

## **Manual Tasks Policy**

---

### **1. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

The Geelong College is a Child Safe College. We have a zero-tolerance stance on child abuse and are committed to the protection of all children from all forms of abuse. The Geelong College recognises that in order to achieve a child safe environment at the College which meets students' intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral needs, students need to be involved in the creation and maintenance of such an environment.

We are committed to taking a preventative and proactive approach to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe; they are empowered to use their voices when decisions are being made that affect their safety. We are also committed to providing simple and accessible processes to assist all children to identify and communicate when they do not feel safe. Particularly, this includes those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, from culturally diverse backgrounds and those with a disability.

We are clear about our behavioural expectations of every person in our community and are committed to having a shared understanding of and responsibility for child safety. All staff are expected to uphold a culture that protects children from all forms of harm.

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy and associated guidelines is to ensure the safety and well-being of all staff, volunteers and contractors when performing manual tasks. This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines to minimize the risk of injury and promote a safe working environment.

Hazardous manual handling of tasks involves an activity that requires the use of force exerted by a person to handle (lift, lower, push, pull, carry, hold, restrain) or otherwise move, hold or restrain any object. While lifting objects is the most obvious manual handling hazard, injuries such as repetitive strain injury (RSI) also fall within this category.

Common manual handling injuries include back strain, sprains, soft tissue injuries and other musculoskeletal disorders.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors involved in manual tasks within any of the College premises.

### **4. Definitions**

- a. **Manual Tasks:** Activities that require physical effort, including lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, and repetitive movements.
- b. **Musculoskeletal Disorders:** Are a range of health conditions including discomfort, minor aches, sprains and soft tissue injuries etc. Injuries can occur in a one-off situation involving overload or intense activity or on-going wear and tear over time.
- c. **Risk Assessment:** The process of identifying hazards, evaluating risks, and implementing control measures to reduce the risk of injury.

## 5. Responsibilities

Under the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004 (Vic), managing the risks related to manual handling of tasks is a shared responsibility, however specifics are detailed below:

### 5.1 Supervisors/Line Managers:

- a. Ensure the implementation and compliance with this policy.
- b. Provide training and resources for safe manual task practices. Include information on proper lifting techniques, use of equipment, and risk assessment procedures.
- c. Consult with staff to identify, assess and control manual handling risk; this includes reviewing risk controls after a musculoskeletal disorder is reported in the workplace.
- d. Oversee the identification and assessment of manual task risks, ensuring appropriate measures are in place to mitigate them. If the College has reduced the risk so far as reasonably practicable, and the risk of harm still exists, the College will reduce the risk further by using information, instruction or training.
- e. Encourage and facilitate the reporting of manual handling incidents and near-misses and take corrective actions as necessary.
- f. Arrange workspaces to minimize awkward postures and repetitive movements. Provide adjustable furniture and equipment to accommodate different users.
- g. Regularly review the effectiveness of risk control measures and update the policy as needed

### 5.2 Staff and Contractors:

- a. Follow the manual tasks policy and safe handling procedures at all times:
  - (i) Bend your knees and keep your back straight when lifting objects.
  - (ii) Hold the object close to your body and use your leg muscles to lift.
  - (iii) Avoid twisting your body while lifting or carrying objects.
- b. Report any hazards, incidents, or unsafe practices to supervisors immediately.
- c. Review workspaces to ensure no awkward postures and minimal repetitive movements
- d. Attend and actively participate in all required training sessions on manual handling.
- e. Use appropriate equipment, such as trolleys or lifting aids, to reduce the physical strain of manual tasks. Ensure equipment is regularly maintained and in good working condition.

## 6. Monitoring

The Work, Health and Safety Committee will monitor the process of identification, assessment and control of manual tasks and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.

## 7. References

- a. Victorian Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004
- b. Victorian Occupational Health & Safety Regulations 2007, Part 3.1
- c. Code of Practice No. 25 – Manual Handling 2007
- d. WorkSafe Guidance Material: Manual Handling – Risks with Musculoskeletal Disorders