



Glen Eira Kindergarten Association INC.

Title	Manual Handling Policy
Policy Category	Childrens Programs
Policy Type	Best Practice
NQF Standard	NQS: Quality Area 3
Related Legislation	See legislation map

Background and Context

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure that:

- All people who undertake manual handling, including employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors, are provided with a safe and healthy working environment
- All reasonable steps are taken by GEKA to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

GEKA has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors. This policy reflects the importance GEKA places on the wellbeing of employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, by endeavouring to protect their health, safety and wellbeing, and integrating this commitment into all of its activities.

GEKA is committed to ensuring that:

- the management group, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors are aware of their health and safety responsibilities
- systematic identification, assessment, control and monitoring/review of hazards is undertaken at the service, including anticipating and avoiding reasonable foreseeable harm and risk
- effective communication and consultation form a fundamental part of the management process to encourage innovative ways of reducing manual handling risks in the service environment
- expectations about safe manual handling are included in induction and supervision processes
- training is provided to assist staff to undertake manual handling safely and to identify health and safety hazards which, when addressed, will lead to safer work practices at the service
- GEKA complies relevant legislated obligations (in particular, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations*).

Hazardous manual handling is the biggest cause of injuries in Victorian workplaces. Some actions that may result in harm include (but are not limited to):

- Pushing, lifting or moving items such as books and resources
- Carrying, changing or dressing a child
- Protecting a child from harm
- Playing with a child
- Handling and feeding centre pets and animals

- Working within garden environments

All the above examples require staff, volunteers, contractors and other visitors to either lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move or restrain an object or person, and therefore have an element of risk. A risk assessment is needed for all physical actions and safe techniques need to be applied to ensure injury is prevented.

Scope

This policy applies to employees, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of GEKA, including during offsite excursions and activities.

Definitions

Duty of Care: Duty of care is a legal obligation of a person to take reasonable care to avoid harm or injury to oneself and/or another person to whom they have responsibility. This means employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors must ensure that their actions (or inaction) do not affect the safety or health of others.

Harm: Includes death, or injury, illness (physical or psychological) or disease that may be suffered by a person as a consequence of exposure to a hazard.

Hazard: An element with the potential to cause death, injury, illness or disease.

Hazardous manual handling: (as defined under the *Occupation Health and Safety Regulations 2017*) is work requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain—

- a. anything that involves one or more of the following—
 - I. repetitive or sustained application of force;
 - II. sustained awkward posture;
 - III. repetitive movement;
 - IV. application of high force involving a single or repetitive use of force that it would be reasonable to expect that a person in the workforce may have difficulty undertaking;
 - V. exposure to sustained vibration;
- b. live persons or animals;
- c. unstable or unbalanced loads or loads that are difficult to grasp or hold;

Incorrect manual handling practices can lead to serious musculoskeletal disorder or even death in some circumstances.

The impact may be short or long-term, or in some instances, result in debilitating long-term conditions that can severely affect a person's quality of life. The longer manual handling is undertaken unsafely, the greater the likelihood of harm.

Injury: means personal or bodily injury and includes—

- a. pre-natal injury; and
- b. psychological or psychiatric injury; and
- c. disease; and
- d. aggravation, acceleration or recurrence of an injury or disease

Manual handling: see definition for *hazardous manual handling*.

Musculoskeletal disorder (MSD): is an injury, illness or disease that arises in whole or in part from hazardous manual handling, whether occurring suddenly or over a prolonged period. Injuries can also occur due to a

combination of both these mechanisms, for example body tissue that has been weakened by cumulative wear and tear may be vulnerable to sudden damage from a strenuous task. Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) do not include an injury caused by crushing, entrapment or any cut resulting primarily from the mechanical operation of equipment.

MSDs include:

- sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments and tendons
- back injuries, including damage to the muscles, tendons, ligaments, spinal discs, nerves, joints and bones
- joint and bone injuries, including injuries to the shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, ankle, hands and feet
- nerve injuries or compression (for example carpal tunnel syndrome)
- muscular and vascular disorders
- chronic musculoskeletal pain
- soft tissue hernias

Nominated Supervisor: A person who has been nominated by GEKA under Part 3 of the Act and who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor(s) with responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations (Section 5 and 161).

Reasonable care: The degree of caution and concern for the safety of himself/herself and others that an ordinarily prudent and rational person would use in the circumstances. Failure to exercise reasonable care is considered negligence.

Reasonably practicable: A duty holder must meet the standard of behaviour expected of a reasonable person (who is ordinarily prudent and rational) in the duty holder's position and who is required to comply with the same duty. The notion of reasonably practicable takes into account what a reasonable person ought to know and foresee.

Risk: The chance (likelihood) that a hazard will cause harm to individuals.

Risk assessment: A process for developing knowledge/understanding about hazards and risks so that sound decisions can be made about the control of hazards. Risk assessments assist in determining:

- what levels of harm can occur
- how harm can occur
- the likelihood that harm will occur.

Risk control: A measure, work process or system that eliminates a work, health and safety (WHS) hazard or risk, or if this is not possible, reduces the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

Policy

Responsibilities

GEKA is responsible for:

- providing and maintaining, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health
- ensuring GEKA's commitment to duty of care is demonstrated at all levels of the organisation in accordance with relevant legislative requirements.
- consulting with employees and Health and Safety Representatives, if any, on matters related to health or safety that directly affect, or are likely to directly affect them

- cultivating a culture where hazardous manual handling risks are immediately reported by staff, volunteers, contractors and other visitors so that the risk can be managed before harm occurs.
- manage risks associated with hazardous manual handling in the workplace, including the duty to identify hazardous manual handling, assess and control any associated risk of MSD, and review, and if necessary revise, risk control measures.
- if it is not possible to eliminate the risks to health and safety, reducing those risks so far as is reasonably practicable, in order to protect employees, volunteers, contractors and other visitors from any risk of MSD associated with hazardous manual handling work
- ensure employees have adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to work in a safe and healthy manner and that this information is shared with volunteers, students, contractors, parents/guardians
- employing or engaging people with the necessary qualifications or expertise to advise on health and safety issues
- monitoring health and safety conditions in the workplace through systematically identifying, assessing, controlling and monitoring/reviewing hazards and WHS risks, including those associated with manual handling
- ensuring independent contractors engaged by GEKA are provided with a safe work environment to the extent that GEKA has control and in accordance with any contractual agreements.

Employee, volunteers, contractors and other visitors are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care for their own health and safety
- having an adequate level of insurance prior to engaging with GEKA
- taking reasonable care for the health and safety of anyone else who may be affected by their acts or omissions at the workplace
- participating in formal and informal training and supervision to conduct manual handling in a safe and healthy manner
- following manual handling procedures, including identifying, assessing and controlling manual handling risks in line with relevant policies and procedures of GEKA
- promptly reporting hazards in line with relevant procedures
- cooperating with GEKA with respect to any action taken to comply with any requirement under the OH&S Act 2004 and Regulations
- not intentionally or recklessly interfering with or misusing anything provided at the workplace in the interests of health, safety and wellbeing.

Breaches of this policy

Employees and volunteers who do not meet their health and safety responsibilities by following relevant GEKA policies and procedures may face disciplinary action that could result in a number of outcomes, including termination of employment.

Contractors may have their contract terminated.

If a visitor breaches this policy, they may be required by management to leave GEKA premises immediately.

Approvals and Revision

Date	Version	Author	Revision Description
Q3 2012	1.00	GEKA Management	New Policy
Q1 2021	4.00	GEKA Management	Annual Review