## Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ

# Operational Policy: School Hours & Term Dates (NAG 6)

## Statement of Intent:

Section 65a of the Education Act 1989 requires that every Board of Trustees shall ensure that each school it administers is open for instruction every year on the number of half-days prescribed by the Ministry of Education. The Blind & Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) will ensure compliance with this legislation through the implementation of this policy.

BLENNZ comprises the Homai Campus School, all Visual Resource Centres, the National Assessment Service, Residential, Immersion and the Homai Early Childhood Centre.

## Policy Requirements:

1. Details of the forthcoming school day and school year will be accessed from the NZ Education Gazette annual notices, Ministry of Education circulars and Ministry of Education website.

2. State and integrated schools must be closed on Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays and Easter Tuesday (note: Easter Tuesday is not a Public Holiday but it is a school holiday so schools must not be open for instruction on this day). To open on a Saturday or Sunday a school must apply to the Ministry of Education for an exemption.

3. If a local Anniversary Day public holiday falls within school term dates, BLENNZ will close on this day and stay open for an extra day to ensure that it is open for the required number of half days. Visual Resource Centres located in areas in which the region’s Anniversary Day does not fall in school holidays, will open or close on a day set by BLENNZ management that takes this requirement into consideration. This will be specified on the annual calendar and will ensure there is equity amongst staff nationally in terms of number of days worked during term times.

4. Teacher-only days (TOD) are planning and preparation days. Instruction is not provided for ngā ākonga on these days. TOD are not included in the calculations of half-days when BLENNZ is officially open for instruction. If BLENNZ is closed to accommodate such events as TOD, inservice or conference days, BLENNZ will ensure that it remains open for the prescribed number of half-days as notified by the Ministry of Education.

5. BLENNZ will endeavour, wherever possible, to consult with its local community to establish a common opening day, and in particular with Manurewa High School and James Cook High School. The needs of Visual Resource Centres in supporting ngā ākonga will also be taken into consideration.

6. If Waitangi Day or ANZAC Day falls on a weekend, the next Monday is a public holidays.

7. Under Section 65e of the Education Act 1989, the Board may close the BLENNZ Homai Campus School at any time because of epidemic, flood, fire or other emergency. Ministry of Education consent to close in an emergency is not required although the local Ministry office should be notified. If the emergency will result in BLENNZ not being open for the required number of half-days in that year, approval to reduce the number of half-days open must be obtained from the Manager at the nearest office of the Ministry of Education.

8. Visual Resource Centres located in schools will follow the directives of the local school’s Board in terms of closure during emergencies. BLENNZ stand alone bases will follow, in consultation with senior management, the directives of civil defence and local authorities.

9. The definition of an emergency does not include paid union meetings or strikes.

10. Members of the Post Primary Teacher’s Association (PPTA) and the NZ Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI) are entitled to attend at least two paid union meetings per year. During these meetings BLENNZ will make arrangements to ensure that it remains open for instruction.

11. Parents of ngā ākonga enrolled in the Homai Campus School or Homai Early Childhood Centre will receive notification of term dates through newsletters. BLENNZ will also notify its community of interest of term dates for the following year through notification on its website and Facebook page.

12. The Education Legislation Amendment Act 2016 includes an amendment that allows schools to vary their hours of instruction to give more flexibility in timetables to cater to the particular needs of their school and ngā ākonga. BLENNZ will still be open for instruction for a minimum of four hours a day, including at least two hours in the morning and another two hours in the afternoon. Any changes to when the two blocks of two hours is taken must be done in consultation with parents, staff, the local community and anyone else who could be affected.

## Supporting Documents:

[Government Legislation: Education Act 1989](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/DLM185907.html)

[Ministry of Education: Setting Term Dates, Holidays and Closing Days](https://education.govt.nz/search/SearchForm?Search=school+hours+and+term+dates&action_results=Go)

[Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA)](https://www.ppta.org.nz/)

[NZEI Te Riu Roa](https://www.nzei.org.nz/)

[NZSTA: Work Stoppages](https://www.nzsta.org.nz/advice-and-support/employment/day-to-day-staff-management/employment-records/work-stoppages/)

[Ministry of Education: Varying School Hours](https://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/legislation/education-legislation-amendment-act/varying-school-opening-hours-at-a-glance/)

  4 February 2019

Approved: …………………… Date: …………………………

 (Principal)