



## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE DIOCESE OF LISMORE

# LIFTING AND TRANSFERRING OF STUDENTS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

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## 1. WHS Lifting and Transferring of Students

This Standard Operating Procedure sets out the principles/procedures for the lifting and transferring of students.

The Catholic Schools Office recognises and uses a risk management approach to help ensure the workplace health and safety needs of all persons involved in the activity, including the person being handled.

The Principles of the procedure are:

- Risk Identification
- Risk Assessment
- Risk Control
- Risk Review

Each lift/transfer process needs to be assessed on its merit. Assistance may be sought from allied health workers when required.

## 2. Risk Identification

2.1 This stage involves the identification of lifting/transferring tasks that are likely to involve a risk to the workplace health and safety of workers, students or other persons. It should include:

- i. analysis of workplace injury/incident reports to:
  - identify where, and in what activities, injuries from lifting/transferring have occurred. Factors to be reviewed in this process should include:
    - the design or condition of the premises;
    - the time of the day when the incident occurred; whether an injured worker was working alone; whether the injury may have been the result of a combination of factors (e.g. lifting and falling/slipping); the actual working environment;
    - whether the injury may be a repeat injury;
    - whether the injury is caused by a single incident, cumulative incidents, or repetitive activities.
- ii. consultation with workers performing tasks, to identify injuries likely to occur from lifting/transferring and associated tasks.
- iii. audit and inspection of the school/college premises, facilities and grounds, to identify lifting/transferring hazards.
- iv. direct observation of work tasks being performed to identify risks, e.g. inspections, audits and walk-through surveys.

2.2 All workers who are trained or competent to do so should undertake hazard identification on a regular basis and follow this by risk assessment when necessary.

## 3. Risk Assessment

3.1 This stage consists of assessing the risks involved in the lifting/transferring tasks that have been identified.

3.2 Risk assessment is particularly critical whenever:

- i. a work process or practice is introduced or modified;
- ii. there is a change in the work environment or change in workers or

- worker numbers;
- iii. any worker or other person has expressed a specific concern;
- iv. an injury has arisen from a work process/practice;
- v. a hazardous incident has occurred.

3.3 The school/college Work Health and Safety Committee/Representative or competent nominated workers or other persons should be involved in carrying out risk assessment.

#### **4. Risk Control**

4.1 This stage of the risk management process is the selection and implementation of control measures to eliminate or minimise risk. The hierarchy of control measures for the lifting/ transferring of students may involve:

- i. job redesign, i.e. the redesign of lifting/transferring tasks to eliminate or minimise risk factors [this is the highest priority risk control measure];
- ii. provision of mechanical handling equipment, eg. static or mobile hoists, mechanical aids, where redesign of a lifting/transferring task (eg. team lifting) is not practicable, or is potentially unsafe or other than a short-term or temporary measure.
- iii. appropriate training for workers in the use of preferred lifting/transferring principles for any new or redesigned tasks; personal protective equipment; team lifting procedures; mechanical aids;
- iv. other administrative controls, ie redesign of some parts of the task, additional staffing for some tasks if practicable, and provision of mechanical aids and training.

4.2 Although job redesign may be an option, a combination of different risk control measures is generally needed to address the risk factors and minimise the overall risk of injuries in certain situations.

#### **5. Review**

5.1 The effectiveness of current and new control measures should be reviewed regularly to ensure the objectives are being achieved and that there are no unforeseen negative outcomes. Ideally, there is benefit in all personnel who are involved in the lifting/transferring of students reviewing the risk management approach to people handling, back care and lifting techniques, and the correct use of mechanical aids and hoists on a regular basis.

### **Risk Management Issues for Lifting/Transferring of Students**

#### **6. School/College Design/Workplace Layout**

- 6.1 Consideration should be given to the workplace health and safety requirements of workers and students during the design of new buildings or the refurbishment of existing facilities.
- 6.2 Areas of particular concern that affect the lifting/transferring risk to workers and students include: a) access to and design of buildings;

- i. access to and design of toileting, bathing and change facilities;
- ii. type of floor surfaces;
- iii. steps and stairs and doorways; e) classroom design and dimensions;
- iv. design of teaching aids and school/college furniture;
- v. design and mobility of hoists and other mechanical aids;
- vi. access to mechanical aids such as hoists;
- vii. location and adequacy of storage facilities.

## **7. Weight Limit**

- 7.1 Workplace health and safety legislation does not set a standard reference weight in relation to the lifting/transferring of people. It is now recognised that weight is only one of a number of factors in the cause of injuries. The added risk factors of unexpected movement and general unpredictability when people are being moved or lifted, increases or compounds risks associated with weight.
- 7.2 Lifting a load in optimal conditions may be safer than handling the same load under compromised conditions.
- 7.3 All the risk factors should be considered when establishing the method of transfer/lift.

## **8. Protective Clothing for Students**

- 8.1 Students who are known to fall or have seizures regularly must wear protective clothing, particularly head protection.

## **9. Arresting Falls**

- 4.1 The practice of attempting to arrest falls places the 'rescuer' at high risk. The urgency does not allow the 'rescuer' to adopt correct positioning and the momentum of the falling weight places large forces on muscles and joints of the arms and spine.
- 4.2 Workers should attempt to control or 'direct' the fall to the ground, not prevent it, and only if they are not at risk at being injured themselves. In some cases, it may also be preferable to allow the fall to occur, e.g. on grassy surfaces.
- 4.3 The school/college may need to make parents/caregivers aware, in writing, of the ongoing risk to workers and the school/college's position on arresting falls.
- 4.4 The student who is continually at risk of falling will be required to wear protective clothing.

## **10. . Public Transportation of Students**

- 10.1 If students requiring lifting/transferring need to be transported by bus, control methods should include:
  - i. use of an hydraulic lift or tracks to enter the bus
  - ii. before securing the wheelchair to the floor, wherever possible [Australian Standard Wheelchair Restraint in Motor Vehicles: AF2942];
  - iii. correct selection and use of a mechanical hoist;
  - iv. appropriate lifting and transferring procedures;
  - v. appropriately designed vehicles.

10.2 If students requiring lifting/transferring need to be transported by taxi, control methods should include:

- i. encouragement for students to do a standing or
- ii. sliding transfer, if capable;
- iii. use of a correct or most suitable mechanical hoist necessary: personnel should be instructed in order to be competent in its use.

## **11. Warm-up Sessions**

11.1 It is sometimes helpful for workers to participate in exercise sessions prior to the lifting/transferring of students.

11.2 In facilities where lifting/transferring of students is a significant part of the daily program, set exercise sessions must be completed before the commencement of the daily program.

11.3 Exercise sessions should include exercises for strengthening, stretching and cardiovascular fitness.

## **12. Furniture and Equipment**

12.1 Furniture and equipment used in school/colleges need to be ergonomically suitable for specific functions. Consultation with workers, WHR/WHR Committee and other users must occur before purchase.

12.2 There should be information and training for workers in the use of new equipment prior to use.

## **13. Clothing**

13.1 Workers should:

- i. wear footwear which is protective, supportive and features a non-slip sole;
- ii. be made aware of the need for the freedom of hip and knee movement during lifting/transferring tasks, e.g. tight clothing which restricts movements will inhibit lifting/transferring of students;
- iii. ensure that jewellery worn by workers, or their hair, does not scratch or become caught on others during lifting/transferring activities.

## RISK IDENTIFICATION/ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The following is a risk identification/assessment checklist for the lifting/transferring of students. Personnel should tick the appropriate response and consider control measures for all 'Yes' answers.

### 14.1 Characteristics of People as Loads

Assessment Issues	Yes	No	Comments
a) Does the student require special handling?			
b) Is the student:			
i) unable to assist?			
ii) unable to bear weight?			
iii) uncooperative or intellectually disabled?			
iv) likely to shift, move about, become rigid?			
v) slippery or wet?			
vi) difficult to grip?			
vii) awkward to handle?			
viii) unstable or unbalanced?			
ix) wearing unsuitable clothing?			
c) Does the student block the view of the worker during handling?			
c) Does one worker handle large and/or heavy students without assistance?			
e) Does more than one worker handle large and/or heavy students?			

### 14.2 Workplace Layout

Assessment Issues	Yes	No	Comments
a) Does the layout prevent the worker from adopting an upright and forward facing posture?			
b) Is the task obscured in any way from the worker?			
c) Is the worker unable to perform handling tasks between their knuckle and shoulder height?			
d) Is there limited, restricted or obstructed space for movement in the task?			
e) Is there insufficient space for the worker's leg and feet movements?			
f) Is the task performed without mechanical aids?			
g) Are working heights for the activity inappropriate for the worker's size and the task performed?			
h) Is the workplace outdoors or indoors difficult to control [e.g. slippery floors and surfaces; obstructions]?			
i) Is required equipment in sufficient quantities and readily accessible to staff?			

### 14.3 Actions and Movements

	<b>Assessment Issues</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a)	Does the worker experience undue discomfort from actions during the task?			
b)	Are the worker's movements while handling the student likely to be sudden or uncontrolled?			
c)	Are there repetitive over-reaching, bending, lifting or stretching movements?			
d)	Does the worker need to move their joints to the extremes of their range?			
e)	Are these joint movements prolonged or repetitive?			
f)	Is the load unevenly shared between both hands?			
g)	Is the student lifted by one hand?			
h)	Is the student pushed, pulled or lifted across the front of the worker's body?			
i)	Does the worker need to bend over to one side to lift, or exert any prolonged force?			
j)	While holding a student in an unsupported position, is another action performed by the worker?			

### 14.4 Postures and Positions

	<b>Assessment Issues</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a)	Is the worker's posture uncomfortable during the task?			
b)	Is one posture required to be maintained for long periods without variation or rest?			
c)	Is the task performed in a position which makes it difficult to reach, grasp or handle?			
d)	Does the task require frequent, prolonged or repetitive activity: i) above shoulder height or reach?			
	ii) forward bending?			
	iii) sideways bending?			
	iv) twisting the back?			

### 14.5 Task Duration and Frequency

	<b>Assessment Issues</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a)	Does the task require frequent or prolonged:			
	i) pushing?			
	ii) pulling?			
	iii) carrying and holding?			
	iv) restraining?			
b)	Can the task become monotonous and reduce alertness?			
c)	Does the task require prolonged periods of effort which result in fatigue?			
d)	Does the task involve sustained or repetitive use of smaller muscles as in the hand, arm, or neck and shoulder muscles?			

#### 14.6 Location and Distances

Assessment Issues	Yes	No	Comments
a) Is the student to be carried up or down stairs?			
b) During lifting/transferring activity is the student at any time located:			
i) above the worker's shoulder?			
ii) below mid-thigh?			
iii) in a position which requires extended reach?			
c) Is the access to the student restricted or obstructed?			

#### 14.7 Weights and Forces

Assessment Issues	Yes	No	Comments
a) Is the student lifted, lowered, carried, held or moved at a distance from the worker's body?			
b) Is a physical and muscular effort required to:			
i) push?			
ii) pull?			
iii) lift?			
iv) lower?			
v) carry?			
vi) hold?			
vii) restrain?			
viii) cope with sudden movements?			
c) When sliding, pulling or pushing, is the student difficult to move or not likely to control their movement?			
d) Is the worker required to push/pull while seated without having good seating and stable foot support?			

#### 14.8 Skills and Experience

Assessment Issues	Yes	No	Comments
a) Is there a need for more training in recognising risks and knowing how to deal with them?			
b) Is there a need for improved induction training?			
c) Are workers inexperienced in heavy handling tasks if required for the job?			

#### 14.9 Personal Characteristics

Assessment Issues	Yes	No	Comments
a) Are the demands of the job a risk to the health and safety of the worker?			
b) Is a young worker handling or lifting people?			
c) Are aged or below average height workers performing lifting/transferring activities?			
d) Are workers who perform manual handling [lifting/transferring] activities physically unfit for the task?			
e) Is an worker with a previous back injury handling or			

	lifting people?			
f)	How is the physical fitness of workers required to undertake lifting/transferring activities assessed?			

#### 14.10 Work Organisation

	Assessment Issues	Yes	No	Comments
a)	Is the work flow affected by congestion or sudden changes or delays?			
b)	Is the work affected by insufficient worker numbers to complete tasks within a deadline or at peak workloads?			
c)	Are assistive devices unavailable or not used?			
d)	Are policies and procedures on the use of assistive devices inadequate?			
e)	Should procedures for specific lifting/transferring situations be identified?			
f)	Should team lifting be a requirement for this job?			
g)	If mechanical lifters or other equipment is provided, is it sufficient for the school/college's needs?			
h)	Is there effective maintenance of mechanical handling aids and equipment?			
i)	Are people handling tasks performed without planned recovery time?			
j)	Are there inadequate procedures for reporting and fixing unsafe equipment or environmental conditions?			
k)	For mechanical handling aids and equipment, are there deficiencies in:			
	i) selection process?			
	ii) purchasing specifications?			
	iii) record-keeping related to health and safety?			
	iv) instruction in safe use?			
	v) consultation process			

#### 14.11 Work Environment

	Assessment Issues	Yes	No	Comments
a)	Does noise level interfere with communication?			
b)	Is unsafe footwear worn for the task?			
c)	Does rain or water affect task?			
d)	Are floors/surfaces underfoot uneven or slippery?			
e)	Are there different floor levels?			
f)	Is the work environment untidy?			
g)	Are there extremes of heat, cold, wind or humidity?			
h)	Is there excessive vibration?			
i)	Is lighting inadequate for the task?			
j)	Is the task performed in a confined or obstructed area?			
k)	For seated work:			
	i) is the seating uncomfortable?			

ii)	does the height of the chair contribute to discomfort?			
iii)	does the lumbar support need to be improved?			
iv)	does the leg room need to be improved?			
v)	do workers lift weights while seated?			
l)	For prolonged standing work, does a footrest need to be provided?			

#### 14.12 Clothing

	<b>Assessment Issues</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a)	Does clothing design hinder the use of appropriate and safe techniques for student manual handling [lifting/ transferring] tasks?			
b)	Is the worker's footwear poorly designed for student lifting/transferring tasks?			
c)	Is the worker's jewellery or hair likely to get caught or pulled by persons being handled?			
d)	Will the requirements to wear gloves or any form of personal protective clothing or equipment significantly increase the risk of injury due to reduced grip stability, dexterity or strength of grip?			

#### 14.13 Special Considerations

	<b>Assessment Issues</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a)	Does the worker have temporary special needs [e.g. pregnancy, returning from sick leave, work related illness or extended leave]?			
b)	Does the worker have any permanent special needs not addressed elsewhere?			

## RISK ASSESSMENT / CONTROL FORM

### 1. IDENTIFY THE HAZARD

- a) Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Describe the hazard: \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Form the hazard takes: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. ASSESS THE RISK

- a) Identify the risk: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Occupations and tasks at risk: \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Number of people at risk: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

HOW LIKELY IS IT TO HURT SOMEONE?	HOW SEVERELY COULD IT HURT SOMEONE?		
	Kill or disable	Several days off work	First Aid
<b>Very likely</b> - could happen frequently	<b>H</b>	<b>H-M</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Likely</b> - could happen occasionally	<b>H</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M-L</b>
<b>Unlikely</b> - could happen, but only rarely	<b>H-M</b>	<b>M-L</b>	<b>L</b>
<b>Very unlikely</b> - could happen, but probably never will	<b>M</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>

### 4. RISK ASSESSMENT

• <b>H</b>	<b>High Risk</b>
• <b>H-M</b>	<b>High to Medium</b>
• <b>M</b>	<b>Medium</b>
• <b>M-L</b>	<b>Medium to Low</b>
• <b>L</b>	<b>Low</b>

**5) DETERMINE WHAT CONTROL MEASURES TO TAKE**

a) Short-term/immediate control measures: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Finish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Actual Finish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Long-term control measures: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Finish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Actual Finish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**6) REVIEW, APPLY AND MONITOR CONTROL MEASURES**

a) Review the possible control measure: i) Will the control measure introduce a new hazard? If no, continue. If yes, undertake the risk management procedure again	Yes / No
ii) Is the revised control measure effective? If yes, continue. If no, re-do step 3	Yes / No
b) Control measure finally applied:	Yes / No
c) Monitor the control measure i) Does the control measure continue to be effective? If yes, continue to monitor. If no, re-do the risk management procedure again.	Yes / No

School/college Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_