents
- Other relevant agency representatives

It is important to demonstrate that within the group of people who conduct a risk management process (whether it is a simple mental assessment or detailed and documented) that:

- a) the risk factors (relevant to people handling) have been considered during the assessment,
- b) that control measures are targeted to minimise the risk of injury and
- c) the implemented control measures are reviewed to ensure they are effective.

This can be achieved by ensuring relevant staff have viewed and understood information on the principles of manual handling of people. Schools should be able to demonstrate how relevant information has been accessed and utilised by staff to conduct any assessments

Specific resources for schools are available on the CD “Manual Handling of Students Resource Package” and at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/healthsafety/hs-mod-manual-pack.html>

Please see the factsheet – Risk Management Process for Manual Handling of Students – A step by step guide for more detailed information.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/man-hand-studs.pdf>

