Manual Handling Policy

School Address*: Our Lady of Good Counsel School,*

Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork. P31FH22

Phone number: *0214878370*

Roll number: *18208A*

School Patron: *The Bishop of Cork and Ross, Bishop Fintan Gavin*.

Principal: *Aisling Power*.

Deputy Principal: *Nollaig Moynihan.*

Chairperson: *Harold Brooks*

Chairperson Change Sept 26- Billy Murphy.

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Manual Handling Policy

For Teachers, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), Bus Escorts, Ancillary Staff, Administration Staff, Caretaking and Cleaning Staff

Our Lady of Good Counsel School
Innishmore, Ballincollig, Co. Cork P31 FH22
Roll Number: 18208A

Chairperson: Billy Murphy
Principal: Aisling Power

Date Ratified: 22/09/2026

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1. Policy Statement

Our Lady of Good Counsel School is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all employees, pupils, visitors and contractors. The Board of Management recognises that many staff members are required to undertake manual handling activities in the course of their work, particularly when supporting pupils with additional care, mobility, sensory, physical and behavioural needs.

The school aims to:

- Minimise the need for manual handling wherever possible.
- Prevent injury to pupils and staff.
- Promote safe systems of work.
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate training.
- Ensure manual handling activities are risk assessed.
- Provide suitable equipment where required.
- Comply with all relevant health and safety legislation.

The safety, dignity, rights and wellbeing of pupils and staff will remain central to all manual handling practices within the school.

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2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- Teachers
- Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)
- Bus Escorts
- School Secretaries
- Caretakers
- Cleaners
- Ancillary Staff
- Student Teachers
- Volunteers
- Contractors working in the school

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3. Legislative Framework

This policy is developed in accordance with:

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007
- Manual Handling of Loads Regulations 2007
- Education Act 1998
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004
- Disability Act 2005
- Children First Act 2015
- HSA Guidance on Manual Handling Risk Assessment
- Department of Education Health and Safety Requirements
- Guidance from the State Claims Agency

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4. Definition of Manual Handling

Manual handling means any transporting or supporting of a load by one or more persons, including:

- Lifting
- Lowering
- Carrying
- Moving
- Pushing
- Pulling
- Holding
- Supporting

Within a special school environment, manual handling may involve:

Objects

- Classroom furniture
- Therapy equipment
- Educational resources
- Deliveries
- Cleaning equipment
- Catering supplies

People

- Assisting pupils with mobility
- Transfers to and from wheelchairs
- Toileting assistance
- Positioning students
- Supporting pupils using hoists
- Assisting pupils following a fall
- Emergency evacuations

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5. General Principles

The school promotes the principle:

Avoid - Assess - Reduce

Avoid

Staff should avoid manual handling where possible through:

- Environmental design
- Suitable equipment
- Hoists

- Changing benches
- Height-adjustable furniture
- Wheeled transport systems

Assess

Risks associated with manual handling activities shall be assessed regularly.

Reduce

Where handling cannot be avoided, the risk shall be reduced through:

- Safe systems of work
- Appropriate staffing levels
- Training
- Equipment
- Individual pupil plans

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6. Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board will:

- Ensure compliance with legislation.
- Provide resources for safe practice.
- Support training requirements.
- Monitor implementation of this policy.
- Ensure manual handling risks are addressed within the school Safety Statement.

Principal

The Principal will:

- Ensure procedures are implemented.
- Arrange training.
- Monitor compliance.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed.
- Investigate accidents and near misses.
- Ensure appropriate equipment is available and maintained.

Staff

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Follow training received.
- Use equipment appropriately.
- Report hazards immediately.
- Report defective equipment.
- Participate in mandatory training.
- Follow risk assessments and care plans.
- Never undertake unsafe lifting practices.

Staff have a legal duty to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of others.

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7. Manual Handling of Pupils

The school acknowledges that some pupils require physical assistance due to:

- Physical disabilities
- Medical conditions
- Mobility difficulties
- Neuromuscular conditions
- Behavioural needs
- Sensory regulation needs

The dignity and safety of pupils must always be maintained.

Staff Shall Not

- Lift pupils unnecessarily.
- Carry pupils unless required in an emergency.
- Use unsafe lifting practices.
- Attempt transfers outside their training.
- Undertake single-person lifts where assistance is required.
- Improvise handling techniques.

Individual Pupil Handling Plans

Where required, pupils shall have an Individual Moving and Handling Plan which may include:

- Medical information
- Mobility profile
- Transfer requirements
- Equipment required
- Staffing requirements
- Emergency procedures
- Risk assessments

Plans will be developed in consultation with:

- Parents/Guardians
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- School Staff
- Relevant HSE personnel

Plans will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

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8. Training Requirements

All staff involved in manual handling activities shall receive appropriate training.

Training may include:

General Manual Handling

- Principles of safe lifting
- Risk assessment
- Back care
- Posture
- Safe movement of loads

People Handling

- Safe support techniques
- Wheelchair transfers
- Hoist procedures
- Positioning
- Bed/changing bench transfers

Pupil Specific Training

Where required, additional training shall be provided regarding:

- Particular physical disabilities
- Specialist equipment
- Behaviour support considerations
- Medical needs

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9. Use of Equipment

Examples of equipment used in the school may include:

- Mobile hoists

- Standing hoists
- Transfer boards
- Slide sheets
- Wheelchairs
- Adjustable changing benches
- Height-adjustable tables
- Profiling beds
- Evacuation chairs
- Specialist seating

Staff shall:

- Use equipment only if trained.
- Carry out visual checks before use.
- Report faults immediately.
- Follow manufacturer instructions.

Defective equipment shall be removed from use immediately.

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10. Responding to Falls

If a pupil falls:

Staff should:

1. Remain calm.
2. Assess for injury.
3. Seek assistance.
4. Follow the pupil's care plan.
5. Contact emergency services if necessary.

Staff should not attempt to lift a pupil following a fall unless:

- It is safe to do so.
- They have received appropriate training.
- The pupil has been assessed for injury.
- The lifting method forms part of an agreed care plan.

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11. Emergency Situations

There may be circumstances where staff must act immediately to prevent:

- Serious injury.
- Medical emergency.
- Fire.
- Significant danger to a pupil or others.

In such instances:

- Staff must act reasonably.
- The least risky option should be used.
- Assistance should be sought immediately.

All emergency lifting incidents must be reported.

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12. Risk Assessment

The school shall carry out risk assessments relating to:

Environmental Factors

- Classroom layouts
- Corridors
- Toileting areas
- Sensory rooms
- Outdoor environments

Task Factors

- Frequency of lifting
- Weight of equipment
- Duration of handling

Individual Factors

- Pupil mobility
- Physical needs
- Behavioural risks
- Medical conditions

Risk assessments shall be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following accidents
- Following significant changes in pupil needs
- Following introduction of new equipment

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13. Accident Reporting

All accidents, injuries, near misses and manual handling concerns must be reported.

Reports shall be completed:

- As soon as reasonably practicable.
- Using approved school documentation.
- In accordance with the Accident and Incident Policy.

Serious incidents shall be immediately reported to:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Member of Senior Management

where appropriate.

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14. Staff Wellbeing

The school recognises that manual handling injuries can have a significant impact on staff wellbeing.

The school will:

- Encourage early reporting of musculoskeletal concerns.
- Support access to Occupational Health where appropriate.
- Promote safe working practices.
- Review incidents to identify preventative measures.

No staff member will be expected to undertake a task which presents an unacceptable level of risk.

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15. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement
- Accident and Incident Reporting Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures

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16. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Management will review this policy every two years or sooner if:

- Legislative changes occur.
- Significant incidents occur.
- Guidance from the HSA or Department of Education changes.
- New equipment or systems of work are introduced.

Ratification

This Manual Handling Policy was approved by the Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel School.

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Chairperson	Billy Murphy		22/09/2026
Principal	Aisling Power		22/09/2026

Review Date: Sept 2028