



## MANUAL HANDLING POLICY

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### PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines and procedures to ensure that:

- all people who attend the premises of Leslie Moorhead Pre-School Centre Inc., including employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, are provided with a safe and healthy environment
- all reasonable steps are taken by the Approved Provider, as the employer of staff, to minimise the risks associated with Manual Handling within the pre-school environment.

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### 1. VALUES

Leslie Moorhead Pre-School uses a systematic approach to managing the risks associated with manual handling and the procedures aim to minimise the risk of injury to staff. This policy complies with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (OHS Regulations) and related Regulations and Codes of Practice.

#### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, children, parents/guardians, students on placement, volunteers, contractors and visitors attending the programs and activities of Leslie Moorhead Pre-School Centre Inc.

#### 3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

##### Background

Everyone involved in an early childhood education and care service has a role to play in ensuring the service's operations are safe and without risk to the health and safety of all parties. In Victoria, health and safety in the workplace is governed by a system of laws, regulations and compliance codes that set out the responsibilities of employers and employees to ensure safety is maintained at work.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act) sets out the key principles, duties and rights in relation to workplace health and safety. The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 specifies the ways duties imposed by the OHS Act must be undertaken and prescribes procedural/administrative matters to support the OHS Act, such as requiring licenses for specific activities, or the need to keep records or notify authorities on certain matters.

The legal duties of an employer under the OHS Act are:

- to provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. This responsibility extends to contractors for routine tasks over which the employer has management. For contractors completing non-routine tasks, the employer must ensure that the service's daily operations and layout do not pose unreasonable risks
- to ensure other individuals, such as families and visitors, are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the organisation's activities

- to consult with employees about OHS matters that will, or will likely, affect employees directly, including identifying hazards and assessing risks, and making decisions about risk control measures.

The OHS Act places the responsibility on **employees** for:

2. taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions
3. co-operating with reasonable OHS actions taken by the employer, including following guidelines, attending OHS-related training, reporting incidents, co-operating with OHS investigations, encouraging good OHS practice with fellow employees and others at the service, and assisting the employer with conducting OHS inspections during operating hours
4. not interfering with safety equipment provided at the service, such as fire extinguishers.

### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *AS/NZS 4804:2001 and 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety systems*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management*
  - Standard 7.1: Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007](#)

## 4. DEFINITIONS

A hazardous manual task as defined by the WHS Regulations, means a task that requires a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person, animal or thing involving the following:

- Repetitive or sustained force
- High or sudden force
- Repetitive movement
- Sustained or awkward posture
- Exposure to vibration

These factors are known characteristics of hazardous manual tasks which directly stress the body and may lead to injury.

Definitions of terms regularly used in policies for the early childhood education and care sector – e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. are provided in the General Definitions section of this manual and can be referred to as required.

## 5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

Worksafe Victoria Early childhood education and care: Safety basics

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-education-and-care-safety-basics>

Better Health Workplace safety - manual handling injuries

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/workplace-safety-manual-handling-injuries>

### Service policies

- Occupational Health and Safety Policy

## **PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING AND MONITORING SAFE MANUAL HANDLING**

- Staff are encouraged to use their common sense and not to take unnecessary risks when handling large or heavy objects
- When lifting a child or object weighing more than 15 kilos, staff are required to seek assistance.
- Manual handling and correct lifting/back care training will be provided every year depending upon staff turnover.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to follow the below procedures and assist by identifying manual handling hazards and risks.
- New staff are to be provided with information regarding the correct lifting techniques during their induction.
- The OH&S Committee representative and/or Approved Provider will conduct checks regularly to monitor the practice of manual handling across the centre. Any difficulties noted in these checks will be followed up immediately.

## **MANAGING RISKS FOR MANUAL HANDLING**

- Identify risks - discuss issues with staff and check past records of incidents/accidents.
- Assess risks - how much strain, pressure, stress, weight, force, grip, skill and duration is required for each activity.
- Control risks - when designing tasks in order to minimise injury, look at changing the way jobs are done, changing the layout of the workplace and changing the equipment.
- Storage of equipment. Every reasonable effort will be made to store all heavy equipment below shoulder height.

## **CORRECT LIFTING PRACTICES**

Reduce the risk of injury by following these guidelines:

- Staff must never twist while lifting, instead pivot with the feet
- When a staff member lifts a child or object, they should not stretch over and lift, but lean close and raise as close as possible to their body.

When lifting staff must:-

- place their feet shoulder width apart for good balance
- keep their breastbone elevated
- bend their knees, not at the waist to maintain the centre of balance and to
- use the strong leg muscles to do the lifting or brace their stomach muscles
- use smooth, gradual motions
- hold child or object close to their body
- move their feet not their spine to stand up
- prepare to move in a forward direction.

Staff should transfer heavy items to smaller containers to reduce weight, wherever possible.

Staff, committee of Management, Volunteers and parents should:-

- kneel where possible
- avoid sitting on child sized chairs where possible
- refrain from carrying children on their hip
- lift children with one arm under their buttocks and the other arm under their backs, with the child facing them
- Take micro-breaks, stretch, and use different muscles
- Avoid performing the same lifting task repeatedly over a long period of time.
- Before purchasing, consider the weight of new equipment, how it will be used
- Ensure enough staff are rostered on per session to allow adequate job rotation, rest breaks and variety of tasks to reduce repetition.
- Ensure staff have comfortable seating for rest and meal breaks.
- Provide fixed rubber flooring in areas where workers are required to stand for long periods.
- If an item is too heavy, ask for help from others.

## **EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Leslie Moorhead Pre-School Centre Inc will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to occupational health and safety issues
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)).

## **ATTACHMENTS**

NIL

## **AUTHORISATION**

The policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Leslie Moorhead pre-School Centre Inc.] on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022 .

**REVIEW DATE:** FEBRUARY 2025