## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

# Operational Policy: Payments by Parents of Ākonga (NAG 4)

## Statement of Intent:

The Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) is committed to ensuring its compliance with Section 3 of the Education Act 1989. It will do this by following Ministry of Education guidelines in terms of seeking donations or fees from its parent community for ākonga either enrolled in the Homai Campus school or attending any BLENNZ programme.

## Policy Requirements:

1. Any funds sought from parents or caregivers will clearly indicate whether the request is for a donation, and is therefore voluntary to pay, or a charge for goods or services provided.

2. When donations are sought, BLENNZ may suggest an amount to pay, but this payment cannot be insisted upon, nor enforced and interest cannot be charged.

3. BLENNZ will only seek payment for activities or goods when there is clear agreement between BLENNZ and parents/caregivers to accept the goods or service. Unless parents/caregivers agree to purchase goods and services they will not be liable for any payment. Such goods or services may include take-home items made during technology classes, stationery, clothing and activities such as trips.

4. BLENNZ will not:

* Describe voluntary contributions or donations as “fees”, “charges” or “levies”
* Charge parents for information about enrolment with BLENNZ
* Demand any form of payment to confirm enrolment with BLENNZ
* Demand payment of any bonds, insurance, membership fees or levies
* Demand a fee to cover the cost of either tuition or materials used in the provision of the curriculum
* Levy parents for any operational costs like heat, light and water charges
* Exclude ākonga from trips or activities that are part of curriculum delivery because of their parents/caregivers’ inability or unwillingness to pay a requested donation
* Charge parents/caregivers for tuition costs. If there is a “take-home component” for which a charge for materials is made, the ākonga or family can choose to purchase for their own use, or not.
* Charge for tertiary-level courses that are purchased by BLENNZ and then offered as part of the educational programme for senior ākonga
* Mislead parents/caregivers in any way as to the nature of amounts included in invoices or reminder notices
* Invoice parents/caregivers for donations in such a way that they appear to be owed
* Withhold information or privileges because a parent/caregiver has not paid a donation
* Alienate ākonga because parents/caregivers have not paid a donation
* Pressure parents/caregivers into making a voluntary purchase or donation.

5. Invoices should clearly specify what the payment is for. It is acceptable to list all requests for payments in a single document, however it must be clear which payments are voluntary and which are not.

6. Donations and payments for goods and services will be accounted for separately.

7. Any payment made, or not made, is strictly between BLENNZ and the parents/caregivers concerned. Public identification will not occur in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993.

8. There will be no communication between ākonga and parents/caregivers suggesting there are consequences for non payment of donations.

9. At the beginning of the school year a donation and activity fee from parents/caregivers of ākonga enrolled in the Homai Campus school will be sought. Information to parents/caregivers will specify the amount of the donation sought, the use to which it will be put, and that it is voluntary. The activity fee charge will also clearly show what this payment will cover. It cannot be used to cover any costs funded by the Ministry of Education for curriculum delivery.

10. Parents/caregivers are welcome to seek advice in terms of payment for services charged from the Parent Legal Information Line (0800 499 488).

## Supporting Documentation:

[Ministry of Education Circular 2013/06 – Payments by Parents of Students](http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/publications/education-circulars/2013-circulars/circular-2013-06-payments-by-parents-of-students/)

[Privacy Act 1993](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0028/latest/DLM296639.html)

 4 February 2019

Approved: …………………. Date: …………………….

(Principal)