# Operational Policy: Safety Checking of Employees and Volunteers (NAG 6)

## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

## Statement of Intent:

The Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) has a responsibility to ensure that it complies with the the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014 and any of its amendments in relation to consistent safety checking of its employees.

As noted on the Government’s Children’s Action Plan website, “the Vulnerable Children’s Act 2014 sets out clear expectations for consistent safety checking across the children’s workforce. Consistent safety checking (also referred to as vetting and screening) will help to assess whether people pose a risk to children, and provide a way of preventing known abusers from entering the children’s workforce.”

Employees include all those in permanent, fixed term and day to day relieving positions. Volunteers working directly or indirectly with ākonga will also be required to undergo the relevant safety checking in the same form as core children’s workers or non-core children’s workers.

## Definitions:

### Core Children’s Workers

Those who work alone with, or have primary responsibility or authority over, children e.g teachers, teacher aides, residential staff, DOM staff, therapists etc.

### Non-Core Children’s Workers

Those who are paid or funded by state sector agencies and have regular, but limited, child contact e.g. administration, resource production, domestic, catering and grounds maintenance staff.

## Policy Requirements:

1. All core children’s workers starting a job with BLENNZ as employees, contractors or volunteers must be safety checked before they start employment.

2. Safety checking involves:

* Identity verification: proof people are who they say they are, including former identities
* Information requirement: through Police, records, history and behaviour checks
* Risk assessment: judgement based process for interviewing staff
* Periodic re-assessment: every three years.

3. All new non-core staff, contractors or volunteers starting employment with BLENNZ must be safety checked prior to commencing employment.

4. Contracted or agency staff, Blind Foundation staff and volunteers who work with ākonga on any BLENNZ site, and those undertaking education or vocational training course work experience within BLENNZ, must abide by this policy. It is their employer, agency or tertiary education institute’s responsibility to ensure that all documentation has been sighted and police vet checks processed. Signed confirmation of this must be received by BLENNZ prior to working with ākonga. Supervision of contracted staff remains the responsibility of the contractor.

5. Once the initial identify check has been completed for all staff, full safety checking of individual employees (identify and police vet) will occur on a 3-yearly cyclical basis.

### Proof of Identify:

Proof of identity must be confirmed by either the Principal, Senior Manager, Co-ordinator or VRC Manager.

Two forms of identification must be presented by the employee (or future employee) in person. One form of identification must be from Category A and one from Category B. At least one of the acceptable forms of identification must be photographic. Documents must be current and not expired. Where names or other identity information on either identification documents differ, acceptable evidence must be presented to confirm the name change e.g. marriage certificate or statutory declaration.

| Category A | Category B |
| --- | --- |
| New Zealand Passport | New Zealand Driver’s Licence |
| Overseas Passport (with NZ Immigration visa/permit) | 18+ Card (must be current) |
| NZ Full Birth Certificate | Community Services Card |
| NZ Citizenship Certificate | Super Gold Card |
| NZ Certificate of Identity (issued to people who have refugee status) | Inland Revenue Number |
| NZ Refugee Travel Document | Electoral Roll Records |
| Emergency Travel Document | NZ issued utility bill, issued not more than 6 months earlier |

The BLENNZ “Proof of Identity” form must be completed before payroll is processed.

## Supporting Documentation:

[Ministry of Education Website: Police Vetting for Schools and Kura](https://www.education.govt.nz/school/people-and-employment/principals-and-teachers/police-vetting-for-schools-and-kura-maori/#sh-safety%20checking%20of%20staff)

[Ministry of Education Website - Safety Checking of Employees](http://www.education.govt.nz/news/safety-checking-childrens-workers-in-force/)

[School Trustees Association Website](http://www.nzsta.org.nz/)

[Government Legislation Website](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/)

[Children's Action Plan Website](http://childrensactionplan.govt.nz/)

Safety Checking Employer Endorsement Form for Non BLENNZ Staff

Guidelines for Completion of Identity Checks

Approved: 

Date: 12 August 2021

Next Review: 2024