

## **MOVING AND HANDLING IN SCHOOLS - responsibilities**

### **Extract from:**

**SEN Casework and Development Team, Children and Young People's Service, Milton Keynes Council (2010) *Lifting and Moving of People: Guidelines for school and other educational establishments on manual handling operations* [These guidelines were adapted, with permission, from documents produced by Slough Borough Council].**

### **In:**

**Cope, P. / Children and Young People's Services, Milton Keynes Council (2010) *Children and young people with medical and physical difficulties: Information for schools, early years and other community settings*. Milton Keynes: Milton Keynes Council. [Online at: [http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/inclusion/documents/medical\\_handbook\\_master\\_Sept\\_10.pdf](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/inclusion/documents/medical_handbook_master_Sept_10.pdf) accessed: 1.1.12]**

### **The School's Responsibility**

- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that safe systems of work are in place for moving and handling pupils.
- Equipment, such as hoists, slings, variable height changing tables, sliding sheets and boards should be provided, according to need, by the Local Authority (LA)/ Health Authority/Social Services.
- Manual handling aids are not a health need for the child but intended to protect education staff from possible injury and their provision is the responsibility of the employer.
- The Headteacher should ensure that training is available to education staff involved in manual handling on a regular basis.

### **The Physiotherapist's Responsibility**

- The risk assessment is best done in collaboration between health and education staff so that agreement is reached on how to handle the child safely and to establish what equipment is required.
- Therapeutic handling requires additional skills and training over and above those needed for the handling that is carried out routinely throughout the day and should be carried out only by therapists or staff specifically trained.
- Advice on specific, individual handling problems can be given by physiotherapists regarding children on their caseload. This should be documented carefully and copies kept in physiotherapy records, education records and care plans.
- The advice given for a specific child must be safe for all carers to carry out.

### **Special Schools and Units**

- Schools that provide for a number of pupils with physical disabilities must have

Manual Handling Policies in place and staff training which is updated regularly.

- Risk assessments are to be carried out routinely, monitored for suitability and updated at least annually for all pupils who require manual handling procedures. More frequent review is necessary when conditions alter and the assessment is no longer valid (e.g. after surgery or following growth spurts).
- A member of the education staff is to be responsible for health and safety issues in every school, including risk assessments and safe systems of work. This is often in liaison with the health staff, but ultimate responsibility rests with the education staff.

### **Mainstream Schools**

- Prior to a child with a physical disability being placed at the school, a risk assessment will be carried out with advice and recommendations regarding training and equipment required to manage the child safely, made to the Headteacher or Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).
- Adaptations may be necessary to the school environment and specialist recommendations implemented.
- Complex building adaptations will need to comply with DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) 1995 and 2005 regulations. Funding for such adaptations may be available from the Local Authority, through the 'Schools Access initiative' fund. Ideally these adaptations need to be identified through the Annual Review process and addressed before placement.
- Handling advice and programmes for all children and young people who need them must be clearly documented to help avoid misunderstandings. The Teaching Assistant (TA) assigned to work with the child needs to receive specific instructions from the physiotherapist and/or appropriate health care professional on how to carry out safe handling which could include specific individual exercise/management programmes.
- It is important to ensure that the assistant is carrying out instructions correctly and safely. The TA must be able to contact the physiotherapist and/or health care professional if problems arise
- Other children need to understand the limits of help they can give the pupil with disabilities and avoid any moving and handling, including pushing the wheelchair and helping the child who has had a fall
- Other children may be able to help safely with carrying a child's bag, or lunch tray, and by learning to be aware that the child with disabilities may be easily overbalanced and needs space to move safely.

### **School Environment**

- Risk assessments for the working environment are also mandatory
- Crowded, busy corridors or lack of classroom space increase the risk of injury both to the child and assistants, and may make it difficult to store equipment needed for mobility and moving and handling

- Wheelchairs, walkers, special furniture and adjustable height changing tables all require space where they can be accessible but safely stored.
- Modification to school buildings to improve accessibility for existing or potential pupils can reduce the risk of manual handling injury by removing or modifying environmental hazards. Over time, schools are expected to use a proportion of their 'devolved capital' funds to improve general accessibility.