



**Moving and Handling Policy
(Lifting and Moving of Pupils)**

April 2026

Moving and Handling Policy (Lifting and Moving of Pupils)

1. Introduction

Ballyoran Primary School recognises its responsibility to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors during all moving and handling activities. The school operates a **minimal lifting policy**, with the clear expectation that hazardous manual handling will be avoided wherever reasonably practicable.

This policy applies to the moving and handling of pupils and is written in line with **Northern Ireland health and safety legislation** and recognised good practice. It sets out the arrangements for the safe management of moving and handling activities involving pupils within Ballyoran Primary School.

This policy will be reviewed **biennially**, or sooner if legislative requirements, guidance, staffing, or pupil needs change.

2. Legal Responsibilities

Under relevant health and safety legislation, including but not limited to:

- Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000

The Education Authority (EA) as employer and Ballyoran Primary School as the workplace, have a duty to:

- Avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable
- Assess any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided
- Reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable

These duties apply equally to the moving and handling of people as to inanimate objects.

3. Management of Moving and Handling (Pupils)

3.1 General Policy Statement

The primary aim of this policy is to prevent injury to employees and pupils by promoting safe moving and handling practices.

- Staff will be supported through appropriate training, risk assessment and the provision of suitable equipment
- Wherever reasonably practicable, **pupils should not be manually lifted**
- Manual lifting of the whole or a significant part of a pupil's body weight should not normally take place
- Safer handling techniques and mechanical aids must be used wherever possible

In line with Special Educational Needs and Disability legislation, the Education Authority and the Board of Governors are committed to improving access for pupils with disabilities and ensuring that **reasonable adjustments** are implemented.

No member of staff will be required or expected to undertake a moving and handling task that they reasonably believe to be unsafe, or for which they have not received appropriate training.

3.2 Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is central to safe moving and handling practice.

- Staff directly involved in moving and handling tasks will contribute to risk assessments
- In complex cases, advice may be sought from physiotherapists, occupational therapists, accredited moving and handling trainers or the EA Health and Safety Service
- Risk assessments must be reviewed regularly and whenever circumstances change

Generic risk assessments may be used for common activities; however, these **must always be supported by an individual Moving and Handling Plan** for each pupil where handling needs are identified.

3.3 Control Measures

Where moving and handling tasks cannot be avoided, appropriate control measures will be implemented, which may include:

- Environmental adaptations such as improved space, layout, and the installation of grab rails
- Provision of suitable equipment, e.g. hoists, slings and adjustable furniture
- Statutory inspection and maintenance of lifting equipment, including six-monthly inspections under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) where applicable
- Ensuring staff are trained, competent and physically capable of undertaking their role
- Maintaining adequate staffing levels
- Rotating or spreading repetitive tasks to reduce strain
- Clear communication where pupil needs or circumstances change
- Agreed procedures, equipment and staffing arrangements for foreseeable emergencies

Emergency situations do not remove the requirement to protect staff from injury. Staff should not place themselves at unacceptable risk when responding to emergencies.

All identified control measures must be clearly communicated to all relevant staff.

3.4 Training

The school is committed to ensuring that staff receive appropriate, proportionate and up-to-date moving and handling training.

- Accredited trainers will be used where required
- Training will include risk awareness, safer handling techniques and equipment use
- Refresher training will be provided as identified through risk assessment or when practice changes
- Accurate training records will be maintained by the school

3.5 Equipment and Aids

Where the school provides equipment to support safe moving and handling:

- Staff must be trained in the correct and safe use of the equipment
- Equipment must only be used following suitable and sufficient risk assessment
- Where equipment is provided by the Health and Social Care Trust or is owned by the pupil, inspection and maintenance responsibilities must be clearly confirmed

All lifting equipment must comply with LOLER and PUWER requirements and be recorded on the school's inspection and maintenance register.

3.6 Summary

All moving and handling arrangements for pupils at Ballyoran Primary School must align with this policy. The admission of new pupils or changes in pupil need will trigger appropriate assessment, planning and training. Ongoing staff consultation and review are essential to maintaining a strong safety culture.

4. Guidance on Risk Assessments

4.1 Generic and Individual Assessments

- Generic assessments may be used for similar tasks or activities
- Individual assessments must reflect the specific needs of the pupil, the environment and the equipment used
- Assessments must be reviewed when circumstances change and at least annually

Where a pupil presents higher or more complex handling needs, individual Moving and Handling Plans may be reviewed more frequently, for example termly or as advised by relevant professionals.

4.2 Organisation of Risk Assessments

The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that moving and handling risk assessments are completed and reviewed. A suitably trained member of staff with direct knowledge of the pupil's needs will normally lead the assessment process.

4.3 Risk Assessment Process

1. Identify activities requiring assessment
2. Complete appropriate risk assessment documentation
3. Implement agreed control measures and action plans
4. Communicate arrangements clearly to all relevant staff
5. Review assessments regularly and when changes occur

4.4 Factors to Consider

Risk assessments will take account of:

- The task
- The pupil
- The environment
- The employee
- Any additional relevant factors, including medical equipment or health conditions

4.5 Moving and Handling Plans

A Moving and Handling Plan will:

- Identify agreed control measures and equipment
- Specify staffing and supervision arrangements
- Be communicated to all relevant staff
- Be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if needs change

Parents and pupils will be consulted where appropriate.