# Operational Policy: Anti Bullying (NAG 5)

## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

In accordance with National Administration Guideline Five – Health and Safety, the Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) is responsible for ensuring it takes all reasonable steps to provide a physically and emotionally safe learning environment for ākonga attending any BLENNZ programme. BLENNZ programmes include the Homai Campus School, Satellite classes, Short and long-term Residential Services (including Immersion), the National Assessment Service, the Early Learning Service, the Homai Campus Music School and ākonga activities arranged through Visual Resource Centres. BLENNZ is committed to ensuring that it provides environments free from bullying behaviour.

When working in other educational settings, BLENNZ staff will follow the policy and procedures of the respective educational setting when responding to incidents of bullying with the ākonga with whom they work.

The Bullying Prevention and Response: A guide for Schools 2015 provides overarching assistance in assessing and supporting the management of an incident.

[Link to Ministry of Education website: Bullying Prevention and Response](https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/Deter-Bullying)

## Definition:

Bullying is one particular form of aggressive behaviour and can be covert or overt in nature. Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, racial, homophobic, ableist and cyber misuse. Bullying is not always an individual action. It can involve up to three parties; initiators (those who are doing the bullying), target (those being bullied) and sometimes bystanders (those who witness the bullying). There are three main types of bystanders:

* Followers (assistants) do not initiate, but take an active role in the bullying behaviour.
* Supporters (reinforcers) who support the bullying behaviour, but do not take an active role.
* Defenders try to help the target by intervening.

Bullying behaviour can emphasise the following four characteristics:

* Bullying is deliberate, hurtful behaviour.
* Bullying involves a power balance – actual or perceived.
* Bullying has an element of repetition.
* Bullying is harmful.

There are four main types of bullying:

* Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, taking belongings).
* Verbal (e.g. name-calling, teasing, insulting, belittling another’s abilities, achievements, appearance or personal mannerisms, and sexist, ableist or racist remarks).
* Indirect (e.g. spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups).
* Cyber (misusing technology to hurt or humiliate or stalk another person through e.g. internet or mobile phones).

## Bullying Prevention

BLENNZ recognises that real change happens when ākonga, staff, parents, whānau and community share responsibility for ensuring safe, positive physical and emotional BLENNZ environments. BLENNZ will therefore:

* Work towards establishing a BLENNZ wide approach to positive behaviour management.
* Use a range of activities including curriculum based programmes to develop the ability for ākonga to relate to each other.
* Promote digital citizenship throughout ICT and promoting safe use of technology (though our Cybersafety Use agreement and Cybersafety Policy).

## Bullying Response, for when bullying occurs:

BLENNZ recognises the importance of consistently responding to all incidents of bullying that have been reported in BLENNZ and ensuring that planned interventions are used to respond to these incidents and support all involved. BLENNZ will support any ākonga who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour.

1. All reported incidents of bullying from ākonga will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

2. Staff will act in a consistent, professional and fair manner in dealing promptly with reported incidents of bullying. The incident may be reported by a bystander or a parent / whanau.

3. An appropriate adult will support the affected ākonga by:

* + Reassuring that they have done the right thing in reporting the incident
  + Recording a description of what happened and assessing the level of severity.

4. A copy of this policy will be given to all whānau of ākonga enrolled in the Homai Campus school (including those in residential placements). Ākonga involved in Immersion Courses, National Assessment and other BLENNZ activities will be provided with access to information prior to the course or activity.

5. Where appropriate, staff will be provided with access to training in identifying and reporting on bullying.

6. Where appropriate ākonga and their whānau will be provided with access to material and/or training to assist them in recognising cases of suspected bullying.

7. Staff will use a range of proven techniques to enhance the physical and emotional safety of ākonga. Such techniques may include peer mediation, positive pathways programme, counselling, and use of curriculum content.

8. BLENNZ will involve parents and whānau as early as possible and as appropriate.

9. All more serious incidents will be escalated to Senior Management and may involve advice and involvement from outside agencies.

10. Where appropriate and possible, confidentiality for the target will be observed.

11. BLENNZ will monitor all incidents of bullying and identify patterns of concern, and where appropriate provide support to targets, bystanders and initiators of bullying behaviour.

## Raising Awareness

BLENNZ recognises the importance of good communication with whānau to promote consistent messages and to ensure that any reported bullying can be recognised and responded to effectively. The policy will be made available in multiple formats (e.g. print to all new enrolments and the website) so that it is accessible to whānau.

BLENNZ seeks to foster a climate of trust where ākonga feel able to inform others of bullying in the knowledge that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All members of our community – Board of Trustees, school leaders, teachers, staff, ākonga and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is; and know what to do when bullying does occur. BLENNZ aims to ensure that all members of its community

* have an understanding of what bullying is,
* know what the BLENNZ policy is on bullying and follow the policy when bullying is reported,
* are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported, and
* know that bullying will not be tolerated.

## Supporting Documents:

[Link to Ministry of Education website: Bullying Prevention and Response](https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/Deter-Bullying)

[Link to Bullying Free NZ Website](http://www.bullyingfree.nz/)

BLENNZ Residential Care Manual

[Ministry of Education website: Running a Hostel](https://www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/school-facilities/running-a-hostel/)

Cybersafety Policy and Use Agreements

Approved: 

Date: 23 February 2022

Next Review: